

ANDREA G. DITTMANN

Curriculum Vitae

Northwestern University, Kellogg School of Management
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Evanston, IL 60208
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EDUCATION

- 2020 **KELLOGG SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT**, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
Ph.D. in Management & Organizations (*expected*)
Dissertation Committee: Nicole M. Stephens (chair), Nour Kteily, Loran Nordgren,
Lauren Rivera, & Mesmin Destin
- 2012 **ST. OLAF COLLEGE**, Northfield, MN
B.A. in Psychology (Minor: Statistics), *summa cum laude*

RESEARCH INTERESTS

I study how valued cultural practices in organizations shape whether social class inequality is amplified or attenuated. Informed by these insights, I then investigate how we can design theoretically-driven interventions that restructure organizations to create spaces that reduce both social class inequalities, as well as broader intergroup inequalities.

PUBLICATIONS AND INVITED REVISIONS (see Appendix for abstracts)

Dittmann, A. G., Stephens, N. M., & Townsend, S. S. M. (*under 2nd round review at JPSP*). When people from working-class contexts outperform people from middle-class contexts. (title disguised)

- **Winner of the Wheeler Institute Award: judged to be research with greatest potential for contribution to the field of business for development at TADC 2019**

Stephens, N. M., Townsend, S. S. M., & **Dittmann, A. G.** (2019). Social class disparities in higher education and professional workplaces: The role of cultural mismatch. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 28(1), 67-73. doi.org/10.1177/0963721418806506

Dittmann, A. G. & Stephens, N. M. (2017). Interventions aimed at closing the social class achievement gap: Changing individuals, structures, and construals. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 18, 111-116. doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.07.044

Maner, J. K., **Dittmann, A. G.**, McNulty, J., & Meltzer, A. (2017). Implications of life-history strategies for obesity. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(32), 8517–8522. doi:10.1073/pnas.1620482114

Dittmann, A. G. & Maner, J. K. (2017). A life-history theory perspective on obesity. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 40. doi:10.1017/S0140525X16001400

Stephens, N. M., **Dittmann, A. G.**, & Townsend, S. S. M. (2017). Social class and models of competence: How gateway institutions disadvantage working-class Americans and how to intervene. In C.S. Dweck, A.J. Elliot, & D. Yeager (Eds.), *Handbook of Competence and Motivation (2nd Edition): Theory and Application*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Nie, A., Griffin, M., Keinath, A., Walsh, M., **Dittmann, A. G.**, & Reder, L. (2014). ERP profiles for face and word recognition are based on their status in semantic memory not their stimulus category. *Brain Research, 1557*, 66-73.

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW (see Appendix for abstracts)

Dittmann, A. G., Birnbaum, H. J., Stephens, N. M., & Townsend, S. S. M. (*Under review at Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*). College financial resources and social psychological interventions to improve the academic achievement of working-class students. (title disguised)

SELECT WORKING PAPERS (see Appendix for abstracts)

Dittmann, A. G., Stephens, N. M., Townsend, S. S. M., & Rivera, L. (*In preparation for Academy of Management Journal*). Working in professional organizations but still working class: How social class background impacts subjective workplace experiences. (Dissertation Chapter 2)

Dittmann, A. G., Kteily, N., & Bruneau, E. (*In preparation for Psychological Science*). Subtle signals of self-value shape perceptions of a group's human worth. (title disguised)

SELECT RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Dittmann, A. G.* & Dobson, K. S. H.* (*Data collection*). A field experiment to improve the quality of police-community interactions within a municipal police organization. *joint first authorship

Dittmann, A. G., Stephens, N. M., & Townsend, S. S. M. (*Data analysis*). Interdependent organizations promote the strengths of employees from working-class contexts. (Dissertation Chapter 3)

Dittmann, A. G., & Stephens, N. M. (*Data collection*). Social class background and negotiations.

Birnbaum, H. J.*, **Dittmann, A. G.***, & Stephens, N. M. (*Data collection*). Gender, social class background, and workplace burnout. *joint first authorship

Ruttan, R. & **Dittmann, A. G.** (*Data analysis*). Rivalry and (conspicuous) prosociality.

GRANTS, HONORS, & AWARDS

2019	Wheeler Institute Award, Trans-Atlantic Doctoral Conference, London Business School
2018	Organizational Behavior Doctoral Consortium Nominee (1 candidate selected per school)
2018	Dissertation Research Grant, Kellogg School of Management (\$2970)
2018	Student Travel Award Grant, Society for Personality and Social Psychology
2016	Student Travel Grant, Harvard BIG Ideas Doctoral Workshop
2015	Interdisciplinary Research Award Honorable Mention, Kellogg School of Management

2012	Phi Beta Kappa, St. Olaf College
2012	Departmental Distinction in Statistics, St. Olaf College
2011	Gordon Allport Award (awarded for excellence in psychology), St. Olaf College
2008-12	Dean's List, St. Olaf College

ARTICLES FOR A POPULAR AUDIENCE

Dittmann, A. G. (June 8, 2017). Challenges for working-class students don't end at commencement. *Behavioral Scientist*.

Dittmann, A. G. (August 12, 2016). Understanding social class as culture. *The Psych Report*.

ORGANIZED SYMPOSIA

2018 Harnessing research on the effects of economic and social class inequality to improve lives. (Symposium Co-Chair with Mindy Truong). The Academy of Management Conference, Chicago, IL.

2017 Reducing inequality in organizations. (Symposium Co-Chair with Edward Chang). The Academy of Management Conference, Atlanta, GA.

SELECT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2019 **Dittmann, A. G.**, Stephens, N. M., & Townsend, S. S. M. Cultural mismatch in professional organizations: How organizational culture shapes the fit and retention of employees from working-class contexts. Paper to be presented at the Academy of Management Conference, Boston, MA.

Dittmann, A. G. An interdependence advantage: Working together leads groups from working-class contexts to outperform groups from middle-class contexts. Paper presented at the Trans-Atlantic Doctoral Conference, London, UK.

Dittmann, A. G., Stephens, N. M., & Townsend, S. S. M. In interdependent performance situations, people from working-class contexts outperform their counterparts from middle-class contexts. Paper presented at the Society of Personality and Social Psychology Conference, Portland, OR.

2018 **Dittmann, A. G.**, Stephens, N. M., & Townsend, S. S. M. Interdependent organizations promote fit and retention in employees from working-class contexts. Paper presented at the Academy of Management Conference, Chicago, IL.

Dittmann, A. G., Kteily, N., & Bruneau, E. Unequal and worth less? Unequal prisoner swaps influence perceived self-value, direct perceptions, and future treatment of outgroups. Paper presented at the International Association for Conflict Management Conference, Philadelphia, PA.

Dittmann, A. G., Stephens, N. M., & Townsend, S. S. M. Interdependence promotes fit and performance among working-class individuals. Poster presented at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference, Atlanta, GA.

2017 **Dittmann, A. G.**, & Stephens, N. M. Interdependence promotes greater fit and performance among working-class individuals. Paper presented at the Academy of Management Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Dittmann, A. G., & Stephens, N. M. Working in middle-class organizations but still working class: How social class background impacts workplace experience. Paper presented at the Academy of Management Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Ruttan, R. L. & **Dittmann, A. G.** Rivalry and (public) prosociality. Paper presented at the Academy of Management Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Dittmann, A. G., Stephens, N. M., & Townsend, S. S. M. Interdependence promotes greater fit and performance among working-class individuals. Data blitz presented at the Cultural Psychology Preconference at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference, San Antonio, TX.

Dittmann, A. G. & Maner, J. K. The buffering effect of power: Implications for social support and well-being. Poster presented at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference, San Antonio, TX.

- 2016** **Dittmann, A. G.**, Stephens, N. M., & Townsend, S. S. M. Interdependent teams promote greater person-team fit and performance among working-class individuals. Paper presented at the Academy of Management Conference, Anaheim, CA.
- Dittmann, A. G.** & Kteily, N. The downsides of a “good” deal?: The effect of unequal prisoner swaps on perceptions of worth. Paper presented at the International Society for Political Psychology Conference, Warsaw, Poland.
- Dittmann A. G.**, Stephens, N. M., & Townsend, S. S. M. Interdependent teams promote greater person-team fit and performance among working-class individuals. Paper presented at the Kellogg-Booth Student Symposium, Chicago, IL.
- Dittmann, A. G.**, Nelson, J. E., Stephens, N. M., & Townsend, S. S. M. How school rank and cultural match impact underrepresented students’ academic outcomes. Paper presented at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Diego, CA.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Guest Lecturer

- 2017 Negotiations, Guest Lecturer in Dr. Nicole Stephens’s seminar
- 2011 Research Methods in Psychology, Statistics Guest Lecturer in Dr. Chuck Huff’s seminar

Teaching Assistant

- 2014-18 Leadership in Organizations, Drs. Loran Nordgren, Holly Raider, & Nicholas Pearce
- 2016-20 Negotiations, Drs. Victoria Medvec, Nicole Stephens, Nour Kteily, & Eli Finkel
- 2015-16 Leading and Managing Teams, Dr. Maryam Kouchaki

SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE

APS Observer, January 22, 2019

Politico, January 16, 2019

Harvard Business Review, September 5, 2018

Christian Science Monitor, May 30, 2018 (lead article)

U.S. News & World Report, July 24, 2017

Harvard Business Review, May 22, 2017

PROFESSIONAL WRITING EXPERIENCE

2017-19 Founding Columnist, *Behavioral Scientist* blog

WORKSHOPS

2018 Developing Organizational Research on Financial Precarity, Economic Inequality, and
Socio-Economic Status PDW, Academy of Management Conference, Chicago, IL
2016 Harvard BIG Ideas Doctoral Workshop, Harvard Business School, Boston, MA

RESEARCH & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2013-14 Lab Manager, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University
2012-13 Lab Manager, University of Chicago Booth School of Business
2011-12 Research Fellow, Center for Interdisciplinary Research, St. Olaf College
2011 Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow, Carnegie Mellon University
2010 Observational Coding Assistant, University of Minnesota

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Ad-hoc Reviewer (Journals): Organization Studies

Ad-hoc Reviewer (Conferences): Academy of Management Conference, International Association for
Conflict Management Conference, Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference

MORS Doctoral Student Admissions Committee: Visit Weekend Organizer (2015-16), Admissions
Committee Member (2016-17), PhD Student Interviewer (2018), PhD Student Panelist (2015, 2019)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Academy of Management (AOM)

International Association for Conflict Management (IACM)

Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology

Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP)

Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI)

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Analytical Software: LIWC, MPlus, R, SPSS

Design Software: Adobe Creative Suite (Dreamweaver, InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop)

REFERENCES

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APPENDIX: SELECTED ABSTRACTS

Dittmann, Andrea G., Nicole M. Stephens, and Sarah S. M. Townsend, “When people from working-class contexts outperform people from middle-class contexts,” *Under 2nd round review at JPSP*.

Previous research has documented that people from working-class contexts have fewer skills linked to academic success than their middle-class counterparts (e.g., lower intelligence, worse problem-solving skills). Challenging this idea, we propose that one reason why people from working-class contexts underperform on U.S. measures of achievement is because they tend to assess people working *individually*. We theorize that working *together* on measures of achievement will create a cultural match with the interdependent selves common among people from working-class contexts, therefore improving their sense of fit and performance. We further theorize that effective group processes will serve as a mechanism underlying why working together should afford these benefits. Four studies utilizing diverse methods support our theorizing. Using archival data on college student grades, Study 1 finds that groups with a higher (vs. lower) proportion of students from working-class contexts perform better. Utilizing a nationally representative sample of collegiate student-athletes, Study 2 shows that the benefits of working together for people from working-class contexts are moderated by whether groups are engaging in effective group processes. Two experiments provide causal evidence that working together (vs. individually) improves the fit and performance of people from working-class contexts, but not people from middle-class contexts. In Study 4, we find that people from working-class (vs. middle-class) contexts perform better when working together because they more often engage in effective group processes. Our findings suggest that assessing achievement as people work together is one effective way to more fully realize the potential of people from working-class contexts.

Stephens, Nicole M., Sarah S. M. Townsend, and Andrea G. Dittmann (2019), “Social class disparities in higher education and in professional workplaces: The role of cultural mismatch,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 28(1), 67-73.

Differences in structural resources and individual skills both contribute to social class disparities in U.S. gateway institutions of higher education and professional workplaces. People from working-class contexts also experience cultural barriers that maintain these disparities. In this article, we focus on one critical cultural barrier—the cultural mismatch between the independent cultural norms prevalent in middle-class contexts and U.S. institutions and the interdependent norms common in working-class contexts. In particular, we explain how cultural mismatch can fuel social class disparities in higher education and professional workplaces. First, we explain how different social class contexts tend to reflect and foster different cultural models of self. Second, we outline how higher education and professional workplaces often prioritize independence as the cultural ideal. Finally, we describe two key sites of cultural mismatch—norms for understanding the self and interacting with others—and explain their consequences for working-class people’s access to and performance in gateway institutions.

Dittmann, Andrea G. and Nicole M. Stephens (2017), “Interventions aimed at closing the social class achievement gap: Changing individuals, structures, and construals,” *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 18, 111-116.

Understanding the sources of the social class achievement gap in education is an important step toward ensuring that education serves its purpose as an engine of social mobility. The goal of the current article is to provide a brief overview of the sources of the social class achievement gap as well as interventions aimed at closing this gap. We outline three major sources of the social class achievement gap — individual skills, structural conditions, and people’s processes of meaning-making, or construals — and

the interventions that target them. While all of these interventions can effect change, we propose that interventions will be most effective when tailored to fit the specific needs of students and the context in which they are delivered.

Maner, Jon K., Andrea G. Dittmann, Andrea L. Meltzer, and James K. McNulty (2017), “Implications of life-history strategies for obesity,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(32), 8517-8522.

The association between low socioeconomic status (SES) and obesity is well documented. In the current research, a life history theory (LHT) framework provided an explanation for this association. Derived from evolutionary behavioral science, LHT emphasizes how variability in exposure to unpredictability during childhood gives rise to individual differences in a range of social psychological processes across the life course. Consistent with previous LHT research, the current findings suggest that exposure to unpredictability during childhood (a characteristic common to low SES environments) is associated with the adoption of a fast life-history strategy, one marked by impulsivity and a focus on short-term goals. We demonstrate that a fast life-history strategy, in turn, was associated with dysregulated weight-management behaviors (i.e., eating even in the absence of hunger), which were predictive of having a high body mass index (BMI) and being obese. In both studies, findings held while controlling for participants’ current socioeconomic status, suggesting that obesity is rooted in childhood experiences. A serial mediation model in study 2 confirmed that effects of childhood SES on adult BMI and obesity can be explained in part by exposure to unpredictability, the adoption of a fast life-history strategy, and dysregulated-eating behaviors. These findings suggest that weight problems in adulthood may be rooted partially in early childhood exposure to unpredictable events and environments. LHT provides a valuable explanatory framework for understanding the root causes of obesity.

Dittmann, Andrea G. and Jon K. Maner (2017), “A life-history theory perspective on obesity,” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 40, e115.

We extend Nettle et al.’s insurance hypothesis (IH) argument, drawing upon life-history theory (LHT), a developmental evolutionary perspective that documents downstream consequences of early-life exposure to unpredictable environments. We discuss novel evidence consistent with both IH and LHT, suggesting that early-life exposure to unpredictable environments is associated with reduced engagement in weight management behaviors and a greater probability of adulthood obesity.

Stephens, Nicole M., Andrea G. Dittmann and Sarah S. M. Townsend (2017), “Social class and models of competence: How gateway institutions disadvantage working-class Americans and how to intervene,” In C.S. Dweck, A.J. Elliot, & D. Yeager (Eds.), *Handbook of Competence and Motivation (2nd Edition): Theory and Application*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

In this chapter, we document and describe how social class shapes competence in four sections. First, we examine how different social class contexts promote divergent understandings of how to be competent, which we refer to as *models of competence*. Second, we provide evidence that the middle-class model of competence is institutionalized in society, while the working-class model of competence is often excluded. We do so by focusing on schools and workplaces—two institutions that evaluate individuals’ competence and serve as gateways to upward mobility. In the third section, we show how this institutionalization of the middle-class model of competence can disadvantage working-class individuals by limiting access to opportunities, undermining their performance, and leading them to be evaluated as less competent. Finally, we propose interventions at both individual and institutional levels that have the potential to reduce some of the social class inequalities perpetuated by this reliance on the middle-class model of competence.

Dittmann, Andrea G., Nour S. Kteily, and Emile Bruneau, “Subtle signals about self-value shape perceptions of a group’s human worth,” *In preparation for Psychological Science*.

We suggest a novel route by which people make attributions about groups’ self-worth, and how they should be treated: the subtle cues they send about how worthy they consider themselves to be. We predicted that a group would be perceived as having lower self-worth when the group engaged in an action that was (vs. was not) strategically beneficial for the group. We also predicted that, to the extent that a group was perceived as having lower self-worth, perceivers would grant the group less respect, and recommend worse treatment of the group. Across nine experiments, we find support for our theorizing, both with members of groups in conflict with the target group (Studies 1–2a, 3a-b) and third-party observers (Studies 2b, 3c, 4a-b).

Dittmann, Andrea G., Nicole M. Stephens, Sarah S. M. Townsend, and Lauren Rivera, “Working in professional workplaces but still working class: How social class background impacts subjective workplace experiences,” *In preparation for Academy of Management Journal*, (Dissertation Chapter 2).

In the current investigation, we develop an emergent theory around the different pathways that are available to people from different social class backgrounds to effectively navigate professional workplaces. To do so, we conducted interviews ($N = 74$) with MBA students at top business schools who came from working-, middle-, and upper-class backgrounds about their early career experiences after graduating from college. We find evidence for two forms of cultural, social, and economic capital: dominant and non-dominant. The forms of capital people felt they could utilize differed by their social class background. Specifically, people from working-class backgrounds did not feel as though they had dominant capital, but instead felt as though they had distinct forms of non-dominant capital that enabled them to effectively navigate professional workplaces. In contrast, people from upper-class backgrounds felt as though they could deploy dominant forms of capital to effectively navigate professional workplaces. Distinct from people from both working- and upper-class backgrounds, people from middle-class straddled the divide and utilized both forms of capital.

Dittmann, Andrea G., Hannah J. Birnbaum, and Nicole M. Stephens, “College financial resources and interventions to improve the academic achievement of working-class students,” *Under review at Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*.

College students from working-class backgrounds often experience a cultural mismatch between their interdependent cultural norms and the independent cultural norms typically endorsed by U.S. colleges. However, research has not yet considered how critical features of the college context, such as colleges’ financial resources, may shape the impact of cultural (mis)match. Importantly, though most students from working-class backgrounds attend colleges with lower financial resources, the vast majority of research on psychological interventions for students from working-class backgrounds has been conducted at colleges with higher levels of financial resources. The current research examines whether colleges’ financial resources shape the impact of a cultural match for the academic performance of students from working-class backgrounds. Specifically, in an online study, we examine the short-term effects of creating a cultural match on students’ performance on a verbal task (Study 1). In a longitudinal intervention, we create a cultural match at the beginning of college, and then examine the impact on students’ GPAs at the end of the first year (Study 2). The current research highlights the powerful role of the college context in shaping the efficacy of psychological interventions.