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Feeling, Thinking, Acting: The Role of Subjective Social Class and Social Class Identity on Emotions, Attitudes and Prosocial Behavior towards Muslim Immigrants in Belgium

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Master in Psychology of Intercultural Relations

Supervisor:

Dr. Rita Guerra, Integrated researcher, ISCTE - University Institute of Lisbon

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CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS
E HUMANAS

Department of Social and Organizational Psychology

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To my brother, Dario, who continuously inspires me to see the good in others, no matter how far they stand from my own reality.

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Resumo

A maioria da investigação focada na forma como as sociedades de acolhimento percebem e experienciam a migração ignorou o papel potencial da classe social subjectiva e da identidade social de classe nas relações intergrupais positivas e na coesão social de migrantes e sociedades de acolhimento. O presente estudo procurou compreender esta relação e centrou-se em três aspectos importantes: comportamento prosocial, atitudes e emoções em relação a imigrantes Muçulmanos na Flandres. Com base na teoria da privação-gratificação relativa, examinámos as relações indirectas da classe social subjectiva com o comportamento/intenções prosociais, atitudes e emoções através da privação relativa (PR), bem como o papel moderador da importância da identidade social de classe. 431 participantes Belgas participaram num inquérito online. Globalmente, os nossos resultados suportam o efeito indirecto previsto da classe social subjectiva: níveis mais baixos de classe social subjectiva, estão associadas a uma maior percepção de privação relativa, que por sua vez se relacionou com intenções de comportamento menos prosociais, e atitudes e emoções mais negativas em relação aos imigrantes. Curiosamente, os efeitos directos da classe social subjectiva mostraram um padrão diferente: níveis mais elevados de classe social subjectiva estiveram associados a relações intergrupais mais negativas (mais atitudes e emoções negativas), e níveis mais baixos de classe social subjectiva estiveram positivamente relacionados com intenções prosociais mas apenas para aqueles com uma elevada identificação de classe social. De um modo geral, este estudo oferece uma nova visão sobre a relação entre a classe social subjectiva e as relações intergrupais face a imigrantes Muçulmanos na Bélgica.

Palavras-chave: classe social, privação-gratificação relativa, comportamento prosocial, atitudes, emoções, imigrantes muçulmanos

Abstract

Most research investigating how receiving communities perceive and experience migration has overlooked the potential role of subjective social class and social class identity in positive intergroup relations and social cohesion of migrants and host societies. The present study aimed to provide novel insights to understand this relationship and focused on three important features: prosocial behaviour, attitudes and emotions towards Muslim immigrants in Flanders, Belgium. Building on relative deprivation-gratification theory we examined the indirect relationships of subjective social class on prosocial behaviour/intentions, attitudes and emotions via relative deprivation (RD), as well as the moderator role of the importance of social class identity. 431 Belgium participants participated in an online survey study. Overall, our results supported the predicted indirect effect of subjective social class: the lower the subjective social class, the higher the perceptions of relative deprivation, which in turn is related to less prosocial behaviour intentions, and more negative attitudes and emotions towards immigrants. This indirect effect was, however, not moderated by the importance of social class identity. Interestingly, the direct effects of subjective social class showed a different pattern: when bypassing deprivation our results showed higher subjective social class was detrimental for intergroup relations (more negative attitudes and emotions), and that lower subjective social class was positively related to prosocial intentions for those identifying highly with their class identity. Overall, we gained valuable insights in the relationship of subjective social class and the three features of intergroup relations.

Keywords: Social class, relative deprivation-gratification, prosocial behavior, attitudes, emotions, Muslim immigrants

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Introduction

An individual's social class shapes their sociopolitical attitudes, emotions and prosocial behavior and can influence whether or not that person is in favor of immigration (Manstead, 2018). In turn, whether immigrants are allowed to make valuable and appreciated contributions to societies or whether they experience opposition will largely depend on how immigrants are seen and treated by receiving communities (Esses, 2021). Most research looking at how receiving communities perceive and experience migration has been focused on how immigrant communities want to acculturate (Kunst et al., 2021), on the impact of multicultural policies and ideologies (Lee & Johnstone, 2021), as well as on perceived threats (e.g., realistic and symbolic, Esqueda and Schlosser 2021, identity threats, Morris, Mok and Mor, 2011) but has overlooked the potential role of subjective social class and social class identity in intergroup relations (Manstead, 2018).

In that context, it is important to distinguish between subjective social class (i.e., distinctive patterns and reliable, observable verbal and non-verbal behavior influenced by wealth, educational prestige and occupation; Manstead, 2018) and objective social class (i.e., income, education and occupation; Manstead, 2018), as research indicates that, generally, more people describe themselves as working class, while objectively, much less would be categorized as such (British Social Attitudes Survey; Evans & Mellon, 2016). Furthermore, contrary to objective social class, subjective social class indicates an aspect of one's social identity, as subjective perceptions of social rank may create cultural identities (Manstead, 2018). Social class identity refers to the differences in a person's experiences, practices, and how they perceive the world based on their social class (Aries & Seider, 2005; Bottero, 2004). Thus, lifestyle preferences and tastes (Bottero, 2004), access to resources (Bolan, Murph, & Gleeson, 2004), and a subjective feeling of connection and attachment to the group (Blondé & Falomir-Pichastor, 2021) can suggest a social class identity and vice versa (Warren et al., 2010).

Considering both objective and subjective measurements, Manstead argued that the common assumption that lower class individuals hold more prejudices towards immigrants and ethnic minorities is considered to be due to economic threat. This means that higher class individuals also hold prejudices towards these immigrants and minorities when the latter are perceived as highly skilled or highly educated. Researchers (Manstead, 2018; Jetten, Mols and Postmes, 2015) claim that resistance towards immigration is highest among both: people that are relatively deprived, as well as people that have above average access to resources (i.e., are

relatively gratified), indicating that a v-curve can be distinguished (i.e., Relative Deprivation-Gratification Theory; Grofman & Muller, 1973).

Therefore, building upon existing research, in the current research, we aimed at understanding the relationship of subjective social class with features of positive intergroup relations and social cohesion between host society members and migrants. Specifically, we were interested in examining how subjective social class is related with prosocial behavior, attitudes and emotions of the host society towards Muslim immigrants in Belgium. The latter have been deemed the archetypical outgroup of the country and are typically associated with negative feelings (Meuleman, B., Abts, K., & Meeusen, C. 2017). Building on relative deprivation-gratification theory (i.e., the assumption that a group's satisfaction is related to their condition relative to other groups, rather than their objective circumstances; Dambrun, Taylor, McDonald, Crush & Méot, 2006) we examine if the relation between subjective social class and attitudes, emotions and prosocial behaviour occurs via perceptions of relative deprivation. Finally, building on research showing that the degree of social class identification is an important factor when considering the role of subjective social class (Rubin & Stuart, 2018), we additionally examined if the indirect relationship between subjective social class, relative deprivation and intergroup outcomes is significantly stronger for people who find their social class identity highly important than for those who find it less important.

To summarize, while there are studies showing a relationship between differences in social class and prosocial behavior, attitudes and emotions towards migrants, social class has mainly been assessed via objective rather than through subjective and identity measurements. Therefore, we aim to fill this gap and examine the relationship between subjective social class, prosocial behavior, attitudes and emotions towards migrants, via relative deprivation, as well as the potential moderator role of one's identification with their respective social class.

CHAPTER 1

Literature Review

1.1. Social Class, Identity and Attitudes towards Migrants

In a recent literature review, Manstead (2018) claims that sociopsychological research has frequently investigated categories such as gender, race, sexual orientation, nationality, and age, but studies of identity have traditionally overlooked social class or SES as a component of social identity. Social class identity refers to the differences in a person's experiences, practices, and how they perceive the world based on their social class (Aries & Seider, 2005; Bottero, 2004). Aspects contributing to these differences include the distribution of resources, life chances, and perceptions of one's capacities (Aries & Seider, 2005). Social class identity becomes salient when people perceive themselves as similar, or are categorized as such by others, based on factors affecting social rank (Bottero, 2004; Durant & Sparrow, 1997). For example, living in 'the suburbs' or private home ownership are commonly regarded social and cultural practices that indicate a middle-class identity. Thus, lifestyle preferences and tastes (Bottero, 2004), access to resources (Bolam, Murph, & Gleeson, 2004), and a subjective feeling of connection and attachment to the group (Blondé & Falomir-Pichastor, 2021) can suggest a social class identity and vice versa (Warren et al., 2010).

While some research indicates the significance of investigating the role of social class identity (e.g., by finding that importance of social class identity can amplify associations between social class and anxiety and life satisfaction; Rubin & Stuart, 2018), most researchers who have recently been studying social class identity comprehensively (Martin, Williams & Reynolds Young, 2018) or related to topics such as development (Thomas & Azmitia 2014), public service satisfaction and happiness (Zhou, Chen, S., Chen, L., & Li, 2021), or mental health (Rubin & Stuart, 2018), claimed that social class identity is still generally underexplored compared with other aspects of social identity.

However, social psychological research showed that people place at least as much importance to their social class identities as they do to identities more traditionally studied by identity researchers (Easterbrook, Kuppens & Manstead, 2018). To fill this gap, Manstead (2018) provided an overview how social class impacts thoughts, feelings and behaviour from a sociopsychological perspective, including the relationship between social classes and identity. Hereby, the author distinguishes between measuring social class through objective measures of social class and subjective measures of social class. While objective measures are mostly indicated by education, job and/or income, subjective measures indicate a social class identity,

as subjective perceptions of social rank can create cultural identities (Manstead, 2018). These subjective perceptions of social class are based on distinctive patterns and reliable, observable verbal and non-verbal behavior influenced by wealth, educational prestige and occupation (Manstead, 2018). The importance to distinguish between those two concepts arises from public assessments of the social class system. For instance, research from the British Social Attitudes Survey (2017; in Evans & Mellon, 2016) indicated, that around 60% of participants describe themselves as working class, while only 14% would be categorized as such based on objective measurements and ‘traditional’ working class occupations (Manstead, 2018). Hence, we propose that when examining concepts related to social class, it is crucial to consider both objective and subjective measurements. Furthermore, we argue that the importance attached to social class identity is also an important aspect to examine, as identification is distinct from merely belonging to a group. Rather, it refers to a subjective feeling of connection and attachment to the group of which one is a member that involves integrating the group membership as a significant aspect of the self-definition (Blondé & Falomir-Pichastor, 2021). Taking into account both objective and subjective measurements, Manstead argued that the common assumption that lower class individuals hold more prejudices towards immigrants and ethnic minorities is considered to be due to economic threat. This means that higher class individuals also hold prejudices towards these immigrants and minorities when the latter are perceived as highly skilled or highly educated. Researchers (Manstead, 2018; Jetten, Mols and Postmes, 2015) claim that resistance towards immigration is highest among both: people that are relatively deprived, as well as people that have above average access to resources (i.e., are relatively gratified), indicating that a v-curve can be distinguished (i.e., Relative Deprivation-Gratification Theory; Grofman & Muller, 1973).

1.1.1. The Relative Deprivation-Gratification Theory

Researchers argue that the v-curve can be explained by the *Relative Deprivation-Gratification Theory* (Grofman & Muller, 1973). *Relative deprivation* is the perception that one’s own conditions are worse compared to some standard, accompanied by feelings of anger and resentment (Smith & Pettigrew, 2015). *Relative gratification* is considered the opposite of relative deprivation and is consequently defined as the perception that one’s own conditions are beneficial compared to some standard (Leach, Snider & Iyer, 2002; Martin, 1981; Smith, Spears, & Oyen, 1994; Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972). Consequently, the major assumption of Relative Deprivation-Gratification Theory is that a group’s satisfaction is relative to other group’s conditions, rather than relative to their objective circumstances. This implies that

objectively advantaged people may feel more deprived than objectively disadvantaged people, due to the chosen target for their social comparisons. Relative Deprivation-Gratification Theory has been successfully applied to a variety of sociopsychological domains including social change (Power, Madsen, & Morton, 2020), collective action (Zhai, Luo, & Wang, 2020), and the dynamics of intergroup prejudice and hostility (Anier, Guimond, & Dambrun, 2016).

Evidence for the Relative Deprivation-Gratification Theory has been found throughout the years. For instance, research showed that prejudice against immigrants in Europe was directly linked with relative deprivation (Pettigrew et al, 2008). Furthermore, research suggests that in regard to relative gratification, individual's ingroup identification is stronger and relatively gratified people feel more pride as a group member, encouraging both ingroup bias and outgroup derogation. Consequently, relative gratification may promote racism and discrimination by encouraging status quo ideologies that in turn support the advantages of those who already have more access to resources in society (i.e., political conservatism) (Anier, Guimond, & Dambrun, 2016). Likewise, research suggests that if privileged members perceive their status as legitimate and unstable, this legitimacy and instability moderates the effect of relative gratification on prejudice (Leblanc, Beaton and Walker, 2015). Additionally, existential guilt and fear of losing benefits contributed to the understanding of this association between relative gratification and discrimination, as tested in an intergroup setting where relative gratification was unstable and illegitimate (Moscatelli et al., 2014). Finally, research investigating the v-curve delivers evidence that the fear for future wealth can partially explain the impact of both relative deprivation and gratification, as people who felt gratified or deprived were the most anxious about their future wealth, leading to immigration opposition (Jetten et al., 2015).

In sum, relative Deprivation-Gratification Theory offers an explanation for findings supporting the v-curve, i.e., that both people identifying with higher and lower social classes hold negative attitudes and prejudices against immigrants and minorities. Studies by Manstead (2018), Moscatelli et al. (2014) and Jetten et al. (2015) indicate that emotions, such as fear, guilt or pride may play a role in explaining this v-curve. Building on this, the current research aims at examining the role of relative deprivation-gratification as a potential underlying mechanism for the impact of subjective social class identity on a less studied outcome: prosocial behavior.

1.2 Prosocial Behavior and Social Class

Above we discussed the mechanisms underlying racist and negative attitudes and prejudice towards immigrants and other ethnic minorities. Even though it is considered that general

attitudes towards policies, people, institutions, or events correlate well with behavioral *patterns*, they do not necessarily correlate with *specific* behaviors (Dovidio, Gaertner, Schnabel, Saguy & Johnson, 2010). Rather, as researchers have argued, predicting specific actions, such as donating to a charity, requires a measure of attitude towards the behavior itself (Ajzen, Fishbein, Lohmann, & Albarracín, 2018). Nevertheless, *prosocial behavior* is vital for positive intergroup relations, as prosocial action typically stimulates reciprocity and thus can encourage and reinforce more harmonious intergroup relations. Conversely, reciprocity that is refused can encourage and reinforce conflictuous intergroup relations and generate wariness towards outgroup members (Dovidio, Gaertner, Schnabel, Saguy & Johnson, 2010).

When it comes to differences in prosocial behavior displayed by people from different social classes, one might expect lower class individuals to focus on their own needs rather than that of others and to prioritize their own prosperity (Piff et al., 2010). This is, because, compared to people of higher classes, lower class individuals are expected to have less economic resources (Drenea, 2000; Oakes & Rossi, 2003); less educational opportunities (Snibbe & Markus, 2005); fewer access to social institutions such as elite schools, universities, and social clubs (Oakes & Rossi, 2003); and lower rank in society relative to others (Adler, Epel, Castellazo, & Ickovics, 2000). Moreover, people of a lower social class are assumed to experience stress and violence in their close relationships more frequently than their higher class counterparts (Gallo, Bogart, Vranceanu, & Matthews, 2005; Staggs, Long, Mason, Krishnan, & Riger, 2007). Indeed, research investigating social class and prosociality found an indirect effect via individual-based relative deprivation and suggests that people from lower social class may act less prosocially than people from a higher social class (Callan, Kim, Gheorghiu & Matthews, 2017). However, contrarily, other research suggests that despite an increased experience of chronic life stressors, lower class individuals seem to be more other-oriented (Piff et al., 2010), more dependent on others to obtain their desired life goals, more aware of others in their social context, and more likely to demonstrate nonverbal actions towards others (Kraus & Keltner, 2009; Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2009).

Support for the latter hypothesis is found in studies showing, for instance, that rank-based processes influence affective experiences that motivate prosocial behavior, such as compassion (Batson & Moran, 1999; Eisenberg, 2002; Goetz, Keltner, & Simon-Thomas, 2010; Oveis, Horberg, & Keltner, 2010). Additionally, individuals with low trait ratings of social power (i.e., a concept indicating a person's ability to influence others) reported more investment in a relationship with a stranger and reported higher levels of compassion when that stranger displayed suffering (van Kleef et al., 2008). While acknowledging that social power and social

class are distinct constructs (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003), this finding suggests that lower class individuals may act more prosocially and experience more compassion towards the needs of others (Piff et al., 2010). Moreover, cross-cultural research on cooperation delivers support for the hypothesis that lower class individuals may demonstrate more prosocial behavior than individuals from higher class backgrounds, as cultural variation in prosociality seems to stem from differences in interdependence (Piff et al., 2010). The latter is supported by research showing that individuals from more dependent cultures, where resources are limited and community cooperation is common practice, acted more prosocially than did individuals from cultures leaning towards independence (Oyserman & Lee, 2008; Roberts, 2005; Utz, 2004; Wong & Hong, 2005). Furthermore, in nationwide American surveys regarding charity-giving, people with a lower income donate a relatively greater share of their incomes than do people earning a higher income (James & Sharpe, 2007). Hence, even though lower class individuals experience disadvantages in society, have less access to resources and are more dependent on others, they may be expected to display more prosociality than their higher class counterparts (Piff et al., 2010).

Taken together, while some social psychologists have found that higher social class is related to lower prosociality (Piff et al., 2010), other researchers have found the opposite effect (Van Doesum, Tybur, & Van Lange, 2017, Callan, Kim, Gheorghiu & Matthews, 2017). Hence, the relationship between prosociality and social class is leaving contradictory findings, leading researchers to describe the relationship as “fragile” (Korndörfer et al., 2015, p. 39). While various models with different results have been tested (i.e., geographical region as moderator; Cote, House, & Willer, 2015; public vs. private context as moderator; Kraus & Callaghan, 2016), the exact routes in which prosocial behavior towards migrants and social class are linked are yet to be explored.

1.2.1. Prosocial Behavior Intention and Actual Behavior

In theory, directly measuring actual behavior is considered to have significant advantages (see Crano, Brewer, & Lac, 2014). However, in practice, such behavioral measurement is not always feasible due to the scope of studies, such as contextual limitations or costs (Baumsteiger & Siegel, 2019). Therefore, researchers, particularly in survey research, often opt to measure *prosocial behavior intentions* (Baumsteiger & Siegel, 2019). Prosocial behavior intentions indicate a person’s inclination to display behavior that benefits others (e.g., Agerström & Björklund, 2009). The *Theory of Planned Behavior* (Ajzen, 1991) suggests that the more favorable the attitude and subjective norm (i.e., a person’s perception of the normative

expectations of others), and the greater the perceived control (i.e., a person's perception of the factors that may facilitate or inhibit the performance of that behavior), the more the person should be inclined to perform the respective behavior. Consequently, in case a suitable opportunity occurs, people can be expected to act upon their intentions. Thus, intention can be considered the immediate antecedent of behavior (Ajzen, 2002).

In sum, differently than research on attitudes and emotions showing that negative attitudes and emotions can be found in both people from higher and lower social class, the findings discussed above indicate that, dependent on the context, lower class individuals may display *more* prosocial behavior than their higher class counterparts, and do so because of an increased orientation to the needs of others (Piff et al., 2010). However, it should be noted that the abovementioned studies have utilized proxies or objective measurements of social class, rather than measuring subjective social class and indicators of identity directly. Furthermore, research suggests that measuring actual prosocial behavior is difficult in a survey study. Therefore, in the current research we will examine a comprehensive model that takes into account emotions, attitudes and prosocial behavior intentions towards immigrants, as well as offer a possibility to act upon those intentions (i.e., giving a donation; Twenge et al., 2007), in order to measure actual prosocial behavior.

1.3. Muslim Immigrants in Flanders

Particularly, we are interested in prosocial behavior, attitudes and emotions towards Muslim immigrants in Flanders, Belgium. The significance to focus on Muslim immigrants in Belgium stems from socio-political concerns over immigration, conflicts regarding cultural and religious diversity, and the importance of social cohesion between migrants and host-societies (Vazaiou, 2020). Moreover, researchers have put forward that dramatic events (i.e., terror attacks in European capital cities) and the dispute of Muslims and Islam in Europe have strengthened the populist radical right position regarding immigration and integration (Vazaiou, 2020). Particularly strong opposition can be seen regarding immigrants having different religious affiliations than the one dominant in the host country (Esses, 2021). This is shown by research in 15 European countries asking participants to rate profiles of asylum seekers varying on a number of aspects. Christian and agnostic asylum seekers were consistently evaluated more favorable than Muslim asylum seekers (Bansak et al. 2016; Heath & Richards, 2019; Wike, Stokes, & Simmons, 2016).

In Belgium, post-war labor migration started in the 1960's and has attracted migrants arriving from Southern Europe (predominantly Italy), North-Africa (predominantly Morocco)

and Turkey. Over the years, the term ‘immigrant’ has developed to be mainly linked with people of Turkish and Moroccan descent and is typically associated with negative feelings of the host population (Spruyt, van der Noll, & Vandenbossche, 2016). Hence, researchers have identified immigrants from Turkey and Morocco as the archetypical out-group of the country (Meuleman, Abts & Meeusen, 2017). This group of immigrants is generally socio-economically underprivileged and a supposed threat for social welfare and the occupation of low-skilled professions of Belgians without immigration background, i.e., a perceived realistic threat (Abts & Kochuyt, 2013). As immigrants of Turkish and Moroccan origin are culturally noticeable and portray a distinctive outgroup, they pose a threat not only socio-economically but also to the established social-cultural order, and are therefore additionally perceived as a symbolic threat (Swyngedouw, 1995; Meuleman et al., 2019; Zick, Pettigrew & Wagner, 2008).

Currently, Belgian population consists approximately of 75.2% native Belgians, 4.1% of Italian origin, 3.7% of Moroccan origin, 2.4% of French origin, 2% of Turkish origin, 2% of Dutch origin, and 10.6% of other origins (Migration Policy Institute, 2022). The number of Muslim Turkish and Moroccan immigrants are based on the number of migrant people and their descendant countries where Islam is the major religion (i.e., Morocco and Turkey), as religion is not contained in Belgium’s national statistics (Vazaiou, 2020). However, the accuracy of such estimates is questionable, as among Turkish and Moroccan immigrants some may follow other religious beliefs or be non-religious. Nevertheless, according to a 2020 estimate, researchers identified 7.5% of the national population as Muslim, corresponding to about 810.000 people (Sealy & Modood, 2019). Additionally, Pew Research Center’s 2017 survey estimated that between the years 2010 and 2016, 57% of 230.000 migrants coming to Belgium were Muslims.

Public opposition towards Muslim immigrants and the emergence of the populist radical right can particularly be seen in the Flanders region of Belgium. For instance, research shows that 46% of the Flemish support the statement that Islamic culture does not contribute to European cultures, 37.2% support the statement that most Muslims in Belgium do not respect European culture and lifestyle and 42% deem Islamic culture and history as more violent than other cultures (Billiet & Swyngedouw, 2009). Moreover, a statement of the chairman of the “Vlaams Belang”, a Flemish radical right-wing party that received the second most votes for the period 2019-2024 (Europees Parlement, 2022), implies that assimilation should be the ultimate objective for acculturating minorities (i.e., immigrants would only be accepted “(...) on the precondition that they adapt to our language and culture. If they do not wish to adapt, we will insist firmly on their return”; Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011). Consequently, the demand

of assimilation and the beforementioned threat perceptions may lead to more restrictive immigration policies and resistance against minorities' cultural maintenance (Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011), which in turn may lead to decreased social cohesion in European societies.

1.4. Present Research

The present study aims to provide novel insights to understand the relationship between subjective social class and three important features of positive intergroup relations and social cohesion of migrants and host societies: prosocial behavior intentions and actual behavior, attitudes and emotions towards immigrants. As Esses (2021) points out in a recent review, whether immigrants are allowed to make valuable and appreciated contributions to societies or whether they experience opposition will largely depend on how immigrants are viewed and treated by receiving communities. Most research looking at how receiving communities perceive and experience migration has been focused on how immigrant communities want to acculturate (Kunst et al., 2021), on the impact of multicultural policies and ideologies (Lee & Johnstone, 2021), as well as on perceived threats (e.g., realistic and symbolic, Esqueda & Schlosser 2021, identity threats, Morris, Mok & Mor, 2011). Most social psychological research on this topic took an intercultural lens, not considering the potential role of other relevant social identities, such as social class. Indeed, social psychological research has overlooked the role of social class on relations between groups (Manstead, 2018). Thus, in the current study, we aim at extending previous research by exploring the role of subjective social class and social class identity on prosocial behaviour, attitudes and negative emotions of the host population towards Muslim immigrants in Flanders, as a crucial aspect to positively influence intergroup relations and social cohesion. Based on relative deprivation theory and previous research on social class differences regarding migration aspects, we propose that the relationship between subjective social class and different features of intergroup relations (prosocial behavior, attitudes and emotions towards migrants) is mediated by relative deprivation-gratification. Based on previous research showing that the degree of social class identification can both increase or decrease the association between social class and other factors, such as psychological well-being (Rubin & Stuart, 2018), we additionally examine if the relationship between subjective social class, relative deprivation, and intergroup outcomes is significantly stronger for people who find their social class identity highly important than for those who find it less important. We will test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. Previous research has shown contradictory findings for the direction of the relationship between social class, relative deprivation and prosocial behavior. Research

studying direct effects of social class on prosocial behavior suggested that people from lower social class might be inclined to act more prosocially due to an interdependent self-construal (Piff et al., 2010, Manstead, 2018). Other studies examining an indirect effect via relative deprivation found evidence for the opposite direction though, i.e., that people from lower social class act less prosocially (Callan, Kim, Gheorghiu & Matthews, 2017). The latter study however examined individual-based relative deprivation, rather than group-based relative deprivation. In the current study, we expect a negative relation between subjective social class and relative deprivation (Manstead, 2018), that is, higher subjective social class is associated with lower relative deprivation. However, due to the previously discussed inconsistent findings, we will explore the indirect relationship between subjective social class, relative deprivation, prosocial behavior and prosocial behavior intention, without putting forward a directional hypothesis. Thus, we expect that the higher the subjective social class, the lower the relative deprivation, and will then explore whether there is a positive or negative relationship of lower relative deprivation and prosocial behavior and prosocial intention (H1a). We do expect that the direction of the relationship is similar for prosocial behavior and prosocial behavior intention, as intention is assumed to be the immediate antecedent of behavior (Ajzen, 2002). Based on previous research showing that the degree of social class identification can both increase or decrease the association between social and other factors, such as psychological well-being (Rubin & Stuart, 2018), we will also explore if the indirect effect of subjective social class on prosocial behavior and intention is stronger for those placing high importance on their social class identity than for those placing less importance on it (H1b).

Hypothesis 2. Previous research suggests that both people from higher and lower social class may hold negative attitudes and emotions towards immigrants (Manstead, 2018). Particularly, research indicates that negative attitudes are often found when people feel relatively deprived due to perceiving immigrants as an economic threat (Manstead, 2018). As stereotypical immigrants in Belgium (i.e., Turkish and Moroccan people) are generally socio-economically underprivileged and occupy low-skilled professions (Abts & Kochuyt, 2013), we propose that primarily lower class people should perceive economic threat by these immigrants. While for lower class people feelings of threat play a dominant role in association with stereotypically low-skilled immigrants, (existential) guilt and pride have been considered the primary negative emotion for higher class people (Manstead, 2018). In the present research, we focused specifically on attitudes related to symbolic and realistic threats, and on negative emotions related to fear and anger but not existential guilt or pride. Consequently, we expect subjective social class to be negatively related to relative deprivation (Manstead, 2018), which

is in turn positive related to negative attitudes (H2a) and negative emotions (H2b), indicating that the lower the subjective social class, the higher the relative deprivation, and the higher the relative deprivation, the more negative attitudes/negative emotions. Hence, we expect an indirect effect of subjective social class on negative attitudes and negative emotions, via relative deprivation. Based on previous research (Rubin & Stuart, 2018), we will explore if the indirect effect of subjective social class on negative attitudes (H2c) and emotions (H2d) is stronger for those placing high importance on their social class identity.

CHAPTER 2

Empirical Part

2.1. Method

Based on previous literature, we expected a small to medium effect size of subjective social class on group-based relative deprivation (e.g., Yu et al., 2020; $\beta = -.42$), a medium effect size of relative deprivation on prosocial behavior intention (e.g., Zhang, Liu, & Tian, 2016, Study 2; $\beta = -.33$) and a small effect size for relative deprivation on negative attitudes and emotions (Jetten, Mols, Postmes, 2015; study 4; $\beta = -.17$). We apply a conservative approach and expect small effect sizes. According to Preacher et al. (2007), a sample of 500 participants is required to detect a small effect ($\beta = .14$) in a conditional process analysis with a power of .91.

2.1.1. Procedure and Participants

Data were collected between June and July 2022 via Qualtrics (Qualtrics, 2022) and spread on social media (primarily Facebook) and SurveyCircle (SurveyCircle, 2022). Recruited were adult participants (i.e., participants that were 18 years or older) that lived in Flanders and had the Belgian nationality. Furthermore, excellent Dutch proficiency was required to fill-in the survey. The distribution of missing data was examined and we excluded all participants that filled in less than the predictor and at least one of the three outcome variables. Hence, we deleted 109 participants due to too many missing data, 2 participants due to finishing the survey unrealistically quick (< 60 seconds) and 1 participant for being under 18 years old. After data preparation, the total sample comprised 431 participants, slightly less than the size indicated by power analysis. Gender was assessed following guidelines on gender diversity in psychological research (Cameron & Stinson, 2019). 66% of the participants identified as female, 31% as male and 3% identified as non-binary. Participants were between 18 and 86 years old ($M = 42,27$, $SD = 18,46$). Political orientation was assessed via the Left-Right Self-Placement scale by

Heitmeyer et al. (2013), which measures political orientation on a scale from 1 (left) to 5 (right). On average, participants were leaning towards the political left ($M = 2.25$, $SD = 1.11$). We also adapted the scales assessing income and level of education from Heitmeyer and colleagues (2013) to fit the Belgian context (e.g., changed the obtainable diplomas).

2.1.2. Measures

If not otherwise specified, all items were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (I completely agree) to 5 (I completely disagree). Demographics were assessed at the beginning of the survey in the same order for all participants. We also assessed political orientation, which was used as a covariate in later analyses. Then we assess our main constructs of interest: subjective social class, importance of social class identity, relative deprivation-gratification, prosocial behaviour, prosocial behavior intention, attitudes towards Muslim immigrants and emotions towards Muslim immigrants¹. Measures were randomly presented and the order of items within each scale was also randomized. The prosocial behaviour measure involving donation was presented last because it involved redirecting participants to a different website where they could donate to a project supporting Muslim immigrants in Belgium.

Subjective Self-Definition of Social Class. We asked participants to indicate their subjective social class, ranging from working class via lower middle class, middle-class, upper middle-class to upper class (Rubin & Stuart, 2018), i.e., higher scores indicate a higher social class.

Subjective Social Class. We measured subjective social class by the MacArthur scale of subjective social class of Adler and Stewart (2007). This scale uses a ladder as a representation where people stand in Belgium. Participants are then asked to place themselves on this ladder, ranging from the top (e.g., people who have the most money, the most education) to the bottom (e.g., people who have the least money, the least education).

Importance of Social Class Identity. From the Social Identification Scale by Rubin and Stuart (2018), we used the aspect ‘Importance of Social Class Identity’ to assess the importance of social class identity for the participants (4 items, e.g., ‘My social class is a significant aspect of my identity’; $\alpha = .89$). We created a composite score by averaging all items, where higher values indicate a greater importance placed on social class identity by the participant.

¹ Additional exploratory measures were included, i.e., ‘entitativity between respective social class and Muslim immigrants’ and ‘perceived discrimination based on respective social class’. However, they did not prove to be of interest to the main goal of the current research and have been left out of analyses.

Relative Deprivation-Gratification². To measure relative deprivation-gratification, we used the 7-item relative deprivation-gratification scale by Dambrun et al. (2006). The scale measures the two components of relative deprivation-gratification, namely economic relative deprivation-gratification and overall relative deprivation-gratification. (e.g., ‘Are you currently (blank) with the economic conditions of the (respective class) in Belgium?’, or ‘Would you say that the general conditions of people from the (respective social class) are (blank) than those of Muslim immigrants in Belgium?’; $\alpha = .74$). We created a composite score by averaging all items, where higher values indicate higher deprivation, i.e., a more negative perception of the economic and overall situation.

Attitudes towards Muslim Immigrants. To measure attitudes towards Muslim immigrants in Belgium, we adapted the items measuring threat, discriminating intentions, and hostility towards foreigners of the German version of the Xenophobia survey by Heitmeyer et al. (2013) to fit the Belgian context (9 items, e.g., ‘Muslim immigrants living in Belgium threaten our freedoms and rights’; $\alpha = .96$). We created a composite score by averaging all items, where higher values indicate more negative attitudes towards Muslim immigrants.

Negative Emotions. To measure negative emotions towards Muslim immigrants, we adapted the German version of the Xenophobia survey by Heitmeyer et al. (2013) to fit the Belgian context and Muslim immigrants specifically. The scale asks participants to think about the situations in which they had contact with Muslim immigrants in Belgium and to indicate how often they had certain feelings (4 items, e.g., ‘Think about situations in which you had contact with Muslim immigrants in Belgium. How often did you feel *angry*?’ $\alpha = .79$). We create a composite index for negative emotions (i.e., anger, fear, helplessness, confusion) where higher values indicate more negative emotions.³

Prosocial Behavior Intentions. We adapted the scale of Baumsteiger and Siegel (2019) to the Belgian context and Muslim immigrants specifically. Participants were asked to indicate how likely they would display a certain behavior (4 items, e.g., help an unknown Muslim immigrant find something they lost, like a key or a pet; $\alpha = .90$). We created a composite score by averaging all items, where higher values indicate a greater intention to display prosocial behavior.

² Relative Deprivation-Gratification is the original name of the scale. However, to ease interpretation, we continue to call this measurement relative deprivation.

³ The original scale also included positive emotions. However, a factor analysis showed that positive and negative emotions represented two different factors. As the scale included more items for negative emotions (4) compared to positive ones (2), we decided to focus on negative emotions.

Prosocial Behavior. To assess prosocial behavior we used a common method in social psychology (e.g., Twenge et al., 2007), i.e., asked participants to donate to an organisation supporting Muslim immigrants in Belgium. Specifically, as the last part of the survey, we described that the survey now came to end and we would like to use this moment to introduce ‘Caritas Belgium’ to the participants, i.e., a well-known organization that offers a support project specifically for Muslim immigrants. We provided a brief explanation how Caritas is supporting Muslim immigrants in Belgium and asked whether participants would like to donate. A link to the donation page was provided. We then used link-tracking as an indication whether or not participants were donating. However, the response rate to the linktracking was very low ($N = 6$) and we received reactions from participants that were under the impression we were associated with Caritas and questioned whether the survey was for research purposes or a donation campaign. Concludingly, the measurement failed to fulfil our aim and we decided to exclude it from further analyses.

2.2. Results

Descriptives and bivariate correlations are reported in Table 1. Based on the significant, positive correlations between ‘subjective social class’ and ‘subjective self-definition of social class’, and following previous research (Rubin & Stuart, 2018), we created an index score ‘subjective social class’ (after standardizing the two measures ‘subjective social class’ and ‘subjective self-categorization of social class’). We checked for linearity by running simple scatterplots between the predictor (subjective social class) and each of the outcome variables (prosocial behavior intention, negative emotions and attitudes towards Muslim immigrants). To test our main hypotheses (moderated mediation model) we used PROCESS macro for SPSS, Model 8, version 4.1, Hayes, 2022; with 5,000 bootstrap samples and 95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI. We entered subjective social class as the predictor, prosocial behavior intention, attitudes and emotions towards Muslim immigrants as separate outcomes, relative deprivation-gratification as the mediator and importance of social class identity as the moderator. We furthermore control for political orientation and objective social class (i.e., an index score of level of education and income) and add them as covariates in each of the analyses.⁴

⁴ We replicate these analyses excluding the two covariates: The results remain the same when controlling for political orientation and objective social class and thus we present the more comprehensive models with the covariates.

Table 1*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations.*

Variable	M	SD	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Subjective Social Class	8.52	2.31	301	-							
2. Relative Deprivation-Gratification	-2.98	.57	317	-.59**	-						
3. Importance of Social Class Identity	2.54	.99	429	-.05	.00	-					
4. Prosocial Behavior Intention	4.37	.85	327	.01	-.10	-.01	-				
5. Negative Attitudes	2.23	1.18	335	.03	.21**	.02	-.58**	-			
6. Negative Emotions	2.14	.78	311	.00	.25**	-.03	-.52**	.71**	-		
7. Political Orientation	2.25	1.11	425	.05	.03	.04	-.49**	.68*	.40**	-	
8. Objective Social Class	11.38	3.17	411	.49**	-.33**	-.04	.01	-.06	.00	.03	-

Note. ** $p < .05$

Hypothesis 1: Prosocial behavior intentions. Results (see Table 2) showed that approximately 24% of the variance of prosocial behavior intention was explained by subjective social class, relative deprivation, importance of social class identity, the interaction between importance of social class identity and subjective social class, and covariates ($R^2 = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$). As predicted, subjective social class was negatively related to relative deprivation such that the lower someone's subjective social class, the more deprived that person feels. Relative deprivation was negatively related to prosocial behavior intention, such that the more deprived someone feels, the less this person intended to act prosocially (H1a). The relationship between subjective social class and relative deprivation was not significantly moderated by importance of social class (H1b). There was no significant association between subjective social class and prosocial behavior intention. However, results showed a significant interaction effect of subjective social class and importance of social class identity on prosocial behavior intention. Subjective social class was negatively associated with prosocial intentions only for those who placed high importance on their social class identity (+1SD, $B = -.08$, $SE = .04$, 95% CI [-0.150, -0.002]), whereas no significant relation was found for those low on importance of social class identity (-1SD, $B = -.01$, $SE = .04$, 95% CI [-0.071, 0.097]). That is, subjective lower social class was related to increased prosocial intentions only for high identifiers, or in other words, subjective higher social class was related to decreased prosocial intentions only for high identifiers. Finally, the indirect effect of subjective social class on prosocial behavior intention

via relative deprivation was not moderated by the importance of social class identity (H1b) (index < .01, 95% CI = [-.01, .01]; Table 3), being positive and significant regardless of level of importance of social class identity (+1SD, $B = .042$, $SE = .02$, 95% CI [0.005, 0.081]; -1SD, $B = .04$, $SE = .02$, 95% CI [0.004, 0.073]).

Hypothesis 2: negative attitudes and negative emotions. Results (see Table 2) showed that approximately 56% of the variance of attitudes was explained by subjective social class, relative deprivation, importance of social class identity, the interaction between importance of social class identity and subjective social class, and covariates ($R^2 = 0.56$, $p < 0.01$), and that 29% of the variance of negative emotions was explained by the variables, interaction and covariates ($R^2 = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$). As predicted, subjective social class was negatively related to relative deprivation, such that the lower someone's social class, the more deprived this person feels in both models with negative attitude and negative emotions as the outcome. The relationship between subjective social class and relative deprivation was also not moderated by importance of social class in both models. As predicted, relative deprivation was then positively related to attitudes, such that the more someone feels deprived, the more negative attitudes this person holds (H2a), as well as to negative emotions, such that the more someone feels deprived, the more negative emotions this person has (H2b). Additionally, results showed a significant positive direct effect of subjective social class on attitudes, indicating that the higher someone's subjective social class, the more negative attitudes that person holds. Likewise, results showed a significant positive direct effect of subjective social class on negative emotions, indicating that the higher someone's subjective social class, the more negative emotions that person has. Finally, contrary to the hypothesis, the expected conditional indirect effect of subjective social class on both negative attitudes and emotions was not significant, as indicated by the non-significant indexes of moderated mediation for both outcomes (see Table 3). However, the indirect effect of subjective social class via deprivation was significant and negative regardless of level of importance of social class identity for both attitudes (+1SD, $B = -.098$, $SE = .03$, 95% CI [-0.154, -0.041]; -1SD, $B = -.083$, $SE = .03$, 95% CI [-0.135, -0.035]) and emotions (+1SD, $B = -.093$, $SE = .03$, 95% CI [-0.148, -0.038]; -1SD, $B = -.075$, $SE = .02$, 95% CI [-0.126, -0.028]).

In sum, the results showed that the predicted indirect effect of subjective social class on negative attitudes via relative deprivation (H2a) was significant, such that the lower subjective social class, the higher the relative deprivation, and the more negative attitudes and behaviours.

Table 2

Conditional indirect effects for all features: Prosocial Behavior, negative attitudes, negative emotions.

Prosocial Behavior Intention								
Predictors	M (Relative Deprivation)				Y (Prosocial Behavior Intention)			
	Coeff.	SE	t	p	Coeff.	SE	t	p
(W) Importance SC ID	-.04	.04	-1.09	.28	-.03	.06	-.52	.61
(X) Subjective SC	-.13**	.02	-7.34	.00	-.03	.03	-.94	.35
X x W	-.01	.01	-.65	.52	-.04*	.02	-2.06	.04
Constant	3.12**	.17	18.06	.00	6.13**	.48	12.86	.00
M (Relative Deprivation)	-	-	-	-	-.30*	.12	-2.43	.02
COV (Political Orientation)	.02	.03	.47	.64	-.37**	.06	-6.67	.00
COV (Objective SC)	-.02	.01	-1.13	.26	-.00	.02	-.12	.90
Negative Attitudes								
Predictors	M (Relative Deprivation)				Y (Negative Attitudes)			
	Coeff.	SE	t	p	Coeff.	SE	t	p
(W) Importance SC ID	-.04	.04	-1.04	.30	-.01	.06	-.10	.92
(X) Subjective SC	-.14**	.02	-8.33	.00	.11**	.03	3.29	.00
X x W	-.01	.01	-.91	.36	-.01	.02	-.31	.76
Constant	3.03**	.17	18.26	.00	-1.08*	.47	-2.29	.02
M (Relative Deprivation)	-	-	-	-	-.63**	.12	5.02	.00
COV (Political Orientation)	.02	.03	.60	.55	.75**	.05	13.93	.00
COV (Objective SC)	-.01	.01	-.44	.66	-.02	.02	-1.06	.29
Negative Emotions								
Predictors	M (Relative Deprivation)				Y (Negative Emotions)			
	Coeff.	SE	t	p	Coeff.	SE	t	p
(W) Importance SC ID	-.01	.04	-.27	.79	-.02	.06	-.31	.75
(X) Subjective SC	-.14**	.02	-7.48	.00	.10**	.03	2.86	.00
X x W	-.01	-.01	-.99	.32	.01	.02	.29	.78
Constant	3.12**	.17	18.35	.00	-.47	.46	-1.01	.31
M (Relative Deprivation)	-	-	-	-	.61**	.12	5.06	.00
COV (Political Orientation)	.04	.03	1.08	.28	.33**	.05	6.21	.00
COV (Objective SC)	-.02	.01	-1.49	.14	.00	.02	.22	.83

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Tabled values are unstandardized regression coefficient

Table 3*Indices of Moderated Mediation.*

Moderated Mediation				
Importance SC ID	Index	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Prosocial Behavior	.00	.01	-.01	.01
Negative Attitudes	-.01	.01	-.03	.01
Negative Emotions	-.01	.01	-.03	.01

Note. BootLLCI – bootstrapped lower level confidence interval, BootULCI – bootstrapped upper level confidence interval.

CHAPTER 3

Discussion

For a long time, research has focused on objective measurements of social class, rather than subjective ones, and has neglected the role that social class identity may play in intergroup relations between immigrants and host societies. In the current study, we aimed at extending previous research by examining the role of subjective social class on prosocial behaviour, attitudes and negative emotions of the host society members towards Muslim immigrants in Flanders, Belgium. Based on Relative Deprivation-Gratification Theory and previous research on social class differences regarding migration aspects, we proposed that the relationship between subjective social class and the different features of intergroup relations would be mediated by relative deprivation-gratification (Manstead, 2018; Jetten, Mols, Postmes, 2015). Additionally, based on the Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), researchers have argued that the degree of social class identification can both increase or decrease the association between social class and other factors, such as anxiety and life satisfaction (Rubin & Stuart, 2018). Hence, we additionally examined if the indirect relationship between subjective social class, relative deprivation, and intergroup outcomes is significantly stronger for people who find their social class identity highly important than for those who find it less important.

Overall, our results partly supported our hypotheses. Whereas we found consistent support for the indirect relationship between subjective social class and prosocial intentions, negative attitudes and emotions, via relative deprivation, we did not find evidence supporting the predicted moderation by importance of social class identity. That is, the indirect relationship

between subjective social class, relative deprivation, and respective outcomes was not conditional on how important social class identity was for the participants.

3.1. Subjective Social Class and Prosocial Behavior Intention

As predicted, subjective social class was negatively related to relative deprivation such that the lower someone's subjective social class, the more deprived that person feels. Results showed that relative deprivation was then negatively related to prosocial behavior intention, such that the more deprived someone feels, the less this person intends to act prosocially. This finding, i.e., that people from lower social class intend to act less prosocially via increased relative deprivation, supports previous research on individual-based relative deprivation (Callan, Kim, Gheorghiu & Matthews, 2017). Indeed, we only found this detrimental impact of lower subjective social class on prosocial behavior via relative deprivation and not a direct effect. This is in line with prior research showing that activating perceived deprivation may lead to feelings of resentment and unfairness when people believe that others have more than they do (Callan, Kim, Gheorghiu and Matthews, 2017). When people then try alleviate the perceived unfairness and aim for an immediate improvement of one's status, but believe they are not getting their deserved share compared to similar others (i.e., Muslim immigrants, that are mostly also expected to belong to lower social class), prosocial behavior, as frequently driven by reciprocity and sharing (Zhang & Epley, 2009), loses its significance (Callan et al., 2011).

However, results showed that the direct relationship of subjective social class and prosocial behavior intention was moderated by importance of one's social class. Indeed, when looking at the direct relation (not via relative deprivation) between subjective social class and prosocial intentions, results showed that people of lower social class that placed high importance on their social class identity intended to act significantly more prosocially, whereas this was not significant for those low in identification. Building on the Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), researchers have proposed that a group's social status is linked with its member's psychological association with that social group identity and in turn linked with that person's sense of self-esteem (Rubin & Stuart, 2018). Hence, SIT researchers claim that people strongly identifying with a social group and placing high importance on their membership in their self-concept, the stronger is their psychological association between their group's social status and their own self-esteem (amplification hypothesis; Crabtree, Haslam, Postmes, & Haslam, 2010, p. 564; Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Martiny & Rubin, 2016; McCoy & Major, 2003; Rubin & Hewstone, 1998, 2004). Rubin and Stuart (2018) have applied this reasoning to psychological well-being (i.e., anxiety and life satisfaction), and,

building on this, we proposed that the amplification hypothesis could also be applied to prosocial behavioral intentions. This indicated that if people from a lower social class (i.e., people with a more interdependent self-construal than people from a higher social class; Manstead, 2018), find their class identity an important part of their self-concept, it would amplify the relationship between subjective social class and prosocial behavior. Thus, our findings regarding the direct impact of subjective social class and prosocial intentions deliver support for the amplification hypotheses.

3.2. Subjective Social Class, Negative Attitudes and Emotions

As expected, we found the predicted indirect relationship between subjective social class and negative attitudes via relative deprivation, such that the lower someone's subjective social class, the more this person feels deprived, and the more someone feels deprived, the more this person holds negative attitudes and emotions. We did not find the predicted significant moderation effect of importance of social class identity on the indirect relationship between subjective social class, relative deprivation, and attitudes and emotions. However, results showed a significant positive direct effect of subjective social class on negative attitudes indicating that the higher someone's subjective social class, the more negative attitudes that person holds. Likewise, we found a significant positive direct effect of subjective social class on negative emotions indicating that the higher someone's subjective social class, the more negative emotions that person has. Finding a positive significant relationship between subjective social class and negative attitudes and negative emotions is not strictly contrary to what the literature suggests, as research indicates a v-curve based, i.e., more negative attitudes and emotions in both lower and higher social class depending on the perceived (economic) threat (e.g., Manstead, 2018; Moscatelli et al., 2014; and Jetten et al., 2015).

3.3. Subjective Social Class and Intergroup Outcomes

Summarizing the findings above, we found an indirect effect of social class on prosocial intentions, such that people of lower subjective social class felt more deprived, and the more people felt deprived, the less they intended to act prosocially. Whereas lower social class was detrimental for prosociality indirectly, via deprivation, this was not the case for its direct impact on prosocial intentions. That is, our research suggests that lower subjective social class was positively related to prosocial intentions for those placing high importance on social class identity. Thus, indirect and direct relations of subjective social class and prosocial behavior intentions differed: they seem to be detrimental if assessed via deprivation, but beneficial if

assessed directly, for people placing high importance on social class identity. Similarly, we find that subjective social class is detrimental for negative attitudes and emotions, via relative deprivation, i.e., the lower the subjective social class, the more people feel relatively deprived, and the higher the relative deprivation, the more negative attitudes and emotions these people hold. Our research also showed that, similar to the direct effect on prosocial behavior intention, the indirect effects of subjective social class on attitudes and emotions is different to the direct effects: people of higher subjective social class experienced more negative emotions and held more negative attitudes, as we found a positive direct association of social class and negative emotions and attitudes. Stated the other way around, if assessed directly, people of lower subjective social class experienced less negative emotions, held less negative attitudes and, if they found their lower class identity highly important, intended to act more prosocially. Concludingly, the findings suggest that indirectly, via increased relative deprivation, lower subjective social class is related to less prosocial behavior, more negative attitudes and negative emotions. However, the direct link between subjective social class and intergroup outcomes shows that people of a lower subjective social class may have more prosocial behavior intentions and have more positive emotions and attitudes.

3.4. Future Directions

Researchers argued that central to the effects of social class, individual-based relative deprivation and prosociality are feelings of resentment and unfairness that arise when people feel that similar others (i.e., Muslim immigrants, that are mostly also expected to belong to lower social class) have more than they do (Callan, Kim, Gheorghiu and Matthews (2017)). Contrary with this are recent studies within the psychological literature, claiming a significant driver behind cooperative behavior is the feeling of entitativity, which entails common fate and similarity (Zhang, 2019, Zagefka 2022). In the present research, we included a measurement of entitativity, which also contained items measuring similarity and common fate. Surprisingly though, we did not find any significant correlations of entitativity with the outcome variables prosocial behavior, negative attitudes or emotions. Therefore, future research should further examine whether similarity and related concepts such as entitativity and common fate can also play a role in prosocial behavior towards migrants and minority groups, and consequently might be a factor that can either facilitate or inhibit positive intergroup relations.

Furthermore, the present study utilized measurements for negative attitudes and emotions that primarily contain items related to threat and fear regarding a stereotypically lower class outgroup (i.e., Muslim immigrants). According to research, these topics accelerate

negative attitudes and emotions more in people from a lower social class than in people from a higher social class (Manstead, 2018). Hence, further research should examine whether the results can be replicated or whether they alter when comparing the host population to a stereotypically high social class outgroup, and when also assessing guilt and pride as possible emotions.

As mentioned before, we did not include the measurement of prosocial behavior in our analysis, as we did not receive a sufficient number of responses. Additionally, however, we did receive responses on the trustworthiness of the study, i.e., Facebook comments and e-mails. Particularly, people questioned the underlying intention of the Caritas project aiming to support Muslim immigrants, claiming Caritas was trying to undermine ‘Belgian values’ by supporting Muslim immigrants and discussing whether or not this survey was a (donation) campaign disguised as university research. Not only did we receive comments on the measurement of prosocial behavior, but also on the MacArthur ladder of subjective social class, i.e., a well-known and frequently used measurement in sociopsychological research. Apparently, the MacArthur ladder was perceived by different participants as a request to state whether or not one ‘looks down’ on other people and to assess how participants perceive the worth of others. Additionally, we received more general comments expressing worry that this research is trying to portray people of Flanders as racist and overall questioned whether there was a ‘hidden agenda’ behind the present research, besides that of a master’s dissertation. The reaction of participants was surprising, as the measurements were frequently utilized in previous research. While some comments, such as the criticism on the MacArthur ladder, were directed at specific scales, we did have the impression that it was overall the mere topic of Muslim immigrants in relation to the host society that created defensiveness and suspicion. As this led to a possible response bias on scales including questions about Muslim immigrants, and the exclusion of a whole variable (i.e., prosocial behavior), future research should aim to explore whether the reaction was linked with the context of the data collection (i.e., an online survey spread primarily via Facebook), with a general sensitivity of the topic in the country, or with other possible factors.

3.5. Limitations

The present study has some limitations that should be taken into consideration.

One limitation is that we failed to create a direct measurement of prosocial behavior that can be used in survey research. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) suggests that the more favorable the attitude and subjective norm (i.e., a person’s perception of the normative

expectations of others), and the greater the perceived control (i.e., a person's perception of the factors that may facilitate or inhibit performance of the behavior), the more the person should be inclined to perform the respective behavior. Consequently, in case a suitable opportunity occurs, people can be expected to act upon their intentions. (Ajzen, 2002). Based on this argumentation, we were hoping that providing an opportunity to donate to a project supporting Muslim immigrants would make it possible to link subjective social class to a more direct indication of actual behavior, on top of measuring the mere intention. However, as discussed above, this seemed to have led to suspicion and defensiveness, which possibly accounts for the low response rate. Furthermore, we are also aware that donating money is just one way of acting prosocially, compared to, e.g., volunteering, and that this is dependent on the financial resources of the participants. We opted for donating money, primarily due to the context of the study, as we deemed linktracking as an indication of a donation, but not as an indication of volunteering.

Another limitation is that we did not succeed to find a sufficient number of participants, i.e., according to power calculations we aimed to reach 500 participants but, after participant deletion, we remained with only 431, and most analyses were conducted with less than this, as many participants did not answer to all measures. Hence, our results should be interpreted with caution and future research with well powered samples is needed to replicate our findings.

Finally, given the correlational nature of the present study, we cannot make any causal inferences, and future research is needed to test some of the predicted relations experimentally or longitudinally. Indeed, inducing social class experimentally may be particularly challenging, and thus relying on cross-lagged panel designs could be a better option. Still, we based our assumptions on thoroughly studied theories such as the Social Identity Theory and the Relative Deprivation-Gratification Theory, which provided a framework for the direction of effects. We hope that future research continues to accept these challenges to tap the full potential of social class and social class identity on features of intergroup relations.

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion

Most research looking at how receiving communities perceive and experience migration has overlooked the potential role of subjective social class and social class identity. This research offers novel insights on the role of subjective social class and intergroup relations towards immigrants, focusing specifically on the case of Muslim immigrants in Belgium. Overall, our

findings suggested that subjective social class and social class identity are indeed important factors to account for when aiming to understand attitudes, emotions and behaviours towards immigrants. Lower subjective social class was detrimental for intergroup relations but only indirectly via increased feelings of deprivation. On the contrary, higher subjective social class was directly detrimental for intergroup relations, being associated with more negative attitudes and emotions. Despite the correlational nature of these findings, they offer valuable insights for unpacking the complex impact of social class for intergroup relations between host society and migrants.

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Appendix

a. Informed Consent

Deze studie maakt deel uit van een onderzoeksproject dat plaatsvindt aan het ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa. De studie heeft tot doel licht te werpen op de sociale perceptie van verschillende sociale groepen in België.

De studie wordt uitgevoerd door Theresa Zagers (theresa_zagers@iscte-iul.pt), met wie u contact kunt opnemen om eventuele twijfels weg te nemen of opmerkingen te delen.

Uw deelname aan de studie zal bijdragen tot de vooruitgang van de kennis op dit gebied van de wetenschap. Het bestaat uit het beantwoorden van vragen over bovengenoemde onderwerpen gedurende ongeveer 15 minuten. Er zijn naar verwachting geen significante risico's verbonden met de deelname aan de studie.

Deelname aan de studie is strikt vrijwillig; u kunt vrij kiezen om al dan niet deel te nemen. Als u hebt besloten deel te nemen, kunt u uw deelname op elk moment stopzetten, zonder dat u daarvoor een reden hoeft op te geven. Uw deelname is niet alleen vrijwillig, maar ook anoniem en vertrouwelijk. De verkregen gegevens zijn uitsluitend bestemd voor statistische verwerking en geen van de antwoorden zal individueel worden geanalyseerd of gerapporteerd. Op geen enkel moment van het onderzoek zal u gevraagd worden zich te identificeren.

Ik verklaar dat ik de doelstellingen van het aan mij voorgestelde onderzoek heb begrepen

Ik ga akkoord met deelname aan het onderzoek.

Ik ga niet akkoord met deelname aan het onderzoek.

b. Scales

Demografische gegevens

Leeftijd

1. Kunt u mij vertellen in welk jaar u geboren bent? _____

Geslacht

2. Ik identificeer mijn *gender* als _____. (Gelieve te specificeren)

Nationaliteit

3. Wat is uw nationaliteit ?

Belg

- Vlaanderen
- Wallonië
- Brussel
- Duits gedeelte

Belg en _____

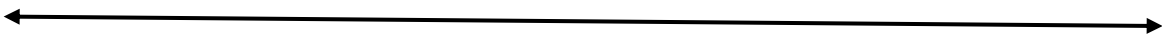
Other _____

Politieke oriëntatie

4. Veel mensen gebruiken de termen "links" en "rechts" om te verwijzen naar verschillende politieke houdingen . Als u aan uw eigen politieke opvattingen denkt, zou u uzelf dan classificeren als:

links

rechts



Opleidingsniveau

5. Mag ik vragen wat het diploma is dat u tot nu toe heeft behaald?

Geen diploma

Middelbare school

Basis school

Algemeen secundair onderwijs (aso)

Secundair kunstonderwijs (kso)

Technisch secundair onderwijs (tso)

Beroeps secundair onderwijs (bso)

Bachelor aan de hogeschool

Bachelor aan de universiteit

Master aan de hogeschool

Master aan de universiteit

PhD

Other _____

Inkomen

6. Als u alles bij elkaar optelt: Wat is het maandelijks netto-inkomen dat u allen samen in uw huishouden heeft na aftrek van belastingen en sociale zekerheid?

minder dan 500 euro

500 tot onder de 1000 euro

1000 tot minder dan 1500 euro

1500 tot minder dan 2000 euro

2000 tot onder de 2500 euro

2500 tot onder 3000 euro

3000 tot minder dan 3500 euro

3500 tot minder dan 4000 euro

4000 tot minder dan 4500 euro

4500 tot 5000 euro

meer dan 5000 Euro

weet niet

geen informatie

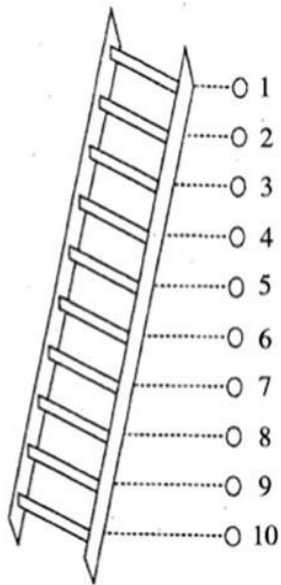
Sociale klasse

Subjectieve sociale klasse

7. Zie deze ladder als een illustratie van waar mensen in België staan. Bovenaan de ladder staan de mensen die het best af zijn - zij die het meeste geld hebben, de hoogste opleiding, en de meest gerespecteerde jobs. Onderaan staan de mensen die het slechtst af zijn - zij die het minste geld hebben, de laagste opleiding, de minst gerespecteerde jobs, of geen job. Hoe hoger u op deze ladder staat, hoe dichterbij de mensen aan de top staat; hoe lager u staat, hoe dichterbij de mensen aan de onderkant staat.

Waar zou u uzelf plaatsen op deze ladder?

Zet een grote "X" op de trede waar u denkt dat u op dit moment in uw leven staat ten opzichte van andere mensen in België.



Subjectieve zelfdefinitie van sociale klasse

9. Geef de sociale klasse aan die u het best omschrijft

1. arbeidersklasse
2. lagere middenklasse
3. middenklasse
4. hogere middenklasse
5. bovenklasse

Belang van sociale klasse identiteit

10. Kunt u mij zeggen in welke mate u het eens bent met de onderstaande stellingen?

1. helemaal mee eens
2. eerder mee eens
3. niet mee eens, noch mee oneens
4. eerder oneens

5. helemaal niet mee eens.

Mijn sociale klasse is een belangrijk aspect van mijn identiteit.

De sociale klasse waartoe ik behoor, is een belangrijke weerspiegeling van wie ik ben.

Mijn sociale klasse is een bepalend kenmerk van mij.

Behoren tot mijn sociale klasse is een belangrijk deel van mijn zelfbeeld

Relatieve ontbering/verrijking

Waargenomen algemene en economische omstandigheden

11. Gelieve de optie aan te duiden die overeenstemt met uw mening .

Bent u op dit moment _____ met uw persoonlijke economische omstandigheden?

1. zeer tevreden
2. eerder tevreden
3. noch tevreden noch ontevreden
4. eerder ontevreden
5. helemaal ontevreden

Verwacht u dat uw persoonlijke economische omstandigheden over een jaar _____ zullen zijn?

1. veel beter
2. beter
3. noch beter noch slechter
4. slechter
5. veel slechter

Bent u op dit moment _____ met de economische omstandigheden van de (respectievelijke klasse) in België?

1. zeer tevreden
2. eerder tevreden
3. noch tevreden noch ontevreden
4. eerder ontevreden
5. helemaal ontevreden

Verwacht u dat de economische omstandigheden van de (respectievelijke klasse) in België over een jaar _____ zullen worden?

1. veel beter
2. beter
3. noch beter, noch slechter
4. slechter
5. veel slechter

Zou u zeggen dat uw algemene persoonlijke omstandigheden _____ zijn dan die van andere mensen uit de (respectievelijke klasse) in België?

1. veel beter
2. beter
3. niet beter en niet slechter
4. slechter
5. veel slechter

Zou u zeggen dat de algemene omstandigheden van mensen uit de (respectieve sociale klasse) _____ zijn dan die van Moslim immigranten in België?

1. veel beter
2. beter
3. niet beter noch slechter

4. slechter

5. veel slechter

Zou u zeggen dat de algemene omstandigheden van de (respectieve klasse) in België
_____ zijn dan die van andere sociale klassen in België?

1. veel beter

2. beter

3. niet beter en niet slechter

4. slechter

5. veel slechter

Houding tegenover Moslim immigranten in België

12. Kunt u mij nu opnieuw zeggen of u het eens bent met elke stelling

1. helemaal mee eens

2. eerder mee eens

3. niet mee eens, noch mee oneens

4. eerder mee oneens

5. helemaal mee oneens

De Moslim immigranten die in België wonen, bedreigen onze vrijheden en rechten.

De Moslim immigranten in België bedreigen de Belgische cultuur.

De Moslim immigranten in België vormen een belasting voor het sociaal netwerk.

Er wonen te veel Moslim immigranten in België.

Als banen schaars worden, moeten de in België wonende Moslim immigranten naar huis worden teruggestuurd.

De Moslim immigranten die in België wonen, bedreigen onze welvaart

Ik zou nooit een auto kopen van een Moslim immigrant.

Ik zou problemen hebben om te verhuizen naar een gebied waar veel Moslim immigranten wonen.

Negatieve Intergroep Gevoelens

13. Denk nu na over de situaties waarin u contact had met Moslim immigranten in België.
Hoe vaak voelde u zich ...

1. zeer vaak

2. vaak

3. soms

4. zelden

5. nooit

66. Ik heb geen contact met Moslim immigranten

Boos

Geïrriteerd

Blij

Tevreden

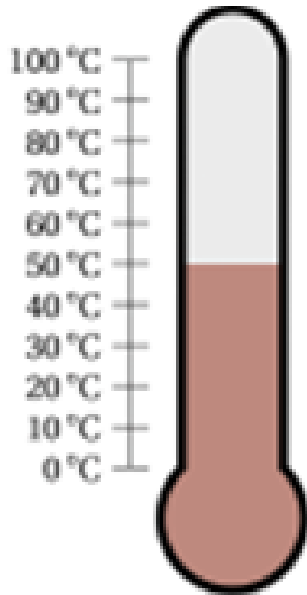
Bang

Hulpeloos

Gevoelens thermometer

14. We willen graag naar uw gevoelens met betrekking tot Moslim immigranten in België vragen. Gelieve deze groep te beoordelen met behulp van de gevoelens thermometer. Een waardering tussen 50 en 100 graden betekent dat u gunstig staat tegenover de groep, dat u er

een warm gevoel bij hebt. Een waardering tussen 0 en 50 graden betekent dat u de groep niet gunstig gezind bent, dat u er een koud gevoel bij hebt. Beoordeel de groep op 50 graden als u noch warme noch koude gevoelens hebt voor de groep.



Entitativiteit/gemeenschappelijk lot

15. Gelieve aan te geven in welke mate u het eens of oneens bent met elke stelling

1. helemaal mee eens
2. eerder mee eens
3. niet mee eens, noch mee oneens
4. eerder mee oneens
5. helemaal mee oneens

Er bestaan sterke banden tussen Belgen uit de (respectieve sociale klasse invullen) en Moslim immigranten in België.

Belgen uit de (respectieve sociale klasse invullen) en Moslim immigranten in België werken met elkaar samen.

Er zijn sterke gelijkenissen tussen Belgen uit de (respectieve sociale klasse) en Moslim immigranten in België.

Belgen uit de (respectieve sociale klasse) en Moslim immigranten hebben een gemeenschappelijk verleden.

Belgen uit de (respectieve sociale klasse) en Moslim immigranten hebben een gemeenschappelijk lotsbesef.

Waargenomen discriminatie op basis van sociale klasse

16. Kunt u mij nu opnieuw zeggen in welke mate u het eens bent met elke stelling?

1. Nooit

2. Zelden

3. Soms

4. Vaak

5. Altijd

Hoe vaak hebt u het gevoel dat mensen uit uw sociale klasse gediscrimineerd worden? (kies het cijfer dat het best weergeeft hoe u zich voelt)

Hoe vaak heeft u het gevoel dat u persoonlijk gediscrimineerd wordt vanwege uw sociale klasse? (kies het cijfer dat het best weergeeft hoe u zich voelt)

Intentie om prosociaal gedrag te stellen

16. Stel u voor dat u de volgende mogelijkheden tegenkomt om een Moslim immigrant in België te helpen. Geef aan hoe bereid u zou zijn om elk gedrag uit te voeren van 1 (Ik zou dat zeker niet doen) tot 5 (Ik zou dat zeker doen).

Ik zou dat zeker niet doen

Ik zou dat zeker doen



Een Moslim immigrant die ik ken troosten nadat deze persoon een probleem heeft gehad

Een vreemde Moslim immigrant helpen iets terug te vinden dat deze persoon kwijt is, zoals een sleutel of een huisdier

Helpen bij de verzorging van een zieke Moslim immigrant met wie u bevriend of verwant bent

Een onbekende Moslim immigrant helpen met een kleine taak (bv. helpen boodschappen te dragen, op zijn spullen letten terwijl die persoon naar het toilet gaat)

Prosociaal Gedrag

18. Geachte deelnemer,

We naderen nu het einde van de enquête en willen u graag bedanken voor uw bijdrage aan dit onderzoek. Voor we uw aandacht verliezen, willen we van de gelegenheid gebruik maken om u voor te stellen aan 'Caritas België', een organisatie die Moslim immigranten in België ondersteunt. Caritas biedt ondersteuning en advies met betrekking tot gezinshereniging, toegang tot huisvesting of andere problemen die zich kunnen voordoen. Ze organiseren ook de voogdij en begeleiding van Niet-begeleide Minderjarige Vreemdelingen (NBMV), evenals bezoeken aan niet-openbare centra.

Als u geïnteresseerd bent in een donatie aan 'Caritas België', klik dan op onderstaande link.

BELANGRIJK: Kom daarna terug naar deze pagina en klik op de pijl hieronder om naar het einde van de enquête te gaan. Anders kunnen we uw antwoorden niet volledig verwerken.

<https://www.caritasinternational.be/nl/asiel-migratie/hulp-aan-migranten/>

Als u niet geïnteresseerd bent in een donatie, klik dan op de pijl hieronder om naar het einde van de enquête te gaan

c. Debrief

Hartelijk dank voor uw deelname aan deze studie!

Zoals in het begin aangegeven, gaat de studie over de sociale percepties van verschillende sociale groepen in België. In het kader van uw deelname willen wij u graag meer informatie geven over de onderzoeksdoelstellingen. Concreet gaat de studie over de relatie tussen Belgen uit verschillende sociale klassen en mensen die naar België zijn geëmigreerd. De onderzoeker

is ook geïnteresseerd in de respectieve emoties die in verband met deze relatie kunnen ontstaan. Een andere factor waarin we geïnteresseerd waren is "prosociaal gedrag ten aanzien van Moslim immigranten".

Als indicator voor deze factor vroegen we de deelnemers in de laatste vraag geld te doneren aan een organisatie die immigranten steunt. Dit is een gebruikelijke procedure in psychologische studies (Twenge et al, 2007) om het geplande gedrag van mensen op een meer concrete en reële manier te beoordelen, aangezien de attitudes en gedragingen van mensen niet altijd congruent zijn (bv. Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Aangezien eerdere bekendmakingen over het testen van de factor "prosociaal gedrag" de antwoorden op de enquête en de waarschijnlijkheid om te kiezen voor een donatie aan de organisatie kunnen hebben vertekend, hebben wij ervoor gekozen deze informatie niet eerder te verstrekken.

Wij herinneren u eraan dat de volgende contactgegevens kunnen worden gebruikt voor vragen, opmerkingen of voor het ontvangen van informatie over de belangrijkste bevindingen en conclusies van de studie: Theresa Zagers met e-mail: theresa_zagers@iscte-iul.pt.