

# **Doctor of Sociology**

## **Fertility and Partner Choice of the Descendants of Immigrants in Belgium**

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### Abstract

Studies analysing the fertility behaviour and partnership patterns of the descendants of immigrants have mainly analysed both demographic events separately. This is unfortunate, as one may assume that the fertility behaviour of descendants of immigrants will vary depending on with whom they partnered. For instance, having a partner of the same (i.e. endogamous) or another (i.e. exogamous) origin may differently affect their fertility behaviour. In addition, variation in fertility is also plausible within endogamous unions by the migration history of the partner, since the endogamous partner can either be born and raised in the country of origin and only migrated to the host society later in life (i.e. a first, or a 1.5-generation partner), or be born in the host society to foreign born parents (i.e. a second-generation partner). Therefore, by focussing on the importance of the partner for the fertility behaviour of the second generation, a so far unexplored aspect of fertility variation within the descendants of immigrants is analysed in this doctoral dissertation. The study focusses on the descendants of Spanish, Italian, Turkish and Moroccan origin in Belgium and analyses whether the origin and migration history of the partner is of importance for their fertility behaviour for the period 2001-2006. The results reveal that the origin and migration history of the partner hardly matters for the fertility patterns of second-generation women of Italian and Spanish origin. For women of Turkish and Moroccan origin, by contrast, clear differences by the origin of the partner are found. Women of both origin groups in an endogamous union experience higher birth rates than their counterparts in an exogamous union. However, no variation is found within the endogamous unions. Whether or not the endogamous partner has been born in the country of origin does not seem to affect birth rates.

The absence of fertility variation within the endogamous unions may be explained by partner selection effects.