

# PARTNER AND FAMILY RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND INTRA-EU MOBILITY

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## Abstract

European citizens have unprecedented opportunities to be mobile across member state borders, so-called 'intra-EU mobility'. Existing scientific studies on intra-EU mobility have predominantly focused on economy and labour-market oriented aspects in terms of determinants and outcomes of the mobility. However, like all migration moves, it should be acknowledged that intra-EU mobility may just as well have important impacts on the individual when it comes to family life and related challenges. Nevertheless, there is limited research on partner and family relations starting from the specific intra-EU mobility perspective. Therefore, the main research question of this dissertation is: How are partner and family relations shaped and challenged in a context of intra-EU mobility? In each empirical chapter of this dissertation, a subtopic of this main research question is elaborated and studied using quantitative analyses on large-scale survey data. The studies mainly focus on Belgium which is a good case study as an EU member state with high numbers of European migrants and with a long history in the European integration project. The findings of this dissertation support the idea that intra-EU mobility cannot be disconnected from the lives of Europeans and their most intimate relationships: intra-EU mobility affects partner and family relations, and vice versa. This intersection of partner and family relations, and intra-EU mobility shows to be a complex system of interdependencies and influences through many different mechanisms. It is crucial to improve our insight in this complex system when aiming to discuss and further understand intra-EU mobility and EU integration.

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