

# Core discussion networks (CDNs) and contextual effects

## *An experimental study*

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### Introduction

- The core discussion network (CDN) name generator (the GSS “important matters” question) has been used in Hungary, since the late 1980s to elicit close, intimate ties of the ego.
- Analyses of Hungarian CDNs detected a significant shift in the kin-non-kin ratio of the confidants: a shift from overwhelmingly kin-dominated CDNs to those in which friendship relations play a much more significant part (figure 1)
- Having witnessed these dramatic changes, we decided to test if the significant increase of non-kin (overwhelmingly friendship) ties has anything to do with the fact, that in more recent surveys (2015) a question on the number of friends preceded the CDN name generator, that is, we wanted to test if they were thus primed to include friends in an increased extent or not?
- We focus on one source of non-sampling error, contextual placement within the survey. Our experiment tries to measure the effect of context, that is, the possible effect of the question preceding the CDN name generator (priming hypothesis).
- Based on Brashears (2011) and Bailey and Marsden (1999) we expect that primed respondents in the subsample with the question regarding the number of friends preceding the CDN name generator mention higher friend ratio in their CDN than the non-primed subsample.
- We expect that priming has stronger effect on older respondent and on less educated people

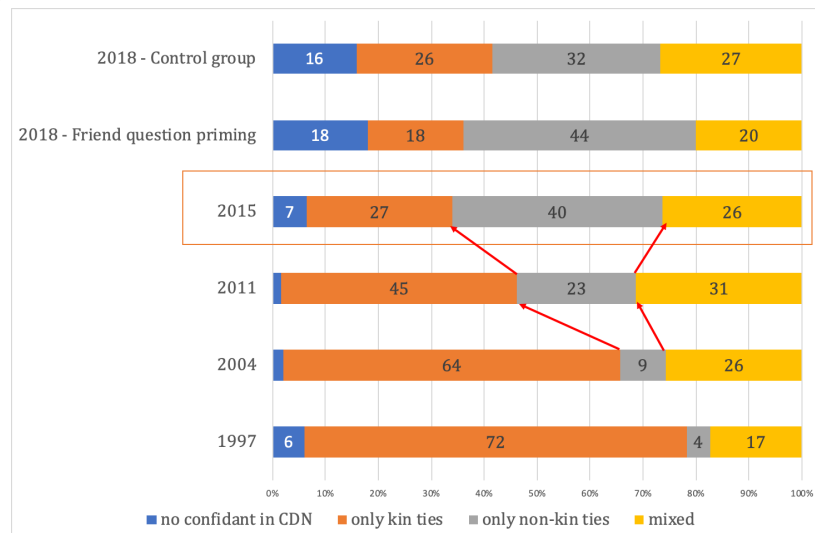


Figure 1.  
Change of CDN  
kin/non-kin  
structure in  
Hungary.

### Data and methods

- We tested the priming with a pre-registered survey experiment: <https://osf.io/tdgsf>
- The survey was face-to-face, representative for the 18+ Hungarian population, with a sample size of 5350 respondents.
- The study was a between-subject, two-group design. We manipulated the question order; in the primed group, we put the “how many friends do you have” question directly before the CDN block, in the control group, we put a neutral question before the CDN block and asked about the size of the friendship network after the CDN block.
- The main dependent variable is the non-kin ratio within the CDN block, but we also tested the friend’s ratio within the non-kin group.
- We used OLS regression models to test the effect of treatment, and we added interaction terms to the model to check whether the effect size of treatment differed within socio-demographic groups.

### Selected results and conclusion

- The non-kin ratio was 67% in the group where the number of friends question directly preceded the CDN block, and 53% in the control group.
- After controlling with other variables, we still found a 11% effect size (see regression model B value) but we didn’t find any significant interaction terms, so the effect size was constant for all the demographic groups.
- We found that those who have more friends have a higher friend rate within the non-kin ties in their CDN.
- Although we found a significant effect of priming on the CDN non-kin ratio, it seems that the significant shift in the kin-non-kin ratio of the confidants still stands in Hungary.

	Estimate	Standardized coeff	Std. Error	Significance
Intercept	0,709		0,040	0,00
<b>Priming</b>	<b>0,117</b>	<b>0,142</b>	<b>0,013</b>	<b>0,000</b>
Gender	-0,006	-0,007	0,013	0,66
Age	-0,001	-0,044	0,000	0,01
Education	0,003	0,009	0,006	0,59
Settlement	-0,026	-0,067	0,006	0,00
Number of friends	-0,008	-0,077	0,002	0,00
Adjusted R2	0,03			

Table 1.  
OLS regression  
model on non-  
kin ratio within  
CDN