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Sports and Friendships 2021-2023

[Sport en Vriendschappen 2021-2023]

Codebook

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Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Abstract | 5 |
| 2. Study description..... | 5 |
| 3. Data availability and replication | 5 |
| 4. Study design..... | 5 |
| 4.1. Ego-questionnaires | 6 |
| 4.1.1. Social network measures..... | 7 |
| 4.1.1.1. Name generator questions | 7 |
| 4.1.1.2. Name interpreters..... | 8 |
| 4.1.2. Discrete choice experiment | 8 |
| 4.2. Short questionnaire..... | 8 |
| 4.3. Alter-questionnaire | 8 |
| 4.4. Sports records..... | 9 |
| 5. Study population and response rates..... | 9 |
| 5.1. Cohort I..... | 9 |
| 5.2. Cohort II..... | 9 |
| 5.2.1. Ego-questionnaires | 9 |
| 5.2.2. Short questionnaire..... | 9 |
| 5.2.3. Alter-questionnaire | 9 |
| 6. Supplementary material | 10 |
| 7. References..... | 10 |
| 8. Acknowledgements | 11 |

1. Abstract

The ‘Sports and Friendships’ study was conducted between 2021 and 2023 (Franken et al., 2023). Its aim was to understand the development of multiple dimensions of students’ social relations throughout student life, and its consequences for their sport participation and academic experiences and outcomes. The study follows two cohorts of students at a research or vocational university of a Dutch city (Cohort I: $N = 92$, Cohort II: $N = 655$). We mapped the important transitions they experienced (e.g., leaving the parental home), the accompanying changes in their egocentric networks (e.g., newly formed ties), and employed multiple methods to map their sports activities (i.e., survey self-reports, behavior trace data). This codebook document describes the kinds of data that have been collected in the context of the ‘Sports and Friendships’ study.

2. Study description

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Title (English) | Sports and Friendships 2021-2023 |
| Title (Dutch) | Sporten en Vriendschappen 2021-2023 |
| Principal investigators | Franken, R., Bekhuis, H., & Tolsma, J. |
| In collaboration with | Radboud Sports Centre (RSC) |
| Funding | NWA ‘Transition Into Active Living’ (TRIAL) 116018249 |
| Citation (English) | Franken, R., Bekhuis, H., & Tolsma, J. (2020). Sports and Friendships: Codebook. DOI |
| Citation (Dutch) | Franken, R., Bekhuis, H., & Tolsma, J. (2020). Sport en Vriendschappen: Codebook. DOI |
| Topic | Social network changes, student life, sports participation, life course |
| Keywords | Social networks, egonets, students, life transitions, sport participation, name generators |

3. Data availability and replication

Each survey data collection wave is stored in a separate R-object (e.g., `wave1_public.RDa`), which can be accessed via [DANS Data Station SSH](#). All information that could identify a respondent is deleted from the data files (including all open-ended questions, names of alters, etc.). Please let us know if you find variables that should be deleted, by sending an email to rob.franken@ru.nl. Sports activity data collected about participants by the university sports center will not be made publicly available. If researchers wish to collaborate or replicate our research, we may share parts of these data. We will guarantee participants’ anonymity by aggregating these data.

4. Study design

The ‘Sports and Friendships’ study includes the following types of data:

- **Ego-questionnaires:** Cohorts were surveyed with an online/smartphone questionnaire 2 (Cohort I) or 3 (Cohort II) times over the academic year. Questionnaires were administered via LimeSurvey (Schmitz, 2020). The questionnaire assessed various social network dimensions via multiple name generator questions, dynamic measures pertaining to (changing) social contexts, as well as individual attributes (e.g., sports motivation and activity). A summary of the question blocks administered in these questionnaires can be found under [ego-questionnaires](#).
- **Short questionnaire:** Cohort II participants who gave permission to be sent additional questions received a short smartphone questionnaire 1-2 weeks after filling out the second questionnaire. They were asked about their opinions regarding political topics and eco-friendly actions. Students were also asked to estimate the opinions and behaviors of two of their previously listed alters. Last, they were asked to invite these alters to fill out a short alter-questionnaire (see below). A summary of the questions can be found in the short questionnaire section.
- **Alter-questionnaire:** Cohort II participants were asked to send a smartphone questionnaire invitation to two specified alters. In this questionnaire, alters answered similar questions as ego did in the short questionnaire. Alters were also asked to report both their own and ego's sports participation frequency and level of proficiency. A summary of the questions can be found in the [alter-questionnaire](#) section.
- **Sports records:** We obtained comprehensive, time-stamped records of the sports activities of our participants that were collected by the university sports center. This is described in the [sports records](#) section.

4.1. Ego-questionnaires

Our ego-questionnaires consisted of multiple blocks of items. The most important are listed below. Not all blocks were asked in all waves (and over both cohorts). The timing of these blocks is reported in [Table 1](#). For the specific questions asked in each block, we refer to the (Dutch) LimeSurvey/survey structure files (see [supplementary material](#) section).

- **Introduction:** Introduction to the study, link to our website containing a formal invitation letter, and an informed consent form.
- **Socio-demographic questions** on topics such as participants' gender, age, study program and year. Asked also about parents' educational attainment.
- **Social networks:** Asked name-eliciting questions about personal relations, including core discussants, study partners, best friends, and sports partners. See the [social network measurement](#) section for more information on our procedure.
- **Other relations:** Asking about participants' relational closeness with family members, and their romantic relationship.
- **Occupation before studies** (e.g., secondary or tertiary education, a gap year, employment)
- **Study integration:** Asked about memberships of multiple relevant (departmental) student associations, and about participation in the introduction week and its activities.
- **Study habits:** Asking about self-perceptions on the participant's studying success and efficiency. It also included an item on whether the participant had considered quitting their studies (Elmer et al., 2022), and on the number of credits (ECs) attained by the students over the course of the academic year.
- **Other memberships:** Asked about memberships of other (in)formal organizations (e.g., sports clubs, political or religious organizations).
- **Residency:** Asking about housing situation (e.g., with friends, parents, or alone) and place of residence (including 4-digit ZIP code).
- **Loneliness:** Included two items to measure the titular construct, one tapping into emotional loneliness, the other into social loneliness (de Jong Gierveld & van Tilburg, 2008).
- **Extraversion:** Measured the titular construct with 2 items of the BFI-2 (Denissen et al., 2020).
- **Financial constraints:** Measured the degree to which participants experienced having to miss out on activities or outings with friends because they could not afford them financially.
- **Sports participation:** Asked participants about the types of sports activities they had done, how often they did these activities, and the setting in which they did them [e.g., a formal (clubs) setting, a commercial gym, or alone].
- **Sports competency:** Focused on the participants' perception of their, and their sports partner(s), abilities in the sport(s) they participate in.
- **Sports motivation:** Measured different types of motivation for sports (fun, health, aesthetics, competition, social interaction).
- **Attitudes:** Asking about participants' attitudes towards varied (Dutch) modern political topics (e.g., vaccination, migration, farmer protests, 'wokism').

| Questionnaire block | Cohort I | Cohort II |
|-----------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Introduction | Wave 1 + 2 | Wave 1 + 2 + 3 |
| Socio-demographic questions | Wave 1 | Wave 1 |
| Social networks | Wave 1 + 2 | Wave 1 + 2 + 3 |
| Other relations | Wave 1 + 2 | Wave 1 + 2 |
| Occupation before studies | Wave 1 | Wave 1 |
| Study integration | Wave 1 | Wave 1 |
| Study habits | N/A | Wave 2 + 3 |
| Other memberships | Wave 1 | Wave 1 |
| Residency | Wave 1 + 2 | Wave 1 + 2 |
| Loneliness | Wave 2 | Wave 2 |
| Extraversion | Wave 2 | Wave 2 |
| Financial constraints | Wave 2 | Wave 2 |
| Sports participation | Wave 1 + 2 | Wave 1 + 2 + 3 |
| Sports competency | Wave 2 | Wave 1 + 2 |
| Sports motivation | Wave 1 | Wave 1 |
| Attitudes | Wave 1 + 2 | Wave 1 |

Table 1. Question blocks over questionnaire rounds and cohorts.

4.1.1. Social network measures

The ego-questionnaires used an extended egocentric name generator (Marin & Hampton, 2007) method to delineate participants' personal network and collect information about alters. We asked participants to name the people whom they were connected to in four ways: (1) confiding or discussing important matters, (2) studying together, (3) being best friends, and (4) doing sports and exercise together. See [name generators](#) section for full text of these questions. In response to each name generator, participants provided the names of up to 5 alters. Following each name generator, we asked respondents about the relationship – in terms of ‘closeness’ – between the members listed in the particular name generator. After each set of name generators, respondents completed an adjacency matrix that indicated which pairs of names referred to the same alter (see [Fig. 1](#)). Last, name interpreter questions were asked to obtain additional information about the alters and dyadic relationships (see [name interpreter](#) section).

Can you confirm if the individuals you studied with are the ones previously mentioned? To do so, please tick the corresponding box for each person indicating if their name matches one previously mentioned. If there are no matches, you may proceed by clicking on 'Next'.

| | Study partner: Mustafa | Study partner: Rob | Study partner: Katrin | Study partner: Sara |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Aforementioned person: Sara | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Aforementioned person: Peter | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Aforementioned person: Katrin | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Aforementioned person: John | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Figure 1. Screenshot of the CAPI interface used by a hypothetical ‘Sports and Friendships’ participant to match alters after the ‘study network’ name generator.

In subsequent survey rounds (wave 2 for Cohort I and waves 2-3 for Cohort II), following the four name generators, participants completed adjacency matrices similar to that of [Fig. 1](#) that indicated whether (unique) alters listed at that wave were the same as persons previously listed, which allowed us to identify created, maintained, and dropped ties.

In wave 3 of Cohort II, we expanded the measurement of networks. In cases where a person listed as an alter in Wave 2 did not reappear in any of the name generators of Wave 3, we asked the respondent why this person was not renamed (cf. Fischer & Offer, 2020). The survey instrument offered the following answer categories:

1. I simply forgot to mention this person again.
2. There hasn't been an opportunity for us to be in touch.
3. Our relationship changed.
4. Another reason: [open-ended text].

If respondents selected answer 3, "our relationship changed," the survey prompted them to choose an additional explanation from the following options:

1. One or both of us has moved.
2. One of us has undergone a major life transition (such as quitting studies, entering/ending a relationship, having a child, etc.).
3. One of us has health issues.
4. We have drifted apart/the relationship has faded.
5. We had disagreements or fights.
6. The relationship has changed in another way: [open-ended text].

4.1.1.1. Name generator questions

The four name generator questions administered were:

- “Most people discuss important personal matters with others. When you look back on [period], who were the most important people you discussed important issues with? Please provide up to five names (their first name and the first letter of their last name). If you would like, you can also provide nicknames, as long as you know who they are for future reference. Please fill in one name per box.”, tapping into the *Core Discussion Network* (e.g., Burt, 1984; Marsden, 1987; Small et al., 2015)
- “We would also like to discuss the people you study with, such as those you collaborate with on a project or do homework with. When you think back on [period], who were the most important people you have studied with. For each person, please fill in one box.”, measuring participants' *Study Network*.

- “We are curious about your friendships. The people you can count as your closest friends are often few and far between. Who would you count as your closest friends? You can name up to five. Please fill in one person per box.”, measuring participants’ *Best Friends Network*.
- “Some people mainly exercise alone, while others exercise with others. If you look back on [*period*], who are your most important sports partners? Please provide up to five names, entering one person per box.”, capturing participants’ *Core Sports Network* (Franken et al., 2022).

In the first questionnaire given to Cohort I and II participants in September, the first month of the academic year, we asked them to reflect on their social relationships from 6 months before the summer holiday. This approach enabled us to trace the social ties of first-year students before they transitioned to university, while keeping the same timeline for senior students. For Cohort I, we asked about ego’s current ties without specifying a time frame in the second questionnaire (March 2022). For Cohort II, we asked participants to reflect on the previous semester in the second and third questionnaire (January, 2023). In the ‘best friends’ name generator, we did not apply a time frame.

4.1.1.2. Name interpreters

Several pieces of information about each alter from participants were collected (aka name interpreters):

- Socio-demographic characteristics, including age, gender, educational level, and kinship.
- Political opinions: (ego’s perception of) an alter’s placement on the left-right political spectrum, and the extent to which ego and alter (dis)agreed on political topics (e.g., voting choice, opinions, and political topics in the news). This was only asked in survey round 1 in both cohorts.
- Sports behavior: Participants were asked which sport they mostly did with an alter that was mentioned as part of the Core Sports Network name generator, how frequently the alter participated in the sport, and how skilled they are at it (Cohort II, waves 1-2).
- Dyadic variables, pertaining to ego’s frequency of contact with and emotional closeness to alter; ego’s physical proximity to alter, and the duration of the tie between ego and alter.

A unique feature of the ‘Sports and Friendships’ study is that name interpreters questions about relational characteristics (i.e., contact frequency and emotional closeness) were also asked about alters that were named at t but not renamed at $t+1$.

4.1.2. Discrete choice experiment

In questionnaire 2 of Cohort I, we piloted a discrete choice experiment with which we aimed to participants’ selection preferences for sports partners on the basis of different alter attributes. This design was later implemented in the large sample I&O Research Panel (see here: https://robfranken.github.io/DCE_sports).

4.2. Short questionnaire

Cohort II participants who gave permission to be sent additional questions received a short smartphone questionnaire 1-2 weeks after filling out the second questionnaire (February 2023). The aim of this questionnaire was to gain an understanding of participants’ opinions regarding migration and climate policies, and their eco-friendly actions, as well as their estimation of the opinions and actions of their personal network members. We send this questionnaire to Cohort II participants who named at least 2 alters in the second survey round. For each participant, we selected 2 alters, such that different social relationships (i.e., core discussants, friends, study partners, sports partners) and levels of multiplexity were well-represented. For further details regarding the procedure through which we selected alters, see here: https://robfranken.github.io/alters_project/alters. We asked participants of this additional survey questions about:

- Their left-right political self-placement.
- Their perceived importance of multiple political themes (e.g., crime, climate, discrimination).
- Their opinions about multiple statements regarding migration (policy) and asylum seekers.
- Their opinions about multiple statements regarding climate policy.
- Their eco-friendly actions (e.g., shopping second-hand or buying items made with recycled materials).
- Their estimation of the opinions and behaviors of the selected alters.
- The difficulty of responding to questions about themselves and their alters.

Lastly, participants were asked to invite the selected alters to complete a brief [alter-questionnaire](#). To do so, they could press a button that copied a personalized invitation message and a link to the questionnaire, which they could then send via WhatsApp or email.

4.3. Alter-questionnaire

In this questionnaire, ego’s alters answered similar questions as ego did in the [short questionnaire](#). Alters who were listed as a sports partner were also asked to report both their own and ego’s sports participation frequency and level of proficiency. We also asked alters about dyadic characteristics (i.e., ego-alter contact frequency, emotional closeness).

4.4. Sports records

By signing the digital consent form in the first ego-questionnaire, study participants gave their consent for researchers to use the sports data collected about them by the university sports center. This data includes time-stamped records of their check-ins and check-outs at the university sports center gym, the courses they signed up for and attended, the ticket hours they booked, and their memberships in university affiliated sports organizations.

5. Study population and response rates

Our target population consists of students at the research or vocational university of a Dutch city who took an annual subscription at the university sports center and who, during their online registration at the sports center, ticked a box giving permission to be sent invitations to participate in scientific research. The services of the university sports center provided us with a list of students, their names and mail addresses. We made a selection. For the selection criteria, see the [Cohort I](#) and [Cohort II](#) sections. Selected students were invited for the first ego-questionnaire via mail. They were referred to our website, for more information on the project, a consent form, and a link to the questionnaire. To increase response rates for the first questionnaire, we raffled of 10 annual subscriptions at the sports center for the next academic year (worth 123 and 134 Euro, for the respective cohorts). For the second survey task in both cohorts, and the additional short ego-questionnaire round, they received 5 Euro vouchers. For the third wave of Cohort II, we raffled an additional 5 annual sports center subscriptions. We sent 2 reminders for each ego-questionnaire.

5.1. Cohort I

Here, we selected from those who gave consent to be approached for research, the first-time subscribers at the sports center, who have Dutch as their first language ($N = 1,725$). Our aim was to select first-year students, but since the sports center could not filter on this information, those who had just subscribed were chosen instead. However, in the first questionnaire these participants filled out, it was seen that roughly 40 % of the responses were not first-years and were excluded. Additionally, an opt-out link was included in the invitation mail for those who were not eligible for participation due to not being a first-year student. After two months of the first invitation, more than 200 people had opted out. This showed that Cohort I's list of potential participants did not include mostly first-years.

A summary of the response process of Cohort I:

- We received information of 1,725 students who gave consent to be approached for research, who were first-time subscribers at the sports center, and who have Dutch as their first language.
- 170 Cohort I participants filled out the first survey task. Roughly 40 % of participants were filtered out of the questionnaire due to not being a first-years students; and more than 200 students opted out.
- 92 Cohort I participants filled out the second survey task.

5.2. Cohort II

5.2.1. Ego-questionnaires

In Cohort II, we selected from the list provided by services of the university sports center all students who have Dutch as their first language. We excluded those who participated in Cohort I and those that opted out ($N = 5,227$).

A summary of the response process of Cohort II:

- We received information of 5,227 students who gave consent to be approach for research, who have Dutch as their first language (excluding Cohort I participants and those who previously opted-out).
- 1,135 Cohort II participants filled out the first survey task (response rate = .22). 15 students opted-out.
- Wave 1 respondents who named at least one network partner at wave 1 ($N=1,116$) were invited for the second questionnaire. 608 Cohort II participants filled out the second survey task (response rate = .54).
- 1,113 participants were invited for a third and last survey round. These individuals were selected based on the criteria of having completed either only wave 1 (and listed one or more alters) or both waves 1 and 2.
- 419 participants filled out the survey (response rate = .38). 3 students opted-out.

5.2.2. Short questionnaire

74 % of the wave 2 participants of Cohort II gave permission to be sent an invitation the additional questions about their opinions (the 'short questionnaire') ($N=451$). After screening, 433 participants were finally invited as some did not meet the participation requirements (e.g., insufficient number of alters or only kin alters). 279 completed the survey task (response rate = .64). 35 students opted-out.

5.2.3. Alter-questionnaire

433 ego-participants sent invitations to 2 of their alters, totaling 866 invitations to alters. In total, 239 alters filled out the alter-part questionnaire (response rate = .28).

6. Supplementary material

Researchers can access the following materials, via [DANS Data Station SSH](#).

Data files: Public data-sets/R data-objects for each wave:

Cohort I:

- wave1_public.RDa
- wave2_public.RDa

Cohort II:

- wave3_public.RDa
- wave4_public.RDa
- wave5_public.RDa
- short_public.RDa
- alters_public.RDa

LimeSurvey questionnaires:

Cohort I:

- wave1_questionnaire.html
- wave2_questionnaire.html

Cohort II:

- wave3_questionnaire.html
- wave4_questionnaire.html
- wave5_questionnaire.html
- short_questionnaire.html
- alters_questionnaire.html

LimeSurvey survey structure files:

Cohort I:

- wave1_surveystructure.lss
- wave2_surveystructure.lss

Cohort II:

- wave3_surveystructure.lss
- wave4_surveystructure.lss
- wave5_surveystructure.lss
- short_questionnaire.lss
- alters_questionnaire.lss

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