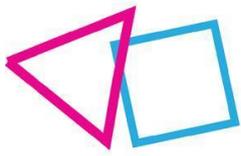


Deliverable Report

D1.7 Open report on Victim and offender profile description report





Document information and contributors

Deliverable No.	D.1.7	Work Package No.	WP1	Task/s No.	T1.4
Work Package Title	BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE BASE ON CYBERCRIME DRIVERS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS				
Linked Task/s Title	Baseline analysis of key findings and determining factors for young cybercrime victims and offenders				
Status	Final Draft	(Draft/Draft Final/Final)			
Dissemination level	PU	(PU-Public, PP, RE-Restricted, CO-Confidential)			
Due date deliverable	31/03/22	Submission date			31/03/22
Deliverable version	FINAL				
Deliverable responsible	COMILLAS				
Contributors	Organization	Reviewers	Organization		
María Reneses	Comillas	Kaisa Kägu	EPGB		
María Riberas	Comillas	Sonia Solera Cotanilla	UPM		
Aarón Gómez	Comillas	Gregorio López	COMILLAS		
Nereida Bueno	Comillas	Violeta Vázquez	ZABALA		
Ben Heylen	Ugent				
Jaan Ginter	Tartu				

Document History

Version	Date	Comment
V1	17/03/2022	First draft
V2	25/03/2022	External review
Final	30/03/2022	Final version

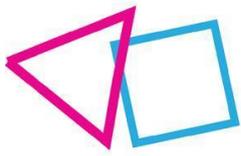
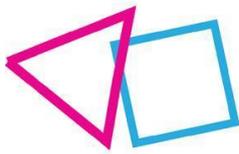


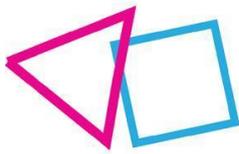
TABLE OF CONTENT

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	7
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	8
1. ONLINE GROOMING	11
1.1.- INTRODUCTION	11
1.2.- VICTIMS	13
1.2.1.- TYPOLOGY OF VICTIMS	18
Takeaway points	21
1.3.- OFFENDERS	21
1.3.1.- TYPOLOGY OF OFFENDERS	23
1.4.- MODUS OPERANDI	25
1.4.1.- INITIAL CONTACT	25
A) Close or known victims	25
B) Strangers	26
Take Away points	28
1.4.2.- PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES	29
A) Deception	30
B) Implication	31
C) Corruption	33
D) Coercion and blackmail	34
E) Sex	35
Takeaway points	38
1.5.- GENDER DIFFERENCES	39
A) Differences in strategies	39
B) Different initiative	41
Takeaway points	43
1.6.- REGIONAL DIFFERENCES	44
Takeaway points	48
1.7.- DISCLOSURE	48
1.8.- INCIDENCE, EVOLUTION AND CONSEQUENCES	49
A) Incidence and evolution	49



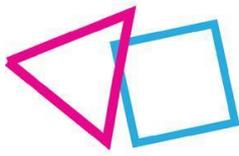
D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

B) Consequences	51
1.9.- CONCLUSIONS	51
1.10.- REFERENCES OG	54
2. CYBERBULLYING	58
2.1.- INTRODUCTION	58
2.2.- INCIDENCE	58
2.3.- THE EVOLUTION OF CYBERBULLYING DURING THE LAST YEARS	59
2.4.- CONSEQUENCES	59
2.5.- VICTIMS	60
2.5.1.- RISK FACTORS	61
Takeaway points	62
2.6.- OFFENDERS	64
2.6.1.- RISK FACTORS	64
Takeaway points	65
2.7.- MODUS OPERANDI	66
2.7.1.- STRATEGIES/TYPES	66
Takeaway points	67
2.8.- GENDER DIFFERENCES	68
Takeaway points	71
2.9.- REGIONAL DIFFERENCES	71
Takeaway points	71
2.10.- DISCLOSURE	72
Takeaway points	72
2.11.- REFERENCES CB	73
3. HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR THE PURPOSE OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION	76
3.1.- INTRODUCTION	76
3.2.- VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING	77
Takeaway points	82
3.3.- OFFENDERS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING	83
3.4.- MODUS OPERANDI	88
3.5.- GENDER DIFFERENCES	91
3.6.- REGIONAL DIFFERENCES	92
Takeaway points	93

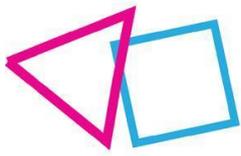


D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

3.7.- DISCLOSURE	94
3.8.- REFERENCES HT	96
4.- MISINFORMATION AND CYBERHATE	98
4.1.- SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE SURVEY	99
Takeaway points	103
4.2.- INTERNET USAGE	104
A) MOST USED APPS	104
B) SPENT HOURS ON THE INTERNET	106
C) ELECTRONIC DEVICES	107
Takeaway points	109
4.3.- FAKE NEWS	109
A) Sources of information and the erosion of trust	110
B) Typology	112
C) Age as a vulnerable factor:	113
D) Spreaders profile and reasons to share fake news	114
E) Reliability and verification	117
F) Main means of propagation	119
Takeaway points	120
4.4.- CYBERHATE AND CYBERBULLYING	121
A) Victimization factors	121
1) Racism	122
2) LGBTIphobia	122
3) Sexism	122
4) Cyberbullying	124
B) Offenders factors	127
1) Racism	127
2) LGBTIphobia	127
3) Sexism	127
4) Cyberbullying	128
5) Cross aggression	130
C) Main means and platforms	131
D) Trivialisation of aggression	132
Takeaway points	133



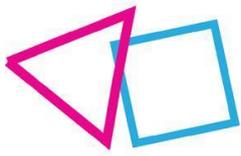
	D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report	134
4.5.- REACTIONS AND PREVENTION		134
A) Reactions		135
B) Information about risks (school and family)		137
Takeaway points		141
4.6.- SURVEY RESULTS IN VALENCIA		142
A) SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA		142
B) SPENT HOURS ON THE INTERNET		146
C) RISKS ON THE INTERNET		146
D) FAKE NEWS		147
E) CYBERBULLYING AND CYBERHATE		148
F) ONLINE GROOMING		150
G) VICTIMISATION FACTORS		152
Takeaway points		153
4.7.- CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION		154
4.8.- REFERENCES		163



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
OG	Online grooming
CB	Cyber bullying
HT	Human trafficking
CH	Cyberhate
MD	Misinformation and deception
FN	Fake news
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning describe distinct groups within the gay culture-community



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

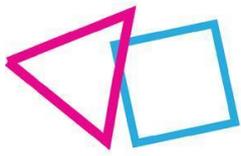
The main objective of this deliverable is to interconnect all the information provided in the previous deliverables: *literature review (D1.1)*, *the interviews report (D1.3)* and *court sentence analysis (D1.5)*, to provide the *Open report on Victim and offender profile description report (D1.7)*, the public version of *D1.6*. This aims to build a comprehensive report interconnecting all the information provided in the previous deliverables, aiming to help WP3 to implement most of the information in releasing an ecological evidence-based video game.

We will show a summary of the key findings and **determining factors** for young cybercrime victims and offenders by gathering all the information collected via RAYUELA's research framework, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, case studies, literature review and surveys developed in Madrid and Valencia.

Although our findings show that it is not possible to **build standard profiles** for victims and offenders, we will develop the main risks and protective factors in **online grooming (OG)**, **cyberbullying and cyberhate (CB&CH)**, **human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation (HT)** and **misinformation, deception and fake news (MD & FN)**. Together with the **variables, indicators**, and the **descriptors that measure potential risk**, we will also describe findings on the **incidence, evolution, short and long-term consequences** for victims and offenders post-attack.

In relation to **online grooming**, the results obtained in the previous deliverables (D1.3 & D1.5) are consistent with literature review (D1.1). Firstly, we found similarities in terms of the sex and age of the victims, with a higher risk of being victimized between 13-14 years old and being a girl. Also we can highlight some risk factors that make young people more vulnerable to becoming victims. Some factors include: low self-esteem, poor family communication, sexual orientation, difficulty to make friends face to face, etc. Additionally, in the analysis of sentences and interviews we have been able to find persuasive strategies described in literature review, the most frequent being implication and deception. In addition, the results obtained from the survey show that female victims from 15 to 17 years old are more vulnerable to online grooming conducts.

Secondly, regarding **cyberbullying** results, it can be said that previous deliverables (D1.3 & D1.5) are consistent with literature review (D1.1). Online bullying has increased significantly in the last decade as a result of the development of new technologies with victimisation ranging around 20%. Minorities

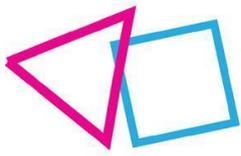


D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

(regarding gender, sexual orientation, provenance, religion, even proficiency in sport, school etc.) have an extra risk of becoming targeted. Investigation has shown that loneliness, difficulties in making friends, school problems and low self-esteem are risk factors that raise victimisation rates. Moreover, having a public profile and sharing a lot of personal information, sharing passwords or having passwords with low difficulty should also be taken into account in measuring victimisation and making prevention plans.

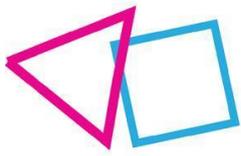
Thirdly, regarding **human trafficking with the purpose of sexual exploitation results (more precisely loverboys or Romeo pimps)**, it can be said that previous deliverables (D1.3 & D1.5) are consistent with literature review (D1.1). In general, no specific profiles could be found for neither victims nor offenders, but some common risk factors could be identified. For victims, the main risk factors are problems with attachment, which renders victims vulnerable to the seemingly sincere interest the offender shows in her or him. Secondary risk factors included low self-esteem, low SES, impaired cognitive development and belonging to a cultural or sexual minority group. For offenders, the main risk factor included having negative views of women, having loose moral views on sex, low education, unemployment, and belonging to an ethnic minority. As to the modus operandi, deception is widely used, insofar as the offender seduces the victim into a (seemingly) loving relationship, thus making the victim dependent on the offender. It is also precisely because of this, the fact that the problem of loverboys remains often undetected and is very difficult to prevent.

Finally, for approaching misinformation, online deception and cyberhate, 11 In-depth interviews were conducted with experts in the fields together with 8 focus groups with teenagers. In addition, a survey was implemented in Madrid and Valencia with more than 800 of students. Fake news related with young people's concerns and interests have appeared to be the most commonly believed and shared. Although participants generally agree that traditional news is more reliable than social media, most of them tend to get informed through social media, even if they know it is not reliable. They rarely verify information and, when they do it, they use some strategies that might be problematic, such as checking the comments. The prevalence of fake news spreaders was not so high, being bigger between those who did not know it was fake than among those who did. While the first ones tend to have a higher use of the mobile and a foreign background, the second one referred to have less information about Internet risks. Both tend to be older (15-17) and share information because it is funny more often than the average. Both but especially the conscious spreaders were more likely to be cyberhate offenders as well.



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

Cyberbullying and cyberhate are interconnected, commonly including racism, LGTBphobia, and insults around physical appearance. Students with LGTBI+ sexual orientation, from peripheral background and women are more vulnerable not only to cyberhate conducts, such as sexism, LGTBphobia and racism, but also to general cyberbullying offences such as insults, memes and photos, account usurpation, group isolation or unwanted sexual photos. Both tend to be masked by humour, which often makes these situations more difficult to combat. Other risk factors for becoming a victim were the time spent online and to have been previously victimized. Although different reactions to the different crimes have been found, prevention strategies should encourage children to report more, whether they are the victim or someone they know. Regarding families, focusing more on communication and trust and less on supervision would be a good way to tackle cybercrime.



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

1. ONLINE GROOMING

1.1.- INTRODUCTION

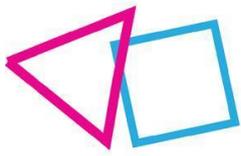
Online grooming (OG) is a process through which an adult uses new technologies to establish a dynamic of sexual persuasion and victimisation through online contacts in order to obtain sexual content from the child (Webster et al., 2012, see Barber & Bettez, 2020 for a review on OG definitions). This phenomenon is a way of benefiting from young people's lack of maturity, with potential negative consequences for their psychological, physical, and social well-being. For that reason, the following paper (D1.7) has the aim to compile the commented information in previous reports (D1.1, D1.3 & D1.5).

The legal definition of grooming made in the Explanatory Report of the Lanzarote Convention (2021) contains another element, namely the intention to meet with the young person previously enticed to produce content or having a physical encounter. In this convention, the agreement was that simply sexual chatting with a child was insufficient in itself to incur criminal responsibility, being another element needed for the crime. The relationship established through the Internet had to be followed by a proposal to meet the child.

However, according to Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13-12-2011 on combating the sexual abuse, sexual exploitation of children and child abusive material, after essentially reproducing the provisions of the Lanzarote Convention in this respect, it adds a new dimension by imposing the need for the parties to punish any attempt by an adult, by means of information and communication technologies, to acquire, possess or access child abusive material by enticing a minor who has not reached the age of sexual consent to provide this type of material.

The last guidance from European Council (2015) highlights that «All cases of sexual abuse of children – no matter if they are a result of a physical meeting, or committed purely online – should be criminalised». The recommendation parts of the fact that «online sexual abuse, even if it does not lead to a physical meeting, can be very traumatic for the child». It encourages countries which want to go one step further in the criminalisation of online grooming in national law.

Accordingly, while some countries from our research such as Spain have included both situations (the proposal of a meeting or a sexual abuse committed purely online) in the definition of the crime, others



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

only have the previous recommendation (the need of proposing a meeting). As it was discussed in D1.5, it has implications in the kind of crimes that end up in courts.

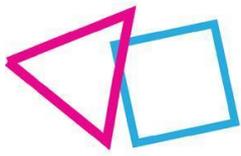
This compilation is the result of dialogue between the literature review (D1.1), the analysis of sentences (D1.5) and the interview report (D1.3). The court sentences included information from 51 online grooming cases involving 97 victims. Thus, a total of 15 convicted offenders, 8 victims and 23 experts were interviewed. Among the experts we counted on academics with extensive experience in the field of online grooming from different disciplines, as well as different professional profiles, from managers of hotlines to psychiatrists, magistrates, human rights lawyers and police officers with an extensive track record in computer crimes related to minors.

In addition, 8 focus groups about Internet risks were conducted with teenagers, with some information related to online grooming as well. The groups were carried out in five countries (Spain, Portugal, Greece, Estonia and Slovakia) with a total of 47 young people of different ages; In Spain there were two groups, one of six young people aged 12-14 and one group of five children aged 14-17; in Portugal there was a group of five young people aged 15-17; in Greece the group consisted of six students aged 14-16; in Estonia there were three groups, one of six students aged 12-14, another of five students aged 12-14 and one of 7 young people aged 14-17; finally in Slovakia the group consisted of seven young people aged 14-16.

In order to develop the section, some information from a survey carried out in the Community of Madrid will also be included. 682 young people from different educational centres participated. To conduct the survey, a stratified probability sampling¹ approach was used to select the participants. The strata were formed by the type of school to which they belonged (public, concerted and private) and the size of the region where they live. Previously, the scope of the study was limited to the Community of Madrid. The population was composed of adolescents between 13 and 17 years of age. The survey has been very useful to contrast the information obtained in the aforementioned deliverables.

After analyzing interviews' results and case study, we had rich information about the facts of the crime, but also about personal characteristics and about the social context of both victims and offenders. In this deliverable we profile victims' risk factors and precipitators to cybercrime, in order to propose

¹ The "stratified probability sampling" is a type of probability sampling that is used in a research where an organization can branch off the entire population into multiple non-overlapping, homogeneous groups (strata) and randomly choose final members from the various strata for research which reduces cost and improves efficiency.



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

prevention measures. Also, we do it related to offenders, as it is relevant to profile them because it is also important to intervene and suggest prevention measures to avoid future cyber-victimisation cases.

The modus operandi will be described with the main persuasive strategies regarding the crime. Gender differences are also analyzed together with the findings of regional differences. Finally, after discussing the result involving the process of disclosure, some findings will be shown related to the incidence, evolution and consequences of the crime.

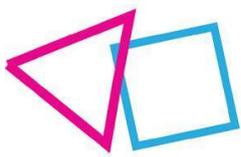
1.2.- VICTIMS

The first point to consider when discussing online grooming is that there is nothing such a victim profile. We may find some precipitant factors, but in words of most of the experts in the field: *any kid can become a victim*. Nevertheless, risk and protective factors that have emerged through the research will be discussed in this epigraph.

A key aspect to be taken into account for the profiling and for the serious game is age. The literature proposed that online grooming is most prevalent in adolescence (Whittle et al., 2013). Specifically, some authors (Baumgartner, et al., 2010; Mitchell et al., 2001) proposed age ranges between 11-15 years as the ages of greatest risk. In contrast, other studies considered that the ages of greatest risk are between 14 and 17 years (De Santisteban and Gámez-Guadix, 2017a; Jones et al., 2013; Montiel et al., 2015; Wolak and Finkelhor, 2013).

Accordingly, we have found that the mean age of the victims obtained from the analysis of sentences from different European countries is 13.78 years ($SD=1.62$), which coincides with that obtained from the victim interviews where the mean age obtained was 14.76 years ($SD=2.55$). In addition, we did not find significant differences according to the European area, so we may consider the age of highest risk to be a victim of online grooming to be between 13 and 14 years old.

In the survey results we found that 15-17 year olds participants were more likely than 13-14 to have received friend requests from an adult on social networks (60.3%, $n=270$, $\chi^2=19.96$; $p<.001$), photos or messages (62.9%, $n=144$, $\chi^2=10.69$; $p<.001$) and to have had conversations with adults (62.7%, $n=101$, $\chi^2=6.31$; $p<.001$) versus 42.3% ($n=99$), 49.7% ($n=225$) and 51.4% ($n=268$) who did not have these experiences. Adolescents would be more at risk than younger kids, in contrast to what happens in



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

offline sexual abuse. This might be related to the characteristics of the vital stage (Whittle et al., 2013), such as seeking for a wider social network- which may include strangers, searching for new experiences, and having sexual curiosity and/or certain insecurities that are usually increased in adolescence.

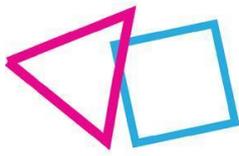
Another important variable is the sex of the victim. The literature review shows a higher risk of victimisation in girls, being from 82% compared to boys (Mitchell et al., 2001) to 66% (Wolak et al., 2010). The results obtained from the analysis of the sentences coincide with the literature review, we found that 53.8% ($n=56$) of them were girls while 46.2% ($n=48$) were boys. The percentages show that there are no significant differences in the sex of the victims according to the European area ($\chi^2=4.19$, $p=.24$). Although there is a higher number of offenders who choose female victims (65%, for instance, in the sample of the court sentences) they seem to be more successful with boys, which could be bringing these figures closer and closer together, as will be discussed in the section on gender differences.

As in the survey, 53.8% ($n=241$) of the young people who had received friend requests from adults were girls ($\chi^2=46.85$; $p<.001$) while 37.3% ($n=167$) were boys, 3.3% ($n=15$) were non-binary gender and 5.6% ($n=25$) preferred not to say their gender. In addition, 64.6 % had received photos and messages from adults ($n=148$; $\chi^2=60.17$; $p<.001$). All the information discussed above, can be summarized in the following chart:

Table 1. Table summarizing age and gender according to the source consulted

	Years	Gender
Literature Review	14-17	Girls (82%-66%)
European Sentencing	13.78 (SD=1.62)	Girls 53.8% & Boys 46.2%
Interviewed Victims	14.76 (SD=2.55)	No differences ($\chi^2=4.19$, $p=.24$)
Survey Results	15-17	Girls 53.8% & Boys 37.3% *receiving friend request

Regarding risk factors found in previous research related to the victim background, some of them have appeared in our samples. Although it is not possible to determine the proportion of them, which may



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

be low, some cases showed this kind of traumatic background, despite not being majoritarian. Nevertheless, specially in the cases of the court sentences, this information could simply not be available, while existing.

Johnson and collaborators (2019) have shown how having a previous history of abuse, poor mental health and **low self-esteem** increases the risk of becoming an online grooming victim. In our samples, some kids presented a previous history of disability, therapy, anorexia or sexual abuse, although, again, it was not mayoritarian. In addition, some of the victims referred to have school problems when the crime took place. Some offenders also state to take advantage of this variable: *success is half guaranteed when you find a vulnerable person, who is dependent, who does not have great self-esteem*. Some experts point out that self-esteem may play a role especially in girls, which could be related with the most violent types of grooming including coercion, blackmailing and gender violence.

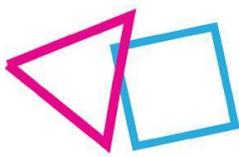
Regarding the family structure, economic and/or family problems (Whittle et al., 2013) together with poor family communication (Johnson et al., 2019) have been found as risk factors. Nevertheless, parental education level seems to be more relevant than family income (Villacampa & Gómez, 2016). In our samples, there were some victims with economic and family problems, but we cannot affirm that they were greater than the average population. According to the bibliography and experts' opinion we can assume that **family communication** might be key for prevention.

Scenario 1.1.

Description: Although family communication is a protective factor, it is also something to improve and be tackled in the game. We could then use the same scenario for educational purposes and to measure how the kid perceives his/her communication at home. It could be measured in the final section of an adventure, when the kid needs to decide whether to disclose/reveal the crime. For instance, it could happen in a second step, if after having talked to a friend, the friend tells our main character to let the family know, and our character needs to decide:

Options: A) it is not worth it, they do not care... Too worried about their problems. B) They might help but maybe they are too angry because all the time I spend online and they decide to cut me off. C) I'll try to ask them about their opinion, as X suggested.

Objectives: To measure family communication and to teach about the importance of disclosure.



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

The amount of time connected to the Internet seems to have an impact according to the literature review (Baumgartner et al, 2010; Jones, Mitchell & Finkelhor, 2013). In our victims' sample, **this time of connection was high**, with an average of 6 hours per day (with a minimum of 4 hours), longer than the general population (which is less than five hours per day according to Scott, Biello & Woods, 2019; Villanueva-Blasco & Serrano-Bernal, 2019). These data are consistent with those obtained in the survey, as those young people who had received friend requests on social networks were those who used the internet more than 4 hours a day (69.8%, $n=155$, $\chi^2=26.11$; $p<.001$), as well as those who had conversations with adults ($\chi^2=26.51$; $p<.001$) and received messages and/or photos from them ($\chi^2=10.69$; $p<.002$). Finally, 75% of the interview sample had their **profile in social networks public** when the facts took place, which could be understood as another risk factor, together with **posting much information online**.

Scenario 1.2.

Description: The main character looks at the mobile and sees a notification of the time spent in social networks today (4hours). (S)he has to decide between:

Options: a) spending some more time to check if this story in Instagram got some replies. b) Watch some [generic tik tok] videos, it is not that bad c) going for a walk and buying this thing (s)he needs from the store, and if it's not too late going to the park and reading the book is close to finished.

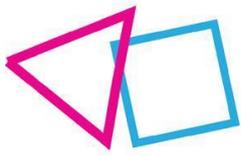
Objective: To check if (s)he is concerned about time spent on the Internet.

Scenario 1.3.

Description: A friend sends an invitation (whatsapp conversation) to this new social network. When creating an account the character needs to make some decisions:

Options: Public/semi public (my friends' contacts see the information)/private; adding pictures; age; city; school. Note: It is better not including the kind of photos (if more or less sexualized) for not blaming the potential victims. But it is something we may discuss.

Objective: To check if (s)he is concerned about information online and public/private profile.



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

Most of the kids in the sample (63%) found it not easy to interact with others face-to-face, preferring online interactions. In addition, 75% stated they would have liked to have more friends when the grooming situation occurred. When being asked, most of the victims in our sample were dealing with some social issues when the crime took place: having fought with his/her best friend, having no friends around, not being popular at school, or being “shut off”. Most of them presented some kind of isolation or lack of social support. When they do not talk about social problems they recognize that they were looking for some attention. According to experts, being isolated would be an explanation as well as being bored or looking for excitement, as we will see in the next section.

Scenario 1.4.

Description: The character has to prepare some classwork in pairs. (S)he has been assigned a partner (s)he doesn't know well, but who seems interesting and nice, which would be nice to meet better.

Options: A) propose to meet at the library to do the classwork. After that, they can go to the cafeteria to spend some nice time after around

B) propose to do it through an online platform, as (s)he prefers online environments to first meet people.

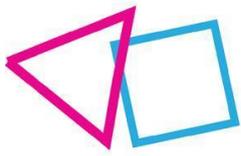
Objective: To check online/face to face preference.

Scenario 1.5

Description: It is difficult to think about a situation for measuring isolation. It could be added to as a contextual variable in another adventure, and for example check if there are differences when it appears, when it does not. For instance, before receiving a friendship invitation: It is Friday night.

Options: There is a conversation with a friend who goes to a party and explains that (s)he cannot invite him/her: “You know it does not depend on me”. A sad face can be seen in the character, who lies on the bed.

Objective: To check isolation/social problems as a variable in the game.



Scales: some test could be applied to measure **self-esteem** before the pilots (to check if it is a relevant variable). No other personality traits seem to be relevant to measure. Other scales could include **social support** or **family support**, since both have proved to be relevant.

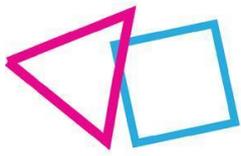
1.2.1.- TYPOLOGY OF VICTIMS

When thinking about risk factors it is important to consider as well the different types of victims we may find: resilient, vulnerable, and risky (Webster et al., 2012). Firstly, the resilient victims should be the ones empowered in the serious game and serve as guides: they are able to recognize some potential danger, as well as able to block and ignore situations they consider suspicious or rare, rejecting sexual behaviors and informing others about.

In the court sentences sample there were significantly less resilient victims than in the sample of the interviews (considering, for instance, not sending any material as a defining factor), which can be explained as the cases that end up in court could be more serious. The strategy of blocking, as explained in D1.5. is not always enough, as some offenders insist on the same victim and change to a different profile, starting often with blackmailing as their first strategy or even with a physical assault after being blocked.

Secondly, the vulnerable victims would be minors with affective deficiencies that are shaped as some need for attention, feelings of loneliness, and low self-esteem. These usually are young girls who are more likely to maintain online relationships -even though abusive ones- to fight against their feelings of loneliness-. This helps the aggressor to maintain toxic and abusive relationships with the girls, which can prolong sexual abuse beyond cybergrooming (Forth et al., 2021).

Lastly, we found risky victims in both D1.5 (court sentences) and D1.3 (interviews) who are characterized by online disinhibition plus a perception of safety and sense of control. This group includes victims who enjoy interpersonal experimentation, have lower risk perception and as a result are able even to start the contact or to ask firstly for sexual content. This kind of victim exemplifies **why not just vulnerable kids may end up in online grooming situations**, as well as those who engage in risky behaviours. We may then find kids without problematic backgrounds or interaction problems at the time of the crime who end up in a grooming situation, although this will be less likely.



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

For that reason, we can highlight the following major groups of precipitators that increase the likelihood of becoming victimized (Díaz-Bazán., 2014). For each group, we will make a subdivision into categories, which will have a greater or lesser incidence depending on the biological, psychological and social factors presented by the minors. The following risk chart is used to create video game scenarios in a more detailed and appropriate way. In which the following coding has been followed for each factor, with the risk precipitation being: "+" some and "++" quite a lot and the risk prevention being: "-" some and "--" quite a lot. In this way, it allows us to measure more accurately the presence of risk or prevention factors in the different scenarios created.

However, while we stress the importance of taking into account the above precipitators, it is especially important to note that online grooming presents a number of key problems. As Maldonado-Guzmán (2019) highlights, the victims of this crime remain silent to a greater extent due to the possible retaliation or consequences of doing so. Also, fear helps the victimizer to maintain the abuse by prolonging it over time, and many of the victims are unaware of the protection resources available to them.

All of this contributes to the increase in the number of victims of this type of crime, due to the lack of reporting by the victim. In addition, cybercrime is influenced by a very important risk factor such as the human factor in cybercrime, which has been defined as the "participation" of the victim in the commission of the criminal act, since being exposed to it to a greater extent, in turn increases the chances of suffering it (Leukfeldt & Holt, 2019).

It is therefore important to bear this in mind when developing prevention, intervention and treatment measures, insofar as not only psychological and sociological variables must be taken into account, but also environmental and spatial ones

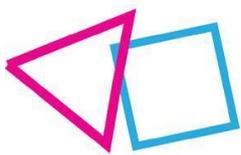
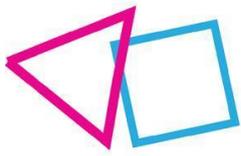


Table 2. Risk-prevention factors chart: victims' variables

Environmental	Isolation/lack of social support (D1.2, p. 12)	+ +
	Good Family communication (D1.1, p. 10)	- -
	Economic problems (D1.1, p. 10)	+
	School problems (D1.2, p. 11; D1.4, p. 11)	+
	Low parental education level (D1.1, p. 10; D1.2, p. 11; D1.4, p. 9)	+ +
Personal	Low self-esteem (D1.1, p. 15; D1.2, p. 11)	In girls + +
	Difficult to make friends face to face (D1.2, pp. 11-12)	+
	Homosexual orientation (D1.4, p. 37; D1.2, p. 8, survey results)	In boys + +
	History of abuse (D1.1, p. 15; D1.2, p. 11)	+
	Poor mental health (D1.2, p. 11; D1.4, p. 11). (E.g. Intellectual deficit)	+
	Pornography consumption & sexual curiosity (D1.1, p. 15; D1.2, pp. 12-13; D1.4, p. 11)	+ +
Use of Internet	Public profile (D1.2, p. 13; D1.4, pp. 9-11)	+ +
	Publishing a lot of information in online sites/App's (D1.2, p. 13; D1.4, pp. 9-11)	+
	Social networks time spent (D1.1, p. 15; D1.2, p. 12; D1.4, pp. 9-11, survey results).	+ +
	Online disinhibition effect (D1.2, p. 12)	+ +
Institutional	Knowledge of reporting by users (e.g. if an App reminds users to be aware of cybergrooming, it could be easier to minors to detect and report the situations before entering in the violence cycle)	- -



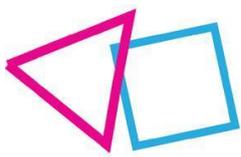
.Takeaway points

- No specific profile victim has been found, however, there are risk factors that may precipitate a minor becoming a victim.
- The analysis of interviews, sentences and literature review coincide in that the age range of highest risk for being a victim of online grooming is 13-14 years old.
- In addition, the sex of the victim is an important variable; in the literature review we found that the most of the victims are girls, as well as in the analysis of sentences and interviews.
- In terms of victim typology, there are three types; resilient victims, vulnerable victims and risky victims. Resilient victims are the ones that most frequently achieve through their actions to stop the offender. Therefore, we should reinforce those actions in the game (e.g., blocking, stating their willingness to report their conversation to an adult, etc.).
- Not only vulnerable children but also minors looking for sharing much content are the riskiest to become victimized.

1.3.- OFFENDERS

Defining a profile for online grooming offenders is as difficult as elaborating it for victims: there is not a single kind of offender. The vast majority, as found in research and in our samples, are men. The only women that we found were young women with a short age difference with their victims, not having major differences between both of them (Bodecka-Zych et al., 2021).

The mean age we found in our samples was between 32 and 36. Although when analysing sentences we only found 15% to be under 25, this figure increased to 33% when analysing interviews (D1.2, p.37). Regarding both the interviewed experts and bibliography (De Santisteban and Gámez-Guadix; 2017a; Schulz et al., 2016; Wolak and Finkelhor, 2013) the youngest offenders are particularly important to pay attention to. In the survey, we found that 8 young people between 12-17 years old had sent sexual photos without the consent of the other person. Prevention should focus on them as they might be more dangerous as they have access to minors in a less conspicuous way, so it might be harder for the victim to identify the abuse from the beginning. For that reason, it should be taken into account that access to new technologies from an early age can develop computer skills that facilitate (e.g. knowledge of most popular App or web sites between youngsters), to a greater or lesser extent, the development of a pro-future criminal career, if this is accompanied by an approach to the criminal justice system (Rima et al., 2021).



Scenario 1.6.

Description: one friendship request. It is a handsome young man, with pictures of playing in a band/attending concerts. He states he is 22.

Options: A) I want to add him, why to not have more friends? It is good, isn't it? B) I don't know him, so I am going to ignore/deny the request.

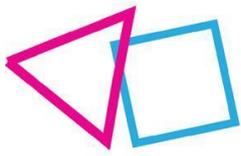
Objective: To check whether the kids consider this example as a threat or not.

We did not find significant information regarding other sociodemographic factors, with a distribution similar to that from the general population (in terms of religion, being single or having a couple or the educational level). The only factor that was relevant was that 40% of the interviewed offenders were unemployed when the facts took place. In the court sentences, this information was not provided in most of the cases, but it was a high rate too in the only region where this was registered. Previous research has also found a higher unemployment rate compared to the general population, despite their similar educational level (Babchishin, Hanson, and Hermann, 2011). In the interviews sample, almost 30% had jobs related to minors, such as managing a candy store or being an influencer, a trainer or a teacher.

Some previous research has shown how online abusers have a higher level of sexual activation, accompanied by feelings of sadness, boredom and stress (Bergen et al., 2015). Similarly, child abusive material consumers tend to suffer many from socio-affective deficits (Steely et al., 2018). As described in the European Online Grooming Project (Webster et al., 2012) some of the offenders in our sample described some type of situation that made them vulnerable before committing the aggression (ending a relationship, or losing the job). Although it was not majoritarian, it is relevant in terms of treatment to consider the mood of *knocking the confidence* as a possible trigger.

The Internet would allow online groomers to separate a new self from the one of the real world (Webster et al., 2012) that could be, in some cases, damaged. Through that second self (Turkle, 1995) they might feel important and empowered, being able to obtain and share more images of minors (Kloess et al, 2014) or simply cheat and seduce the minor. All of this is encouraged by the sense of anonymity and impunity that the Internet "falsely" offers (Miró-Llinares & Moneva, 2020).

Nevertheless, if we follow our sample, the main reason most of the offenders pointed out was loneliness. Many of them would like to have more friends, and some of them (36.4%) stated not having



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

felt enough support and love from their parents during their childhood. In addition, some expressed having suffered from depression, which would be according to previous research about child abusive material consumers (Steely et al., 2018).

Other factors found in the court sentences analysis (D1.5) were cognitive and intellectual limitations (10%). In the region where information about the psychological profile about offenders was available (Belgium). Regarding sexual tendencies half of them had the diagnosis of pedophilia/paraphilia and many of them presented personality traits related to lack of impulse control, antisocial personality disorder, and narcissistic traits (with lack of empathy, lack of guilt and egocentric tendencies).

1.3.1.- TYPOLOGY OF OFFENDERS

We can divide offenders according to different parameters. Firstly, there would be pedophiles (attracted mainly by minors) and not pedophiles. The first ones would be around half in our sample, and did not show as many narcissistic traits and manipulative strategies as the non pedophiles. The last ones seemed to enjoy the power relationship, while the first ones would enjoy the freedom, the adventure and the feeling of not being judged. Secondly, they overlap, but only partially with another category that would differentiate between the crush/lover and abuser/multiple victims offenders. Finally we need to consider that there are slow offenders, who take the time to seduce minors, as well as fast offenders, who go straight to the point.

For that reason, we can highlight the following major groups of precipitators that increase the probabilities of the offenders in committing crimes. For each group, we will make a subdivision into categories, which will have a greater or lesser incidence depending on the biological, psychological and social factors presented by the offenders (as it was done previously in *Table 1*). The following risk chart is used to create video game scenarios in a more detailed and appropriate way. In which the following coding has been followed for each factor, with the risk precipitation being: "+" some and "++" quite a lot. Or, risk prevention being: "-" some and "--" quite a lot. In this way, it allows us to measure more accurately the presence of risk or prevention factors in the different scenarios created.

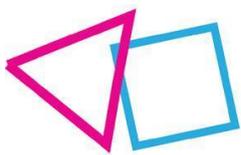
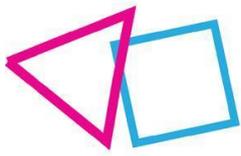


Table 3. Risk-prevention chart: offenders' variables

Environmental	Isolation/lack of social support/loneliness (D1.1, p. 13; D1.2, pp. 15& 37)	+ +
	Having easy access to minors (D1.1, p. 16; D1.4, p.12 & D1.2, p.)	+ +
	Unemployment (D1.1, p.12; D1.2, p.16, D1.4 - Northern Ireland -)	+ +
Personal	Certain affective deficiencies in childhood (D1.2, pp. 14&37)	+ +
	Difficult to maintain sex-affective relation close to offenders' age due to mental health issues (D1.4, p.12, D1.2). (e.g. For instance, a person who presents an "intellectual deficit" may feel more comfortable maintaining social and emotional relationships with children because they have the same level of social skills).	+ +
	Compulsive consumption of abusive material (D1.1, p. 13, D1.4, D1.2)	+
	Paedophilia (D1.1, p. 13; D1.2; D1.4)	+ +
	Poor mental health (D1.1, p.12; D1.4, p.12 & D1.2, p.16). (e.g. depression)	+
	Cognitive, and intellectual limitations (D1.1, p.12; D1.4, p.12)	+
	Psychopath traits: narcissistic traits, impulsivity (D1.1, p.12; D1.2, pp. 15-16; D1.4)	+
Use of Internet	Knowledge of Internet usage (D1.1, pp.12-13; D1.2. p.15)	+ +
	Social networks time spent (D1.2, p.15)	+
	Lack of vulnerability and disinhibition appear (D1.1, p. 13; D1.2, p.15)	+
Institutional	Knowledge of reporting by users (e.g. if an App reminds users to be aware of cybercrime, it could be harder for offenders to commit crimes).	- -



1.4.- MODUS OPERANDI

1.4.1.- INITIAL CONTACT

The type of platform used for first contacts does not seem to be so relevant, and changes fundamentally depending on the most popular ones at the moment. While the offenders who committed the crime several years ago used Messenger, those of the following years preferentially used Facebook, with the most recent ones focusing on Instagram, and according to experts, already on Tik tok.

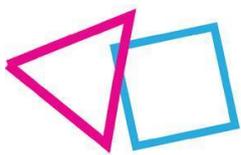
In average, the platform more frequently used for the first contact was the social networks (from 52% to 80%), followed by chat services (around 15%), dating websites or applications (5-10%), and videogames (5%). The only reasons to use them were that they were **the most used by people**, and that they were **easy to use**.

A) Close or known victims

One of the most relevant findings in the research has been that between **20 and 25% of the cases the victims previously knew their offenders**. In around 12% it was the minor who contacted the offender, being around 65% the cases in which the offender contacted an unknown victim, mainly sending a friendship invitation. These figures were consistent in the different samples (regional and global sentences, and victims and offenders interviews), showing a **solid trend**.

The first two cases (knew victim and a victim who makes the contact) although being less frequent are important to consider as they must be more difficult to detect as a danger, and there must be more difficult to disclosure as well -one because of the family or social implications and the other one as the victim can feel responsible for the contact. Cases involving knew victims ended up in physical sexual abuse twice as often as the others.

When they previously knew each other, victims were mainly friends of daughters or sisters, step daughters, students (being the offender his/her teacher, monitor or trainers) or the minor (asking the minor to do it). In the cases where the minor made the first contact it was not always for sexual/romantic proposals (like those occurred through data applications). Some of them contacted the offender in order to get professional photos/photograph books, video game improvements or videogame advice. As we will discuss later, almost all of those who contacted were boys.



Scenario 1.7.

Description: Teacher/father of a friend. It is more sensitive but common (specially if we think in general sexual abuse). A teacher from your last summer camp starts talking to you after you accepted him as a friend in X social network. He says you're really pretty in the last photo, and that he is sure you must have a lot of guys trying to be your boyfriend.

Options: A) He is so kind! I tell him I like his pictures too. B) I ignore him because I don't like the way he talks. C) I show the message to a friend to check what she thinks. We may ask an adult about it.

In red as we need to decide if it is too scary.

Objective: To measure whether the minor is able to share personal information with strangers (s)he meets on the Internet.

In several cases, the contact with the offender was made through friends, resulting in what can be called a **chain of abuse**. Kids may identify a stranger with danger, but when someone is a friend of a friend it usually acts as a proof of trust and reliability, increasing risky behaviors. In addition, as revealed by one of the offenders, to attack victims who are friends might reduce the possibilities of disclosure, as the crime becomes their secret and they support each other without the need of telling someone else.

Scenario 1.8:

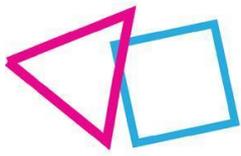
Description: The character is having a conversation with a friend through an online video game chat. This friend says that X has asked him for his Instagram [generic SN] in order to exchange advice. The friend explains he is super cool, funny and he really knows all the secrets of the game.

Options: A) Sure! I can always block him, if he is not so cool. B) Hmm, I prefer not to share my account with strangers, I can learn from the Internet.

Objective: To measure whether the minor is able to share personal information with strangers (s)he meets on the Internet.

B) Strangers

Generally, most offenders start with general questions for firstly getting to know each other, politely. In some cases pleasant comments about the child's appearance or the proposal of a photo shoot, etc. Later, they start to ask about more personal issues to get to know each other. Although in most cases



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

it is not specified how that contact begins. In one of the cases, the minor responded to a "Hello" that appeared in a pop-up window of an online game page.

- Regarding victims' profiles, they did **not seem to put much attention to the creation of their nicknames**. Eventually, they used their own name, a familiar nickname, a short name, or a character from a movie. As it was previously mentioned, the amount of public information must be considered as a risk factor. Most of the interviewed victims had a public profile, with pictures, and, in some cases, the age, name and name of the location on it.

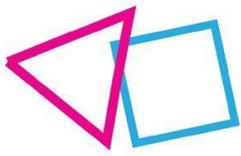
Nevertheless, when asking offenders there does not seem to be a clear pattern of searching for victims. While some of them look for more attractive photos, others search for those who may accept their invitation. Rather than firstly looking for a particular profile, it seems that the research goes in a second time, to see what they like, where they study, etc.

- Regarding offenders' profiles, **it is important to highlight that in our sample most of them did not have a fake profile, and many of them did not lie about their age**. However, several used fake photos (in the profile or sending them) or slightly lied about their age. Some others also created a whole network of different identities.

The most frequent contact is through strangers (75%, n=15). As mentioned above, It can be seen how the type of network changes over the years, following usage fads. Thus, for example, in 2014 Tuenti was used to a greater extent, in 2016 Facebook and in recent years Instagram seems to be used more (this tendency may swap to TikTok App). After a first contact through these networks, communication is usually changed to WhatsApp, and to a lesser extent also by phone and Skype, and only in some cases do they maintain conversations by Instagram and Facebook. We did not find cases where the Dark Web was used.

This clashes with the crime of child abuse, in which the vast majority of offenders are part of the child's social circles, i.e., victim and offender know each other. As highlighted in a study carried out on pedophilia, *99.7% of the aggressors were men* of which 35% were close relatives, 21% of the offenders were distant relatives, 8% were close acquaintance, 26% far acquaintance, and only 9% of the offenders were strangers (Del-Real Castrillo, 2019, p. 15). Nevertheless, the percentage of cases between acquaintances could be bigger, as we can guess that they are harder to report.

In order to know a bit more about how to prevent this kind of contact, in the focus groups the participants discussed reasons and criteria to add strangers in their social media. When younger teens



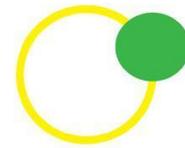
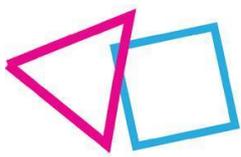
D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

were asked about criteria for adding strangers, they seemed to be more conservative than the older participants. In one of the groups, most of them stated that they add only good friends, except one that recognizes that now he is starting in Tik Tok and Instagram to follow the person who requests, to see who he or she is. In the other group, girls only add very good friends of people who are very good friends of theirs. When a stranger talks to them, they generally ignore him/her, and if he/she insists, he/she gets blocked. One participant also refers to asking her mother to check if she knows him. In contrast, boys seem to tend to ask for more information to see who the person is, and if he or she has a private account they follow to check the profile. In the older groups, in general, they all seem to have a private account, explaining that they have many requests and only accept some of them.

In the older groups, in general, they all seem to have a private account, explaining that they have many requests and only accept some of them. Nevertheless, there is also some diversity in their criteria for adding strangers, as different criteria are used: common friends, proximity, verification of the account, common interests, age, or having a good looking photo.

Take Away points

- Between 20 and 25% of the sample were cases in which the offender was known and belonged to the victim's environment, which implies targeting prevention to these cases as well. The family and the school environment are usually the main focuses. These cases are especially severe as the manipulation is ever stronger when the offender is socially recognized, and the probability of having a physical sexual encounter increases.
- "The chain of contacts" must also be approached, as it usually encourages kids to go on with the abuse instead of disclosing it.
- Social networks are mainly chosen by both offenders and kids regarding the most used ones depending on the time. As not majoritarian, some cases started in data web applications.
- In most cases, the offenders did not create a fake profile or lie about their age. It is important to not focus prevention only on impersonation but also on the risks of starting a relationship with an adult, even though he/she is a young one.
- Although some offenders look for attractive photos and the age in their victims' social network profiles, there does not seem to be a clear-cut patron of choosing, as they usually contact many kids.
- Regarding the first interaction, many started with general questions to first get to know each other. Later they start establishing a relationship, showing interest in the victims' topics, and



talking about them. Finally, the sexual topic arises. Nevertheless, some offenders go directly to the sexual topic and quickly change their objective if finding no interest.

1.4.2.- PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES

Our results show that the persuasive strategies employed by the offenders are multiple. In the court sentences it is even possible to see how they vary not only from one to another offender, but within one offender from one to another victim. Following the classification proposed by Santiesteban and Gámez-Guadix, (2017b) we can group the most used persuasion strategies into four, which we will describe below: Deception, corruption, implication, and aggression. Awakening or taking advantage of sexual curiosity could be treated as a fifth strategy, but as it is present in almost all cases, it will be analyzed as a cross-cutting element.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of strategies used by offenders depending on data extracted from sentences or interviews (victim and offender ones).

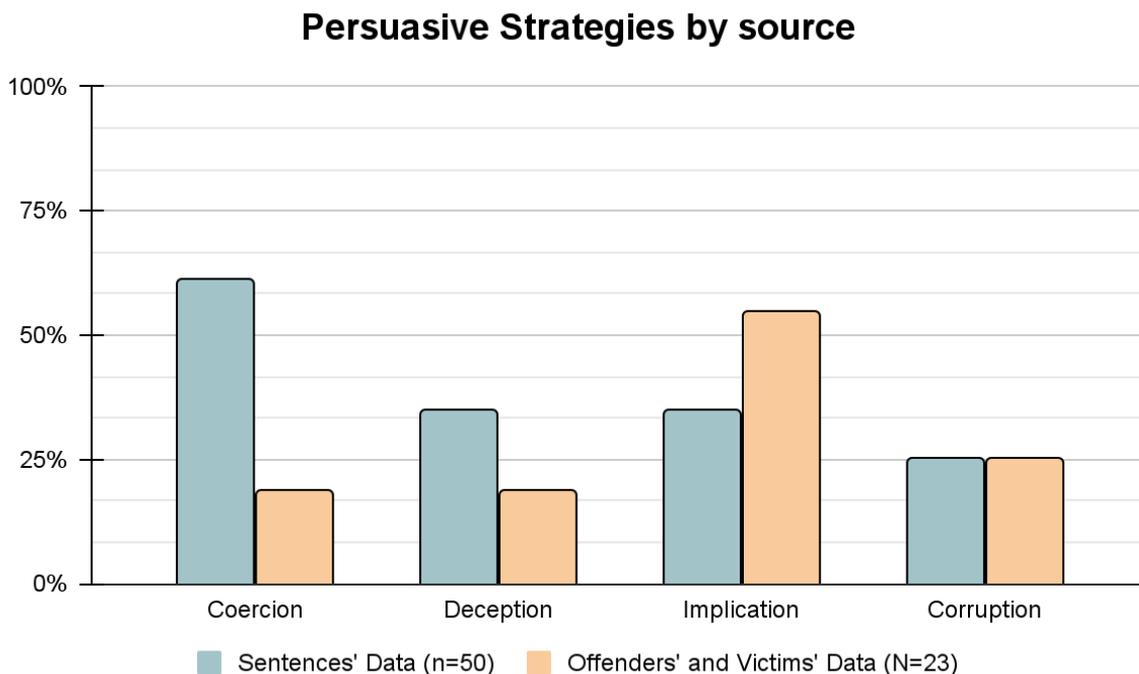
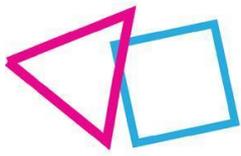


Figure 1: Persuasive strategies used by offenders depending on extracted source

The most used strategies according to the sentences was **coercion** (61%) followed by **deception** (35%), **implication** (35%) and **corruption** (25%). From the offenders' and victims' interviews this figure differs,



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

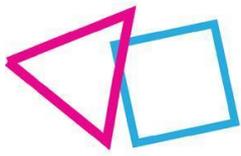
being **implication the most common** (47-62%) followed by **corruption** (6-50%), with significantly less **deception** (12-25%) and **coercion** (13-25%). This difference might be explained by the social desirability of some offenders and because some of the victims in our sample had less severe cases. In addition, in court sentences the coercion strategy could be especially marked as an aggravating factor, while implication, understood for instance as emotional support, might be underrepresented.

A) Deception

As noted above, although deception is a widely used strategy, it is important to highlight that fake profiles/identities might not be as common as the online grooming imaginary. That means that focusing on the idea of the old man who pretends to be a different person would leave out most of the cases consisting in: those in which victim and offender know each other, those in which the victim contacts the offender and those in which the unknown offender does not lie about his identity. It is relevant that at least in some groups it is normalised and many of the participants have stories related to this behaviour: *I have been approached by men who were 50 or 60 years old, and I blocked them, and they could not talk to me or anything. You must be careful with the men who talk to you.*

Nevertheless, the use of a fake identity is quite used by offenders (up to 44% in the sentence sample, although pretty less in the others). Fake profiles vary from simple younger men, using pictures from the Internet (or from former victims) to more elaborated strategies. In one case the offender was a photographer who contacted minors through social networks (Instagram and Facebook) under the pretext of doing photo shoots and the promise of creating a photo book for them to start their professional career as models. Another pretended to be kidnapped by a gang in order to get sexual material.

The most sophisticated ones created what an offender called an *infrastructure of people*. One offender introduced the character of the stepbrother (who would actually be the offender, 54 years old), and it was the other characters who tried to convince the minors to meet and have sex with him: by offering money, encouraging a new experience, downplaying its importance or threatening to break up the couple in cases where a romantic relationship was established, or to make public photos of a sexual nature. With this strategy the offender could establish a romantic relationship pretending to be a young man but having a physical encounter -which he did not get- as an old man. In another case, the offender -who was one of the victims' stepfather pretended to be the president of the club of fans of the favorite series of the victims. For impersonating this character he used a program which changed



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

the face in a video call. The way of getting a sexual physical encounter -which he got several times during three years- was to propose himself as the savior of a blackmailing.

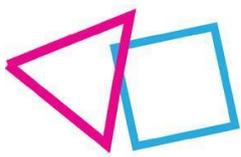
Deception is used to maintain and develop the false identity created. According to previous research, in order to achieve this, the offender adapts his language with emoticons and childish words, lies about his preferences and even provides photographs that are not his own in order to gain the trust or interest of the child (Wells and Mitchell, 2007). We found this type of deception in the interviews where 71.4% of the victims reported having common interests with the offender; 73.3% of the offenders admitted to having conversations with their victims about their hobbies or the activities that the minor liked. Also in the analysis of sentences (D1.5) we obtained similar data related to this type of strategy. Nevertheless, we did not find that offenders change their way of speaking, neither in the court sentences nor in the interview sample. Some of them, indeed, stated that the adult way of expressing may in fact impress the kids, making them more interesting. Similarly, Briggs et al. (2011) found that not all offenders pose as minors, but some present themselves as adults to generate interest in the child.

Scenario: Instead of developing a scenario in this section, an example is done in HT's scenarios.

B) Implication

Implication was the most used strategy in the interview samples (D1.2) and the second one in the sentence analysis (D1.4). This strategy is one in which abusers try to involve the child in the abusive behavior, making it look like a free, mutually agreed relationship (Lorenzo-Dus and Izura, 2017). It usually implies that the offender tries to achieve attachment to the child, gaining her/his trust by showing interest in confident topics (71.4%, $n=5$) or talking about the problems that the victim had at the time (42,9%, $n=3$). So, around half of the offenders admitted having talked with the minors about their problems (family, friends, sexual orientation, etc.).

When being asked about the kind of relationship offender and victim had, only 25% ($n=2$) of the victims' sample stated that they could be considered a couple. Nevertheless, from offenders' point of view, a 46% ($n=7$) considered the relationship as a couple or close friends, while others (54%, $n=8$) stated that the only bond that existed between them was just sex, even though recognizing that their victims could have more deep and romantic feelings. It is important to remark that once the romantic relationship is established, although the victim discovers the lies of the offender, it is possible that the



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

relationship is kept. This can be explained by the low self-esteem of the minor and the emotional deficiencies that the offender tries to satisfy in order to maintain the abusive relationship. In the sentence analysis (D1.4) many of the kids perceived they were in a romantic relationship, as found in previous research (Whittle, 2014).

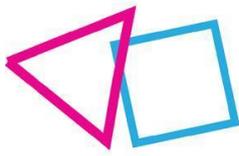
Implication can be understood as the most dangerous strategy, according to our findings, due to several reasons. Firstly, it is the only one that is related with having a physical encounter, ($\chi^2=9.98$, $p<.003$), as well as the topic of conversation about the child's intimate and personal topics, alone or in combination with other topics is ($\chi^2=5.835$, $p=.016$). Secondly, it might make the disclosure even more difficult, as the offender usually insists on the danger he takes in case the relationship is revealed. Finally, coercion frequently follows romantic feelings, ending up in a relationship marked by gender-based violence.

Scenario 1.9.

Description: Instagram recommends a profile that features a young guy, a little older than you, but not much older. Apparently he likes skateboarding and plays in a band. You decide to add him. A few days go by, and the guy in question greets you and you start talking about common likes and dislikes. A few days later, you're not having a good week and decide to share your worries with him. Your new friend listens to you, decides to support you, sends you emotional messages full of hearts and hugs. That comforts you. Some time later and some more conversations later, he asks you to be a couple, although online for the moment, and that one day you could meet, because he is very fond of you. You don't know what to do with that situation, he is a good friend after all.

Options: A) You tell him that you feel the same way too, he has helped you a lot during various problems and you decide to give him a chance. B) Even though you are not attracted to him, he is a good colleague and you want to keep talking and sharing things together, so you go along with him. C) You don't know him at all, after all, you've never seen each other outside of Instagram, so you tell him you don't feel the same and stop talking to each other.

Objective: To measure whether the minor has school problems, low self-esteem and has difficulties making friends face to face. It is important because it is a strategy used by offenders (implication) where the offender tries to gain the minor's trust.



C) Corruption

Corruption is based on bribery so it can be carried out by means of gifts or, more obviously, by directly offering material goods or money to minors in exchange for different sexual behaviors (De Santiesteban and Gámez -Guadix, 2017; Shannon, 2008). One recent procedure which was found in both sentences and interviews was to give advice about video games or promising improvements in the video game in exchange for sexual material.

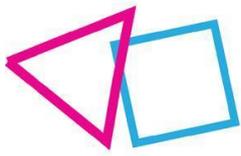
The corruption strategy was found in half of the cases (50%) of the sample of the victim (D1.2). In three of them, offenders directly asked minors for photos in exchange for money. So, it is important to remark how dangerous it might be if the minor is dealing with economic problems or thinks it is enough money and worth it. None of the offenders, but one, accepted having used corruption as a strategy to get sensitive material from the victims. Some experts also pointed out that offenders often use the strategy of getting them things they want but their parents won't buy for them, in order to gain their trust and get sexual material

As extracted from D1.5 we can highlight that the percentage of cases in which this offer is made is 40%, although it is not always the main strategy. In some sentences it does appear as the only strategy, offering money in exchange for material or some type of sexual practice. In others, it seems to appear as an extra motivation, for example, in the face of an attempt to upgrade the acts (from sending photos to physical encounters). Corruption strategy showed a negative correlation with the child agreement for a physical encounter ($\chi^2=4.78, p=.026$).

Scenario 1.10.

Description: Imagine you are playing an online video game (which has microtransactions such as “battle pass”, “event pass”, “skins” and so on) and you meet a person in a match because you found it funny. You start to become friends with that person, you play together and time goes by. There comes a time when that player tells you that he is a guy and that he loves spending time with you, that you have a lot of things in common. You add each other on instagram, and he tells you he loves you. He starts passing you some pictures of him doing daily things, so you can get to know him, he is a young and cool guy. One day he starts talking about sex and passes you an intimate photo. He tells you that if you pass him one he'll buy you the battle pass to the event of the season or your favourite skin.

Options are: A) Yeah, why not, I want that thing no matter what. B) This is quite odd, I am going to



block him right away. C) I'm going to report that profile to the police D) Absolutely not, I am going to tell it to a friend or my parents.

Objective: To see if the minor detects vulnerable situations and how to manage the situation. To measure the human factor in cybercrime.

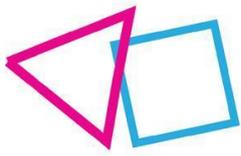
D) Coercion and blackmail

Based on the sample of the victims, coercion or blackmail took place in 37,5% of the cases ($n=3$) (e.g. Youtuber case). In addition, if we take into account the main ideas from sentencing review, up to 50% of the offenders in the sample use coercion. This strategy can be carried out by offenders if there are: power of influence and an asymmetrical relationship. Some interviewed experts stated that *offenders often enjoy the power dynamic and the attention of the victim even more than the victim itself* (D1.2, p.28).

Some of the strategies are to threaten with the following: to publish the pictures on social networks or to show them to family members if the minor does not agree to have sex; to tell the family about the sexual relationship they had in the first place to force the minor to meet again; to use physical violence. As it happens with gender violence, offenders frequently after the blocking in networks or when the victim breaks up (when the minor considers that she is in a sentimental relationship with the offender). The reasons go from meeting again, to obtaining pictures, having sex, keeping the grooming in secret, increasing the intensity or simply looking for revenge.

The social reputation is so important to kids that an offender can blackmail them without any material, for instance promising that he would delete an invented video of her showing her breasts or threatening to tell their friends about the relationship or about having photographs that he actually did not have.

What's more, offenders tend to use emotional violence as a form of coercion through the threat of abandonment. They also showed sophisticated manipulation strategies, certain impulsivity and lack of empathy. Nevertheless, in some cases, like the stepfather's one, the abusive relationship was built with a mixture of trust the victim had in him and diverse manipulation strategies. It is relevant to remark that when offenders act impulsively trying to scare their victims, chances of getting caught arise (D1.2).



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

This type of strategy allows the continuation of the abusive dynamic by prolonging it over time, involving the minor so that he/she does not communicate the situation in which he/she is involved to third parties (De Santiesteban and Gámez-Guadix, 2017b).

Scenario [it also works for corruption] 1.11.

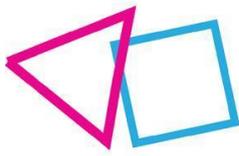
Description: You have been connected to social networks for some time because you are bored and you want to meet new people. You receive a friend request from a person. You go to his profile and see that he is a photographer who has done advertising campaigns with influencers.

Options:

- A) You accept his friend request;
 - If you accept the invitation (option A) the unknown person offers to take some pictures of you because he finds you attractive and so you can start as an influencer. He starts asking you for photos of yourself.
 - A) You agree to send them to him.
 - If you agree to send him photos (option A), he sets more and more conditions, like that some photos should be nude
 - A) You agree to send a nude.
 - If you send a nude, from that moment on, he begins to threaten you with spreading those photos in your school in exchange for you sending him more naked photos and videos masturbating.
 - B) You do not agree and you decide to block him
 - B) You do not agree and you decide to block him.
 - B) You ignore it

E) Sex

Online abusers try to involve the child in the abusive behavior, making it seem like a free relationship established by mutual agreement. The most common stratagems are providing compliments before introducing sexual content, which are always alternated with non-sexual topics aimed to fulfill their emotional needs (Lorenzo-Dus and Izura, 2017).



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

On one hand, the most frequent topic of the conversations that offenders and victims had was sexual content (87.5%, $n=7$), followed by a request for sexual contact in 62.5% ($n=5$) of the cases, regarding the victims' sample. The frequency of topics of conversation in the court sentences is collected in Figure 2.

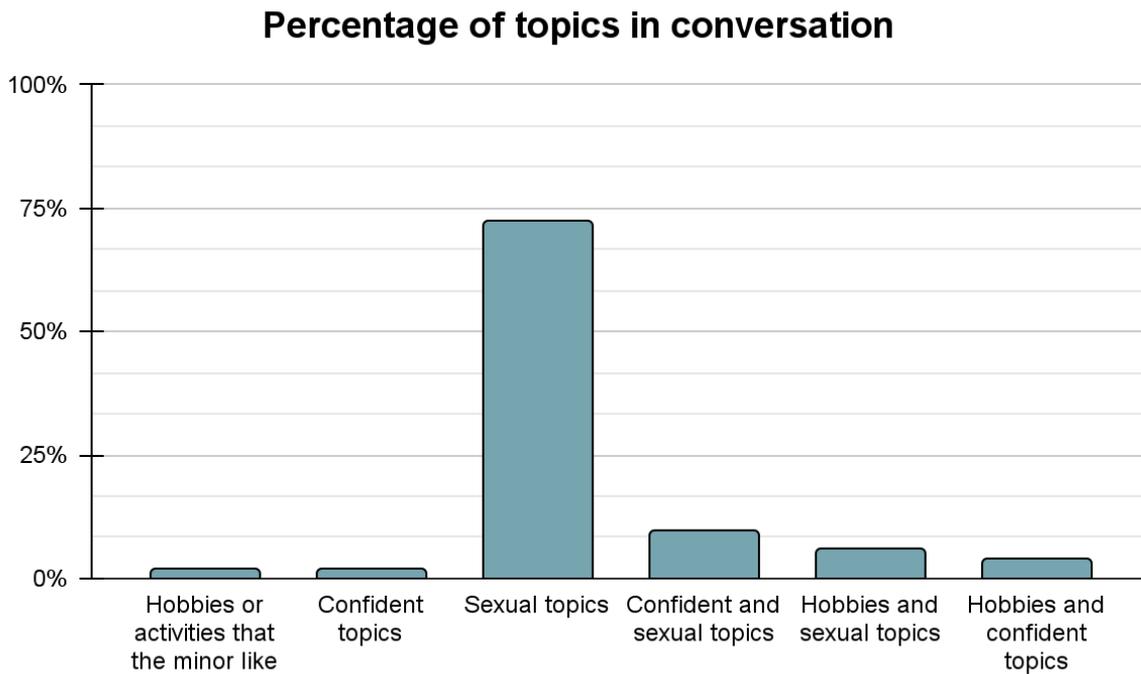
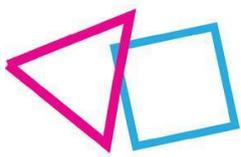


Figure 2. Percentage of topics in conversation.

The main topics of the conversations that were registered in the sentences were sexual topics (72.1%), being non-sexual a very small percentage of the topics. It is difficult to know whether these figures represent the real conversations or is there is a bias in the sentences, not collecting the ones that are not specifically related with sex. The topics of conversation did not vary from one region to another.

Regarding the exchange of material, according to the sentences, 74.4% ($n=67$) of the victims exchanged some type of content with the offender, specifically 65.7% ($n=44$) were images, 4.5% ($n=3$) were videos, and 29.8% ($n=20$) were images and videos. Of these, 98,5% ($n=66$) were of sexual nature. To classify the level of severity of such sexual content, the classification of child sexual abuse material



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report from the COPINE scale (Taylor et al., 2001) was followed. The most frequent severity levels are explicit erotic posing and explicit sexual activity. The results are shown in Figure 3.

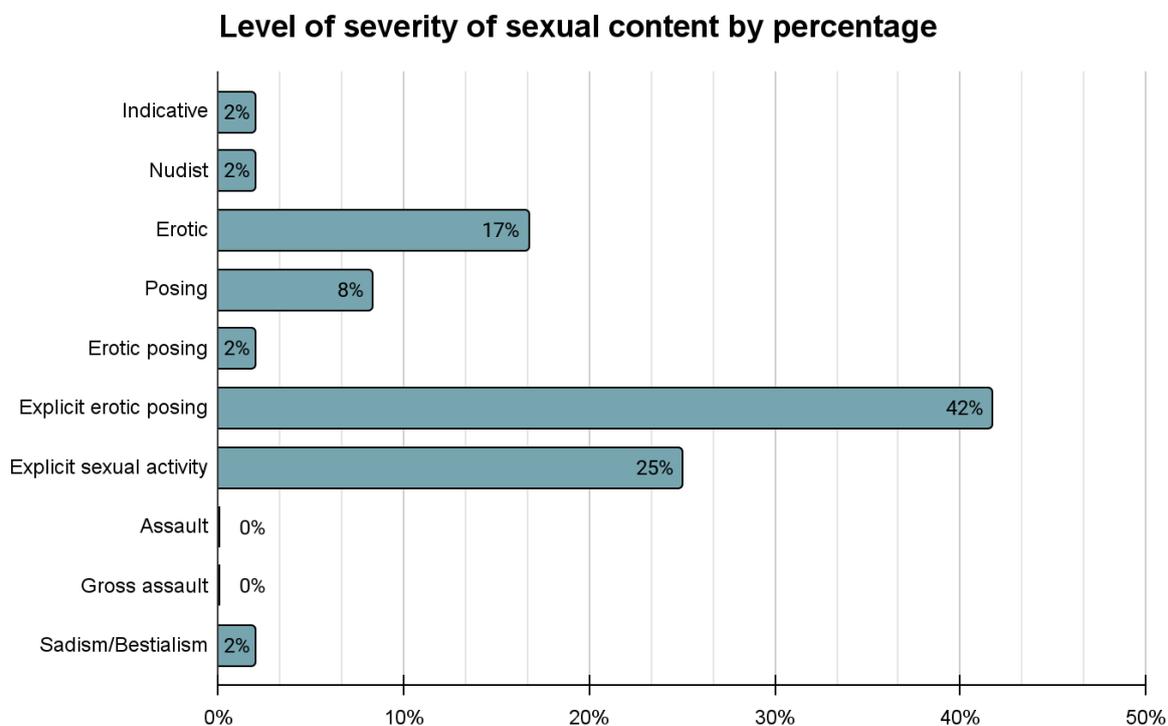
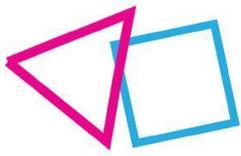


Figure 3. Classification of the level of severity of sexual content.

Regarding the victims' sample, although 2 victims ended up with physical sexual encounters (after the implication strategy was used), 4 (50%) sent different types of pictures. Offenders normally seemed to have prepared the conversations so that at one point the topics changed from general ones to sexual. However, others directly go to sexual topics. In addition, it is relevant to highlight that one risk factor is curiosity around sexuality and their own desire for experimentation.

On the other hand, when we are managing offenders' data, almost all of them (93.3%, $n=14$) obtained images from their victims, and nearly half of them (46.7%, $n=7$) had a sexual physical encounter. The severity of the content varied from semi-naked pictures to sadistic/bestiality ones. A strategy used by offenders is taking advantage of the victims' lack of knowledge and explain them questions about sex through descriptions or sending diverse (sensitive/sexual) material. Some offenders explained that it is important to gradually increase the severity of pictures, and they found it very easy to get photos from boys, because male victims were quite "sexualized", so there was no need to put pressure on



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

them. Thus, this can be a risk factor since sending nude content is a common practice among male adolescents. However, sexuality exists in teenagers and must consider it as a reality. So, avoiding taboo around sexuality would help teenagers to talk about dangerous situations and establish boundaries, due to the fact that adolescents and minors generally use the Internet as a source of sexual information.

Moreover, based on the results of the sentencing analysis (D1.4), in the majority of the cases (45%) the material exchanged was photos, followed by 25% of cases in which both photos and videos were exchanged. However, 30% did not exchange any type of content with the offenders. Of the cases in which material was exchanged, 93,4% of the cases involved sexual content. The level of severity ranged widely, from bikini photos to streaming masturbation videos with more than one person watching. The tone of the conversations, as it could be seen in the transcripts, was very explicit in many cases on both sides.

The number of offline encounters was quite high, especially in the sentence sample, where it was as high as 66.7% agreed (in 75.3% of the cases it was proposed). In the offenders' sample it was 63.63%, being only 25% in the victims' sample.

Scenario 1.12.

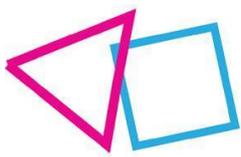
Description: You are playing a videogame online. This video game has a chat to talk with other players. A player starts talking to you to tell you how well you are playing and asks you for your social network to share with you some tricks.

Options:

- A) You accept and you send him an invitation
 - You add each other to social networks and start talking about video games. After a few weeks, he talks to you about sexual topics. Options:
 - A) You are curious and keep the conversation going
 - B) You feel uncomfortable and you decide to cut off the conversation
- B) You ignore him

Takeaway points

- Attention should be paid to both slow types and opportunistic offenders, as although the first ones would be more dangerous, the second ones are more frequent.



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

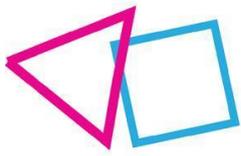
- The strategy of deception is not only limited to the age of the profile. Offenders often lie about their feelings and to get more information they have about the victims. According to D.1.4. offenders did not change that much their way of speaking or writing to look younger.
- Implication was the most used strategy. Results show that it is the main predictor of having a physical sexual contact, as it was also found in D1.4. It involves talking about the minor's problem, becoming a source of support, and it can end up in a romantic relationship.
- To ask for sexual material in exchange for advice about video games is becoming a more and more frequent strategy. It may be especially dangerous as the main target are boys (who are more prompted to send images), and these offenders can be very influential.
- Blackmail and coercion are not limited to the most frequent and well-known situation -that of threatening to make photos public. As was the case in D1.4, the threat of breaking off the relationship (both romantic and friendship) also produces a strong effect on the victims. In addition, the offenders may play with the fear of revealing material even when he does not have anything yet, as scaring a young person by threatening his/ her social reputation can be easy.
- Sexual curiosity must be always considered a risk factor, although there also seems to be a bias in offenders' narratives about their victims' sexuality. The same curiosity is exploited by offenders who take advantage of their lack of knowledge teaching their victims about sex. A stronger sexual education could diminish this risk.
- The offenders use different coercion strategies for the victims to keep their secrets. Nevertheless, the fear of being blamed or punished causes many victims not to disclose the crime.

1.5.- GENDER DIFFERENCES

In the following section we will summarize the information and results obtained from the sentences' analysis and the data gathered from interviews with victims and perpetrators of the crime of online grooming. Both results are quite consistent, which shows a solid trend to consider regarding prevention.

A) Differences in strategies

First, we found that the use of **deception** to gain the victim's trust was related to female victims ($\chi^2=12.53, p<.001$), since this type of strategy was used in 75.8% of the cases of female victims while



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

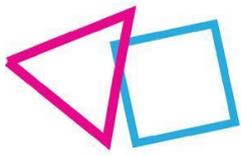
in the cases in which this strategy was used and the victim was a man, the percentage was significantly lower (31.4%).

Similarly, the use of **coercion** was also significantly related to being a female victim ($\chi^2=4.58, p=.032$), with 33.3% of female victims versus 11.4% of male victims. In addition, from the data found in relation to the sex of the victims, we found differences in the age of the victims depending on whether coercion was used or not ($U=191.00, p=.031$). In particular, the youngest victims suffered the most coercion. Another strategy that is related to being a female victim is **blackmailing** ($\chi^2=12.53, p<.001$) since, of the sentences analyzed, this strategy was only used with female victims (20%). In addition, the cases in which another violent crime was committed along with the grooming happened to a greater extent with female victims ($\chi^2=4.83, p=.028$).

Regarding the interview report, offenders use coercion or blackmail more frequently with girls. In both samples (victims and offenders), the more extreme cases of blackmailing, violence, and abusive relationships were all related to girls, as found in D.1.4. The search for personal vulnerabilities and the conversations around personal problems was only present in girl victims, which could also be related to the lower self-esteem and self-image that teenage girls usually have. Likewise, although girls and boys end up sending sexual material in equal measure, in girls this is often achieved after prolonged insistence, with phrases such as *what are you, a cock teaser*. One of the experts explained that self-esteem plays a role in online grooming, especially when it is about girls, being a less important factor when it is about boys. Similarly, the offenders use the fear of abandonment as a coercive strategy especially with girls.

Accordingly, most of the girls in our sample found that during the conversations with their offender: *they felt they could be attractive for another one, and that was cool*. This could be related to their sexual development but also to the pressure that female teenagers suffer for being attractive and feeling desired. On the other hand, the **corruption** strategy was related to being a boy victim ($\chi^2=9.94, p<.002$) with 72.4% of cases in which the victims were boys compared to 25.7% of girls. There were also significant differences between girls and boys in the platform used for the first contact ($\chi^2=12.85, p=.025$), **using boys more frequently online games and date sites and girls' social networks and messenger applications**.

Our results are consistent with previous research (Grosskopf; 2010) showing that offenders who contact girls are more aggressive than those who contact boys, as they seek a relationship of



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

domination through the use of threats and blackmail. We can indeed speak of gender-based violence, as the higher incidence of crime among girls is coupled with a higher likelihood of coercion, blackmail and violence.

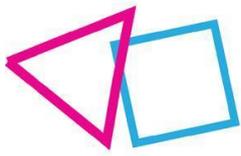
B) Different initiative

The way of selecting the victim in the court sentences was related to the sex of the victim ($\chi^2=8.72$, $p=.033$). Specifically, the selection of female victims was in most cases (96.5%) on purpose, while with boys the selection was on purpose (67.6%), opportunistic (11.7 %), and in 17.6% the approach was produced by the victim. **It was also found that offenders tend to contact girls (77%) through a false identity ($\chi^2 = 21.81$, $p <.001$) more than with boys (18.5%).**

From the victims' sample, boys did not give as much importance to the situation as girls did. Only one of the three boys felt really uncomfortable with the grooming situation, and it was because he was afraid that people would think he was gay. The boy who talked to the Youtuber did not understand why the police had to be involved, and the boy who was requested photos by a young woman simply did not take it seriously. We also found a slightly greater initiative in boys than in girls, according to the results in D1.4. From the victim's sample, one was the one who contacted the offender, and another one was on a dating application. **From the offenders' sample**, some male victims approached the offenders through what we have called "a chain of contacts" which was also more frequent in boys in D1.4.

Both situations, showing more initiative and giving less importance to the grooming situation, may be explained because boys are socialized in a greater risk-taking, and they are taught not to repress their sexuality. This greater initiative is also found on a sexual level since, according to experts, boys discover their sexuality as an active subject, and they are more uninhibited on the Internet, while girls are more reluctant to show their sexuality because they are more sexualized as passive objects.

From one of the interviewed offenders point of view, when the interaction is with boys: *The sexual topic very frequently arises from both parts at the same time. For example, if one says you're very handsome, and the other responds "you too", then you can start talking about sex, or asking a photo because then it would not feel weird. They are not frightened to send some photos or videos because their hormones are very altered. But boys and girls differ in this sense. Girls do not tend to send photos or as many photos as boys.* In his opinion, there is no need to encourage boys to send nudes as it is something they commonly do.



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

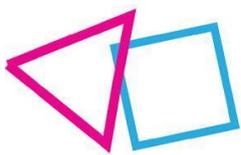
According to our results in D1.5, some experts point out that offenders sexually solicited more girls than boys, but boys more easily enter the dynamics of online grooming. One of the experts pointed out that an offender he caught, who pretended to be a girl, was able to get naked images from 11 boys in only two days. From his point of view, when victims are girls, offenders are not so successful.

Therefore, the strategies used are different depending on the gender of the kid. In the case of boys, the offender often takes advantage of the curiosity or the condition of homosexuality. As one offender explains: *When you are 14-years-old you know you are gay, but you know nothing about it. Then, it is practical to meet someone older that helps you to get started in sex. It is the same as when learning how to ride a bicycle: it is very helpful to get advice from some elite sportsman who can teach you about it, than from anyone that has just initiated riding. I know that I was into boys when I was 13 or 14.* In the victims' sample, an offender tried to imply a boy explaining to him that he was pansexual, which according to the minor would mean: a person that likes other persons for their personality.

Regarding the differences found according to the sex of the victims, the encounter with the offender occurred in practically the same ($\chi^2=0.29$, $p=0.866$) percentage of cases in female (38%) and male (40%) victims. There were also no differences in the percentage of cases in which the offender proposed contact ($\chi^2=1.96$, $p<.374$), with 60% of cases in which the offender proposed contact to the female victim and 71% of cases to the male victim

However, a correlation was found between agreeing to the encounter and the sex of the victims ($\chi^2=3.95$, $p<.033$), with boys who tend to accept having an encounter in 79% of the cases compared to 47% in the case of girls. In any case, the percentages in which the victims agree to have an encounter are high in both cases, although boys showed a greater initiative here as well.

It was found in D1.4 (p. 37) that sexual orientation in homosexual male victims is relevant because it helps the perpetrators to maintain abusive relationships, manipulation and power over their victims, since these are in a situation that may not be able to speak openly with their closest family members or to disclose it (due to isolation or poor communication), who believe that their sexual orientation is something bad (emotional insecurities, as found in D1.2, p. 8). It is also a barrier to denounce the facts, since telling that a man has abused him due to his homosexuality or sexual orientation is a double limitation. This, obviously, influences the statistics by increasing the black figure. Similarly, in the survey, it was found that LGBTI participants were more likely to have maintained online conversations with adults ($\chi^2=12.87$, $p=.025$).



Scenario 1.13:

Description: For instance, a young homosexual boy downloading gay dating App (like Grindr-Tindr) to meet more people like him. He lies in his age, and gets in contact with old/adult gay male that engages a conversation with the boy. Along the conversation, the adult realizes that the boy is a minor and the conversation keeps going. The adult starts sexual conversations and requires the minor nudes or sensitive photos/content.

Options: A) I will keep going with the sexual conversation, I even share some photos. B) Block and report the profile in the App. C) Tell it right away to a friend or someone you have confidence with.

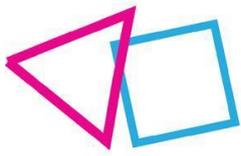
Objective: To see if the minor detects vulnerable situations and how to manage the situation. To measure the human factor in cybercrime.

These results are quite relevant as they show that different approaches must be taken in terms of prevention. Reflection about gender roles should be incorporated into this kind of programs, as in those more general about sex education. According to one of the interviewed experts, from the victimisation perspective, boys don't cry and are hard, so they are less likely to report abuse. The same would apply to the LGBTQ people. The different ways of flirting -in terms of using applications and meeting people online- take place in combination with the fact that these youngsters are far more in a situation of uncertainty and struggling with their identity.

Other variables that were related with the sex of the victim were the background of the offenders, since 80% of the offenders who attacked boys had a prior criminal history while none of those who attacked girls had a prior criminal record ($\chi^2=19.65, p=.006$).

Takeaway points

- Female and younger victims are more likely to suffer coercion. Besides, offenders tend to use more deception, false identities, blackmailing, and commit another violent crime with girls, using corruption to a greater extent with boys. On the other hand, male victims are more likely to start the contact and to agree to the physical encounter, which may suggest a less perception of the risk.



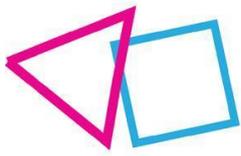
D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

- Girl victims gave more importance to the situation than boys, and boys had a slightly greater initiative than girls. This can be a consequence of boys' socialization: greater risk-taking and not repressing their sexuality.
- For boys, the offenders often take advantage of their curiosity or their condition of homosexuality. In contrast, with girls, the offenders search for personal vulnerabilities and conversations related to personal problems.
- The coercion or blackmailing strategies are used more frequently with girls, who suffer the more extreme cases, and in whom low self-esteem plays a greater role.
- It is relevant to take into account the gender-related differences in order to take different approaches for prevention.

1.6.- REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

First of all, from an anthropological perspective, the differences encountered in sexual abuse rates among diverse ethnic groups or regions have been minimal (Elliott & Urquiza, 2006, Putnam, 2003). However, these are certainly difficult comparisons. If being a child does not mean the same in different times and places, a consensus on what behaviours is considered sexual neither exist, being reporting rates also unclear. Likewise, it is complicated to compare the prevalence of online grooming among territories, since various studies do not have similar inclusion criteria. Ferreira and collaborators (2011) conducted a research that specifically compared the incidence of online grooming, **finding no significant differences between samples from Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom**. Nevertheless, several risk factors may be related to sociocultural and historical variables. For instance, Soriano and collaborators (2019) analysed a sample in Andalusia (Spain) of young Moroccans and Spaniards. Young Moroccan men were the ones who practiced sexting the most, followed firstly by young Spaniards men, and secondly by Spanish women (although this group received more nude pictures), with the Moroccan women occupying the last place.

A number of similar trends were found when comparing the results of the analysis of court sentences in the different European areas, which shows that almost no significant differences were found. The total number of offenders was 51 with a **mean age of 36.63** ($SD=13.03$), with ages ranging from 16 to 70 years. However, **no differences** were found in the age of the offenders according to the different regions ($H=1.06$, $p=.589$).



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

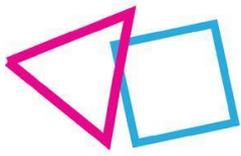
Regarding the interviews, the data obtained for the analysis by zones were too scarce to statistically compare them. Nevertheless, no qualitative differences were found in the analysis and results were consistent with those found in D1.4. Therefore, information gathered from the interviews of experts was consistent with the one found in the court sentences.

In relation to criminal records, 31.4% ($n=16$) had committed previous offences. In addition, differences were found according to the different regions ($\chi^2=11.77$, $p=.008$), with **more offenders in the north having a criminal record (72%, $n=8$), while the south had the lowest number of offenders with previous offences (17.6%, $n=3$)**. According to one expert, these findings related to some regional differences in recidivism could be explained by cultural singularities. In less individualistic countries or in those where the family has a greater impact, recidivism would be lower than in others with less social support and/or control. This would be a trend previously found as well regarding child sexual abuse material offenders.

In terms of the information obtained related to the victims, **104 victims** were found with a mean age of 13.78 years ($SD=1.62$) between the four European zones. **Differences were also found in the age of the victims ($H=9.26$, $p=.026$)**, with the victims in the North (UK and Estonia) being the youngest and those in the West (Belgium) being the oldest victims. These results are consistent with the different age of consent in every country, showing an effect of legislation more than a different modus operandi. Regarding the sex of the victims, 53.8% ($n=56$) of them were girls while 46.2% ($n=48$) were boys. The percentages show that **there were no significant differences in the sex of the victims according to the European area ($\chi^2=4.19$, $p=.24$)**.

In this type of crime, one offender may frequently have several victims, as the access to victims is easier due to the development of social networks and new technologies. We found a mean of 7.62 ($SD=7.52$) victims per offender, being the maximum number of victims per offender 19, and the minimum a single victim. Differences were found in this variable depending on the region ($\chi^2=34.64$; $p<.001$), with **Spain being the area in which there are more victims per offender and Belgium the only area in which only one victim per offender was found**.

In relation to the selection of victims, 77.5% ($n=69$) of them were selected by the offender on purpose, 8.9% ($n=8$) opportunistically, in 8.9% ($n=8$) of the cases it was the victim who approached the offender, and in 4.5% ($n=4$) the selection was carried out through a combination of the previous options. Furthermore, in 85.1% ($n=86$) of the cases the offenders were people unknown to the child and in



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

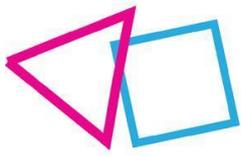
14.9% ($n=15$) they were people from the child's close environment. **No differences were found in the type of relationship that the offender maintained with the victim depending on the regions ($\chi^2=15.19, p=.231$).**

The platform more frequently used for the first contact was the social networks (52.9%, $n=59$), followed by chat services (14.4%, $n=15$), video games (4.8%, $n=5$), dating websites or applications (4.8%, $n=5$), text messages (1.9%, $n=2$) and other platforms (2.9%, $n=3$). In this variable, **differences were found in the use of one platform or another in relation to the different regions ($\chi^2=35.95, p=.007$)**. Thus, it was found that in the Southern region, most of the first contact was made through a social network (67.3%, $n=33$) as well as in the Northern region (71.4%, $n=10$). In the West, the most used platform was chat services (75%, $n=9$) as it was in the East (50%, $n=5$). The topics of conversation did not vary from one region to another. **The type of content exchanged did not vary between regions, being in all four zones the percentage was quite high.**

Regarding the persuasive strategies to get and maintain contact with the victims, **coercion was found to be used more in some areas than in others ($\chi^2=46.33, p<.001$)**. Specifically, the South is the area where this strategy is less used (35%, $n=7$) while **in the North and the West coercion was found in a much higher percentage of cases**, respectively 81.8% ($n=9$) and 90% ($n=9$).

On the other hand, it was found that **deception varied also** according to the zones ($\chi^2=47, p<.001$). **The North zone had the lowest use of deception with 18,2% ($n=2$), while in the West zone 90% ($n=9$) of cases used deception and in the South zone 50% ($n=10$)**. Regarding the use of **false identities**, they were used by 44.4% of the offenders, with **no significant differences ($\chi^2=5.65, p=.130$)** between regions. Finally, the **blackmail** strategy was used in only 8 cases (17.4%), **not existing differences between countries ($\chi^2=3.19, p=.363$)**. There were also no differences between regions related to **Implication, which** was found to be used by 35,9% of offenders ($n=14$) and **corruption** by 25,5 % ($n=13$).

Despite these slight differences, the same trend was not found through the interviews. In addition, most experts pointed out that **there are no regional differences in the online grooming phenomenon, as the offender will always adapt to the victim and look for vulnerabilities in the victim no matter to what region the victim belongs**. Therefore, experts consider that the modus operandi is the same in



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

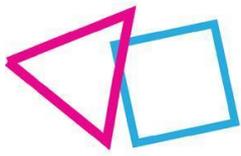
all regions as, in addition, offenders from different parts of the world share tricks with each other through online forums on how to groom a minor for sexual content.

According to experts, **what does change is the social awareness of the problem** in different European countries and that it depends on many variables such as education, religion, the context of each minor, etc. These differences in the social awareness of the issue are related, among others, to two facts. Firstly, to the **lack of unification in the definition of the crime of online grooming** in the different European countries. Secondly, to the **inconsistency in the definition of an age limit**.

The mean duration of the relationship when there was offline contact was 100.34 days ($SD=136.77$), with contacts lasting a minimum of two days and a maximum of 720 days, with no differences between the regions. In those cases where the information was recorded in the sentence, the total number of offline contacts collected across the four regions was 95 with a mean of 1.01 ($SD=1.73$) contact per case, with a maximum of 10 contacts. In this variable, significant differences were found in the number of contacts depending on the zone ($H=8.63$, $p=.035$).

Of the cases that ended in offline contacts, **63.63% ($n=28$) were found to be sexual encounters in those sentences where the information was recorded**. In this variable, differences were found from one area to another in both having a meeting ($\chi^2=10.23$, $p=.017$) and having a meeting with sexual contact ($\chi^2=8.76$, $p=.033$). The West zone had the highest percentage of cases that had meetings (90%, $n=9$) followed by the North zone (62.5%, $n=5$), East zone (50%, $n=6$), and finally the South (38.1%, $n=24$) where the percentage was lower. Spain was the country where the least number of encounters took place, which could be explained by the wider definition of online grooming in their national legislation. Regarding the cases in which these encounters end in a sexual contact, in the zone they were 77.7% ($n=7$) of the meetings, in the North zone 42.8%, ($n=3$), in the South (39.5%, $n=15$) and finally in the East zone 27.27%, ($n=3$).

In most cases in all areas there was a proposal to carry out the offline contact, being this proposal made in 75.3% ($n=67$). In only one case ($n=1$) it was the victim who proposed to meet in person, and in 24.7%, ($n=22$) there was no proposal. 44 Victims agreed, 66.7% of those proposed. **The only strategy that clearly correlated with having a physical encounter was implication ($\chi^2=6.47$, $p=.011$).**



Takeaway points

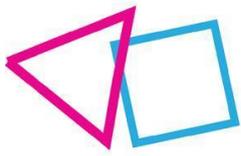
- Most of the findings are similar when analyzing in one single zone and taking the whole European sample, which means a solid trend.
- Most of the victims exchanged sexual material and agreed to have a physical meeting on a high percentage, ending often in a sexual contact.
- Almost no significant differences were found in the modus operandi between zones, which implies that specific scenarios do not need to be developed. The only differences relate to the definition of the crime, offenders' recidivism, and the social awareness of the phenomenon.

1.7.- DISCLOSURE

As said in D1.2 we can highlight the following: in 62.5% ($n=5$) of the cases of the **victims' sample**, the kids kept the relationship secret. In most cases, it was the offender who encouraged the victims to keep it that way, yet not in all of them. Some victims also were afraid of being blamed: *I didn't tell anyone for fear of being blamed, disrespect towards myself*. In terms of prevention, it is relevant to consider the fact that, although the offenders do not encourage the victims, they may not tell other people about the situation in which they are involved.

In three cases the offender directly asked to keep that secret. In the first one, the boy was asked and did it because he feared that others would think he was homosexual. In the other two cases, it was part of the whole strategy of coercion and gender violence. In the words of one of the girls: *I kept the relationship a secret, yes. He told me that I shouldn't tell anyone about it, that we could have problems, that I was just a stupid child, which I was*. In the last one, it was the student who explained the two different ways the offender did it. Firstly, by telling her that it was their secret in common, teaching her how to lie, explaining how he lied to other people, etc. Secondly, with more direct or indirect threats, and undermining one's confidence: *I'm actually still scared he might do something negative. He once threatened me that because I was an adulterer I would know what they do to people like that in other countries.... Stoned to death*.

Regarding the court sentence sample, although not all information is available, most cases are discovered due to police investigation, through other reports and successive cell phone or computer dumps. This implies a very high percentage of cases that remain unreported (**black figure**). In some



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

cases, even after the discovery, the victims continued to deny having had relations, despite the existence of evidence (**negation**).

In this sense, it is relevant that when two parents discover that their daughter has a relationship with an offender, they punish her without a cell phone and computer. However, taking advantage of the Internet access available to the console, she contacted the offender to warn him of the complaint and gave him advice so that he would not go to prison. This example is in line with the strategies that emphasize **the need to improve communication in the family environment, as opposed to simply cutting off networks**.

From the **sample of the offenders**, although most of them explained that the relationship was secret, only two of them admitted asking the minor to not reveal: one of them telling her that he could *end up in jail* and the other one saying *it stays between us*. Both strategies had already been seen in D1.4. Another offender explained that there is no need to ask for the secret because, as they have the other person's pictures, the victim does not want to be revealed.

Scenario 1.14 [Taken from victims epigraph].

Description: Family communication could be measured in the disclosure section (it could be in a second step, after having talked to a friend. For instance, when making a decision regarding asking them/telling them some incident):

Options: a) it is not worthed, they do not care... Too worried about their problems. b) They might help but maybe they are too angry because all the time I spend online and they decide to cut me off. c) I'll try to ask them about their opinion, as X suggested.

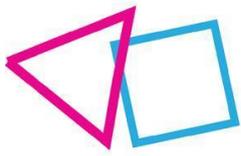
Objectives: to measure family communication.

1.8.- INCIDENCE, EVOLUTION AND CONSEQUENCES

A) Incidence and evolution

As it was mentioned above, although it is complicated to compare the prevalence of online grooming among territories, there does not seem to be significant differences, as it is the case in general sexual abuse.

Prevalence rates on this crime are imprecise (Bryce, 2010) and **variable** mainly due to the ability of children to recognize the problem and to be involved in a risky situation. However, the Child



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

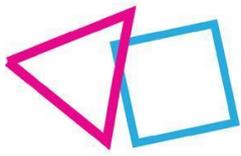
Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP) in 2010 reported an increase in the number of online grooming reports between 2009 and 2010: 64% of the 2391 reports received were related to online grooming, with this crime being the most reported to CEOP (CEOP, 2010).

At the European level, the results of a study conducted in Spain (Villacampa and Gomez, 2016) showed that 11% of the sample had watched sexual photographs online and 9% of the minors between 11 and 16 years old had received sexual messages while surfing on the Internet, compared to the European average that places it at 15%. Similarly, the results related to online contacts with strangers revealed that 21% of young people had participated in an online relationship with unknown people, while in the European Union this percentage rises to 34%. However, the percentage of physical contact with people they had met online decreased to 9%, being this data similar in Spain and the rest of Europe.

Nevertheless, one of the most important findings revealed that there is a difference between online grooming and sexual abuse, because in the first one, 75% ($n=15$) of the offenders were strange people, not known by the victims. Meanwhile, in the second one, around 99.7% ($N=942$) of the aggressors were men of which 35% were close relatives, 21% of the offenders were distant relatives, 8% of them were close acquaintance, 26% of the them were far acquaintance, and only 9% of the offenders were strangers (Del-Real Castrillo, 2019, p. 15). So, we can say that offenders usually take advantage of their previous relationship with the victim.

Concerning the **evolution of online grooming**, experts agree that there has been a notable increase of up to 70% in the number of cases of this cybercrime. Some experts justify this increase as a consequence of the development of new technologies, where offenders have a new environment where they can commit sexual abuse crimes from anonymity and with much greater scope. On the contrary, others explain that it is not so much an increase in the number of cases but an increased detection so it appears that the number of cases has increased.

We also find experts who justify the growth of cases due to the fact that young people have access to the Internet and spend more time online. Proof of this is that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase of 300 percent as both young people and perpetrators have spent more time online. In addition, different countries reported a considerable increase in online grooming reports. The online traffic of videos with child sexual content rose up to 30% in the case of Argentina and to 507% in the case of Spain (Micucci ESET, 2020). Specifically, there has been an increase in sextortion, with two trends; on the one hand, criminal networks that use false profiles through bots, and on the other hand,



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report sextortion between young people, where one receives images and extorts the other with the threat of making those images public (as referred in D1.2, p. 10).

B) Consequences

Some of the consequences of OG referred by the experts range from anxiety and depression to eating disorders (with a weight loss of 20 kilos), drop in school performance, or even suicide. It takes a long time for some of them to recover. Feelings of guilt and shame are quite common. Thus, as one victim also highlighted, it is essential “not blaming the victim”. The problem of shame appears when the kid thinks that he has done something he knew he should have done, and the feeling increases as is something related to sexuality. This is important regarding recovering, but must be considered too when prevention strategies are designed, as it is crucial for disclosing (as discussed in D1.2). Previous studies have found, for instance, that, regarding sexting, the focus is usually on girls, which blame them censoring the expression of their sexuality (Karaian; 2014). Similarly, De Ridder (2018) has described how the criminalization of sexting involves stigmatization, which helps sexting become a cyberbullying tool.

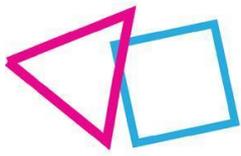
Some of the consequences in the short term of the process of online grooming for the victims are reflected in several sentences: *changes in the behavior becoming more aggressive, giving bad answers and disregarding the rules imposed on him, experiencing a setback in the evolution of the treatment of his disability, losing autonomy to perform activities alone, always demanding to be accompanied, reacting with fear if ever he occasionally meets the defendant, showing himself, sometimes, nervous at home and at school, ceasing to make an effort in the routines and roles played in his day to day activities of daily life, family and academic* (D1.4, pp. 21-22).

Among the consequences that appear in the long term are having to move house *for the minor's mental health, treatment for different emotional alterations, sadness, anxiety, feelings of insecurity and inferiority, difficulty in identifying and expressing emotions, mistrust, feelings of guilt, discomfort and fear before stimuli related to aggression and feelings of anger. Or symptoms like redness, swelling, shortness of breath, trouble falling asleep* (as discussed in D1.4, pp. 21-22).

1.9.- CONCLUSIONS

In the following section we will discuss the conclusions reached after this study:

Firstly (1), the findings show that there is no specific profile of the victims, however we found a solid trend regarding gender differences. On one hand, when the victims are girls, deception, coercion,



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

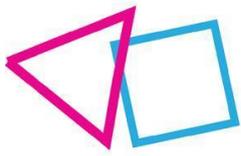
threats of both violence and abandonment, and blackmail are more frequent, being the outcome more likely to involve another violent crime, such as rape or attempted murder. On the other hand, boys show a greater initiative initiating the contact themselves and agreeing to meet with the offender. Offenders contact more girls but are more successful with boys, so the difference between the two is not so great.

Secondly (2), regarding the age and sex of the victims, similar to previous research, being a girl or adolescent appears as a risk factor for online grooming (Wolak et al., 2010). It is relevant to highlight that age is a risk factor due to the characteristics of this stage of life. Specifically, the results of the research show that the age of highest risk to be a victim of online grooming is between 13 and 14 years old, such as the changes that accompany puberty, curiosity about sexuality and new experiences, a certain distance from parental figures, and emotional insecurities due to greater social pressure (which is even stronger in girls). Also some of the risk factors found are; low self-esteem, poor family communication, economic problems, etc.

Thirdly (3), we can highlight that isolation has appeared as the most relevant risk factor as precipitant for suffering online sexual abuse or online grooming in the victims' sample, even though previous studies like the Shoon's one (2006) demonstrated that there is not a single factor, but various that facilitate victimisation. In addition, we discovered that sexual orientation in boys is a risk factor that can contribute to maintaining the abusive relationship with the offender as they cannot reach out help to their parents or friends if they have not come out officially. Moreover, another risk factor has appeared as a precipitator to victimisation: having a public profile. So, it is important, as a preventive measure, to keep the profile private.

Fourthly (4), some perpetrators pointed out some affective deficiencies in childhood, feelings of loneliness and isolation in adulthood. This last factor is considered as a trigger. In addition, it is important to highlight that young offenders have to be considered, because we have found evidence in the interviews that there is another profile, rather than the male-older-offender that comes into our minds when we think about online grooming. For that reason, this is important when making prevention decisions. Moreover, unemployment is also emphasized by Webster and collaborators (2012) as a risk factor for perpetrators, although we do not think it is a determinant factor.

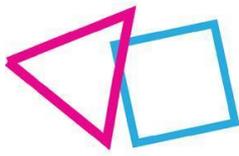
Fifthly (5), in relation to offenders' modus operandi, perpetrators use a wide variety of strategies for contacting minors and obtaining sexual content. The most used strategies are implication and



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

deception as they are the least suspicious when the offender comes to initiating the contact. Nevertheless, it is extended that they use a combination of various persuasive strategies. Although in general terms offenders and victims did not know before the crime, almost 20% of the offenders were known by their victims, which could be even a higher rate if we take into account that it can be difficult to denounce the crime when it takes place in close contexts. So, it raises the unreported crime or black figure, as Del-Real Castrillo states (2019).

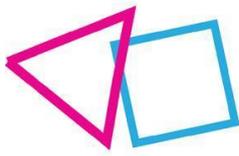
Finally (6), the prevention of online grooming should not be separated from sexual and gender equality education. This is it because gender socialization appears as a risk factor in both boys and girls. In girls, the pressure of being desired and low self-esteem would make them more vulnerable. In boys, the traditional male role would make them more likely to underestimate risk and engage in more unsafe behaviours.



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

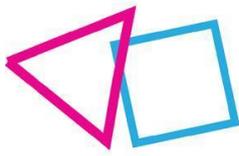
1.10.- REFERENCES OG

- Babchishin, K. M., Karl Hanson, R., & Hermann, C. A. (2011). The characteristics of online sex offenders: A meta-analysis. *Sexual Abuse a Journal of Research and Treatment*, 23(1), 92-123.
- Barber, C. S., & Bettez, S. C. (2020). Exposing patterns of adult solicitor behaviour: towards a theory of control within the cybersexual abuse of youth. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 1-32.
- Baumgartner, S., Valkenburg, P., y Peter, J. (2010). Unwanted online sexual solicitation and risky sexual online behavior across the lifespan. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 31, 439-447.
- Bergen, E., Ahto, A., Schulz, A., Imhoff, R., Antfolk, J., Schuhmann, P., & Jern, P. (2015). Adult-Adult and Adult-Child/Adolescent Online Sexual Interactions: An Exploratory Self-Report Study on the Role of Situational Factors. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 52, 1006-1016.
- Bodecka-Zych, M., Zajenkowska, A., & Bower-Russa, M. Sex Differences in Inmates: Anger, Sensitivity to Provocation and Family History of Imprisonment. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0306624x211049189>.
- Briggs, P., Simon, W. T., & Simonsen, S. (2011). An exploratory study of internet-initiated sexual offenses and the chat room sex offender: has the internet enabled a new typology of sex offender? *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 23, 72–91. DOI: 10.117/1079063210384275.
- Bryce, J. (2010). Online sexual exploitation of children and young people. En Y. Jewkes, y M. Yar (Eds.), *Handbook of internet crime* (pp. 320–342). Willan.
- De Ridder, S. (2018). Sexting as sexual stigma: The paradox of sexual self-representation in digital youth cultures. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 22 (2-6), 563-578.
- De Santisteban, P., & Gámez-Guadix, M. (2017). Estrategias de persuasión en grooming online de menores: un análisis cualitativo con agresores en prisión. *Psychosocial Intervention*, 26(3), 139-146.
- De Santisteban, P., & Gámez-Guadix, M. (2017b). Estrategias de persuasión en grooming online de menores: un análisis cualitativo con agresores en prisión. *Psychosocial Intervention*, 26(3), 139-146.
- Del-Real Castrillo, C. (2019). Infractores, víctimas y características del abuso sexual contra menores en España. In *Pederastia. Análisis jurídico-penal, social y criminológico* (165-206). Aranzadi Editorial.
- Díaz-Bazán, R. A. (2014). Victimology: Support Fund, Assistance and Full Redress of Victim. *Lex*, 12, 1-18. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21503/lex.v12i14.621>.



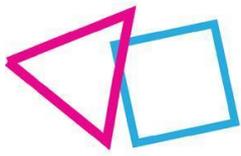
D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

- Elliott, K., & Urquiza, A. (2006). Ethnicity, culture, and child maltreatment. *Journal of Social Issues*, 62(4), 787-809. Doi: [10.1111/j.1540-4560.2006.00487.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2006.00487.x)
- European council (2015). "Online grooming": sexual abuse of children and cybercrime merged. Press release. New document adopted by the Council of Europe's monitoring body. <https://rm.coe.int/168071f8d6>
- European Online Grooming Project: Webster, S., Davidson, J., Bifulco, A., Gottschalk, P., Caretti, V., Pham, T., & Grove-Hills, J. (2012). European Online Grooming Project Final Report, European Union. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257941820_European_Online_Grooming_Project_-_Final_Report
- Ferreira, F., Martins, P., & Gonçalves, R. (2011). Online sexual grooming: a cross-cultural perspective on online child grooming victimisation. *Journal of Sexual Medicine*.
- Forth, A., Sezlik, S., Lee, S., Ritchie, M., Logan, J., & Ellingwood, H. Toxic Relationships: The Experiences and Effects of Psychopathy in Romantic Relationships. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624x11049187>.
- Grosskopf, A. (2010). Online interactions involving suspected paedophiles who engage male children. *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice*, (403), 1–6. <https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.846280530344276>.
- Jones, L. M., Mitchell, K. J., & Finkelhor, D. (2013). Online harassment in context: Trends from three youth internet safety surveys (2000, 2005, 2010). *Psychology of violence*, 3(1), 53.
- Jonsson, L. S., Fredlund, C., Priebe, G., Wadsby, M., & Svedin, C. G. (2019). Online sexual abuse of adolescents by a perpetrator met online: A cross-sectional study. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 13 (1).
- Karaian, L. (2014). Policing 'sexting': Responsibilization, respectability and sexual subjectivity in child protection/crime prevention responses to teenagers' digital sexual expression. *Theoretical Criminology*, 18(3), 282–299.
- Kloess, J. A., Beech, A. R., & Harkins, L. (2014). Online Child Sexual Exploitation: Prevalence, Process, and Offender Characteristics. *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse*, 15(2), 126–139.
- Korbin, J. E. (1987). Child Sexual Abuse: Implications from the Cross-Cultural Record. *Child Survival*, 247–265.
- Leukfeldt, R., & Holt, T.J. (2019). *The Human factor of cybercrime*. Routledge.
- Lorenzo-Dus, N., & Izura, C. (2017). "cause ur special": Understanding trust and complimenting behaviour in online grooming discourse. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 112, 68- 82.



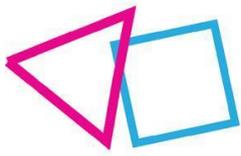
D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

- Maldonado-Guzmán, D. J. (2019). THE MISNAMED CRIME OF ONLINE GROOMING AS A FORM OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST MINORS. LEGAL PROBLEMS AND CRIMINOLOGICAL ASPECTS. *Revista Electrónica de Estudios Penales y de la Seguridad*, 5, 1-18. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7210287>.
- Micucci, M. (2020). Grooming: Una problemática que crece durante la cuarentena. Bratislava, Eslovaquia: We Live Security. Retrieved from: <https://www.welivesecurity.com/la-es/2020/05/20/grooming-crece-durante-cuarentena/>
- Miró Llinares, F., & Moneva, A. (2020). Environmental Criminology and Cybercrime: Shifting Focus from the Wine to the Bottles. In T. J. Holt T. J., y A. M. Bossler (Eds.) *The Palgrave Handbook of International Cybercrime and Cyberdeviance* (491-511). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mitchell, K. J., Finkelhor, D., & Wolak, J. (2001). Risk factors for and impact of online sexual solicitation of youth. *Jama*, 285(23), 3011-3014.
- Montiel, I., Carbonell, E. y Pereda, N. (2015). Multiple online victimisation of Spanish adolescents: results from a community sample. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 52, 123-134. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.12.005.
- Putnam, F. W. (2003). Ten-year research update review: Child sexual abuse. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 42(3), 269-78.
- Quayle, E. & Taylor, M. (2001). Child seduction and self-representation on the Internet. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 4(5), 597-608.
- Rima, D., Atakhanova, S., Mukhamadieva, G., Adlet, Y., & Beaver, KM. (2021). Involvement in Crime and Delinquency and the Development of Technological and Computer Skills: A Longitudinal Analysis. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624x211049195>.
- Scott, H., Biello, S. M., & Woods, H.C. (2019). Social media use and adolescent sleep patterns: cross-sectional findings from the UK millennium cohort study. *BMJ Open*, 9(9), e031161. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2019-031161>
- Shannon, D. (2008). Online sexual grooming in Sweden—Online and offline sex offences against children as described in Swedish police data. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 9(2), 160-180.
- Shoon, I. (2006). *Risk and resilience: Adaptations in changing times*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Soriano Ayala, E., Cala, V. C., & Bernal Bravo, C. (2019). Sociocultural and psychological factors affecting sexting: A transcultural study. *Revista de Educación*, 384, 175-190.



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

- Steely, M., Ten Bensel, T., Bratton, T., & Lytle, R. (2018). All part of the process? A qualitative examination of change in online child pornography behaviours. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 31(3), 279–296.
- Turkle, S. (1995). *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*. Simon and Schuster.
- Villacampa Estiarte, C., & Gómez Adillón, M. (2016). Nuevas tecnologías y victimización sexual de menores por online grooming. *Revista Electrónica de Ciencia Penal y Criminología*, 18(2), 1-27.
- Villacampa, C., & Gómez, M. (2017). Online child sexual grooming. International. *Review of Victimology*, 23, 105-121.
- Villanueva-Blasco, V. J., & Serrano-Bernal, S. (2019). Patrón de uso de internet y control parental de redes sociales como predictor de sexting en adolescentes: una perspectiva de género. *Revista de Psicología y Educación*, 14(1), 16-26. <https://doi.org/10.23923/rpye2019.01.168>
- Webster, S., Davidson, J., Bifulco, A., Gottschalk, P., Caretti, V., Pham, T., Grove-Hills, J., Turley, C., Tompkins, C., Ciulla, S., Milazzo, V., Schimmenti, A., & Craparo, G. (2012). European Online Grooming Project - Final Report. Retrieved from <https://childhub.org/en/child-protection-online-library/european-online-grooming-project-final-report>.
- Wells, M., & Mitchell, K. (2007) Youth sexual exploitation on the Internet: DSM-IV diagnoses and Gender Differences in co-occurring mental health issues. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 24, 235-260.
- Whittle, H. C., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C. E., & Beech, A. R. (2014). “Under his spell”: Victims’ perspectives of being groomed online. *Social Sciences*, 3(3), 404-426.
- Whittle, H., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., Beech, A., & Collings, G. (2013). A review of young people’s vulnerabilities to online grooming. *Aggression and Violent*, 18, 135-146.
- Wolak, J., Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K. J., & Ybarra, M. L. (2010). Online “predators” and their victims: Myths, realities and implications for prevention and treatment. *American Psychologist*, 63 (2), 111–1128.
- Wolak, J., & Finkelhor, D. (2013). Are Crimes by Online Predators Different From Crimes by Sex Offenders Who Know Youth In-Person? *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 53(6), 736-741. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.06.010>



2. CYBERBULLYING

2.1.- INTRODUCTION

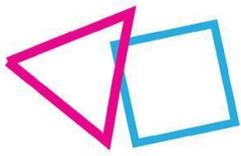
Cyberbullying is a type of aggression that takes place intentionally through different technological devices, specifically through cell phones and the Internet (Slonje & Smith, 2008). Bullying, on the other hand, is an aggressive act carried out deliberately by one or more persons against a victim who is less able to protect himself/herself (Slonje & Smith, 2008).

The main difference between both definitions is the method through which the aggressions occur, since in cyberbullying the main medium is the Internet (Lucas-Molina, et al., 2016). Furthermore, we find other characteristics in cyberbullying that differ from traditional bullying. Firstly, the scope and degree of dissemination that attacks carried out over the Internet have since, in a matter of minutes, the shared material can reach hundreds of people. Secondly, it is impossible to escape from the bullying acts. The victim is attacked in multiple settings, every day of the week, at any time of day. In traditional bullying, on the other hand, the aggressions are reduced to the time slots when the victim is at school. Finally, the third defining characteristic of cyberbullying is anonymity: While in traditional bullying the aggression occurs face to face, in cyberbullying the aggressor does not have to expose himself and can remain anonymous. Along with these characteristics, online bullying can be prolonged, which means that the victim is continuously reliving the situation of victimisation (Buelga, et al., 2010).

2.2.- INCIDENCE

Online bullying has increased significantly in the last decade as a result of the development of new technologies (Lucas-Molina, et al., 2016). The EU Kids Online (2020) project has studied the prevalence of the phenomenon in Europe, both in terms of victimisation and offending, finding differences in the countries surveyed (Smahel et al., 2020). For all countries, they found a higher proportion of minors who had been victims compared to perpetrators, with victimisation ranging around 20%, with some variation in certain countries. Slovakia, Croatia, and Italy reported the lowest prevalence, ranging from 10% and below.

In the European framework, Sorrentino and collaborators (2019) found that young Polish, Greeks and Italians spent less time on the Internet and reported lower rates of CB. In the same study, the authors



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

concluded that despite spending a lot of time on the Internet, Spanish young people experienced a low incidence of CB due to prevention work, a variable that should also be considered.

2.3.- THE EVOLUTION OF CYBERBULLYING DURING THE LAST YEARS

The interviews review indicated that as the use of digital tools increases over time, as well as the time spent online, the incidence of cyberbullying may increase. Also, as more and more of daily life takes place online, online crime spreads. There is a clear trend of online scams, reception of more fraud letters, emails and texts trying to lure (mostly) older people into these schemes in order to defraud them. With many online games requiring cash for extras and buffs, young people are vulnerable to this as well. Offenders offer online gifts or tokens in exchange for concessions: pictures, running an errand etc. During the pandemic, through boredom, an extreme increase in online traffic and a rise in cyberbullying/-crime might seem almost unavoidable (D1.2, p. 46).

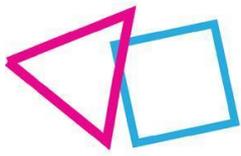
Takeaway points

- The “online shield” should be implemented from all points of view. The inability to see the other persons’ reactions is a large part of cyberbullying. There is also a possibility of misunderstandings in which messages did not come across correctly (D1.2, p. 46).
- Threat of “bribing/enticing/seducing” people with game buffs, extras and presents is very real. Also, scammers and hackers find a lot of opportunities here (through clicks on links in game chat...). RAYUELA can warn people and help them recognise the danger (D1.2, p. 46).

2.4.- CONSEQUENCES

Expert interviews indicated that offenders tend to consciously look for a power play, often to gain recognition and increase their own popularity. They search for an audience, which the (online) community provides. This has dysfunctional consequences for the victim who finds themselves in a minority position. Contradictory the offender cannot distinguish popularity from friendship: “sociometric popularity”. Bystanders do not necessarily agree but follow in line because of fear. Cyberbullying has the risk of becoming harsher thanks to the online shield. Without perceiving the direct consequences of their actions and immediate (physical) repercussions are unlikely, lines are more trivially crossed. This also creates a feeling of anonymity, but as stated earlier: uncommon.

Moral disengagement mechanisms (little empathy) are powerful predictors of aggressive behaviour. Linked are low self-control (impulsiveness), low or, on the contrary, excessively high self-esteem,



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

inability to understand consequences and refusal to cooperate. The main message is that, in general, the bully needs help, not stigmatization (D1.2, p.42).

The same methodology described in the "Introduction" section of Online grooming was used to carry out the research on cyberbullying. The same methodology described in the "Introduction" section of Online grooming was used to carry out the research on cyberbullying. The aim is to compile the commented information in previous reports (D1.1, D1.2 & D1.4) and the information obtained from focus groups and the survey.

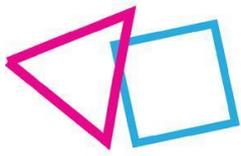
2.5.- VICTIMS

Regarding the age of the victims, the results remain unclear. While some studies suggest that the likelihood of being a victim of cyberbullying increases as young people get older (Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006), other research (Slonje & Smith, 2008) has shown lower rates of cyberbullying in 15–18-year-olds than in 12-16-year-olds. Similarly, Smith and colleagues (2008) found no relationship between being a victim of cyberbullying and age.

The analysis of CB sentences indicated that regarding the victim's age, most victims are between 12-15 years old (67.7%), followed by those aged 16-19 years old (29%) (D1.4, p. 45).

The analysis of interviews with experts, offenders and victims suggested that *there are limited cases where the bully and the victim do not know each other or are not connected in any way in real life* (D 1.2, p. 45). The same result appeared from analysis of CB sentences - only in rare cases the victim was a stranger to the offender (12.2%) (D 1.4, p. 43). Still the earlier studies indicate that around half of the victims do not know who their aggressor is (Li, 2007). The difference of estimates may be a consequence of the fact that interviews and sentences focused on the situations that resulted in exposing the offender but the earlier studies included cases in which the offender was not uncovered. The analysis of sentences indicated that *22 out of the 47 victims (47.8%), or about half of the victims, were bullied by multiple offenders* (D1.4, p 45).

Cyberbullying is a phenomenon that has a significant effect on the psychological well-being of victims (Tsitsika et al., 2015). Estevez (2019) showed that certain psychological characteristics may be related to being a victim of cyberbullying such as presenting a higher level of psychosocial maladjustment and a negative and damaged self-concept. According to her research, victims had a negative self-concept in the four dimensions studied: family, academic, physical, and social.



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

The interviews with the victims indicated as well that «for some victims, the cyberbullying incident had a negative impact on their lives. A limited impact was noticed for persons who do have usual offline (real life) relationships» (D 1.2, p. 40).

Scenario 2.1.

Description: It would be a second part of a CB scenario. The victim is cyberbullied and decide to tell:

Options: a) close friend; b) a parent; c) a teacher; d) a police officer; d) a section in the game offering opportunity to report the CB event to a mediator;

Objective: Measure how open are the possible victims to disclose the CB event. We believe it will be easier to reveal a friend/mediator.

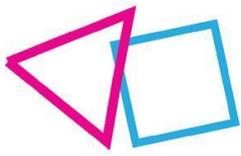
2.5.1.- RISK FACTORS

Victims of cyberbullying have been indicated to have more problems with internalized feelings related to loneliness (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013), depression (Gradinger, Strohmeier & Spiel, 2009) and lack of self-esteem (Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder & Lattanner 2014). Additionally, there is a higher correlation with suffering from social anxiety and social isolation (Juvonen & Gross 2008).

The expert interviews indicated that minorities (regarding gender, sexual orientation, provenance, religion, even proficiency in sport, school etc.) have an extra risk of becoming targeted. E.g., Estonian vs. Russian speaking communities clash due to linguistic miscomprehension. Minorities are closely linked to the environment and situation. Distinct cultures demand nuances to prevent misunderstanding - the interpretation of a joke, what's rude, what's not, the limit of the pain threshold (D 1.2, p. 44).

The interviews with the victims revealed as well that *overall the victims interviewed seem to be vulnerable since they were in a bad mood, not feeling good at school or home. At the moment of bullying, they were often feeling sad, helpless, scared, or humiliated. Only in some cases, there were no social, emotional, or family issues until the moment when the cyberbullying incident suddenly appeared.*

According to the analysis of sentences the number of cases in which there was preceding offline bullying equals the number of cases in which there was no preceding offline bullying (D 1.4, p 49). The



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report interviews indicated as well that *[i]n general it is safe to conclude that a large percentage of cyberbullying is an extension of offline bullying* (D1.2. p 45). Hence offline bullying is a notable risk factor to become a victim of CB.

Scenario 2.2.

Description: The victim is the offenders' girlfriend, he asks her for sexy pictures (sexting), but he also shows it to one of his friends. Later coerces the victim into sending more pics by threatening to send them to her family.

Options: Here we may discuss: I would not say sending a photo to your boyfriend is a risky decision. They are a couple and we should not blame the victim. I would make the decision about the reaction to the threat:

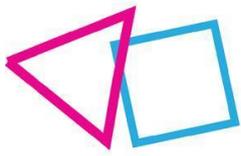
- A. I would be so ashamed if they knew. I will send another one. He already has some...
- B. I need to tell it to someone before it goes any further

Objective: There is evidence that cyberbullying can also occur within a romantic relationship, which may be not as known.

Takeaway points

- The serious game scenarios should include situations of cyberbullying by friends, classmates and complete strangers. This might be an important insight to incorporate in the game: it is also possible that you are bullied by your romantic partner.
- The analysis of sentences revealed that *many cases relate to **sharing passwords** or having **weak passwords** online* (D 1.4, p 45).
 - Teach players the necessity of **obtaining proof**, it will help victims, not just hurt them more.
 - *We **cannot conclude any specific victim profile** by inspecting associations between victim characteristics* (D 1.4, p 58).
- Some major predictors have increased during the pandemic: boredom, frustration, stress, other mental issues, lack of social interaction, digital media use and so on. it seems to be probable that there has been an increase in cyberbullying due to the pandemic (D 1.2, 47).

The following risk chart is used to create video game scenarios in a more detailed and appropriate way. In which the following coding has been followed for each factor, with the risk precipitation being: "+"

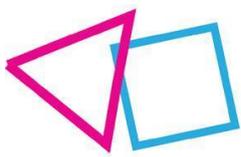


D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

some and "++" quite a lot. Or, risk prevention being: "-" some and "--" quite a lot. In this way, it allows us to measure more accurately the presence of risk or prevention factors in the different scenarios created.

Table 4. Risk chart: victims' variables and precipitators

Environmental	Isolation/lack of social support	+
	Family communication	-
	Economic problems	+
	School problems	++
	Parent's level education	+
Personal	Low self-esteem	+
	Difficult to make friends face to face	+
	Sexual orientation	+
	Poor mental health	+
Use of Internet	Public profile + information online	++
	Social networks time spent	+
	Weak passwords	+
	Sharing passwords	+
Institutional	Schools' capability to offer the possibility of reporting CB.	-



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

2.6.- OFFENDERS

The sentences' review indicated that most offenders are 12-15 years (70.7%), followed by those aged 16-19 (24.4%) (D 1.4, p 42).

Estévez and collaborators (2019) have revealed that cyberbullying offenders display a negative self-image in the school and family environment. Moreover, those young people who perceived a disturbance in their family environment and presented a negative self-concept, manifested certain behaviors with their peers at school that were conducive to bullying and/or cyberbullying.

Lianos & McGrath (2018) found that children with lower self-control and higher levels of anger were more likely to participate in cyberbullying dynamics. Likewise, a factor that correlates positively with becoming a cyberbully is the stress suffered during childhood (Garaigordobil & Machimbarrena, 2019).

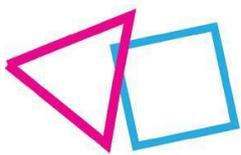
According to the experts' interviews, the environment plays a key role: when parents and the surroundings in general have prejudice, a more tolerant outlook/attitude towards bullying, racism etcetera children become more susceptible. E.g. Imitational behaviour: bullying happens, it's normal... As a result, in many instances offenders look positively towards cyberbullying (consider it a joke, to be funny). They may not be aware of the harm they cause (D 1.2, p. 42).

Still, in the interviews the offenders declared *they have good or at least reasonable relationships with the persons they live with (family, friends, etc.) (D 1.2, p. 41).* And the sentences review indicated that *it is very rare for offenders to have a history of bullying or other deviant behaviours, as 91.3% of those offenders for which information on criminal history was present did not have any precedents (D 1.4, p. 42).*

Regarding the emotional area of youth cyberbullying, Akgül & Artar (2020) showed how establishing good peer relationships predicted less cyberbullying, as those with better peer relationships cyberbullied less. Their research also indicated that online victimisation predicted cyberbullying, whereas being an aggressor did not predict being a victim. The sentences' review revealed that *offenders usually bullied their victims in groups (65.2%) (D 1.4, p. 42).*

2.6.1.- RISK FACTORS

The earlier research has suggested that cyberbullying offenders:



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

- display a negative self-image in the school and family environment;
- have perceived a disturbance in their family environment;
- have lower self-control and higher levels of anger;
- have suffered other stress factors during childhood.

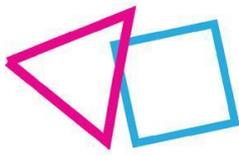
Takeaway points

- *[T]here is not something like 'a specific cyberbullying offender profile.* This conclusion was also a result of the analysis conducted on the cyberbullying sentences.
- The interviewed offenders also do not seem to prefer virtual relationships to real ones. Therefore, in the RAYUELA serious game we should point to general offender profiles instead of generating very specific ones (D 1.2, p. 42.; D 1.4, p. 42-43).

The following risk chart is used to create video game scenarios in a more detailed and appropriate way. In which the following coding has been followed for each factor, with the risk precipitation being: "+" some and "++" quite a lot. Or, risk prevention being: "-" some and "--" quite a lot. In this way, it allows us to measure more accurately the presence of risk or prevention factors in the different scenarios created.

Table 5. Risk chart: offenders' variables and precipitators

Environmental	Parents and the surroundings in general have prejudice, a more tolerant outlook/attitude towards bullying, racism etc.	+
	Family disturbance, stress suffered in childhood	+
Personal	Low self-control	+
	High level of anger	+
	Good peer relationships	--
Use of Internet, Institutional	Knowledge of reporting by users.	-



2.7.- MODUS OPERANDI

2.7.1.- STRATEGIES/TYPES

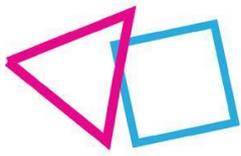
Willard (2007) describes in detail seven behaviors that are involved in the dynamics of cyberbullying:

- Flaming – online “fights” using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
- Harassment – repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
- Denigration
 - Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
 - “Dissing” someone online
- Impersonation – Breaking into someone’s account, posing as that person and sending messages to make the person look bad, get that person in trouble or danger, or damage that person’s reputation or friendships
- Outing and Trickery
 - Sharing someone’s secrets or embarrassing information or images online
 - Tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, which is then shared
- Exclusion – Intentionally excluding someone from an online group, like a “buddy list”
- Cyberstalking
 - Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating
 - Engaging in other online activities that make a person afraid for her or her safety
 - Use of technology, usually cell phones, to control a partner.

Illustrations (from sentences’ review):

Examples of the usage of sexual content: “Tricked the victim to share her password to her account”, “Offender stole the password from the girls from Facebook and Pokec”, “Offender was threatening to share her picture with sexual content”, (D 1.4, p. 50).

Examples of flaming: "You, fucking seal, what are you saying, I already told you once, and I'm not going to tell you again, I swear that this time wherever I see you, you're not going to escape, bitch,



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

filthy slut, I'm going to fuck up your life in the worst way they can fuck you up, you whore, lying bitch, buy yourself a life if you don't have one, but don't fuck up the lives of others", "WHEN I SHATTER YOU I'LL BREAK YOUR FACE, FOR MOUTHS AND FOR BITCH, FUCKING CLOWN, YOU'RE GOING TO SHIT" (D 1.4, p. 50).

In many flaming cases there is no association with sexual context. For example, in one case of flaming the following is reported: "very often when the victim posts something on either social network site, she receives negative comments from her former friends, be it in the form of text or images imitating her poses in a ridiculous way" (D 1.4, p. 54).

Examples of outing: "X uploads a photo of Y [obtained from Y in confidence or by trickery] to Tuenti and encourages friends to comment derogatorily"; "[d]isseminated the recorded video in which he showed his genitals" (D 1.4, pp. 47 and 50).

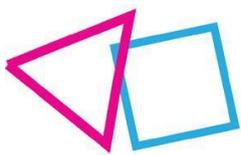
In one case of outing was reported as "the bullies recorded and took a photo in the school locker room, where in the background the child victim can be seen showering, completely naked. They uploaded the photo on Snapchat and passed it around to various groups in the school" (D 1.4, p. 54). In one case an outing was reported as "(t)he victim gives the offenders a photo showing his genitals which the offenders disseminate" (D 1.4, p. 54).

The sentences' review revealed that *selecting the victim is purposeful (79.9%)* (D 1.4, p. 48). *[I]n all the cases where the offender is a stranger, sexual content is used – not excluding the fact that in many cases where the offender is no stranger sexual content is also used. All things being equal, it is recommended to also include sextortion in the game, executed by a fictive character* (D 1.4, p. 63).

One case from the sentences review explicitly indicated that cyberbullying can also occur within a romantic relationship: *The victim was the offenders' girlfriend, he asked her for sexy pictures (sexting), but he also sent these to his friend. Coerced the victim into sending more pics by threatening to send them to her family* (D 1.4, p. 56).

Takeaway points

- The concrete platforms used were "Snapchat, Messenger, Facebook, Text (SMS), Pokec.sk, azet.sk, Tuenti, YouTube, WhatsApp, Viber, Instagram, MeetMe" (D 1.4, p. 46).



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

- *RAYUELA's serious game can limit itself to flaming, online harassment and outing, as the other types of cyberbullying are very rare (D 1.4, p. 50).*
- *Situations in which offenders are in the possession of sexual material should be included in the serious game, as this is common (D 1.4, p. 50 – 51).*
- *In RAYUELA's serious game, the usage of sexual content in situations of cyberbullying should be avoided if the type of bullying is flaming and should especially be included in cases of simulated outing (D 1.4, p 55).*
- *If the opportunity presents itself, potential offenders might jump on sexual content and abuse the material to start/continue cyber bullying. Therefore we should make players aware of the risks of sharing sexual material on the internet. This should not be done by prohibiting this, as this is a normal part of sexual exploration and expression today, but in more indirect ways. (D 1.4, p. 56).*

2.8.- GENDER DIFFERENCES

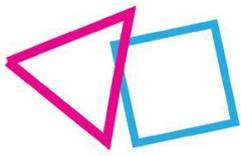
In terms of victimisation, both boys and girls are vulnerable to be victims of cyberbullying (Athanasiou, et al, 2018; Slonje & Smith, 2008). Nevertheless, authors such as Li (2007) encountered a slight difference in the number of cyberbullying victims, with 60% being girls.

The analysis of CB sentences indicated as well that approximately two thirds of victims were girls (D 1.4, p. 44). According to the sentences review about half of the offenders were male (50.8%) and another half female (49.2%) (D 1.4, p 42).

According to the sentences' review *men are less likely to commit offline bullying (44.8% of men do so, compared to 90.3% of women). Overall, in most cases (68.3%) offline bullying is present, and this is primarily committed by women (68.3% of offline bullying cases are committed by women compared to 31.7% of cases of offline bullying are committed by men) (D 1.5, p. 59).*

The sentences' review indicated that *men are relatively more likely than women to limit themselves to 1 cyberbullying event (38.5% of men compared to 5% of women). Overall, most cases are not one discrete event, but a series of at least 2 events (76.1% of cases) (D 1.4, p. 60).*

The sentence review revealed as well that *men are more prone to using sexual content than women: 19 out of 33 men use sexual content (57.6% of men) compared to only 7 out of 32 women (21.9% of women) (D 1.4, p. 60).* When analyzing the kind of insults that kids receive, they are sometimes related



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

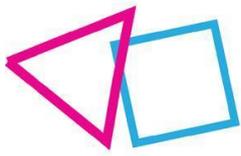
with gender roles, acting in a prescriptive and proscriptive performative way, forming part of gender socialization. If boys tend to be insulted for being homosexual or too feminine: *I call it Shoeshine* [an invented nickname that referred to "what faggots put in their asses to open their asses up"] because as for me he is a faggot.

Pascoe (2013) states that the study of homophobic bullying is not only relevant from the point of view of those involved, but also as a socialisation mechanism that reproduces gender inequalities. Seeing bullying as a result of the social structure would explain how the roles of aggressor and victim are often exchanged. Gender role socialisation does not only affect girls. Insults towards boys have more to do with their lack of ability and their sexual orientation (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). The same pressure to conform to gender expectations would, according to Dennehy (2019), encourage boys to engage in non-consensual distribution of sexual images as a way of reinforcing their masculinity among peers, something that our study has shown to be quite common.

Girls, according to our sample, are frequently insulted for their physical appearance, such a posting a photograph with the text "fat", or their sexual activity or behavior, as can be seen in these examples: *You cocksucker, you cross-eyed, greasy-haired bitch; Bitch, slut, bitch, do you want us to make you a video?; Bitch, whore, slut, slutty, cocksucker, cocksucker and sucker; You filthy whore, fuck you, you fucking mule; You're an easy one, a slut; You fucking seal; Little Slut; [In a whatsapp group]: X, pass photo ass, or photo tits, X do you suck?, do you like 69?, gangbang?, sado? bukakke?.*

Girls on the internet are under pressure to look sexy and receive likes and positive comments, while not showing too much in order not to be insulted, according to Sylwander (2019). Negative comments about appearance and sexuality are also more common for girls than for boys (Linares et. al, 2019; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009).

Our findings, together with those of previous research which shows that boys engage in more CB (Li, 2007) being boys also more aggressive in their interactions (Maher, 2008) contradicts the preconceived notion of the "mean girl" myth by which girls are more relationally aggressive than boys. Although girls were expected to bully more in cyberspace due to relational violence, the evidence shows the opposite except at younger ages, which may be explained by the maturational development necessary for this type of aggression (Barlett and Coyne 2014).



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

In the court sentence sample, some racist insults also appear. Cyber racism, whether through language, images, or symbols, is a form of racism (Mason & Czapski 2017). The internet and anonymity also make it possible to express racist views and opinions more visibly and explicitly (Keum & Miller, 2018). Newcomer deviance, physical deviance, and cultural deviance have been pointed as related to the bullying of young migrants (Mazzone et al., 2018).

Scenario 2.3.

Description: You are playing a video game with some classmates (if this is one adventure, if not, it could be in a social media or another online environment).

- One of your best friends starts to make fun about one character that is quite androgenus. In the chat: Look at him, or should I say her? She is just like Pol, from class, Pol or Pola?
- Another friend. Haha, are you flirting with me, Pola? Sorry, you're not my type

Options: I don't like this kind of joke. I reply: Hey guys, stop picking Pol. He not being super masculine does not mean he's gay. But if he were, what's the big deal?

- B. It's only a joke, I don't care. In addition, Pol is not here.
- C. I kind of like Pol, but I prefer not to get involved in these things, because I'm the one on the receiving end.

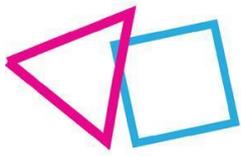
Objective: Because the role of bystanders is really important for CB prevention, and because we have found that homophobia is quite linked with CB.

Scenario 2.4.

Description: You receive a picture of this girl in your class that you do not like, she thinks she is superior to others... In the picture She's peeing behind a tree, you can see her knickers and she looks awful. The message says: Where is your crown, queen? Not so nice without your makeup... You are in the class/patio with a friend.

Options:

- A. You show and tell your friend: haha, Look at her! I am resending it to Laura, only her. She's gonna love it!
- B. You show and tell your friend: I don't feel sorry for him. He deserves it. Then maybe he will learn.



C. You show and tell your friend: We should not be as she has previously been. How could we stop it?

Objective: To check the possibilities to become an offender. Making fun of girls about their physics.

Takeaway points

- The serious game could focus equally on male and female victims and offenders.
- The use of sexual content could be connected to a male offender.

2.9.- REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

One of the variables identified as explaining regional differences is time spent on the Internet. In the European framework, Sorrentino and collaborators (2019) found that young Polish, Greeks and Italians spent less time on the Internet and reported lower rates of CB. In the same study, the authors concluded that despite spending a lot of time on the Internet, **Spanish young people experienced a low incidence of CB due to prevention work**, a variable that should also be considered.

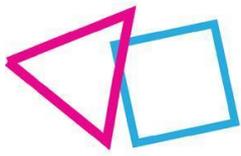
The expert interviews revealed that *[t]here exist differences between Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking young people in Estonia. These are influenced by the language environment, the political background and the educational environment. Their backgrounds mean people are offended, touched, affected by separate issues.*

It is important to consider that some young people may have more problematic relations with persons with a disability. This might depend on the importance that a country gives to inclusive education, as young people who come in contact with these problems regularly are thus more used to it.

Identity based bullying: is a form of biased bullying. *There is a societal legitimation of bullying which increases the risk to be bullied in this environment because of the societal legitimation. Unfortunately we see examples of this in Poland concerning the LGBTQI community (D 1.2, p. 48).*

Takeaway points

- There are some regional differences when it comes to the primary internet platform used. In Belgium, Facebook is the most widely used platform, followed by WhatsApp, Messenger, Viber, Snapchat and MeetMe. In Spain, Whatsapp is the most widely used platform, followed by Tuenti, Snapchat and Messenger. In the UK there is no real primary platform, and Facebook, Snapchat, Text, and Messenger are used to similar extents. In Slovakia, Facebook, Pokec.sk and



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

azet.sk are the platforms used for cyberbullying. Therefore, in the serious game we might give the player a choice between the most used platforms depending on the region (D 1.4, p. 46).

- The serious game could take in account differences of Estonian and Russian speaking players in this zone.
- There are not many regional differences (D 1.2. p. 42).

2.10.- DISCLOSURE

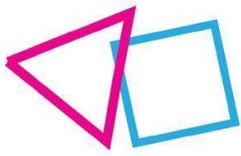
The desire to be permanently connected means that sometimes young people do not report CB for fear of being cut off from social networks, resulting in disengagement and social isolation (Dennehy et al., 2020). In this respect, family climate has an impact on CB, but parental strategies focused on parental control (such as restricting Internet use) are less successful than more collaborative strategies, such as evaluative-mediation and co-use (Elsaesser et al., 2016).

Moreover, Ansori and colleagues (2017) argue that it becomes hard for parents without an online identity to have credibility with their children, who tend to trust online sources more than their families. Young people also do not wish their parents, who already control their offline lives, to control their online activity as well.

The research has indicated that boys are less likely to report CB events to an adult (Maher, 2008).

Takeaway points

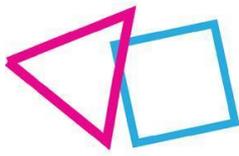
- In the serious game the game itself could have a *report/help* button *“which shows tools for help and support, a way out: can be pressed whenever the player is in distress, wants to skip a scenario or simply believes a report is required* (D 1.2, p. 51).
- In the serious game the players could have a choice whether to use a social networking platform with a 'report' button or a platform without one.



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

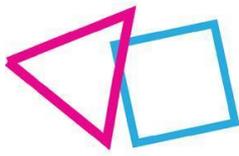
2.11.- REFERENCES CB

- Akgül, G., Artar, M. (2020) Cyberbullying: relationship with developmental variables and cyber victimisation. *Scandinavian Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Psychology* 8, 25-37.
- Ansori, S., Febrian, F., & Ramadhan, H. A. (2017). YOUTH PERSONHOOD @CROSSROAD: A Virtual Ethnography of An Asymmetrical Relation Between Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants in Indonesia. *Antropologi Indonesia*, 37(2), 103–117.
- Athanasiou, K. et al (2018). Cross-national aspects of cyberbullying victimisation among 14–17-year-old adolescents across seven European countries. *BMC Public Health* 18, 800. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-5682-4>.
- Bonanno R.A. & Hymel S. (2013). Cyber bullying and internalizing difficulties: above and beyond the impact of traditional forms of bullying. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 42, 685–697.
- Buelga, S., Cava, M.J. y Musitu, G. (2010). Cyberbullying: victimización entre adolescentes a través del teléfono móvil y de Internet. *Psicothema*, 22, 784-789.
- Dennehy, R., Meaney, S., Walsh, K. A., Sinnott, C., Cronin, M., & Arensman, E. (2020). Young people's conceptualizations of the nature of cyberbullying: A systematic review and synthesis of qualitative research. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 51.
- Elsaesser, C., Russell, B., Ohannessian, C. M. C., & Patton, D. (2017). Parenting in a digital age: A review of parents' role in preventing adolescent cyberbullying. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 35(August 2016), 62–72.
- Estévez, E., Estévez, J. F., Segura, L., & Suárez, C. (2019). The influence of bullying and cyberbullying in the psychological adjustment of victims and aggressors in adolescence. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 16(12), 2080.
- Garaigordobil, M. & Machimbarrena J.M. (2019). Victimization and Perpetration of Bullying/Cyberbullying: Connections with Emotional and Behavioral Problems and Childhood Stress. *Psychosocial Intervention*, 28(2).



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

- Grading P., Strohmeier D. & Spiel C. (2009). Traditional bullying and cyberbullying: identification of risk groups for adjustment problems. *Zeitschrift für Psychologie / Journal of Psychology*, 217, 205–13.
- Juvonen, J. & Gross E.F. (2008). Extending the school grounds? —bullying experiences in cyberspace. *Journal of School Health*, 78, 9, 496–505.
- Kowalski, R.M., Giumetti, G.W., Schroeder, A.N., Lattanner, M.R. (2014). Bullying in the Digital Age: A Critical Review and Meta-Analysis of Cyberbullying Research Among Youth. *Psychological Bulletin*, 140, 4, 1073–1137
- Kowalski, R. M., & Limber, S. P. (2007). Electronic Bullying among Middle School Students. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41, 22-530. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2007.08.017>
- Lucas-Molina, B., Pérez-Albéniz, A., & Giménez-Dasí, M. (2016). La evaluación del cyberbullying: situación actual y retos futuros. *Papeles del psicólogo*, 37(1), 27-35.
- Li, Q. (2007). Bullying in the new playground: Research into cyberbullying and cyber victimisation. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 23(4), 435–454.
- Lianos, H. & McGrath, A. (2018). Can the General Theory of Crime and General Strain Theory Explain Cyberbullying Perpetration? *Crime & Delinquency*, 64(5), 674–700.
- Maher, D. (2008). Cyberbullying: An ethnographic case study of one Australian upper primary school class. *Youth Studies Australia*, 27(4), 50–57.
- Patchin, J.W. and S. Hinduja (2006) 'Bullies Move Beyond the Schoolyard. A Preliminary Look at Cyberbullying', *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 4(2): 148–69.
- Slonje, R. & P.K. Smith (2008) 'Cyberbullying: Another Main Type of Bullying?' *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 49(2): 147–54.
- Smahel, D., Machackova, H., Mascheroni, G., Dedkova, L., Staksrud, E., Ólafsson, K., Livingstone, S., and Hasebrink, U. (2020). EU Kids Online 2020: Survey results from 19 countries. EU Kids Online. <https://doi.org/10.21953/lse.47fdeqj01ofo>



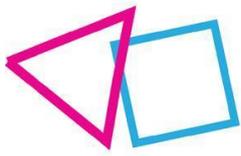
D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

Smith, P.K. et al (2008). Cyberbullying: its nature and impact in secondary school pupils. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 49, 376–85.

Sorrentino, Anna & Baldry, Anna & Farrington, David & Blaya, Catherine. (2019). Epidemiology of Cyberbullying across Europe: Differences between Countries and Genders. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*. 19 (2).

Tsitsika, A., Janikian, M., Wójcik, S., Makaruk, K., Tzavela, E., Tzavara, C., ... & Richardson, C. (2015). Cyberbullying victimisation prevalence and associations with internalizing and externalizing problems among adolescents in six European countries. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 51, 1-7.

Willard, N. (2007). *Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats: Responding to the challenge of online social aggression, threats, and distress*. Champaign, Illinois: Research Press.
http://beta.edtechpolicy.org/C32007/Presentations/Willard_Cyber/cbct0907.pdf



3. HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR THE PURPOSE OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

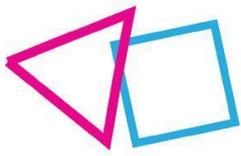
3.1.- INTRODUCTION

On the level of definitions of human trafficking, there is considerable disagreement between how various governments, NGO's, and academics define human trafficking for the purpose of sex work (see further). The definition adhered to by Europe in the CoE Convention against trafficking in human beings is:

Trafficking in human beings shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

For the purpose of the present text, exploitation only refers to sexual exploitation. Given that many partners in the project were unable to find sentences of incidents of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in which the primary means of recruitment is the internet, we changed the focus to one specific form of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in which the internet plays a vital role in the recruitment phase: loverboys or Romeo pimps. It is a specifically hidden form of crime, and unfortunately often remains under the radar of law enforcement and criminal policy. This is corroborated by the fact that in the current project, several partners were unable to find any cases of this form of human trafficking in their respective territories. However, as will appear further down the text, according to experts it is not a rare form of crime. Rather, it is a very common and widespread problem in the entire European Union. A commonly used definition of the problem often used in literature is that of Bongers (2012):

Lover boys are human traffickers who deliberately make girls and/or boys emotionally dependent by (the promise of) entering into a love relationship and then - through coercion, (the threat of) violence or other acts of violence, extortion, fraud, deception, abuse arising from circumstantial predominance,



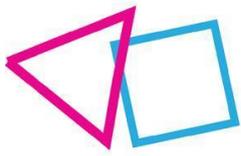
D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

abuse of a vulnerable position of these girls or boys - exploit them, usually in prostitution (Bongers, 2012).

Given the fact that this form of crime has a significant dark number, it is quite difficult to estimate how it evolves over time. The main reasons for this are that the crime is (i) underreported throughout Europe given the intricate emotional connection between victim and offender, (ii) because it is very difficult to proactively detect, and (iii) many countries, as a result, do not adequately acknowledge the existence of this crime as such (in this context, it is a prosecutorial priority in Belgium and the Netherlands, with a rather rich jurisprudence as a result). However, the absence of a crime in a region's jurisprudence does not necessarily imply there is no incidence of that crime. In this sense, it can also be assumed that the loverboy phenomenon is factually present in all zones of Europe, albeit not necessarily recognized or prosecuted as such (Vanhoutte, personal communication, April 4th, 2021). This important finding in its own right is underlined by the joint Europol action organized by Portugal, Spain and the UK, on child trafficking. In this Europe-wide action, no less than 388 people have been apprehended, with 298 potential victims identified in all parts of Europe [1] (Europol, 2020). As a European project on cybercrime directed towards minors, we deem it of the utmost importance to underscore the fact that human trafficking of minors remains an **underreported crime which affects the most vulnerable young people in Europe**, and ought rightfully to be a priority for the RAYUELA project.

3.2.- VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

It is a popular belief, both in media and politics, that the victims of human trafficking are a specific group of especially vulnerable and defenceless girls (e.g. Snajdr, 2013; Weitzer, 2007; 2013). However, both literature and our own investigation at the very least nuanced this view on victims of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. This is not to say that vulnerable girls are not at a heightened risk of being victim of human traffickers, but rather that this scope is overly restrictive in terms of potential victims, especially with regard to the problem of loverboys, and that the potential pool of targets of human traffickers is thus far more diverse than the popular master narrative portrays it to be. In this context, **there is increasing consensus among researchers, that there are no really typical victim profiles to be found in case of human trafficking** (e.g. Twis, 2020a; 2020b; D1.1, p. 49-51), a finding that was underlined in the expert interviews as well (D1.2, p. 65). As a result, a plethora of potential risk factors has been put forth in literature and by the experts, and any combination of them may be present in a given case of human trafficking.



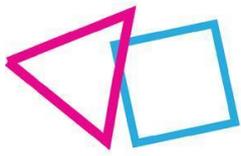
D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

Notwithstanding the absence of such typical profiles, we did find some common denominators in literature and through our research. The principal risk factors for victimisation of human trafficking are **problems with attachment** and **the low self-esteem** that often accompanies it. The concept of attachment ought to be interpreted in the broad sense, as appeared from the interviews conducted with various experts (D1.2, p. 67-68). In line with existing scholarship on the matter, problems with attachment can refer to **weak social bonds with family or significant others, not feeling understood as a person, looking for a clear identity, a history of adverse childhood experiences** (such as maltreatment, earlier sexual abuse, absence of parental investment, unmet needs, and emotional detachment). Many ways lead to Rome and as such each of these factors or any combination thereof can be considered risk factors for human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In the expert interviews, however, it was underlined that these are relatively general risk factors that do not lead to human trafficking in the majority of cases (D1.2, p. 72).

We also identified some common factors that may **facilitate or exacerbate the effect of such problems with attachment**. One particular and especially important risk factor is **running away from home or an institution** (Fedina, 2019; Franchino-Olsen, 2021; D1.2, p. 67-68; D1.4, p. 67). On the one hand, running away from home is a clear indication that a youngster is not feeling well at home, whilst on the other hand this further isolates the youngster, thus putting them at grave risk of falling into the hands of a human trafficker. It has been noted in the expert interviews as well that the specific situation in which a youngster finds her- or himself in a youth institution further impedes the formation of meaningful social bonds, due the fact that they often change institution as well as counsellors, leaving the youngster behind alone and in need of meaningful significant others. Especially in the case of loverboys, this should be considered to be an important risk factor, as loverboys cunningly tap into these feelings of isolation and need by – seemingly – providing the potential victim with the attention and emotional support they so direly seek (D1.2, p. 67-68).

One factor that has been repeatedly mentioned by experts that may further put people at risk, is an **impaired cognitive development** (D1.2, p. 68). The reasoning behind this is that people who are cognitively impaired, often are not able to discern the false promises of the loverboys, and are more prone to unsuspectedly accept their alleged love and attention for them. Even though this factor, once more, is not a necessary condition, it most certainly is a contributing factor whenever present.

A further common characteristic of victims that existing studies put forth is that they are often, but certainly not always, **members of a minority group** in society (Fedina, 2019; D1.2, p. 65-66). This was

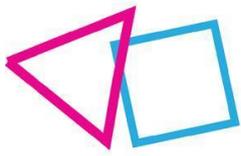


D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

acknowledged in the expert interviews as well, but the experts did nuance the message in two ways. First, they do see a lot of victims who do not have any immigration background at all. Consequently, preventive efforts on human trafficking ought not to be restricted to minority groups only. Second, the immigration background of a person sometimes is a proxy for **religious or cultural standards or values that may indirectly facilitate human trafficking through the provision of justifications**. Often, certain cultures will condone violence, have looser sexual morals, or have a perception of inferiority of women. Such cultural-religious values or ideas can make the forced sexual exploitation of women an acceptable means to an end, and thus be considered to be a facilitator of human trafficking (D1.2, p. 65-68). That being said, it should be borne in mind that the cultures or religions in which such values or ideas may prevail certainly will not always condone this behaviour, so RAYUELA ought not to generalize this idea in the game in order to avoid stigmatization.

In a similar vein, the experts underlined the importance of giving increased attention to people who belong to a **sexual minority** (e.g. the LGBTQI+ community) or who have a **particular sexual interest** (e.g. specific fetishes) as particularly vulnerable (D1.2, p. 65). People belonging to those communities may experience heightened levels of uncertainty about themselves and may actively go look for affirmation of their persona with strangers. The principle remains the same: when feeling uncertain or when looking for their identity, they may be easily deceived by human traffickers that seem to give them this kind of attention, thus strengthening their grip on them. In addition, it ought not to be forgotten that people belonging to these communities may have far less trust in the police and justice apparatus, thus making it even more unlikely that they would report the crime they were victim of. This way, instances of human trafficking would remain largely undetected – even more so than regularly – which is an important point of interest to RAYUELA's serious game.

Both in the literature review and expert interviews, it was shown that the majority of victims are **female**, at least in the registered / declared cases (European Commission, 2018; Franchino-Olsen, 2021; McCoy, 2019; D1.2, p. 65). Notwithstanding this, it ought to be noted that there were male victims to be found in the Belgian and Dutch sentences, and that experts readily agree that boys can equally so be victims of human trafficking. There remains a lack of knowledge on the incidence of male victims, first because this crime in itself is largely hidden from authorities and thus difficult to detect, but also **because of stereotypical gender roles associated with males, that will often result in a low willingness to report the crime to the relevant authorities**. Especially in combination with additional vulnerabilities, such as belonging to the LGBTQI+ community, this may push people into the hands of



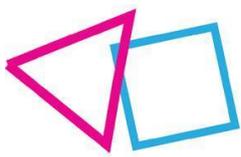
D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

human traffickers, and this important group of potential victims should by no means be excluded from RAYUELA's serious game (D1.2, p. 65).

When looking at an individual's socio-economic status, literature and the sentences seemed to indicate that an important driver for victims of human trafficking is monetary gain. They often find themselves in a precarious financial situation, and enter into sexual exploitation to alleviate these financial concerns. In the literature review, it was indicated that, indeed, many of the victims of human trafficking willingly enter into an agreement with the offender because they want to **improve their material living conditions** (e.g. emigrating, making money). In this sense, the literature review and our research also revealed that victims often – but certainly not always – consider their sexual exploitation a viable means to do so, and thus do not necessarily consider themselves to be victims (Twis, 2020a; D1.2, p. 66; D1.4, p. 67).

However, the expert interviews nuanced this point of view somewhat. The experts did agree that coming from a **low income** family or **unemployment** (parents) can be important drivers of victimisation, but that this is not necessarily always the case. As indicated above, the main risk factor for human trafficking of minors for the purpose of sexual exploitation is a problem with attachment. Such problems with attachment can exist in any household, disregarding SES. In Belgium, especially in the region of Brussels, there are **many instances of young people being recruited by human traffickers (more precisely loverboys or Romeo pimps) that come from very wealthy families**. However, as the parents are often too occupied to meet the needs of the child, attachment problems can occur. This way, the scope of the serious game should go beyond the popular belief that victims of trafficking come from poor families, and focus itself on children living in wealthier families as well (D1.2, p. 66).

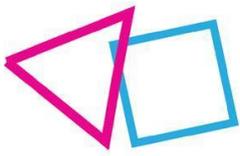
Finally, the role of the internet was discussed. Whereas literature on the role of the internet in cases of human trafficking is scarce, and seemingly indicates that “classical” human trafficking does not use the internet much beyond providing a practical means to stay in touch or exert control, the experts did indicate that the internet plays an important role and especially so in the case of loverboys (see also infra: modus operandi). Young people do spend **increasing amounts of time on the internet, which automatically increases potential exposure to loverboys**, who screen the internet for potential victims regularly. Experts indicated that it is not so much the amount of time spent on the internet that is important, but rather **what kinds of information that are posted on the internet** (D1.2, p. 73-74). In this context, youngsters often post very personal information online, such as their hobbies, or talk about family problems they experience on their social media. Especially if the profile is not secured



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report and public, these are all attractors for potential loverboys, as it gives them clear indications of which sensitivities the potential target is susceptible to. Therefore, a general education about internet safety ought definitely to be within the scope of RAYUELA's serious game. The table below summarizes all the risk factors that have been identified, with the risk precipitation being: "+" some and "++" quite a lot. Or, risk prevention being: "-" some and "--" quite a lot. In this way, it allows us to measure more accurately the presence of risk or prevention factors in the different scenarios created.

Table 6: risk factors for human trafficking victims

Demographic	Sex (female)	+
	Age (12-17)	+
	Ethnic minority	+
	Sexual orientation	++
Psychological	Having low self-esteem	++
	Poor cognitive-emotional development	+
Historical	Adverse childhood experiences	++
Family	Problems with attachment	+++
	Being in an institution	+
Attitudinal	Attitudes towards violence	++
	Attitudes towards sexuality	++
	Attitudes towards women	++
Socio-political	Socio-political climate concerning sexuality	+
	Socio-political climate concerning HT	+
Socio-economic	Low economic status	+

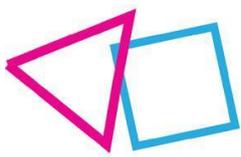


D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

Internet	Kind of information posted online	++
	Public profiles	++
	Time spent online	+
Behavioral	Running away from home or an institution	+

Takeaway points

- Victims can virtually be of any sociodemographic background, which sometimes goes contrary to popular beliefs on who exactly the victims of human trafficking are. It could be an important contribution of RAYUELA to help debunk these myths about victimisation on human trafficking by helping players identify potential problems that may indicate that someone is at risk of being targeted by human traffickers.
- In addition, the serious game could explicitly educate people about “degrees of vulnerability” that may exist among potential victims. In this sense, RAYUELA could explicitly include male victims and those belonging to the LGBTQI+ community, as there is presumably a large dark number for those groups.
- For potential victims themselves, it would be difficult for the game to simulate attachment problems, the main driver behind human trafficking. Rather, the game could concentrate on educating and empowering young people to seek help in a timely fashion, and to get players to know the local resources that may be available to them in case they need to talk or reach out for help.
- Given the fact that human traffickers increasingly resort to the internet in order to screen for potential victims, it is of the utmost importance to provide youngsters with the necessary tools to keep their information and posts as private as possible. In addition, the internet is no place to throw around one's deepest secrets or intimacies of one's personal life. These may all be considered to be attractors for potential human traffickers, and players in the game ought to be educated about the potential dangers this may bring about, whilst at the same time providing clear instructions as to how to keep your information safe.



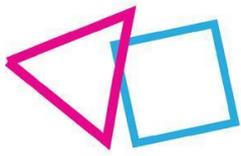
Scenario 3.1.

We could easily ask the sexual orientation of a player in the game. For people who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community, we could send them a virtual friend request from an attractive person (male, female, trans, or queer, according to how they define their sexual orientation), and the profile of this person show pictures that clearly indicate he is member of the LGBTQ2+ community. Ideally this fictive individual would give compliments to the player, and ask to be friends. The player can be given different options: “accept friend request”, “ask the person who he is and where he knows you from”, “ignore the friend request”. It would be especially interesting to compare this to fictive friend requests of non-LGBTQ+ individuals in order to estimate the extent to which being member of the LGBTQ+ community are more inclined to blindly accept friend requests from people they perceive to be able to provide some sense of identity compared to other people – the extent to which belonging to this community as such is a risk factor for human trafficking.

3.3.- OFFENDERS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

When looking at offenders of human trafficking, literature, the sentences and the expert interviews all indicated that there is no clear profile for offenders of human trafficking of minors for the purpose of sexual exploitation, i.e. they represent a quite diversified group of people (Cockbain & Kleemans, 2019; D1.4, p. 69). Notwithstanding this agreement, some prominent factors that may facilitate this crime could be identified. The first important finding is that the image of the offender that is often displayed in media and political discourse – the image of the older cunning offender that preys on the most vulnerable of girls – does not always hold. Existing literature indicates that when sexual incitement is involved, offenders tend to be **relatively young, unemployed, single, and usually do not have a criminal history** (e.g. Carpinteri et al., 2018; D1.2, p. 69-70; D1.4, p. 69). This stands in contrast to those offenders whose primary goal is to collect abusive materials from children, who tend to be older, employed, and have no criminal history.

In the sentences analysis and the interviews we focused on a specific form of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation that often involves the internet as a means of recruitment – the loverboy problem or so called Romeo pimps. In both the sentences and the expert interviews, similar risk factors came forth, even though it has to be noted that there is some disagreement with regards to the element of having no criminal antecedents. In this context, the experts often indicated that



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

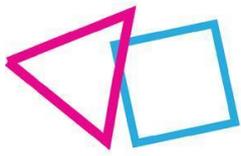
there often are **criminal antecedents**, albeit generally minor ones such as drug dealing (D1.4, p. 69; D1.2, p. 69-70).

Another factor that was revealed in the analysis of the sentences as well as the literature review is that loverboys often have **more than one victim**. This is also the case for “traditional” forms of human trafficking, as suggested by the literature review (e.g. Cockbain & Wortley, 2015). According to the expert interviews, the number of victims can vary but in their practice the average number of victims is 2-3. This is the result of the rather opportunistic nature of the crime, in which offenders approach multiple victims at the time, and simply keep those victims who take the bait, and drop the others who are more cautious or more difficult to control. The internet also plays an important role in this respect, as it greatly increases the number of potential victims loverboys have access to and it facilitates person-to-person interaction.

The expert interviews further pointed out the importance of the upbringing of the offenders. Next to being young “princes charming”, loverboys often are brought up in an environment in which they can basically do as they please, which often goes together with an attitude of **tolerance towards violence** and negative or **inferior views of women** (D1.2, p. 71). This is an important risk factor, as it is a direct facilitator for their exploitation, which can be justified through such values and views.

In addition, they are often popular guys with an overly **high self-esteem** as the popular guys on the block. One respondent described typical loverboys as “*little gods*” who can do as they please and have not been taught to hold back. Especially in combination with the earlier mentioned tolerance towards violence and inferior views of women, this may constitute an especially toxic mix, significantly increasing the odds of becoming a loverboy.

In a similar vein, the experts noted that even though the vast majority of “loverboys” are of the local nationality, they do often have an **immigrant background** (D1.2, p. 71). In this sense they often are of the second or third generation immigrants in their country of residence. However, immigration background is considered to be a proxy for certain **cultural or religious influences** that may go together with the immigration background. In particular, the experts mentioned that **Roma** culture may have looser values on sexual matters and be more tolerant to violence, whereas certain **Muslim** beliefs may be more inclined towards less favourable views of Western women and the fact that Muslim girls are not to have sex before marriage may be a powerful means of coercion on potential victims by means of threatening to release certain information to relatives. A very specific instance of cultural



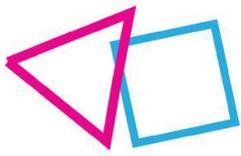
D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

differences related to **popular culture** (D1.2, p. 71). In Belgium, more precisely in the city of Antwerp, the hip-hop/rap scene seems to be intricately linked to loverboys. Certain artists such as *Paraturk* are considered to be popular and successful young men, which enables them to approach vulnerable girls much more easily.

As to the main driver behind loverboys, both the literature review and the expert interviews indicated that this simply is **financial gain** (Cohaney, 2016; Lutnick, 2016; D1.2, p. 72; D1.4, p. 69). Often, but not always, loverboys come from **lower SES communities**, are **unemployed**, and do **not have a decent education** (Carpinteri et al., 2019; D1.2, p. 72). In combination with other risk factors, such as being favourable towards the use of violence and holding negative views of women, they may consider sexual exploitation of their victims as an acceptable means to improve their situation. In addition, they make a lot of money off their victims without having to invest much effort or time in it. As one respondent put it, it will be difficult to convince someone to go work in a grocery store for 1600 euros a month when he can make 2000 euros a night off the back of one victim while sitting on their couch (D1.2, p. 72).

A final risk factor, which might seem surprising at first sight, is **having been victim of human trafficking** (Europol, 2020; Twis, 2020; D1.2, p. 70-71). Whereas the literature and our own investigation of known cases of human trafficking of minors for the purpose of sexual exploitation were men, there are indications in literature and the sentences analyses that sometimes the perpetrators can be female as well. Often the girls in such a context will willingly help the loverboy, either to recruit new targets or to assist in the management of the victims. Even though this may be out of fear for the loverboy (e.g. coercive tactics such as threatening to release photos on the internet), the experts indicated that this is usually not necessary as the victims will often do so either out of love for the loverboy, or simply because this will enable them to do less customers and to avoid to do things with customers they do not wish to do (D1.2, p. 75-76). Especially in combination with the fact that **many victims do not really perceive themselves as such** (Howard, 2012; Lutnick, 2016), this may pose a serious problem in terms of prevention and detection of this form of human trafficking.

To conclude, no specific profile of loverboys can be derived apart from certain rather general, but often occurring, risk factors. For offenders, a typical profile would be a young adult, with little education, who is unemployed, has been brought up without having been taught much limits or restraint, has a high self-esteem (and is often the “popular guy”), perceives (certain) women to be inferior, and has a certain tolerance to violence and abuse.

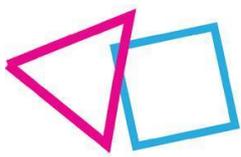


D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

The chart below summarizes all the risk factors that have been identified throughout the research, with the risk precipitation being: "+" some and "++" quite a lot. Or, risk prevention being: "-" some and "--" quite a lot. In this way, it allows us to measure more accurately the presence of risk or prevention factors in the different scenarios created.

Table 7: risk factors for human trafficking offenders

Demographic	Young (early 20's)	+++
	Gender (male)	+++
	Ethnic minority	++
Psychological	High self-esteem	+++
	Narcissistic personality	++
	Poor cognitive-emotional development	++
	Low self-control / inhibition	+
Historical	Adverse childhood experiences	++
	Earlier abuse within the family	+
	Having a criminal history	+
	Having been victim of trafficking (<i>only girls</i>)	+
Family	Poor parental investment	+
	Witnessing of violence	++
	Witnessing of abuse	++
	Overly lenient upbringing (lack of boundaries)	+++



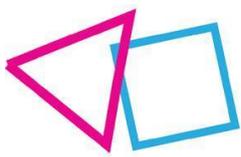
D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

Attitudinal	Attitudes towards women	+++
	Attitudes towards violence	+++
	Perceived acceptability of sexual exploitation	++
Socio-political	Socio-political climate concerning sexuality	+
	Socio-political climate concerning HT	+
Socio-economic	Low income family	++
	Unemployed	+++

As may already appear from the risk chart presented above, most of the risk factors associated with loverboy offenders are distal factors, or factors that have evolved over a longer span of time. For example, attitudes towards women or violence are not learned (nor unlearned) in a day, and it will be very difficult to have an impact on those by means of RAYUELA's serious game. The same applies to certain environmental factors, such as the socio-political climate in a member state, which are very difficult to influence. For this reason, we deem it more useful to **focus on sensitization about the existence of loverboys in the game**, rather than targeting potential offenders themselves, as it appeared in the interviews that preventing this type of crime by targeting offenders directly is an almost insurmountable task (D1.2, p. 77). In addition, the experts also indicated that more general prevention strategies may be needed in order to combat the loverboy problem. In this sense, the **players could be educated about what constitutes a normal relationship, setting boundaries, as well as maybe challenge certain attitudes the players have towards the acceptability of violence, towards women, or towards other minorities such as the LGBTQI2+ community.**

Takeaway points

- The most important takeaway point for RAYUELA's serious game is that the offenders should be depicted as young, often attractive guys, who can be perceived as to be successful and popular (e.g. many friends). This way, RAYUELA could contribute to debunking the master narrative of the "older creepy criminal" and shift attention to the dangers associated with loverboys. The main message should be: if it looks too good to be true that this very popular



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

guy contacts me out of the blue and wants to be friends...then this most likely *is* actually too good to be true. (D1.2, p.77)

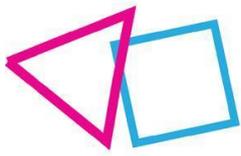
- From the interviews it appeared that loverboys are often Belgians with a different ethnic background. However, we do not recommend to focus too much on this aspect, as it may reinforce certain stereotypes, and may thus direct attention away from the many loverboys that do not have a different ethnic background. In this context, the ethnic origin of the “loverboys” should be diversified as much as possible. (D1.2, p. 70-71)
- A connection can be made with popular culture as well, especially the hip hop and rap scenes. This could be easily integrated in, for example, a fictitious loverboy profile. (D1.2, p. 71-72)
- Particular attention should be given to the main driver for sexual exploitation: monetary gain. Players should be made aware of the fact that when it comes to money, they have not to take any responsibility for the financial situation (e.g. debts) of other people. (D1.2, p. 72)
- Finally, whilst the majority of (known) offenders is male, female offenders can be included as well, as girls will often try to recruit other victims for the loverboy in their own social circle. (D1.2, p. 70)

Scenario 3.2.

One possible scenario would be to introduce fictitious characters in the game who have a conversation with the player. One such conversation could be a fictitious character who says to be in need of money, and that she or he had found a handsome popular guy who would offer her money if she goes to his house with his friends. Then, the player could be offered options to reply to this, ranging from “oh, cool! Good for you” to “are you sure you want to do this, this seems wrong to me”. Upon choosing the correct response, the player could get points, upon choosing the wrong response, the player would get an explanation of the risks involved in such a scenario.

3.4.- MODUS OPERANDI

In the literature review, we discussed Routine Activity Theory as the main theoretical framework as to the recruitment of victims (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Felson & Cohen, 1980). In this theoretical framework, human trafficking may occur if a **potential victim and potential offender meet in a certain place where there is no guardian present**. As argued by Cockbain and Wortley (2015), “while the criminal act associated with internal child sex trafficking can be atrocious, the people, places, and



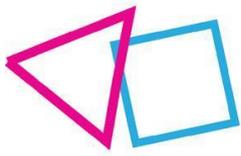
D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

processes involved are shown to be far from exceptional". Especially in the case of loverboys, this process of selection is greatly facilitated by the internet, and Routine Activity Theory can be applied to virtual spaces as well (Pratt et al., 2010). In the expert interviews, it was confirmed that loverboys **opportunistically screen the internet** (any popular social media platform) for potential victims, based on their appearance and interests (D1.4, p. 73-74), and they can thus be considered to be "opportunity takers, opportunity seekers, and opportunity creators" (Wortley & Smallbone, 2016).

In the expert interviews as well as the sentences analysis, it became clear that loverboys operate in different steps, which can generally be summarized as a **grooming stage followed by the stage of actual abuse** (D1.4, p. 68; D1.2, p. 73-76). The experts were in agreement that in the grooming stage, the loverboy will start to seduce the victim by giving compliments and mimicking shared interests with the potential victim. During this stage, the loverboy will gradually tap into the needs of the victim (who often faces attachment problems), thus generating the belief that he is genuinely there for the victim, and **fills the victims emotional needs**. Gradually, the loverboy will isolate the victim, thus generating an emotional dependence of the victim on the loverboy (D.1.2, p. 74-75), a process which was also reflected in the analysis of the sentences (D1.4, p. 68).

A relevant finding for the RAYUELA project is that experts indicate it is **very difficult to get victims out of the hands of "loverboys" once this emotional bond has been established**. Victims often genuinely love the loverboy, and consider him to be the only person who really understands them. For this reason, they will often willingly participate in sexual exploitation, out of love, to help the loverboy, or to save up for a beautiful future together. Experts indicate that even when a loverboy is convicted and sent to prison, victims will often willingly return to him once he is released from prison. The difficulty of severing the ties with the loverboy was well illustrated by a prosecutor who told a story about a loverboy at trial: while he was being tried, the victims of the loverboy who were present in the courtroom cheered at him and were making heart shapes with their hand to express their commitment to the offender (D1.2, p. 76). For this reason, **it is of the utmost importance that the serious games focus on the grooming stage**, before the emotional bond between victim and offender has been established.

When it comes to the use of coercion and violence, an interesting image appeared. In the analysis of the sentences, it became clear that coercion and violence do occur, especially by threatening to expose the prostitution of the victim to family or friends (D1.4, p. 68). The experts nuanced this point of view, in the sense that they indicated that violence may be present, but not always is. In this context, victims



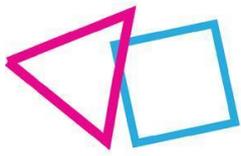
D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

often consider violence towards them as a form of giving attention (“bad attention is better than no attention”), and accept this violence. However, and importantly, the **experts concluded that violence and coercion/ blackmail often simply are not necessary**, given that the victims often act out of love for the loverboy. In addition, as the dependence of the victim on the loverboy is based on an emotional attachment, using too much violence could actually break this emotional bond between the victim and the offender (D1.2, p. 76).

When it comes to **deceptive strategies**, it ought to be clear that loverboys do deceive the victim in the grooming stage by generating a false feeling of mutual interests and addressing the emotional needs of the victim (D1.2, p.74; D1.4, p. 68). This way, loverboys generate a feeling of belonging in the victim, which provides them with a very strong, albeit indirect, means of controlling the victim, who often stays loyal to the “loverboy” out of love and a fear of abandonment – the ultimate deception (D1.2, p. 76).

Takeaway points

- The serious game should concentrate on the grooming stage of loverboys, in order to avoid that an emotional connection can be established between the offender and the victim. One strategy is to educate people about the privacy settings of their profiles on social media. This could make them less visible to potential “loverboys” that screen the internet for potential targets. (D1.2, p. 76)
- In addition, it can be useful to educate people on which information they should probably not post online. In this sense the game could teach them the important lesson “not to do online what they would not do in the real world”. (D1.2, p. 77)
- This education can be extended to who they accept as friends on the internet. Even though having many virtual “friends” and “likes” are considered proxies for success on various social media, it remains risky to just accept friend requests without knowing the purpose. The advantage of this strategy is that it is not only preventive in terms of loverboys, but also for a wide variety of other cybercrimes (e.g. phishing). (D1.2, p. 77)
- The serious game should aim at youngsters at an age before they fall in the hands of loverboys. Given that victims have been identified that are 12-13 years old, the game should ideally focus on people younger than that age. (D1.2, p. 79)



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

- Given that it is very difficult to prevent or even detect potential cases of loverboys, the game could concentrate on more general preventive strategies, as discussed above. These may address issues such as what constitutes a healthy relationship, what constitutes a healthy sexual relationship, and setting boundaries in general. (D.1.4, p. 68).

Scenario 3.3.

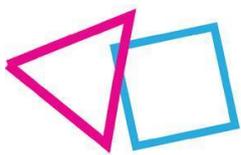
Players could be prompted with friend requests of virtual characters in the game. Some of them might be attractive looking, and others less attractive looking. Then the player can be given the choice as to accept or not the friend request, followed by a question as to why this request was accepted or not, and be given information on the potential risks involved in accepting friend requests from unknown people. Ideally, these will be illustrated by real-life examples in order to make the message more convincing.

3.5.- GENDER DIFFERENCES

Regarding gender differences, literature suggests that the vast **majority of victims of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation of minors are female**: out of the 33% of victims of human trafficking that were minors, 23% were girls (European Commission, 2018, D1.1, p. 46). The experts we interviewed concerning the loverboy tactic also indicated that the majority of victims they see in their practice are female. However, it ought to be noted right away that these numbers are most likely not very representative as human trafficking in general – and the loverboy phenomenon in particular – are very hidden crimes and a significant dark number exists in these crimes as a consequence (D1.2, p. 65).

In this respect, experts readily agree that there is **no theoretical ground to exclude male victims** from the equation, quite on the contrary. Given the fact that the reporting rate of this form of human trafficking is already low for girls, it is most likely even lower for boys due to certain stereotypical ideas that surround male gender roles (e.g. “boys don’t cry”), and they may be even less willing to report the crime than girls. For this reason, RAYUELA could play a pioneering role in breaking certain stereotypes surrounding human trafficking by **explicitly focusing on male victims** as well (D1.4, p. 65, 69).

A similar point can be made regarding offenders: whilst literature and our own research indicates that the majority of offenders are male (Carpinteri et al., 2018), this does not exclude the fact that **girls can be perpetrators as well**. In this respect, the unique study of Wijkman and Kleemans (2019) found



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

convincing evidence that a considerable part of human trafficking offenders, indeed, are female (D.1., p. 51-52). This finding is corroborated by the experts in the context of loverboys as well, where we explicitly discussed the overlap between victim and offender. Experts indicated that **women who are actively being sexually exploited will often take up more active roles as traffickers**. The reasons for this can be manifold: just to please the offender, to avoid having to do too much “customers” on one day, to avoid to do things they do not like, or to try to get out of the sexual exploitation (D.1.2, p. 70)

Takeaway points

- In the serious game, attention should be equally given to female and male victims.
- In a similar vein, equal attention should be awarded to male and female offenders.

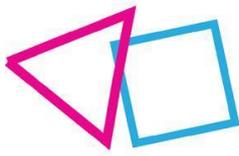
Scenario 3.4.

A fictitious female “friend” approaches a female player and shows him or her a really expensive pair of shoes she just got as well as new and expensive jewellery. We could give the player the option to respond to this in a structured way. Options could be “oh how nice, where did you get those?” or “Oh wow, I could not possibly afford that!”. The fictive friend could then explain that her new lover has a good job for her, and ask the player if he or she would be interested in doing such a job as well. This way, we could imitate the existence of female recruiters for human trafficking in the game.

3.6.- REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Existing studies indicate that human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation is generally more predominant in the Eastern parts of Europe and Germany compared to other EU countries (European Commission, 2018; D1.1, p. 46). In addition, and as notes in the sentences analysis, there also seems to be a higher incidence of border-crossing, “classical” forms of human trafficking (of the coercive type) in the Eastern parts of Europe (D1.4, p. 67-68). However, as this form of human trafficking does not usually involve the internet as a tool of recruitment, it was deemed less relevant for the serious game RAYUELA intends to create.

However, it should be noted that the **absence of registered incidents of human trafficking does not necessarily imply there is no incidence**. This is a direct result of the low reporting rates for human trafficking and the considerable dark number this crime seems to entail. In addition, in some countries



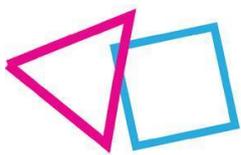
D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

a certain taboo remains in place when it comes to sexuality and sexual exploitation, which can result in many crimes remaining under the radar. A nice illustration of this is the loverboy phenomenon. Whilst no cases were found on this matter in the Southern and Northern zones of Europe, this phenomenon is recognized in the Western parts, in particular in Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Due to this political and prosecutorial acknowledgment of the problem, there is significant jurisprudence to be found on this type of crime in the Western Zone. This is indirectly confirmed by a Europol joint action which showed that this particular problem exists in all parts of Europe, with 388 arrests concerning 249 victims in 12 European countries (Europol, 2020; D1.2, p. 64-65). When asked about potential regional differences, the experts were of the opinion that there are no real regional differences in the sense that the modus operandi is largely the same throughout Europe, and that the **loverboy phenomenon is probably the most widespread tactic in human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation throughout Europe, as well as throughout history** (D1.4, p. 65-66). For this reason, sensitizing young people about the existence of this phenomenon ought to be considered a priority.

Obviously, some minor differences will exist between the zones in terms of the technology available. In this context, it ought to be noted that notwithstanding the overall popularity of social networks such as TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook, there may be **certain social networks that are peculiar to certain zones**. However, this does not change the modus operandi nor the risk factors associated with human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In order to make the game attractive to youngsters, the local “popular” networks and apps should be included in the game as well.

Takeaway points

- No real differences exist between the four EU zones, but the loverboy problem remains unacknowledged and underreported in many zones in the EU.
- RAYUELA should focus on making this form of crime known to people throughout Europe. When asked, experts agreed that it would be useful to include some of the common red flags that may indicate the existence of a loverboy victim in the serious game. This could help people identify potential victims and report accordingly.
- RAYUELA could use its privileged network of LEA's to further enhance the visibility of and increase the knowledge about this particular form of crime throughout Europe. This could be done by other means than the serious game, e.g. the RAYUELA toolkit which will be created.



Scenario 3.5.

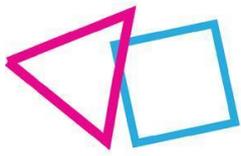
In order to raise awareness among youngsters about human trafficking, the game could use fictive victims that increasingly display common red flags of human trafficking. The common red flags are: having a secret lover, isolation from friends, suddenly engaging in new social networks they shield from other friends, suddenly showing up with expensive things, suddenly wearing sexy and provocative clothes, having business cards from hotels, permanently make calls outside (secretive), visible signs of exhaustion and/or drug use, running away (e.g. skipping school, running away from an institution), psychodynamic complaints. These could be presented to the player either visually or in fictive conversations.

When the player is confronted with these red flags in the game, he could be given different options, such as “ignore”, “ask more details”, “report to a relevant authority”. Even though the red flags mentioned do not necessarily lead to human trafficking, the game could prompt the player with more information on how these indicators may be indicative or problems.

3.7.- DISCLOSURE

Disclosure of loverboy victimisation is a big issue, due to its inherently hidden character. In many cases, victims find themselves in a love affair with the offender, and do not consider themselves to be victims of a crime. In other instances, where coercion is used, victims are reluctant to report the crime, due to fear of the loverboy or the threats he made (e.g. releasing sexual pictures to family members). As a result, many instances of this crime will remain undetected, and those that are detected are often discovered by accident or with luck.

For this reason, it is important to widen the scope of prevention beyond the actual victims and offenders of this crime. One way to do so is the indirect approach set out above, in which people are made aware of the existence of the crime and taught about the red flags that may indicate that a problematic situation is evolving. On the other hand, however, it is equally important to sensitize local law enforcement agencies and policy makers about the existence of this problem, as the phenomenon itself remains largely unacknowledged throughout Europe. Whilst this does not directly relate to RAYUELA’s serious game, it could be an important addition to RAYUELA’s dissemination strategy. For,



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

if neither local law enforcement or policy makers have this particular problem on their agenda, it is very unlikely that the crime will be detected and prosecuted – all observation is steered by expectation.

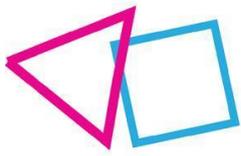
Another way in which reporting could be improved, and which could rather easily be incorporated in the serious game, is to educate people about which resources are at their disposal in case they have doubts, insecurities, negative experiences, or when they are worried about a friend who might be in need. In this context, it is important that these resources, such as call centers / hotlines or specialized teams in law enforcement, are locally represented, and that all the contact details are also provided in the game.

Takeaway points:

- Given the hidden nature of human trafficking in the form of loverboys, attention should be focused on a wide societal sensitization on this topic, in order to help people detect potential cases of loverboys.
- In a further attempt to help people report these crimes to the relevant authorities, they should be made aware of the resources that are available to do so locally.

Scenario 3.6.

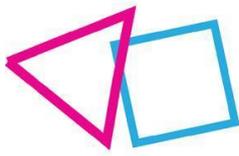
In the game, a player could be approached by a fictitious friend character who explains to her or him a situation that worries her or him. The situation referred to could be a typical “red flag” scenario (see above), and the fictive friend asks the player for advice. The player can then be given the following options to reply to the fictive friend: “oh I’m sure there’s nothing wrong”, or “that is worrisome indeed, you might want to consider talking to a professional service about this”. If the first option is chosen, the player will be prompted with a video or text that explains that the situation the fictive friend describes may be indicative of the existence of a loverboy, followed by information on which local services may be able to assist in such a situation. If the second option is chosen, the player will get additional points, and the same explanations.



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

3.8.- REFERENCES HT

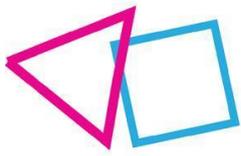
- Bongers, K. (2012). *Aanpak loverboyproblematiek: handreiking*. Utrecht: Centrum voor Criminaliteitspreventie en Veiligheid.
- Carpinteri, A., Bang, B., Klimley, K., Black, R. A., & Van Hasselt, V. B. (2018). Commercial sexual exploitation of children: an assessment of offender characteristics. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology, 33*(2), 150-157.
- Cockbain, E., & Kleemans, E. R. (2019). Innovations in empirical research into human trafficking: introduction to the special edition. *Crime Law and Social Change, 72*(1), 1-7.
- Chohaney, M. L. (2016). Minor and adult domestic sex trafficking risk factors in Ohio. *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research, 7*(1), 117-141.
- Cohen, L. E., & Felson, M. (1979). Social change and crime rate trends - routine activity approach. *American Sociological Review, 44*(4), 588-608
- European Commission. (2018). *Data collection on trafficking in human beings in the EU*. Luxembourg: Publications office of the European Union.
- Europol. (2020). *The challenges of countering human trafficking in the digital era*. Europol Operations Directorate.
- Europol (2020, December 1). *Targeting child trafficking: 388 arrested across Europe*. Retrieved September 12th, from: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/targeting-child-trafficking-388-arrested-across-europe>
- Felson, M., & Cohen, L. E. (1980). Human ecology and crime: a routine activity approach. *Human Ecology, 8*(4), 389-406.
- Fedina, L., Williamson, C., & Perdue, T. (2019). Risk factors for domestic child sex trafficking in the United States. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 34*(13), 2653-2673.
- Franchino-Olsen, H. (2021). Vulnerabilities relevant for commercial sexual exploitation of children/domestic minor sex trafficking: a systematic review of risk factors. *Trauma Violence & Abuse, 22*(1), 99-111.
- Howard, N. (2012). Protecting children from trafficking in Benin: in need of politics and participation. *Development in Practice, 22*(4), 460-472.



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

- Lutnick, A. (2016). *Domestic minor sex trafficking : beyond victims and villains*. Columbia University Press.
- McCoy, M. (2019). Measurements of vulnerability to domestic minor sex trafficking: a systematic review. *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 5(1), 1-12.
- Snajdr, E. (2013). Beneath the master narrative: human trafficking, myths of sexual slavery and ethnographic realities. *Dialectical Anthropology*, 37(2), 229-256.
- Twis, M. K. (2020a). The influence of victims' unmet basic needs as a mediator in trafficking relationships: a research note. *Families in Society-the Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 101(1), 44-53.
- Twis, M. K. (2020c). Risk factor patterns in domestic minor sex trafficking relationships. *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 6(3), 309-326.
- Weitzer, R. (2007). The social construction of sex trafficking: ideology and institutionalization of a moral crusade. *Politics & Society*, 35(3), 447-475.
- Wijkman, M., & Kleemans, E. (2019). Female offenders of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. *Crime Law and Social Change*, 72(1), 53-72.
- Wortley, R., & Smallbone, S. (2006). *Situational prevention of child sexual abuse*. Collumpton, Devon: Willan Publishing.

[1] Participating countries: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom



4.- MISINFORMATION AND CYBERHATE

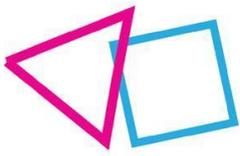
Misinformation and cyberhate are two phenomena that are very present in our society, especially since the development and the generalized use of social media. Indeed, both crosses, to different extents, the cybercrimes studied in our project (cyberbullying, online grooming, and trafficking of minors for the purpose of sexual exploitation). First, cyberbullying frequently occurs through misinformation being spread to harm a person or to make other individuals think differently about someone.

Second, deception is a key element in all cybercrimes, but especially in online grooming and human trafficking, where the offender often pretends to be another person or deceives the victim with false promises. Finally, cyberhate overlaps with cyberbullying, since, as discussed above, aggressions are inseparable from inequalities due to gender, race, or sexual orientation.

Prevention aimed at safer and more responsible use of the Internet should include the development of critical thinking around these elements. In order to explore these issues further, a qualitative analysis has been conducted based on a series of expert interviews and several focus groups with young people.

In-depth interviews were conducted with eleven experts in the fields of research from several European countries. Different backgrounds and profiles were covered. First, academics and researchers came from political science, criminology, linguistics and psychology, specialized in human and societal factors of misinformation and in how people get informed, and in how people validate the information that they hear or read. Secondly, sexual communication with kids and cyberhate were also fields of research. Finally, professionals working in schools (counseling and head of studies), helplines for cybercrime and Cyber Security Advisor (CSA), cybersecurity consultancies, and Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs were also interviewed.

In addition, a survey was conducted in six schools in Madrid. The methodology of both procedures was described in section 1.1. Finally, an analysis from another sample in Valencia (from two schools) is also included as a separate section. As the way the sample was selected was different, we have preferred to analyse the data separately.



4.1.- SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE SURVEY

Regarding socio demographic data obtained through the survey, 45.9% of the respondents were between 13 and 14 years of age ($n = 313$), while 54.1% were between 15 and 17 years ($n = 369$), with a higher number of cases for for 14 ($n = 309$) and 15 year olds ($n = 248$). These are the groups that were created in order to analyze age differences.

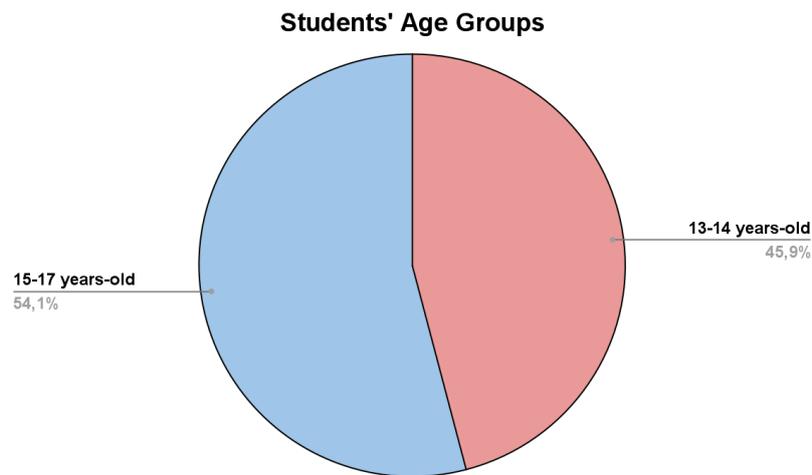


Figure 4. Distribution of the sample by age group.

In terms of gender, 46.6% ($n = 318$) of respondents were male, 45.2% ($n = 308$) were female, 3.1% ($n = 21$) identified as non-binary, while 5.1% ($n = 35$) preferred not to say it.

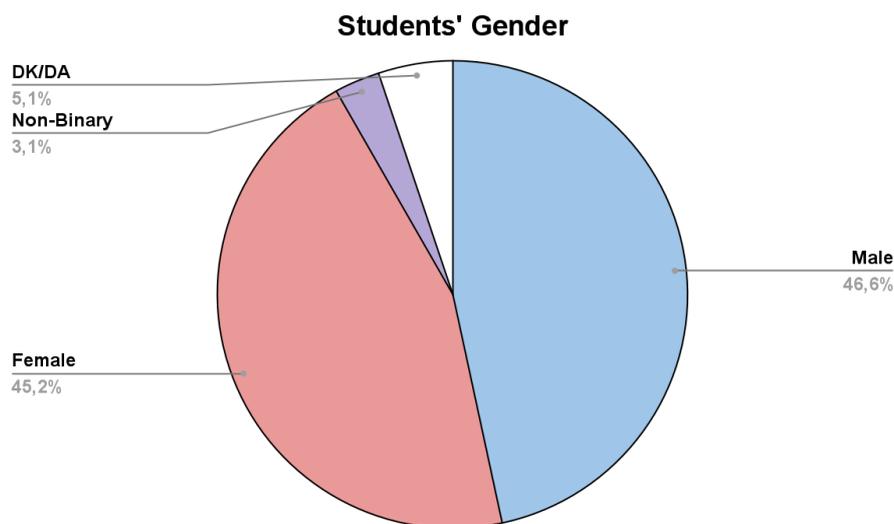
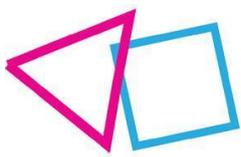


Figure 5. Distribution of the sample by their gender



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

Regarding sexual orientation, 75.5% ($n = 515$) of respondents said they were heterosexual, 8.2% ($n = 56$) bisexual, 2.9% ($n = 20$) homosexual and 3.5% ($n = 24$) other sexual orientation, while 4.7% ($n = 32$) were still unclear.

Students' Sexual Orientation

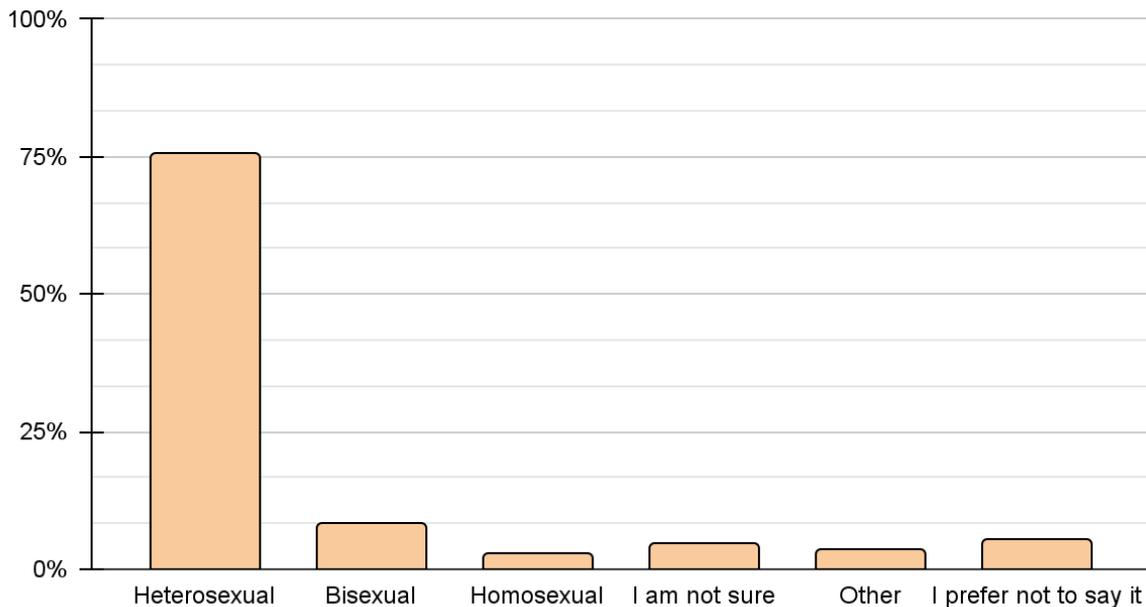
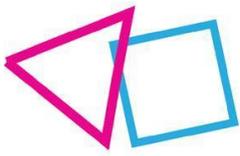


Figure 6.1. Distribution of the sample by their sexual orientation.

However, for statistical analysis and comparison of variables using the chi-square statistic, sexual orientations were grouped as follows: "heterosexual" in 75.5% of cases, "LGTBI+" (which includes "bisexual", "homosexual" and "other") in 14.7% of cases, then "not clear" in 4.7%, and "prefer not to say" in 5.1% of cases. For the sake of clarity, this is expressed in the following figure:



Students' Sexual Orientation by Categories

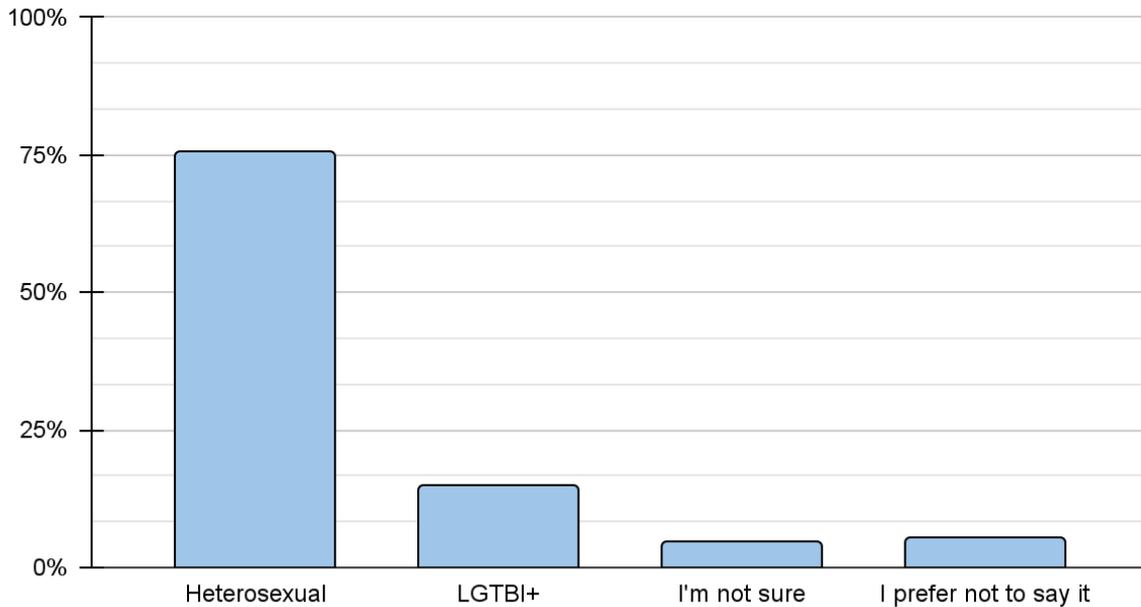
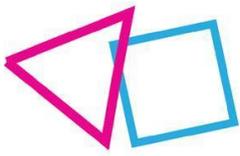


Figure 6.2. Distribution of the sample by their sexual orientation.

Regarding the city where they lived, 77.1% ($n = 526$) reported living in Madrid; 8.4% ($n = 57$) in Getafe; 5.1% ($n = 35$) in Rivas Vaciamadrid; 1.4% ($n = 10$) in Manzanares el Real; 0.6% ($n = 4$) in Soto del Rey. As for the parents' country of **birth**, as shown in Figure 7, Spain was the most representative country of birth of the parents' students (70%; $n = 477$), followed by Morocco (4-9%), Romania (2-4%), Venezuela (2%), Ecuador (2%) and Argentina (1%).



Parents' Birth Country

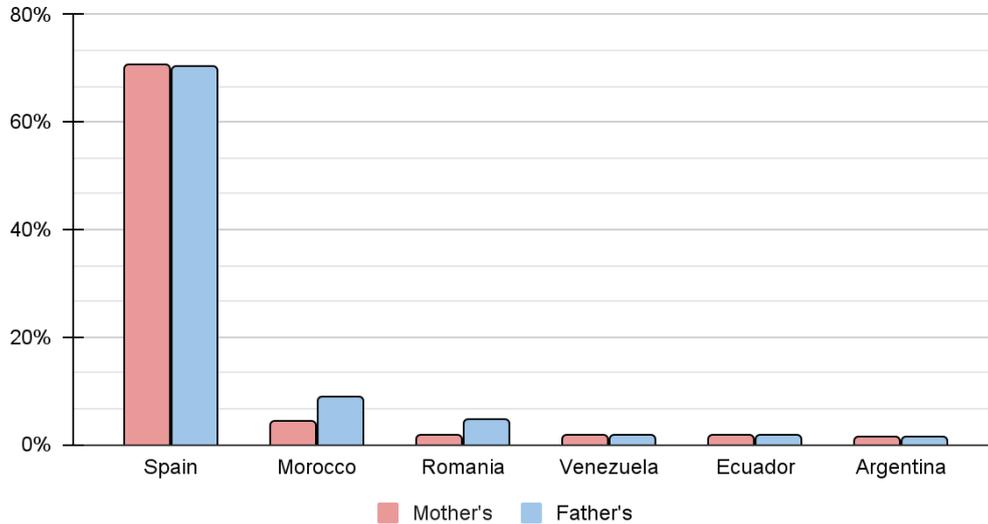


Figure 7. Distribution of Parent's Birth Country by sex.

With regard to the **type of educational center** in which the students surveyed studied, 58.9% of these were public ($n = 402$), followed by private centers in 25.4% of cases ($n = 173$) and subsidised centers for the remaining 15.7% ($n = 107$). More specifically, the educational centers where they study were: "IES Soto del Real" in 28.2% of the cases ($n = 192$); "IES Menéndez Pelayo" in 20.5% ($n = 140$); "Alameda International School" in 16% ($n = 109$); "Colegio Hipatia Fuhem" in 15.7% ($n = 107$); "IES Las Lagunas" in 10.3% ($n = 70$); "Colegio Brains" in 9.4% ($n = 64$).

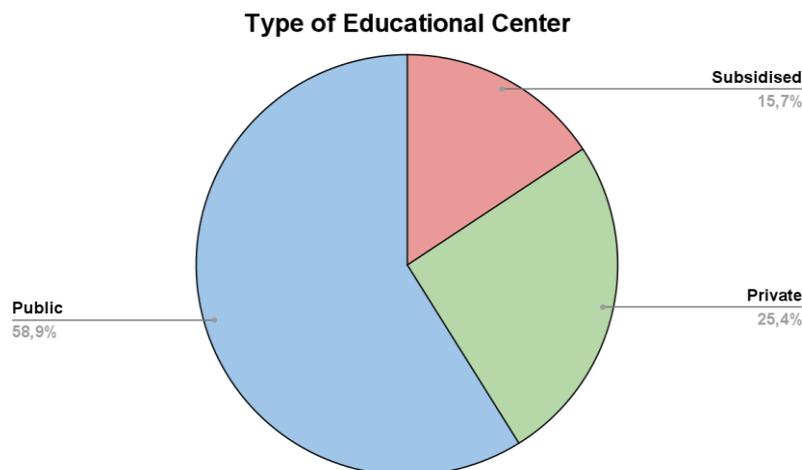
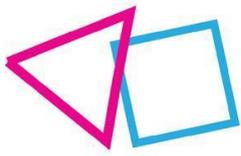


Figure 8. Types of educational centers.



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

Finally, with regard to the **background of the respondents**, 66.4% ($n = 452$) were from national origin, 21.8% were from peripheral migrant background ($n = 148$) and the remaining 4.8% were from non-peripheral background ($n = 32$). Significantly, the proportion of students with a migrant background was very different between school types, with the majority of those from a peripheral background in public schools, and those from non-peripheral backgrounds in private schools ($\chi^2 = 49.55, p < .001$).

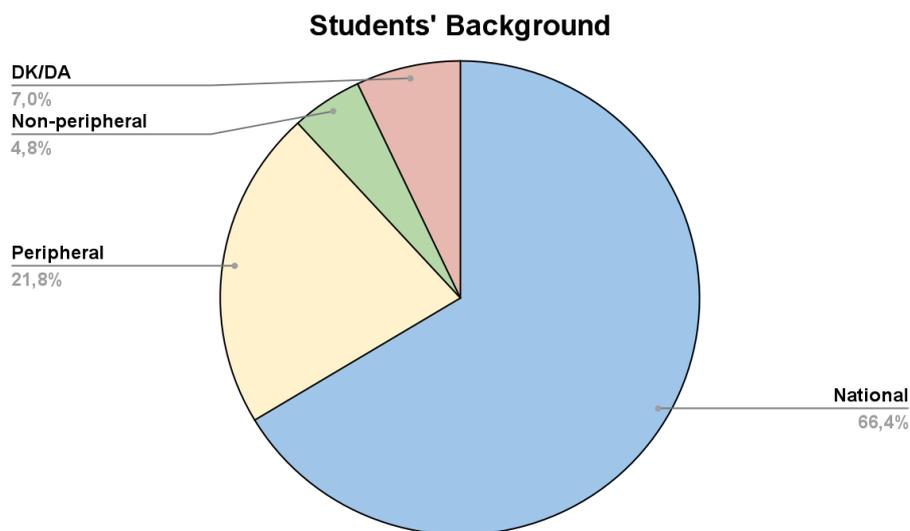
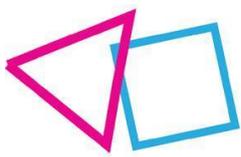


Figure 9. Distribution of the sample by their origin.

Takeaway points

- 45.9% of the respondents were aged between **13 and 14 years** ($n = 313$), while 54.1% were aged between **15 and 17 years** ($n = 369$).
- **46.6%** ($n = 318$) of respondents were **male**, **45.2%** ($n = 308$) were **female**, **3.1%** ($n = 21$) identified as **non-binary**.
- 75.5% ($n = 515$) of respondents said they were **heterosexual**, 8.2% (56) **bisexual**, 2.9% ($n = 20$) **homosexual** and 3.5% ($n = 24$) **other sexual orientation**, while 4.7% ($n = 32$) are still **unclear**.
- 77.1% ($n = 526$) reported living in **Madrid**; 8.4% ($n = 57$) in **Getafe**; 5.1% ($n = 35$) in **Rivas Vaciamadrid**; 1.4% ($n = 10$) in **Manzanares el Real**.
- 58.9% of the students studied in a **public center** ($n = 402$), followed by **private** centers in 25.4% of cases (173) and **subsidised** centers for the remaining 15.7% ($n = 107$)
- **Spain** was the most representative country of **birth of parents' students** (70%; $n = 477$). Regarding the **background** of the respondents, 66.4% ($n = 452$) were of **national origin**, 21.8%



were from peripheral **migrant background** ($n = 148$) and the remaining 4.8% were of **non-peripheral background** ($n = 32$).

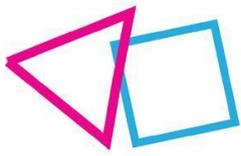
4.2.- INTERNET USAGE

A) MOST USED APPS

For the description of the most used application according to the survey, the statistical information will be grouped into three main categories: “very frequent use” (which would encompass response options 1 to 3 in which students were required to rank the apps); “regular use” (which would encompass response options 4 to 6); and “marginal or almost not usage” (which would encompass response options 7 to 10).

In terms of young people's use of the Internet, and more specifically in relation to the apps they use most, it has to be taken into account **three different uses of the Internet**: searching for **communication, entertainment and information**.

- Firstly, regarding communication apps usage, 72.9% ($n = 497$) used **Instagram** very regularly, followed by messaging apps such as **WhatsApp** with 68.5% ($n = 467$), and **Tik Tok** with 65.6% ($n = 447$) using it regularly. Nevertheless, **Facebook**, although it has a communication purpose, was used marginally by 85.9% ($n = 585$).
 - This information is consistent with the information extracted from the **focus groups**, as Instagram, Tik Tok and WhatsApp also appeared as the apps most used by the participants. Although Facebook was a very popular tool to talk with friends and family in Estonian groups, and some students used this platform to communicate with classroom teachers or classmates, its use was not as widespread.
- Secondly, for entertainment, participants reported using **YouTube** very frequently by 40.6% ($n = 277$) and on a regular basis by 54.7% ($n = 373$). **Twitch** was used very frequently by 8.9% ($n = 61$) and on a regular basis by 41.7% ($n = 284$). Regarding **online video games** (with text or voice chat) it can be highlighted that there was a normal distribution between answer options, since they were used very frequently in 31.7% ($n = 216$), on a regular basis by 38.1% ($n = 260$), and marginally used by 30.1% ($n = 205$). Twitter was then used on a regular basis by 38.7% ($n = 264$), and marginally used by 54.6% ($n = 372$).
 - Consistently, in the **focus groups** participants referred that YouTube would be less used than Tik Tok because young people prefer short content rather than long videos. In addition, online video games would be used when young people are bored or get



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

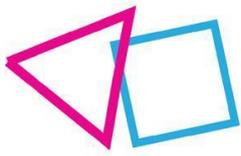
tired from spending their time on social Apps. Twitter would be mainly used for getting informed (following accounts of famous people, influencers and watching the news (informative usage), but not for posting content there.

- Thirdly, **Snapchat** would have mixed use, since it is used for entertainment but also to engage in conversations with other people. It was used on a regular basis by 37% ($n = 252$), and marginally by 60% ($n = 409$).
- And, finally, dating Apps such as **Tinder**, **Grindr** etc. stand out, with 96.7% ($n = 659$) reporting very rare or very marginal (almost never) use.

The following table gives an overview of the most and least used applications according to their use: communication, entertainment and information.

Table 8. Most and less used Apps depending on its given usage.

	Most Used Apps	Less Used Apps
For communication purposes	WhatsApp, Instagram	Snapchat, Facebook
For entertainment purposes	Tik Tok (+), Twitch, YouTube, Online video games	Snapchat, Tinder, Grindr,
For informative purposes	Twitter	Facebook



B) SPENT HOURS ON THE INTERNET

Percentage of hours spent on the Internet during the week by students

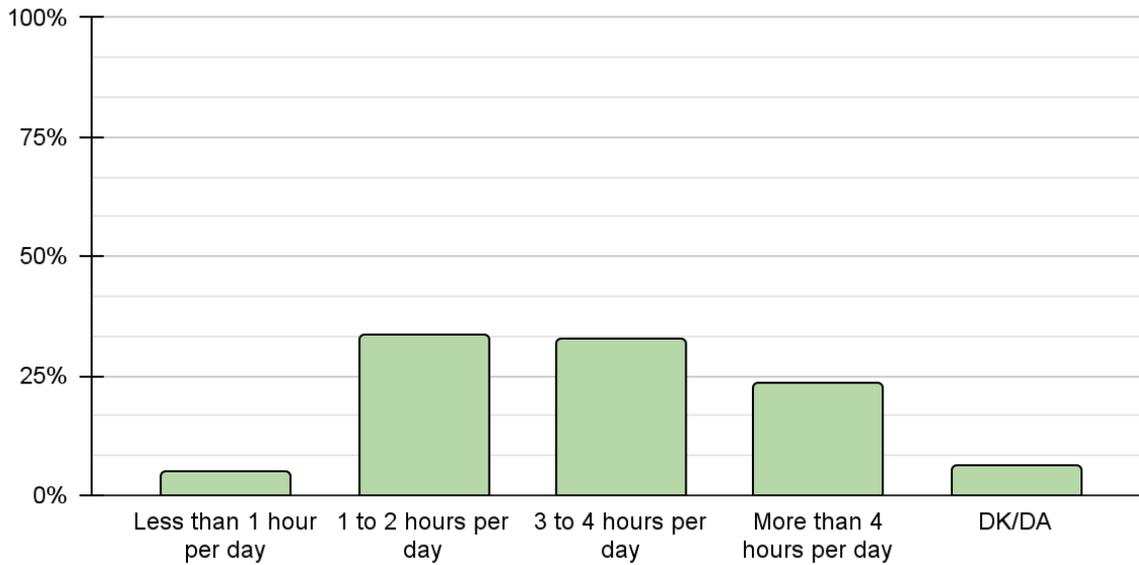
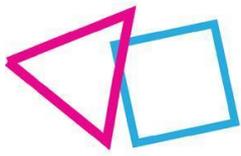


Figure 10. Percentage of hours spent for entertainment on the Internet during the week by students.

- 14-year-old students spend more time on the Internet during the week than participants of another age ($\chi^2 = 33.773$; $p = .028$).
- While girls tend to spend 3-4 hours on the Internet during the week, boys tend to spend 1-2 hours ($\chi^2 = 35.047$; $p < .001$).



Percentage of hours spent on the Internet during the weekend by students

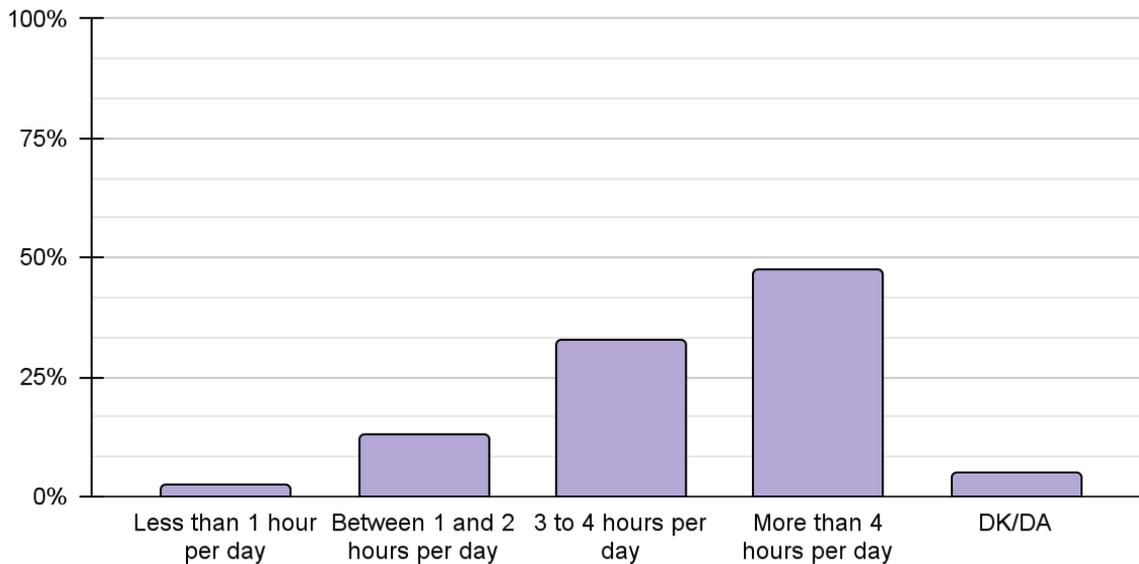
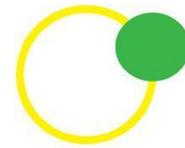
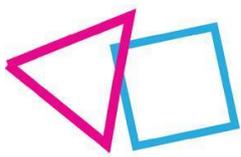


Figure 11. Percentage of hours spent for entertainment on the Internet during the weekends.

- 14-year-olds spend more time on the Internet at weekends than participants of a different age. More specifically, they tend to spend more than four hours on weekends ($\chi^2 = 40.125$; $p = .005$).
- As a relevant point of comparison, no statistically significant differences were found in terms of the time spent on the Internet by boys and girls during the weekend ($\chi^2 = 12.230$; $p = .427$).

C) ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The following section presents the electronic devices most used by respondents and their perceived level of safety. Although this information has been developed in greater depth by Work Package 2 (WP2), it is relevant to make a small digression in this deliverable as they will be analysed to see if they constitute potential victimisation factors. Thus, the information is presented in Figures 12 and 13.



Frequency of device usage

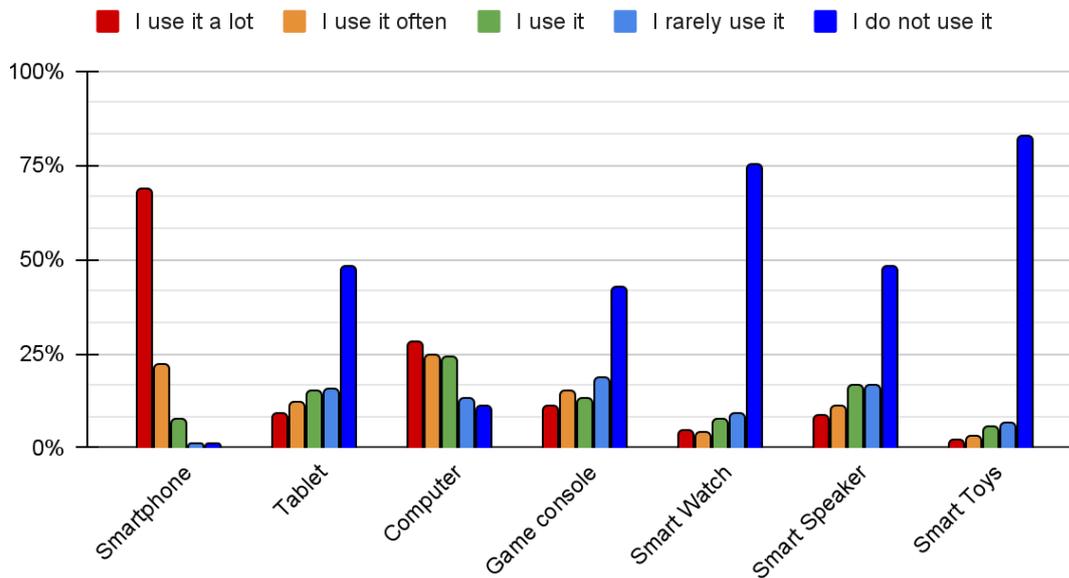


Figure 12. Percentage of the frequency of device usage.

Perceived level of security according to devices

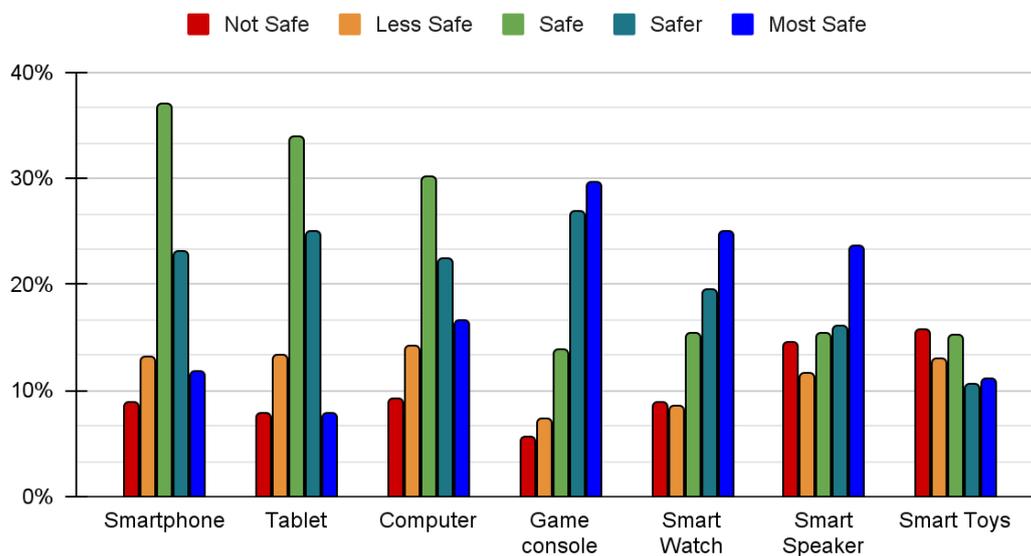
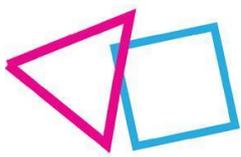


Figure 13. Perceived level of security according to devices.

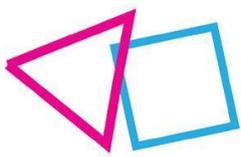


Takeaway points

- Regarding most used applications, for communication, participants mainly use Instagram, Tik Tok, and WhatsApp or Telegram. This information is consistent with the information extracted from the focus groups.
- For entertainment, participants report using mainly Tik Tok (for shortened content) and YouTube (for long-duration videos). Twitch is used sporadically, such as online video games (with text or voice chat). Twitter is used by young people mostly to follow accounts of famous people, influencers and watch the news (informative usage).
- Snapchat has a mixed use since it is used for entertainment but also to engage in conversations with other people. Facebook is a very popular tool to talk with friends and family, or with classroom teachers or classmates. Apps such as Tinder, Grindr etc. stand out, have a very marginal (almost never) use.
- Regarding the hours spent on the Internet during week time, 14-year-old students spend more time on the Internet during the week than other participants ($\chi^2 = 33.773$; $p = .028$). While girls tend to spend 3-4 hours on the Internet during the week, boys tend to spend 1-2 hours ($\chi^2 = 35.047$; $p < .001$).
- Regarding the hours spent on the Internet during weekends, 14-year-olds tend to spend more than four hours on the weekends ($\chi^2 = 40.125$; $p = .005$). No statistically significant differences were found depending on gender ($\chi^2 = 12.230$; $p = .427$).
- Regarding device usage, participants use more frequently smartphones and computers, and in a lesser usage, they almost do not use tablets, game consoles, smartwatches, smart speakers, or smart toys. They consider smartphones, tablets, game consoles and computers to be safer, and less safe smart toys.

4.3.- FAKE NEWS

When the students in the focus groups were asked about what they called fake news, although they all knew the term, some differences appeared in the focus of their explanations. Nevertheless, the main description that was highlighted by most of them was that there is an intention to lie, and that they raise suspicion. Many of them referred to celebrities as both, spreaders, and targets of FNs, which is likely related with one of their main interests. In addition, they differentiated fake news from other types of false information. For instance, Tik Tok has a lot of false information, such as people taking over other users' videos, but it is visible and fake (which could be considered a way of parody). The



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

two main differences we found between the groups were, as we will see below: the platform or mean that is firstly mentioned as the main place for fake news (being social media for most of them, but specific Internet portals for others) and the susceptibility to them (being all potential victims for some of them while the others believe it is something more dangerous for old people).

Regarding the data obtained through the survey, 27.9% of the sample ($n = 190$) recognized having shared news or stories and discovered later that they were fake. An amount slightly higher (33.9%, $n = 231$) knew someone of their age who did it. Although to a lesser extent, 8.9% ($n = 61$) of the sample shared fake news knowing that they were fake, and 16.3% ($n = 126$) knew someone who did it on purpose as well. Differences between both groups will be explained later.

Percentage of young people who have committed the following behaviours

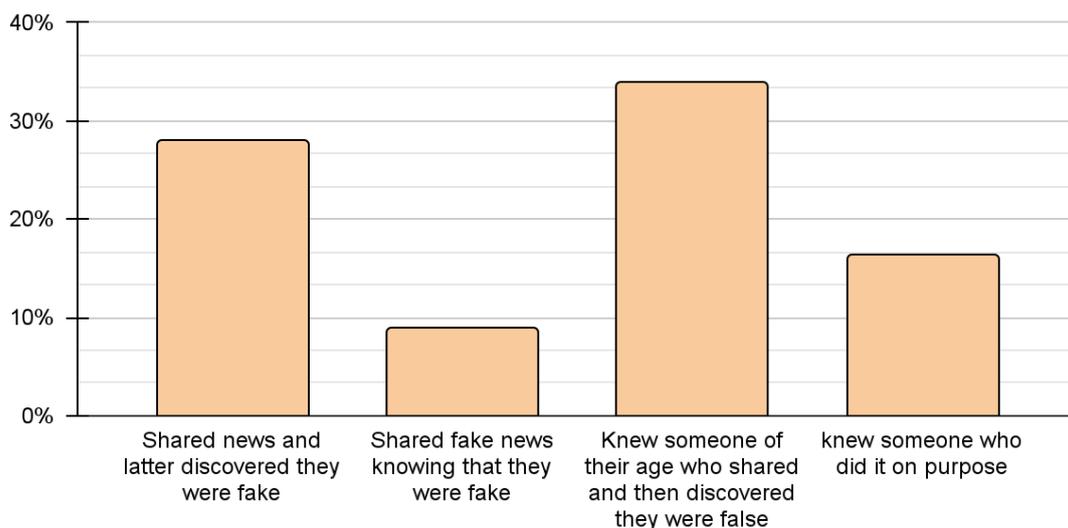
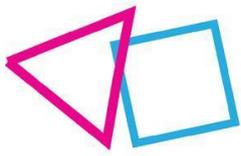


Figure 14. Percentage of young people who have committed the following behaviours.

A) Sources of information and the erosion of trust

For most of the participants in the focus groups, traditional media do not appear as a source of information, although there was a small difference between ages. In the focus groups of younger teenagers (12-14 years old), except for one participant who watched the news on TV with her parents, traditional media did not appear even in the online format. Despite the fact that some referred to using Google to look for information, they mainly watch Tik Tok and YouTube, showing a preference for the video format. Specifically, YouTube was used for *looking for something previously seen in*



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

general Internet or on TV, to check what information YouTube gives, and also for a handy quick review of the news. In the older groups (14-17), there was a larger diversity. Although some of them referred to using traditional media for getting informed, the main source for most of them would be social networks, mainly Tik Tok and Facebook. With this format, news are not selected by the viewer or by the editorial line, but for the preferences of the following users and the social network inner algorithm. As some participants summarised: *It's not so much like news appearing to you as it is because of the news that people upload or the things that people tell you like you are finding out a little more or less; I have notifications in Facebook when new news are launched* [Others agree]. Although less used, Twitter is also mentioned, but here the way in which the information displays is different, as the participants follow different mass media.

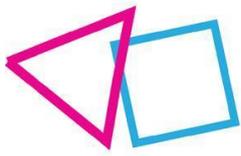
Regarding traditional media, no participant read the newspaper on paper. Many of them recognized that they rarely read the news (*We don't read news very much*). Nevertheless, in one group some of them referred to reading news from the newspaper online, while in another group some of the participants used the BBC application or the local news site app. Only two teens watched the news with their parents on the TV.

Google was the most used platform when they needed to look for specific information. Only a few use more sophisticated tools such as title and domain triage or searching for websites written in a different language (i.e., English). Although less common, they also reported using Wikipedia.

There were, then, two trends in information sources. On the one side we found a slightly larger group of teenagers that get informed only via their social networks, through the content uploaded by the followers and the social network notifications. On the other hand, we obtained another group that got informed as well via traditional media in their online format or on the TV.

The other vulnerability that was pointed out to understand young people as an easy target for the fake news was their common condition of mistrust, and specifically a progressive erosion of trust in traditional media. However, in our sample, while in three groups (Slovakia and Estonia) they pointed out specific regional sensationalist *tabloid portals* or *yellow press* as the first sources of misinformation, more traditional media were not described as suspicious.

Indeed, an interesting discussion emerged in some of the groups around the reliability of these types of information. Although not many participants referred to watch the news on TV, most of them considered them to be more reliable. Even though one participant pointed out social networks as Twitter being the place where *the last-minute news appears first*, in general, most of the teenagers in



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

our sample found that *news on TV is the most credible source of information, as when it appears in the news it gives you more security*, being for some of them, even more reliable than website news. Some of them seemed to be aware of the bubble effect, as one participant described: *Twitter isn't a good source of information because I only watch things about my preferences*. In another group, the debate went from those who got informed through the traditional news channels to those who prefer to use Twitter as *everybody is there* and you can also follow the controversies.

Nevertheless, most of them assuming that traditional media are more reliable does not mean that they are chosen by the participants. Many of them recognized that they *do not trust much* in the information uploaded in social networks, but they still use them as their main source, as *you can't trust completely something*.

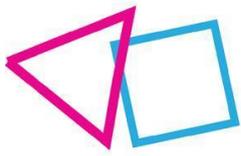
B) Typology

Through the examples that were described in the focus groups, we can delimit a sort of typology about the most common fake news, as they are perceived by our sample's youth.

First, we find misinformation related to the **health** and **COVID-19 situation** (*The first thing that comes to my mind is COVID-19*), which could be encompassed in a broader category about health. This is the most mentioned category, and indeed it was the first contact with fake news for some of the participants, as it was described by a girl: *My mother said there was a vaccine for COVID-19, and later she told me it was a hoax. I was quite impressed because I hadn't seen them before. And I've been impressed*. Negationist spreaders were also pointed out: *Like the news about the hospital being empty etc*. In these categories we also found stories about health risks, such as the one that two boys explained they had believed in about cosmic radiation emanating from our phones while we are asleep.

Secondly, we found news related to **celebrities**: mainly about their romantic relationships and about fake deaths (*the Queen of England dying by Nov. 17th; K. West hooking up with Jeffrey Star*). Many of the participants seemed to enjoy following celebrity gossip. In some cases, they themselves recognised that some of this news could be also described as marketing operations.

Thirdly, **scary news** that tried to create **social panic** were pointed out. One example referred by the children would be the stories about kidnappings, or the existence of some fake "rape day" when organized massive rapes were supposed to being taken place: *I saw a lot of girls from Tik Tok, uploading Tik Toks showing up afraid to go outside because they really believed it*.



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

Finally, the **politics** and **propaganda** motive, which would be the main type of fake news according to the experts, is barely pointed out by children. Only one group referred to it as a potential content - without providing any specific example- and in another group one participant linked the term fake news to Donald Trump, again, without a deep knowledge of the fact: *There was three years ago... it was spread all around the world, something related to Donald Trump. So, the first thing that comes to my mind when I hear about "Fake News" is Donald Trump.*

The emphasis put on the first three types may be related with the **emotional condition** of the fake news. The health risks, celebrities' lives and scary stories related to children or young people appeal directly to children's emotions and/or interests, so they probably remember them more and are more likely to fall for them.

When we contrast these examples with the ones that are explained by the interviewed experts, we find some overlaps but also some differences. They almost coincide in the main areas (they even coincide in some of the examples) but the participants in our sample do not pay so much attention to the political and propagandistic fake news and to the sponsored content, which may be relevant for prevention strategies.

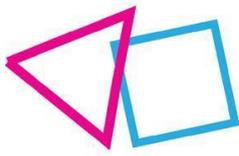
C) Age as a vulnerable factor:

When students in the focus groups were asked about who spreads fake news, they mostly agreed on two profiles. On the one hand, we would find elderly people, as they would have problems with ICTs, as they frequently experience in the WhatsApp family groups:

My grandmother sometimes sends me posts and says, 'look what happened'; and immediately you know, a post from a fortnight ago, and she believes it, and she sends it to me, and I know it's a lie. But she doesn't bother to look at the comments and look it up. The first thing she does is believe the news and share it with her friends.... It's not that she wants to share the fake news but that she doesn't realise that it's fake.

The other vulnerable group would be younger children and teenagers, due to a lack of knowledge, since, according to our participants, at a very early age information would be shared among peers without checking the veracity of the information. One student, for instance, explained how her younger brother believed everything that appeared on YouTube. Another one explained the effect of the fake news on young people as follow:

There was a fake news that there was a rape day or something. I saw that a lot of Tik Tok girls were afraid to go out on the street because they really believed it. But girls who have only been on the Internet



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

for a few months or a year, they don't know how to deal with the Internet yet and they really believe these things. Maybe a 10-year-old girl doesn't realise that and really believes that it can happen. But of course, 10-year-old girls who have Instagram or whatever, they believe everything and eventually they will start to look at the comments, not like now when they see something and pass it on to their friends.

Regarding the survey results, age differences were found significant, but in the opposite way. Older teenagers (15-17) recognized in a greater extent than the younger (13-14) -around the double- having shared fake news without knowing they were fake ($\chi^2 = 8.691, p = .003$), as well as knowing their falsity before sharing ($\chi^2 = 4.635, p = .031$).

In addition, students from our sample reported knowing more people from their age who shared news both unknowingly (33.9%, $n = 231$) and knowingly (18.5%, $n = 126$) than older people who did the same both unknowingly (25.7%, $n = 175$) and knowingly (14.4%, $n = 98$).

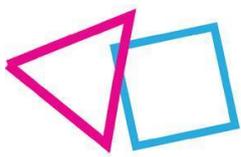
D) Spreaders profile and reasons to share fake news

By analysing the variables that correlate in the survey with students who admitted to sharing fake news (both knowingly and unknowingly), we can establish a number of elements that tentatively point to a higher risk of engaging in these behaviours. While there is some overlap between the two ($\chi^2 = 35.853, p < .001$), and some common correlations (like the age tendency that was previously mentioned) there are also differences, as will be discussed below.

Participants who shared fake news knowing they were fake tend to state that they receive less information about Internet risks at home than the general sample ($\chi^2 = 13.27, p = .010$), less supervision ($\chi^2 = 10.976, p = .027$), and less information at the school ($\chi^2 = 18.168, p = .010$). No correlation was found with the time spent online or the greater or lesser use of certain devices.

Regarding those who shared news and later discovered that they were fake, although no differences were found in the time spent on the Internet or in the most used applications, we found that this kind of spreaders tend to spend more time with the mobile ($\chi^2 = 14.647, p = .005$) and with the tablet ($\chi^2 = 14.917, p = .005$), but not with the computer ($\chi^2 = 8.85, p = .065$). A significant relation was also found with those participants with a migrant background ($\chi^2 = 10.47, p = .015$) both peripheral and non peripheral.

In both cases we find significant correlation with being a cyberbullying offender (in all the situations when they know they are sharing and in some of them when they do not know). Nevertheless, the number of participants that result in this cross is low, so it could not be as representative. Regarding cyberhate situations, the numbers are higher and the correlation is clear with purposeful sharers:



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

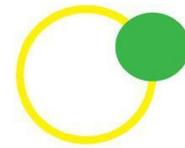
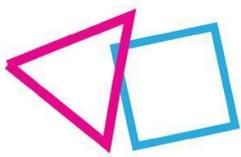
sexism ($\chi^2 = 37.92, p < .001$), LGBTIphobia ($\chi^2 = 35.12, p < .001$) and racism ($\chi^2 = 27.76, p < .001$). With a significant but lower correlation we also find the group who shares without knowing: sexism ($\chi^2 = 4.48, p = .034$), LGBTIphobia ($\chi^2 = 8.48, p = .004$) but no racism.

The link between Cyberhate and fake news was also pointed out in the focus groups, especially through racist fake information related for instance with refugees. It is also significant that, while the general concern about fake news is quite low in both the focus groups and the survey -as it is the less referred Internet risk-, there are some participants that are more aware of the phenomena, such as girls ($\chi^2 = 29.34, p = .015$), students with migrant background ($\chi^2 = 27.05, p = .028$), and LGBTI ($\chi^2 = 25.11, p = .048$). All three coincide with the three situations of cyberhate studied: racism, LGBTIphobia and sexism.

As previously described, the main news that the participants in the focus groups remembered to have received or even share were related with their interests (gossips, concerts, etc.) or were very emotional (kidnapping and rapes). Indeed, when asked about the reasons behind the spread of fake news, they suggested that it is: *to get people's attention and appeal to their interests. That is why they spread faster.*

The fake news that were previously shared by the participants were related to COVID-19 restrictions measures, a fake music event and the mobile radiation. As one participant explains, it was connected with both his **interest and emotions**: *My first thought was, it's such a great festival and we can go again. But then it turned out to be fake. That was sad.* Another participant explained the role of emotions like this: *If you like it, the first reaction is one of emotion, **you are happy**, but then when you see that it is false, you get worried.* Similarly, a news article that sounds funny is much more easily shared, as some participants referred: *I usually share if I think it's funny, sometimes I just read the headline and if it's funny I share.* The main problem with that sharing is that even if the person knows that it is not true, it has an impact on him/her, as another participant explains: *"I sometimes read the news on the internet because it's funny and even if it doesn't seem true, I still believe a bit".*

Among the reasons remarked in the focus groups to spread fake news, one of the main ones would be the wish to gain **popularity and fame**, as *people who are actively looking to get as many likes as possible, mentions, etc. tend to share fake news.* The wish to gain popularity is pointed out as something that others do but not as something that the participants do, which could be understandable due to the social desirability inside the group. Secondly, **entertainment** is also a common reason, sharing fake content for fun or in an ironic way, as one participant referred: *That friend may be joking.*



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

Thirdly, another relevant aspect that some of the participants consider is that fake news is mainly spread by "narrow-minded people" or "**uneducated people**". Finally, participants also state that many spreaders **believe** that the news is **true** and their motivation is to **inform or to help**. In this regard, on the one hand, in the focus groups, nobody acknowledged having shared fake content knowingly. On the other hand, in the survey, as previously described, although a small group referred to having shared on purpose, it was less than one third of those who did it unknowingly. Nevertheless, most of the interviewed stated that neither them nor their friends usually share news.

When the survey participants were asked about their main motivation when sharing online content, the most stated motivation is that the information comes from a known author or mean or it is received from a person of trust. Contrasting the information before sharing it is also pointed out. To a lesser extent, although also relevant, it appears that the information is funny and that it is in video or image format. What the survey participants valued least was the text format and that the information was potentially interesting for their followers.

When content is shared, it worries a lot and quite

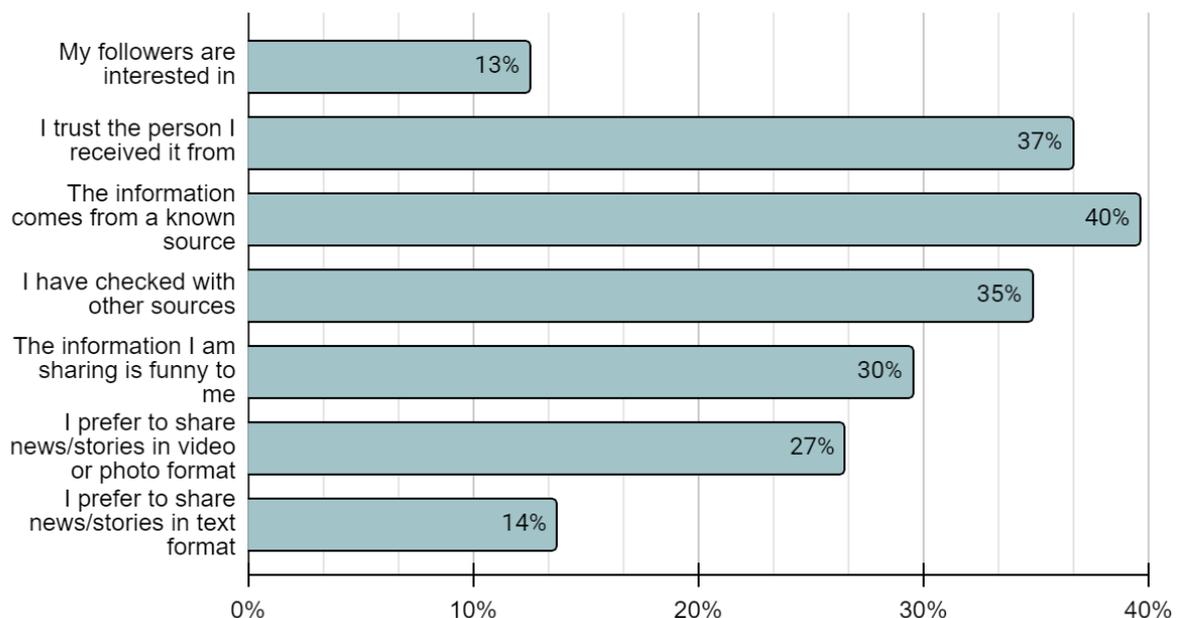
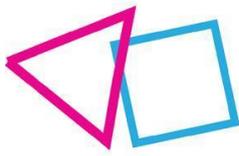


Figure 15. Percentage of respondents' level of importance and motivations when sharing content depending on the following situations.

In this regard, a significant trend was found between the different motivations that the participants express when sharing content and the possibility of ending up sharing fake news. Regarding those who



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

shared fake news without knowing they were, the significant motivations were: that the information comes from a known newspaper/author ($\chi^2 = 18.07, p= .003$); that the information has been checked beforehand ($\chi^2 = 14.05, p= .015$); that the information is funny ($\chi^2 = 12.52, p= .028$).

When the participants shared fake news knowing they were, the main significant motivation was that the information was funny ($\chi^2 = 32.08, p < .001$). There was also an inverse correlation, as they care less than the average if the information comes from a known newspaper/author ($\chi^2 = 16.61, p= .005$) and if the information was previously contrasted ($\chi^2 = 13.12, p= .022$).

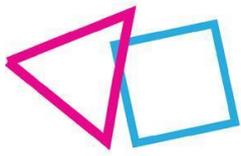
Table 9. Table summarising the factors and motivations that correlate with sharing fake news.

Sharing unknowingly	Sharing knowingly
Age (older 15-17)	Age (older 15-17)
Higher use of mobile phones	Low information about risks at home and school and low supervision
Migrant background (peripheral and non)	
Sexism and LGBTIphobia offender	Sexism, LGBTIphobia and racism offender
Motivations when sharing	
Funny information	Funny information
The information comes from a known newspaper/author	(Inverse) the information comes from a known newspaper/author
The information has been previously contrasted	(Inverse) The information has been previously contrasted

E) Reliability and verification

Although our results from the focus groups show that reliability is not one of the first reasons why young people choose a platform to get informed, that does not mean that they do not have different criteria to consider which information is reliable and which is not. In general, *the source* is considered *the most important element*, although others also pay special attention to the style. Many recognize not to check or verify the information unless they are going to share it, which is not so common.

Regarding the **source**, two aspects were mainly considered: the person who sends or posts the news and by the **site** where the news is. The person who sends it is taken into account in a double sense of



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

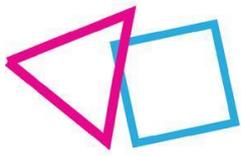
trust and mistrust (*it depends on the person and how it is explained*). For instance, one participant referred to a friend who easily shares fake news who is not reliable anymore. In relation to the web site, they described that there are “famous pages” such as big newspapers or Wikipedia which they trust. Only one participant suggested that before sharing, he verified the information also if it comes from one of these pages. As it was mentioned above, social networks are not considered to be reliable, which is solved -although only in some cases- by contrasting the information: *If I don't trust something in Tik Tok I look for it on google or on the Internet*. Finally, to a lesser extent, authorship is also considered as a factor of credibility either by being a recognised author or a verified user, for instance of YouTube.

Some participants in the focus groups remarked on the importance of the **style** of the content. Within this category they appreciated that the website has good saturation of colours and good quality photographs. In addition, they considered that typos, dodgy headlines or bad spelling can also be a sign of fake news. Nevertheless, some other participants draw attention to the fact that the appearance of the news can be easily manipulated, considering that *searching for sites that know beforehand are trustworthy* could be more reliable.

Other criteria that participants in the focus groups suggested were the **date** of publishing, if there is a **video** together with the piece of news and the **content** itself (for instance, *If the story sounds crazy*). Regarding the most common content, the examples and categories emerged are the same as those analysed in the typology epigraph.

When asked about the verification of the information, the more relevant aspect was that many participants recognized not to verify it, or to do it *rarely... Only if it is really sketchy*. As a young boy explains: *I think I just consider (the news) as not certain, but I will not check if it is true or not and I will not believe that it is really true*. Some also refer to looking at it and just *ignore it*, only checking in case they want to share, which does not happen often. Indeed, some of them prefer not to share than to check: *If I read and start to doubt then I don't share*. Between those who verify the main strategies are as follow:

- Looking at the comments of the publication: *To me for example, my older brother tells me: “look first of all at the comments, If the comments say it is fake, don't trust”*.
- Contrast the information (for instance from Tik Tok) in Google or in another web site to check if something happened that way or if even did not happen at all.



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

- Looking for different sources: *You have to find more sources to make sure it is not fake.*
- In the cases where they are quite familiar with photoshop-like applications, this has helped them to identify photoshopped pictures on Instagram.
- Using a photo recognition software as Photo Sherlock.
- Checking the author of a page or article and him or her background.
- Reviewing the Page visits, shares, and comments.
- Looking for the date of publication.

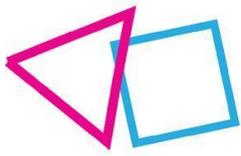
In conclusion, although some participants thought they *do not need to verify if the information is true* because they *just know*, and some explained that they usually do not take the time to do it, other teenagers in our sample showed several tools to verify the suspicious content. In addition, some of the participants thought that most of the people don't check the information and just share it with one click. This could also show a bias between the discourse (self-perception) and the real practice.

F) Main means of propagation

As previously mentioned, some participants pointed out tabloid press and regional newspapers as the main platforms for the spreading of fake news, but this answer was not the most common. Social networks were identified as the main distributors of misinformation. Among this, the most salient would-be Instagram (*as it is difficult to trace the source because everything comes in the form of a picture*), followed by Twitter, Facebook, family WhatsApp groups and Tik Tok. On Twitter there would be two kinds of fake news, the usual ones and a fake tweet, that someone creates as a screen shot.

According to the consulted experts, and in agreement to our findings, all the means can be prevalent for spreading misinformation, so it will happen more wherever young people are the most. In the opinion of these experts, it depends on consumer trends, so misinformation seeks out the channels where we are. Therefore, Tik Tok would have plenty of fake news nowadays as it is one of the most used social networks.

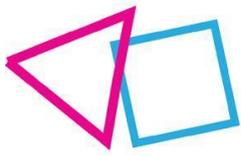
Two social networks that were mentioned as well, although not specific for teenagers, are Twitter and Facebook. Other experts mainly pointed to restricted groups on instant messaging platforms or apps like Telegram and WhatsApp, which in our case would be present more in family groups (related to older relatives).



In the survey, no significant correlation was found between the most used applications and the likelihood of sharing fake news either knowingly ($\chi^2 = 12.53$, $p = .185$) or unknowingly ($\chi^2 = 7.72$, $p = .563$).

Takeaway points

- Regarding the survey's data, 27.9% of the sample recognized having shared news or stories and discovered later that they were fake, and 8.9% of the sample shared fake news knowing that they were fake.
- Regarding the focus groups information, younger teenagers (12-14 years old) would prefer Google, YouTube or Tik Tok to search information over traditional media. Regarding traditional media, no participant read the newspaper on paper. Many of them recognized that they rarely read the news. Google would be the most used platform when they need to look for specific information.
- The typology about the most common fake news, as they are perceived by our sample's youth are: health and COVID-19 situation, celebrities, scary news to create social panic, politics and propaganda.
- There are two vulnerable profiles reported by focus group's information: elderly people, as they would have problems with ICTs and younger children and teenagers, due to a lack of knowledge.
- Regarding the survey results, older teenagers (15-17) were more likely than younger teenagers (13-14) to have shared fake news knowing and without knowing it was fake.
- Participants who shared fake news knowing they were fake tended to state that they received less information about Internet risks than the general sample at home, less supervision, and less information at the school.
- Young people who spread fake news unknowingly were more likely to have migrant backgrounds (not only peripheral) and tended to spend more time with mobile phones and tablets but not with computers.
- Regarding cyberhate situations, the numbers were greater and the correlation was clear with purposely sharers: sexism, LGBTIphobia and racism. The link between cyber hate and fake news was also pointed out in the focus groups, especially through related racist misinformation. Significantly, girls, students with an immigrant background and LGBTI+ were more worried of the phenomenon of fake news.



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

- Among the reasons remarked in the focus groups to spread fake news, one of the main ones would be the wish to gain popularity and fame, although it did not have a significant correlation in the survey. However, both in the survey and in the focus groups, entertainment motivation was pointed out.
- While the fact that the information came from a known newspaper/author or had been checked was especially important for sharers who did not know the content was false, the reverse trend was found for the intentional sharers.
- The most relevant credibility factors for young people are the type of source, the site where the news is published, the authorship of the news and trust in the sender.
- All the means can be prevalent for spreading misinformation.

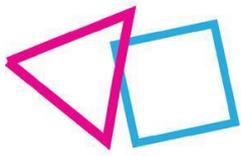
4.4.- CYBERHATE AND CYBERBULLYING

Definitions and targets emerged in the focus groups are consistent with those offered by the bibliography. In the case of the young participants, when asked about cyberhate both cyberbullying and hate speech topics appear, although as one participant explains in one group, cyberhate refers to *attacking ethnic, social, etc. groups and cyberbullying refers to attacking individuals*. Both cyberbullying and cyberhate are mixed probably as bullying has inherited a lot of hate speech: *anyone can be a victim, nowadays those of a different race or who don't quite look the part are shamed*. As one interviewed expert also highlights, expressing hatred can be a form of bullying against a person, so both phenomena (cyberbullying and cyberhate) would overlap in some cases, but not always. Despite this overlap, the following analysis will present the results distinguishing between those related to cyberbullying and those related to cyberhate to increase clarity.

The definition given by one participant of the focus groups is consistent with the previously stated: *An attack against people or groups based on their actual or perceived race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, (dis)ability etc.*

A) Victimization factors

In the focus groups, the most referred situation **targets** are race and *racism: Well, because people don't want people to immigrate to their country, for example*. LGBTBIphobia would be stated in second place (*People mess with those things a lot*). Along with common forms of discrimination, physical appearance is repeatedly highlighted. In two of the groups (in Estonia and Slovakia) the economic status is also pointed out: *Modest children being or economically weaker and without family support children*. In a



lesser extent, age is pointed out: *Fat people, Asians, gay, Black, old people...* Finally, being an influencer is also referred to: *Digital influencers are more often targets, because they're very present online.*

1) *Racism*

Among the victims of racism, half of the sample were men (49%, $n=25$). As expected, having experienced racism correlated with being a peripheral migrant ($\chi^2 = 21.5$, $p < .001$), being that 16.1% ($n=24$) of the participants with this background stated to have suffered online racism. In addition, among those who reported experiencing a racist situation, being LGBTBI appeared to be a risk factor as well ($\chi^2 = 11.43$; $p = .010$).

2) *LGTBIphobia*

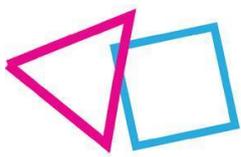
Regarding **LGTBIphobia cases** in which the respondent had acknowledged having been a victim of this situation, 50% ($n=25$) were women, significantly being only 12 male participants who admitted it as well ($\chi^2 = 30.94$; $p < .001$), 3 non binary (14.3% of this groups) and 10 who prefer not to state a gender (28.6% o this group). In a similar proportion, 37.5% of the bisexuals and 35% of the homosexuals referred to have suffered this kind of situations. However, only 6.3% of those who do not have it clear and 8.6% of those who preferred not to say it, stated it as well. The correlation was then bigger with those who did not want to specify their gender than to those who did not want to express their sexual orientation. Globally, 68% ($n=34$) of the victims were LGBTBI+.

3) *Sexism*

With regard to sexist situations, we find that this is the incident that most participants have experienced in relation to racist and LGTBiphobic situations. In relation to the gender of the participants who had been victims of a sexist situation, the majority were female (66.9%, $n=87$), being 28.3% of the female sample ($n=87$), and a significant 37.1% of those who preferred not to say it. In addition, being LGBTBI emerged as a risk factor for ending up in a sexist situation ($\chi^2 = 28.44$, $p < .001$).

While explicitly sexist content in social networks was not approached in most of the focus groups, in the two groups where it was addressed, participants explained that videos with exaggeration of feminine roles or *videos making fun of what women do* are common in social networks. As we will approach later, they are usually sort of masked in the form of jokes.

As previously discussed, gender related issues are especially sensible for ending up blaming the victim. Firstly, just because this type of sexism does not only involve men does not mean that it is not sexist, as a participant suggests: *For example, on Tik Tok I see a video and I get into the comments and many*



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

times I see more criticism of girls towards girls than boys did boys. Indeed, pressure above the ideal of femininity would be stronger in girls. Secondly, the idea that girls with complexes who are offended by this are also presented in a special way. Thirdly, although it is not explicitly mentioned, a last risk could be related with the fact that, as some participants explain, the comments about physical appearance take place more frequently according to the style of the photos, especially *If the girls show more or less.*

Finally, as will be described in the next section, when comments, videos or posts are supposed to be funny or joking, the problem can turn on a lack of sense of humor instead of a form of aggression or of abuse.

Regarding prevalence, sexism is the situation most often referred to in the first person, while as an observer, LGBTIphobia was the most named. The following figure (Figure 16) shows a resume of the three main phenomena described in the previous section:

Percentage of respondents reporting the following behaviours

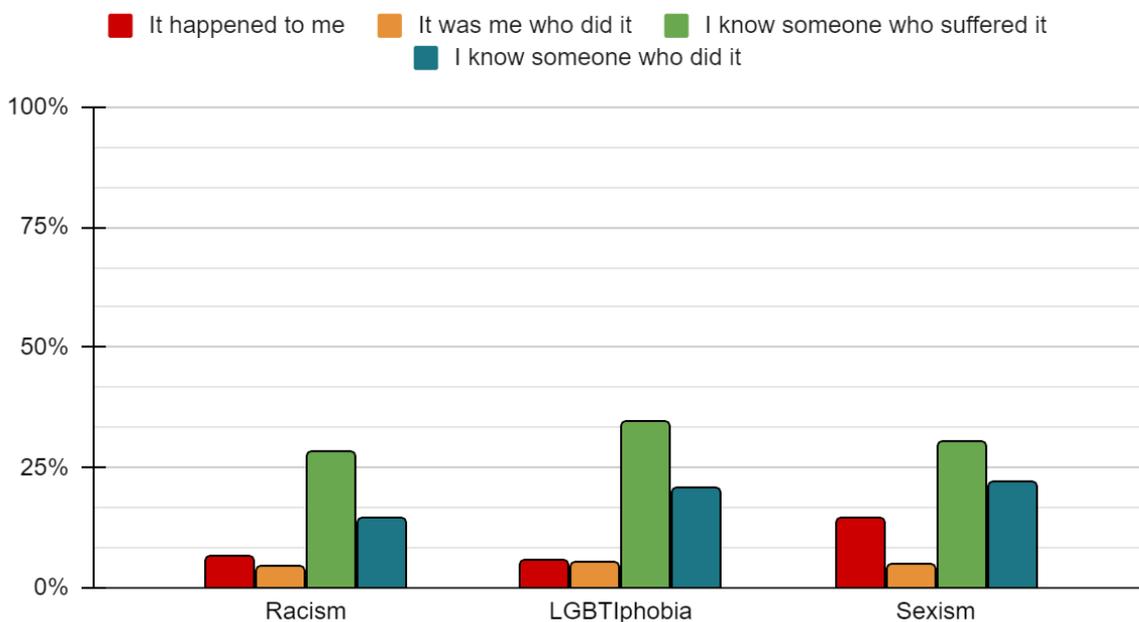
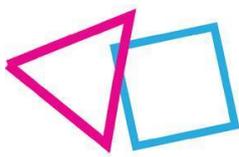


Figure 16. Percentage of respondents reporting the following behaviours.



In addition, the following table (Table 10) shows a resume of the main cyberhate victimisation factors:

Table 10. Cyberhate victimisation summary

	Gender	Sexual orientation	Background
Racism	X	LGTBI	Peripheral
LGTBIphobia	Women	LGTBI	X
Sexism	Women	LGTBI	X

* "X" means there is no correlation between the situations described.

4) Cyberbullying

The connection between cyberbullying and cyberhate can be easily noticed by paying attention to how gender roles and sexism permeate cyberbullying. Indeed, as we will see, the main risk factors for cyberhate (women, immigrants and sexual orientation) are also the main risk factors for cyberbullying.

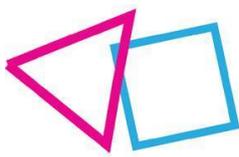
Similar to what was explained in the cyberbullying section, several examples emerge in the focus groups in which girls are especially insulted because of their physical appearance (*for being fat; who is flat; for her face and body*). The following participant reflects the dualism between girls and boys that was previously described:

For example, I see the people in my class, like girls, tend to be more complexed by their bodies and boys tend to... I mean, most kids in my class if you call them gay, they make you cross, and they don't talk to you again. That's like they have a fragile masculinity.

Certainly, as some participants suggest, this trend does not mean that boys are not insulted for their appearance, but for girls it would be like a much more systematized practice, as the following example in the focus groups shows: *In fifth or sixth some guys in my class made a WhatsApp group to talk about the girls, and in particular they messed with one, with her body and with her face.*

There is a relevant connection that appears in several groups between **victimisation and confidence**, involving that *people with lack of confidence* would also be a target. If the general explanations places defects -especially physical- as one of the main reasons for becoming a victim (*as big ears*) some participants deduce that as everybody has got defects, it is not enough to have them, but you would also have to feel insecure:

So, the physique for example is very evident. If it is a person who is very fat and has insecurity with his body, people will possibly take advantage of him/her more than someone who is fat and is comfortable



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

with his body and does not care. If there is an insecurity it is more likely, but there is no specific defect to say such, because we all have defects.

This idea, although not present in all the groups, is especially relevant in terms of prevention and for avoiding ending up blaming the victim, a common behaviour that might hide abuse practises. This reasoning is not only made with regard to bullying, but also with regard to cyberhate, which again could undervalue the effect of this type of discourse. As another participant follows:

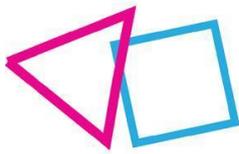
In my town, there is a guy who is gay. Well, there are two. One has it normalised and is super happy and nobody messes with him because they know that no matter how much they insult him, he doesn't care. But the other one is super insecure and super confused and doesn't know what to do. They take advantage and mess with him and make him feel bad. The other, no matter how much you insult him, he will not care, and they know that they cannot hurt him.

However, as shown in the table below (Table 11), the survey shows that the chances of being a victim of cyberbullying are affected by different factors.

Table 11. Table-summary of victimisation factors associated with situations of cyberbullying.

Situation	Age	Gender	Sexual orientation	Migrant background	Time Spent	Type of center
Insults in Social Media	X	X	LGTBI $\chi^2 = 10.07$ $p = .018$	X	+ 3 hours/day $\chi^2 = 15.39$ $p = .004$	Public $\chi^2 = 10.69$ $p = .005$
Group isolation	X	Women $\chi^2 = 44.75$ $p < .001$	LGTBI $\chi^2 = 8.46$ $p = .037$	X	X	X
Log in to my account	X	X	X	Peripheric background $\chi^2 = 13.51$ $p = .004$	X	X
Memes and photos	X	X	X	X	+ 3 hours/day $\chi^2 = 13.81$ $p = .008$	X
Unwanted sex photos	X	Women $\chi^2 = 28.21$ $p < .001$	LGTBI $\chi^2 = 21.89$ $p < .001$	X	X	X

* "X" means there is no correlation between the situations described. While for those where there is a statistical correlation, the chi-square value (χ^2) and the percentage of significance ($p < 0.05$) have been provided.



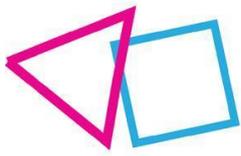
D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

Another risk factor for both cyberbullying and cyberhate would be having been a victim before. Although with the data analysed it is not possible to know which offence occurred before, there is a strong trend in the concurrence of the different forms of aggression, as shown in the following table (Table 12):

Table 12. Precipitating victimisation situations correlating with previous cyberhate and cyberbullying victimisations.

Situation	Racism	LGTBI-phobia	Sexism	Violent content	Insults in RRSS	Memes & photos	Usurp account	Group isolation	Unwant. s. photos
Racism		32% $\chi^2 = 46.894$ $p < .001$	16.2% $\chi^2 = 17.47$ $p < .001$	17% $\chi^2 = 17.43$ $p < .001$	17.4% $\chi^2 = 14.12$ $p < .001$	16% $\chi^2 = 14.03$ $p < .001$	13.5% $\chi^2 = 6.35$ $p = .012$	X	X
LGTBI-phobia	31.4% $\chi^2 = 46.89$ $p < .001$		26.2% $\chi^2 = 83.75$ $p < .001$	17% $\chi^2 = 18.3$ $p < .001$	21% $\chi^2 = 26.79$ $p < .001$	15.2% $\chi^2 = 12.15$ $p < .001$	15% $\chi^2 = 9.03$ $p < .004$	11.7% $\chi^2 = 6.76$ $p < .010$	17.9% $\chi^2 = 15.62$ $p < .001$
Sexism	41.2% $\chi^2 = 17.47$ $p < .001$	68% $\chi^2 = 83.73$ $p < .001$		45.5% $\chi^2 = 73.8$ $p < .001$	40.7% $\chi^2 = 29.85$ $p < .001$	35.7% $\chi^2 = 24.08$ $p < .001$	X	31.7% $\chi^2 = 25.18$ $p < .001$	40.5% $\chi^2 = 28.47$ $p < .001$
Violent content	37.3% $\chi^2 = 17.43$ $p < .001$	38% $\chi^2 = 18.3$ $p < .001$	41.5% $\chi^2 = 73.8$ $p < .001$		31.4% $\chi^2 = 16.07$ $p < .001$	34.8% $\chi^2 = 33.05$ $p < .001$	X	22.2% $\chi^2 = 5.99$ $p = .014$	34.5% $\chi^2 = 22.87$ $p < .001$
Insults in RRSS	29.4% $\chi^2 = 14.12$ $p < .001$	36% $\chi^2 = 26.79$ $p < .001$	26.9% $\chi^2 = 29.85$ $p < .001$	24.1% $\chi^2 = 16.07$ $p < .001$		32.1% $\chi^2 = 46.39$ $p < .001$	24% $\chi^2 = 14.54$ $p < .001$	21.7% $\chi^2 = 18.20$ $p < .001$	25% $\chi^2 = 13.34$ $p < .001$
Memes & photos	35.3% $\chi^2 = 14.03$ $p < .001$	34% $\chi^2 = 12.15$ $p < .001$	30.8% $\chi^2 = 24.08$ $p < .001$	34.8% $\chi^2 = 33.05$ $p < .001$	41.9% $\chi^2 = 46.39$ $p < .001$		33.7% $\chi^2 = 26.54$ $p < .001$	28.9% $\chi^2 = 27.69$ $p < .001$	31% $\chi^2 = 14.73$ $p < .001$
Usurp account	27.5% $\chi^2 = 6.35$ $p = .012$	30% $\chi^2 = 9.03$ $p < .004$	X	X	29.1% $\chi^2 = 14.54$ $p < .001$	31.3% $\chi^2 = 26.54$ $p < .001$		X	33.3% $\chi^2 = 24.24$ $p < .001$
Group isolation	X	42% $\chi^2 = 6.76$ $p < .010$	43.8% $\chi^2 = 25.18$ $p < .001$	35.7% $\chi^2 = 55.99$ $p = .014$	45.3% $\chi^2 = 18.20$ $p < .001$	46.4% $\chi^2 = 27.69$ $p < .001$	44.2% $\chi^2 = 20.09$ $p < .001$		48.8% $\chi^2 = 24.78$ $p < .001$
Unwant. s. photos	X	30% $\chi^2 = 15.62$ $p < .001$	26.2% $\chi^2 = 28.47$ $p < .001$	25.9% $\chi^2 = 22.87$ $p < .001$	24.4% $\chi^2 = 13.34$ $p < .001$	23.2% $\chi^2 = 14.73$ $p < .001$	26.9% $\chi^2 = 24.24$ $p < .001$	22.8% $\chi^2 = 24.78$ $p < .001$	

* "X" means there is no correlation between the situations described. While for those where there is a statistical correlation, the chi-square value (χ^2) and the percentage of significance ($p < 0.05$) have been provided.



B) Offenders factors

1) *Racism*

In relation to the cases in which people reported having provoked racist situations, it was found that 86.1% (n=31) were men, with no cases of women, as the remaining percentage were cases that preferred not to say their gender or were of non-binary gender.

2) *LGBTIphobia*

Similarly, among the cases in which a person had acknowledged being responsible for provoking a situation of LGTBIphobia, 75.6% (n=34) were men (only 3 women). In addition, most of them (75.6%) were between 15 and 17 years old ($\chi^2 = 8.93, p = .003$). Although the numbers are low, more peripheral and non-peripheral migrants than Spaniards admitted to be aggressors ($\chi^2 = 15.76, p = .001$).

In the focus groups, one feature that is pointed out is how peer pressure acts within a group, especially regarding the straight normativity:

They feed each other and that makes them mess more with people, it does not matter if they are girls or boys. I, for example, have seen it more in groups of boys. For example, with homophobia, between them they feed back and make a circle of homophobia even though none can be outside, but inside the circle because they are called faggots among them, but reluctantly. I think when it's a group of people they kind of give feedback and then they get the thing out at the end, and they mess with the people from outside.

This would mean to first start as an endo group dynamic for going late to the exo group.

3) *Sexism*

The only one relevant factor that appeared in these sexist situations was gender, as most of the offenders were men (79.1%, n = 34), with only 7% (n=3) women.

When asked in one group about if **CB** offence is more related to boys than girls, they mostly answer that it is related to boys. This trend is even more accurate when talking about **Hate speech** (not being directly asked about gender), as they answer: *Insecure men; White straight men; Super Straight; Conservative*. Similarly, in another group they explain: *they are boys or men*.

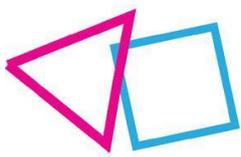


Table 13. Summary of cyberhate offenders' risk factors.

Aggression	Gender	Sexual orientation	Background	Age
Racism	Men	X	X	X
LGBTIphobia	Men	X	Peripheral and non peripheral	Older group (15-17)
Sexism	Men	X	X	X

* "X" means there is no correlation between the situations described.

4) Cyberbullying

Five different situations were measured in the survey, being participants asked about if they had suffered, committed or observed any of them in the last year. In the following graph the prevalence can be seen:

Percentage of respondents who reported the following regarding deviant behaviours

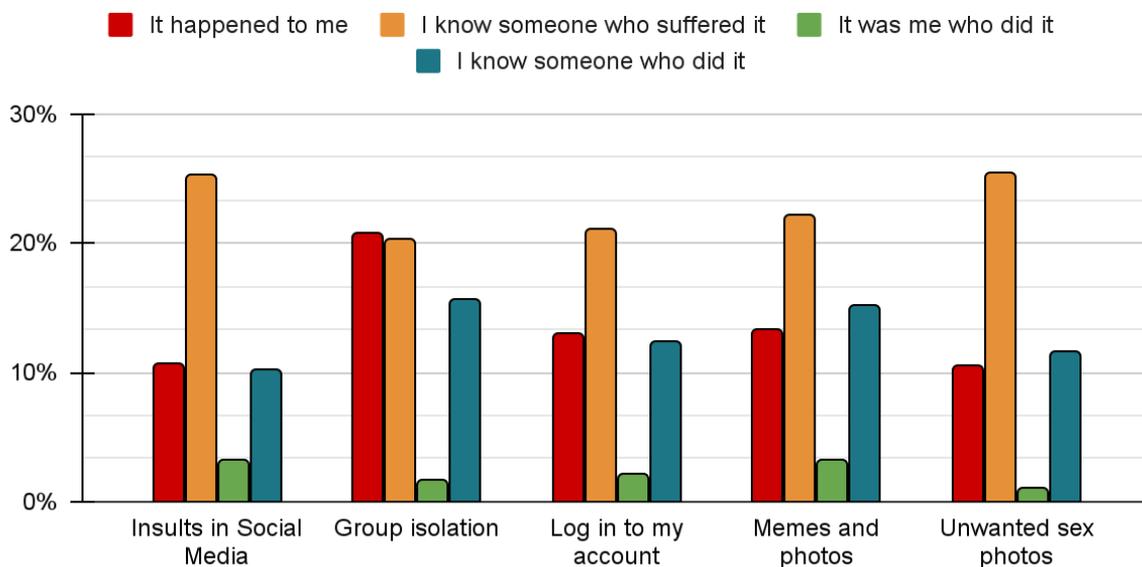
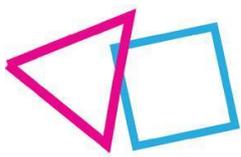


Figure 17. Percentage of respondents who reported the following regarding deviant behaviours.

Among the reasons given by the participants for engaging in cyberbullying would find them thinking *they are superior*. This statement is also connected with the characteristic of bullying -in a greater extent than to cyberbullying- which implies that **some form of asymmetry must be present**, as a



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

participant explains: *bad people who decide to mess with other people, but do not mess with people... it is not a popular person of the school that mess with another popular person. They go against people who cannot, that cannot do anything.* Other reasons would be *not having attention and seeking it, being insecure, having been previously bullied, being young and not thinking through what you might cause with your comment, having issues and wanting to belong.* When thinking about cyberhate, more serious reasons are exposed such as having any needs, being predisposed or being sick.

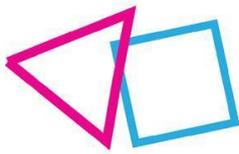
Regarding the survey, the main factors correlating with being an offender are summarized in table 14 bellow (note that boxes with an "x" imply that there is no correlation between the variables described, while boxes with chi-square and p-values imply that there is a positive correlation, and in some cases, determined by gender or age.). It should be noted that the total number of offenders was very low, so the trend needs to be studied further:

Table 14. Risk factors for cyberbullying perpetrators.

Situation	Age	Gender	Sexual orientation	Migrant background	Type of center
Insults in Social Ns.	X	Men $\chi^2=20.23$ $p<.001$	X	Peripheric background $\chi^2=10.54$ $p= .014$	Private & subsidised $\chi^2=14.54$ $p= .001$
Memes and photos	X	Men $\chi^2=9.69$ $p<.021$	X	X	Private & subsidised $\chi^2=7.63$ $p= .022$
Usurp account	15-17 yrs $\chi^2=5.60$ $p<.018$	X	X	X	X
Group isolation	X	X	X	X	Private $\chi^2=5.96$ $p= .051$
Unwanted sex photos	X	X	X	X	X

* "X" means there is no correlation between the situations described. While for those where there is a statistical correlation, the chi-square value (χ^2) and the percentage of significance ($p < 0.05$) have been provided.

Finally, although we can not delimate what happened first, correlating aggression with having been a victim could give us information about previous victimisation. Thus, the following table 15 shows the situations of cross-victimisation by having committed a crime, with correlation in all the boxes where the chi-square value and the p-value are given. The following correlations were found:



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

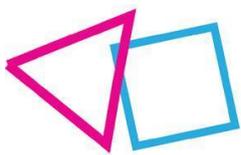
Table 15. Correlations between victimisation and aggression in different situations of cyberhate and cyberbullying.

	Victim Racism	Victim LGBTI-phobia	Victim Sexism	Victim Insults in RRSS	Victim Memes & photos	Victim Usurp account	Victim Group isolation	Victim Unwant. s. photos
Offender Racism	$\chi^2 = 64.20$ $p < .001$	$\chi^2 = 8.20$ $p = .004$	$\chi^2 = 7.16$ $p = .007$	$\chi^2 = 7.93$ $p = .005$	$\chi^2 = 7.91$ $p = .005$	$\chi^2 = 9.61$ $p = .002$	X	X
Offender LGBTI-phobia	$\chi^2 = 15.13$ $p < .001$	$\chi^2 = 15.72$ $p < .001$	$\chi^2 = 8.49$ $p < .001$	$\chi^2 = 6.12$ $p = .013$	X	$\chi^2 = 4.68$ $p = .027$	X	X
Offender Sexism	$\chi^2 = 16.51$ $p < .001$	$\chi^2 = 12.49$ $p < .001$	$\chi^2 = 9.79$ $p = .002$	$\chi^2 = 7.00$ $p = .008$	$\chi^2 = 4.41$ $p = .036$	$\chi^2 = 5.68$ $p = .017$	$\chi^2 = 5.15$ $p = .023$	X
Offender Insults in RRSS	$\chi^2 = 9.50$ $p = .002$	X	X	$\chi^2 = 89.68$ $p < .001$	$\chi^2 = 13.19$ $p < .001$	$\chi^2 = 19.7$ $p < .001$	X	$\chi^2 = 12.45$ $p < .001$
Offender Memes & photos	$\chi^2 = 4.95$ $p = .026$	$\chi^2 = 5.17$ $p = .023$	X	$\chi^2 = 7.39$ $p = .007$	$\chi^2 = 68.07$ $p < .001$	$\chi^2 = 23.54$ $p < .001$	X	$\chi^2 = 7.80$ $p = .005$
Offender Usurp account	X	X	X	$\chi^2 = 8.14$ $p = .004$	$\chi^2 = 7.78$ $p = .005$	$\chi^2 = 32.99$ $p < .001$	X	$\chi^2 = 8.52$ $p = .004$
Offender Group isolation	$\chi^2 = 4.02$ $p = .045$	$\chi^2 = 9.49$ $p = .002$	$\chi^2 = 8.68$ $p = .003$	$\chi^2 = 6.92$ $p = .009$	$\chi^2 = 17.26$ $p < .001$	$\chi^2 = 8.43$ $p = .004$	X	X
Offender Unwant. s. photos	X	$\chi^2 = 10.84$ $p = .001$	X	$\chi^2 = 4.55$ $p = .033$	$\chi^2 = 6.65$ $p = .010$	X	X	$\chi^2 = 18.87$ $p < .001$

* "X" means there is no correlation between the situations described. While for those where there is a statistical correlation, the chi-square value (χ^2) and the percentage of significance ($p < 0.05$) have been provided.

5) Cross aggression

Cross aggression was also found to be really common, affecting most of the categories with a significant $p < .001$. Although a full description will not be made as some of the numbers are very low, an example will be explained as an illustration. For instance, 33.3% ($n=12$) of the cases in which the offenders had committed insults through social networks had also committed a situation of racism ($\chi^2 = 90.32$, $p < .001$), 50% ($n=13$) of LGBTIphobia ($\chi^2 = 82.62$, $p < .001$), 50% ($n=13$) of sexism ($\chi^2 = 87.31$, $p < .001$), 44.4% ($n=12$) memes and photos ($\chi^2 = 126.52$, $p < .001$), 34.6% ($n=9$) usurpation of account



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

($\chi^2 = 114.76, p < .001$), 15.4% unwanted sexual photos ($\chi^2 = 47.01, p < .001$) and 35.7% ($n=5$) isolation of the group ($\chi^2 = 39.76, p < .001$).

C) Main means and platforms

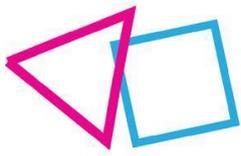
Regarding the focus groups, the platform most frequently mentioned by all groups related to cyberhate was Tik Tok. In less general terms, the following were also noted: Instagram, online gaming, and Twitter. This last one would be addressed as a *specific social media where anything works to hate. Any little thing angers everyone. Anything suits to argue*. When they were discussing cyberbullying, Tik Tok would still be the most mentioned, followed by WhatsApp groups.

Regarding the survey, any form of aggression (neither CH nor CB) significantly correlated with the most used application, except racism offenders which were more likely to have a higher computer use ($\chi^2 = 10.30, p = .036$) and of video game console, ($\chi^2 = 11.76, p = .019$). Having a higher use of video game consoles was also a risk factor for being a LGBTIphobia ($\chi^2 = 16.54, p = .002$) and violence exhibition ($\chi^2 = 12.20, p = .016$) offender.

Regarding victimisation, participants who chose video game consoles as their most used application were more likely to suffer from group isolation, ($\chi^2 = 18.9, p = .026$) and from a sexist situation ($\chi^2 = 18.74, p = .026$). Those who referred to have suffered from a sexist situation referred as well to using the video game console more than the average ($\chi^2 = 15.83, p = .003$). In addition, those with Tik tok as their first app were more likely to suffer for Insults in SSNNs ($\chi^2 = 17.47, p = .042$). Responding that the mobile phone was used a lot (with the highest score) correlated with being a victim of memes and photos ($\chi^2 = 12.29, p = .015$), and similar use with the tablet was related with being a victim of group isolation ($\chi^2 = 15.03, p = .005$).

Another issue was raised in particular by the participants in the focus groups. Firstly, participants pointed out that hate speech is made in the comments, and not only in the content produced in the form of posts or videos, as if it were also a form of reaction. Secondly, platforms such as Tik Tok are described as not only being the vehicle for hate speech, but also a way of replying to it, as these two participants claim:

It is true that in Tik Tok there is a little bit of everything. In Tik Tok you can get out racism, homophobia, transphobia, but just as you get people who mess with it, you also get people who defend it, you can get out of everything; Sometimes I do watch videos of that kind that make fun of people who are gay. But I really see more support for all the things that have happened [recent homophobic aggressions] and I see more messages supporting them than discriminating against them.



D) Trivialisation of aggression

Participants also described how cyberhate is often **masked as humor**, which reflects some contemporary debates about the limits or censorship surrounding humor. As a participant explains when talking about sexism:

In Tik Tok there is a lot of humour with a theme of sexism and everything, with homophobia, racism, and everything. I have seen a lot of sexism in humor and people do not take it as sexism because it is humour. Then, if someone comments something of, "this is sexism", everyone tells him/her: it is humor, you do not have humor and that. Nobody sees it as sexism but as a joke.

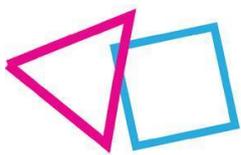
The same strategy was pointed out regarding cyberbullying. It would imply to *try to disguise it with humour, instead of saying it with a criticism they mess with them with jokes*. Stickers and memes would enter in this kind of cyber bullying modus operandi. These thin boundaries regarding humour are also present in the groups when participants reflect about their own experience: *5 years ago, we used to tease each other with girlfriends, we used to kick each other out of groups, but it was more of a joke.*

In another group, the **humor** also appeared in the discussion, and the participants agreed that young people *talk together differently with lots of joking around*, which would mean that they might be perceived badly from an outside person. The potential solution to the dilemma of who to define these boundaries is proposed in the same group as being *when the person doesn't like it anymore doesn't take it as anything funny anymore*. Nevertheless, it might be a hard distinction to make for both victims and offenders. Here we could find again the risk of underestimating the effect of the joke and ending up blaming the victim for being too sensitive, as a participant in a different group refer: *And you know some people can take a joke and don't really care about other people's opinions, and some not.*

Although not trivialised, cyberbullying seems to be quite normalised, meaning that in those groups where the topic was approached most of participants describe it as being pretty common. For instance, in one group, the participant explains that due to the anonymity, bullying is quite frequent in Tik Tok and Instagram: *In Tik Tok a lot of young children are being bullied (9-13 years); In Tik Tok you'll get bullied the minute you post something somewhere.*

In those groups where they talk about experiences, many participants have heard stories (of third persons), ending up two of them (in different groups) in suicide. As one participant explains:

Recently, in my town, a girl ended up committing suicide because of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is not always going to happen either, there is no way.... There were only a few children, and all the children



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

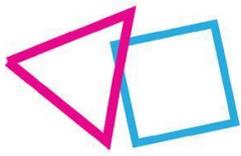
were against her, and the school was also against her, and on social networks and in person. And the girl ended up committing suicide.

Table 16. Summary table of intrinsic risk factors and extrinsic risk factors of cyberbullying and cyberhate

Factor types	Category	Variable	More vulnerable to
INTRINSIC RISK FACTORS	Gender	<i>Woman</i>	Suffering sexism, LGBTIphobia, group isolation and unwanted sex photos
		<i>Male</i>	Committing sexism , LGBTIphobia, insults and memes and photos
	Sexual Orientation	<i>LGBTI+</i>	Suffering LGBTIphobia, sexism, racism, insults in Social Media, Group isolation and Unwanted sex photos
	Age	<i>15-17 years</i>	Suffering and committing account usurpation, committing LGBTIphobia
	Origin	<i>Peripheral</i>	Suffering racism and usurpation of account
EXTRINSIC RISK FACTORS	Hours spent on the Internet	+ 3 hours/day	Suffering insults in Social Media and Memes and photos
	Type of center	Private	Committing insults, memes and photos, and group isolation
		Public	Suffering insults in social media

Takeaway points

- Online sexism, racismo and LGBTIphobia are quite present, being that around half of the participants have experienced, observed or committed them. LGBTIphobia is slightly more witnessed.
- The victimisation factors for cyberhate are also for cyberbullying: being female, LGBTI or having a peripheral migrant background. In addition, spending higher time online or being older (15-17) appeared as a risk factor as well.



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

- Gender roles and heteronormativity permeate cyberbullying as it serves to socially reproduce and maintain these precepts, affecting both girls and boys. Although boys are more likely to commit cyberhate and cyberbullying offenses, and girls are more likely to suffer from them, boys are also frequently insulted for not being masculine enough or by their sexual orientation, while girls' physical appearance is always up for debate.
- Cyberhate is often masked as humour, which reflects some contemporary debates about the limits or censorship surrounding humour. The same strategy is pointed out regarding cyberbullying.
- While Facebook and Twitter are pointed out by the experts as the main platforms on which cyberhate spreads, young people refer in a greater extent to Tik Tok, Instagram and online gaming. When they are discussing cyberbullying, Tik Tok would still be the most mentioned, followed by WhatsApp groups. Online videogames were also associated with both cyberbullying and cyberhate.

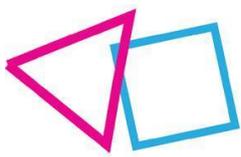
4.5.- REACTIONS AND PREVENTION

In general, most of the participants in the focus groups seemed aware of cyberhate, although some lived the phenomenon from some distance: In two groups they referred to have experienced it only with celebrities and famous people (*Not personally. Only famous people for their color or their life choices*). It could also depend on the inner diversity, which would be not so present, as we saw, in some schools. As it is referred to in a different group: *I did hear the stories but nothing personal; We didn't have cases like this at school either; This is a nice school, and we are kind of a closed community.*

Regarding dangers, while cyberbullying seems to be more of a concern for the older sample of students in the focus groups, younger students seem to be more concerned about online grooming. This could be due to the fact that, as they themselves reported, cyberbullying is a phenomenon that you cannot avoid and to which you are exposed involuntarily (González-García & Campoy-Torrente, 2018), because according to their reasoning, the decision to share or not to share photos with strangers is up to the subject himself/herself:

The most serious thing seems to me cyberbullying because there is no way to avoid it. As H2 said, you can avoid not passing the photos, that is the decision of the person. But cyberbullying cannot be avoided, if it's his turn to mess with you, it's your turn and it's not fair.

According to the survey results, while fake news does not almost concern the participants, cyberbullying is one of the situations most feared by young people (especially when it is concreted as



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report the dissemination of intimate content or as identity theft) followed by online grooming. Results are shown in the following table.

Percentage of the level of concern according to the described behaviours

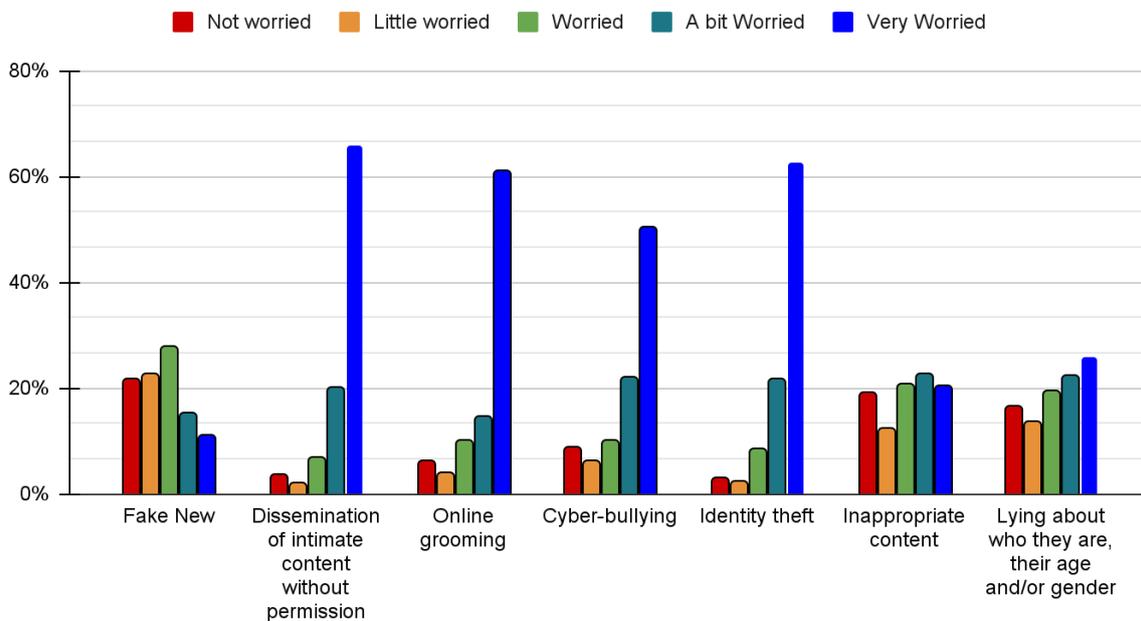


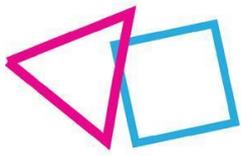
Figure 18. Percentage of the level of concern about Internet risks

A) Reactions

Concerning reactions, the main responses to fake news according to the focus groups are to ignore it and show disinterest in the content: *I ignore it. Yeah, I just ignore it; it doesn't do anything to me.* To a lesser extent, participants referred to blocking the source for not receiving more fake information, or to alert the person who shares it: *You know it's come out that it's a lie.*

Regarding online deception, participants in one group described how when confronted with nasty comments and harassment from stranger accounts, they first share the information among them for later reporting to Instagram as much as they can. Acting like that, they closed some accounts and received thank you messages from the platform. Nevertheless, it is not the most common procedure. Participants usually block those accounts if they are insistent, otherwise they simply ignore it or ask more questions to know who the person is, but they do not generally report.

When students are specifically asked about telling an adult, in one group while one minor described that she would speak if there were another child in danger, two other students reported not telling



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

anything if the situation would not concern them. In another group, in one of the exposed cases, the victim told a friend and the friend showed the Instagram content to her mother. Afterwards, they talked to the victim's family and the school. This case shows how prevention should be addressed to all the possible situations, including when a girl or boy discovers that a friend is involved in grooming.

Regarding cyberbullying reactions, it can be highlighted that participants in focus groups understand that there are "three types of people": on the one hand, those who support the bully and laugh with them, on the other hand, those who do support the victim, and finally, there is a *third group that sees it but gets to do nothing*. The most referred reaction is trying to calm and support the friend who has been harassed instead of stopping the bullying. In addition, many agreed that the fact itself is not the most important but the way the person feels the bullying, as one participant explained: *I don't think he was affected because, I also told him, because I saw the video, that it didn't matter what they thought about him because what mattered was what he thought about himself*.

Moreover, not only the subjective aspect of bullying (how the victim feels the bullying) matters, but also the proximity of the relationship with the victim, since the less warmly or close, the less support she/he will receive:

Well, a lot depends on the situation. If it's in Tik-Tok, it doesn't matter. But if it's with my close friends, I'll say something; If it's someone close to you, you still react and speak up. You don't react to strangers.

Finally, participants agree that no one who is victimised usually asks for help in a bullying case. Although it only appeared in one group, one especially dangerous point of view is that the less a bystander does, the less good, as less attention is paid to the offender:

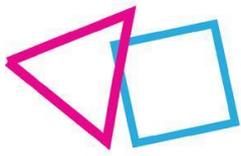
P1: Nobody does anything if I comment.

P2: If they are looking for attention, they will have more strength to continue bullying.

P3: Yes, I agree.

On the other hand, regarding cyberhate reaction, although they did not like it, participants seemed to mostly ignore cyberhate content, as racist content, preferring to ignore such content or to pass over it. It happened even when two black participants gave their answer about the racist content: M1: *Well, it depends on the day, but many days, I pass... Because I don't feel like arguing;* M2: *No, in Tik Tok sometimes videos appear, and I just give it to not to see more content like that.*

Nevertheless, some students explained that although they usually do not react to hate speech, they see that many people do it. The same participants that previously referred to report fake accounts,



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

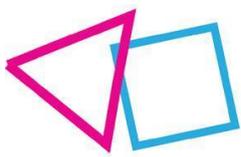
also practised extensive denunciation of cyberhaters, which in some cases ended up being blocked. For another expert, there is a big amount of passive bystanders and young people frequently share or repost cyberhate or fake news. For this expert, we should encourage them to act differently by explaining the negative consequences of taking an active part in sharing and reposting false information or cyberhate.

When directly asked about reporting, some of the students in the focus groups said that, although it is difficult to report an online grooming situation, they thought they would tell their parents, even though *it is difficult to report it as not everyone is so brave*. Moreover, some students referred to the chance to go to the police or contact a counsellor.

Regarding the police, students were not sure about being legally able to report, but they mostly thought that minors can be prosecuted for causing harm online. A dangerous perception to work on is the following (regarding the nude from a boy): *when a photo is on the Internet, I don't know if the police can do much. You can do, you can look for the one who has sent it, but the photo will still be there*. Similarly, some of the students believe that most of the young people would not go to the police, as one participant explains: *I've heard so many young people say that the police don't do anything, that you can go to them, but they won't help you. You must talk about that in the videogame too*.

B) Information about risks (school and family)

Regarding **prevention strategies for Internet risks**, some students in the focus groups mentioned that lectures on online grooming or cyberbullying were held in some schools. The figures for information received at home and school in the survey were also high, although more at home than in the school.



Information about the risks of the Internet

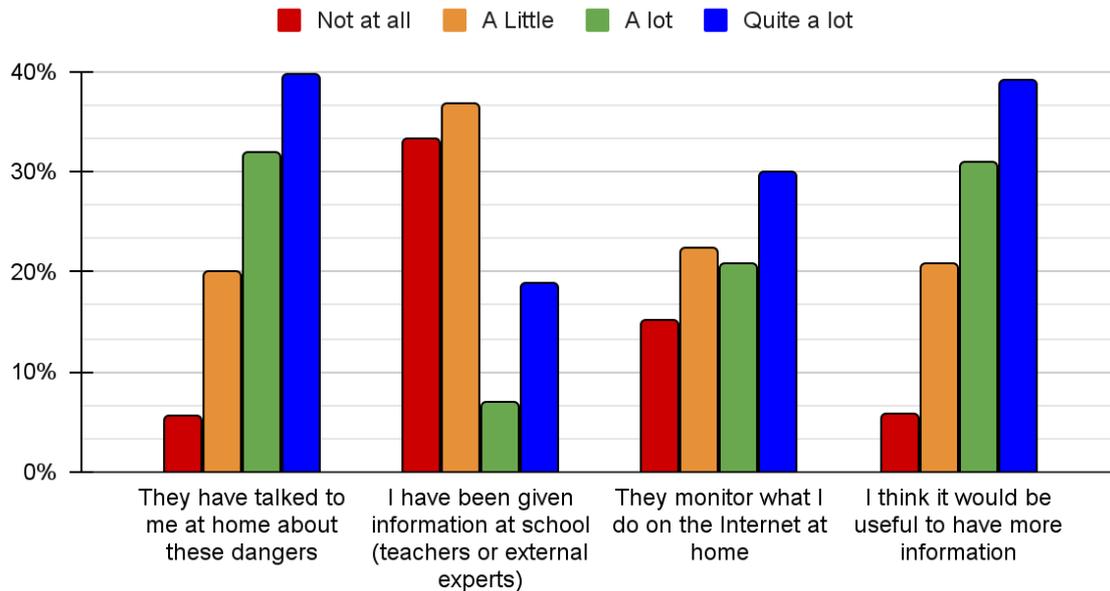
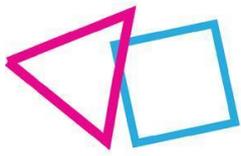


Figure 19. Information about the risks of the Internet.

A correlation was found between being a cyberhate offender and the perception of received information. Specifically, offenders of sexism ($\chi^2 = 26.448$; $p < .001$), racism ($\chi^2 = 12.8$; $p = .012$) and LGBTIphobia ($\chi^2 = 15.433$; $p = .004$) tended to state that they received less information about Internet risks at home. To a lesser extent, they also pointed out to have received less information in the school. Nevertheless, they were significantly less interested in receiving more information ($\chi^2 = 15.551$, $p = .004$; $\chi^2 = 18.954$, $p = .001$; $\chi^2 = 16.891$, $p = .002$). No significant correlation was found with parental supervision.

Regarding parental supervision, the **control exercised by parents over their children**, was pointed out by some students in the focus groups as having effects contrary to those intended, as it was developed in the previous sections. In general terms, in the younger groups of minors in our sample, participants turn to their parents to report an incident they have suffered, and only a few of them first talk to their friends or peer group to verify and decide whether it is appropriate to discuss it with their parents afterwards. The older ones generally consult these issues with their friends before their parents because either they may have more trust with their friends (e.g., *Well, because I have more confidence with my friends than with my parents*), or because they think that their friends can advise them better as they live similar situations (e.g., *more than confidence, it is because my friends understand more about this than my parents*). An interesting factor is that they wait until they are encouraged by their



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

friends to tell their parents: *I always first tell a friend, and if he/she tells me that I should tell my parents, and I see that, I talk with my parents.*

Then, age seems to be a differential factor in adopting one or the other dynamic according to the focus groups. While In the 14 to 17 age groups, some participants stated that they would only tell these issues to their friends or peer group (e.g., *No, we don't tell our parents how we spend our time on social media. And they don't ask*), others said that they would not only talk to their friends, but would also tell their families. Some specified that they do so because they *are very close with the family*, as knowing that this relationship is not that common. One claimed not only to tell their parents, but also perhaps a teacher -in particular- (e.g., *Yes, I tell my parents and maybe my teacher*).

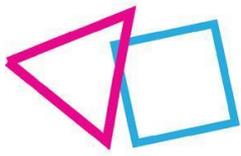
This dynamic is related to the effects of an overprotective parent model (Walters, 2021), which could discourage young people from sharing their concerns with their parents, possibly because by violating the privacy of their children, they lose confidence in parental figures:

M1: I think that the parents offer you their help and they tell you: I am here, and if you need something, you can tell me, and I can help you. But there are many parents who force you to give them the mobile, to look at the conversations you talk to people. And that's getting into a person's intimacy and at the end, you end up taking away all trust in your parents and you don't tell them anything. I think it makes everything worse.

Although this alludes to those supervisory behaviours that are more aggressive, there are others that could be classified as "passive-aggressive" that could also discourage children from maintaining fluid communication with their parents (Walters, 2021). Nevertheless, there is an intimacy that is not bad, but to some extent and possibly necessary:

I think parents do not have to control their children all the time because having intimacy is not bad. My parents have always told me that if someone told me to send pictures or whatever, I told them because that wasn't right either. They used to say that to me when I was younger too. Now they know I know how to handle it and they know I'm not going to send anything like that because they know me.

Regarding experts' opinions about parental supervision, it can be highlighted that parents should be engaged with their children to online activities at early ages, in order to understand how the platforms or online games work, so children's Internet safety can be improved. This has the main objective of helping teenagers to make better choices without the necessity of parent's supervision. So, for this reason, it could be necessary to give young people information to help them to make the right decision due to the difficulty of controlling them at any moment. Therefore, more actors could be involved, like



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

school, teachers and even peers or friends. One expert stated that if the minor is younger than 14 years old, it is a good idea that parents check and limit the usage of the Internet, although if they are older than 14 years old it is more difficult, because they can spend more time outside with friends, having connection to the Internet at any moment.

One of the **factors that could prevent future more serious victimisation situations** is the seriousness of the issue-perceived by the child. This is because it has been found that one of the reasons why young people communicate these issues to their parents is because of the seriousness of the problem (e.g., *I would tell them when they start hurting me*). Thus, this "seriousness" is not objective, but subjective, since it depends on the perception of the minor (e.g., *If it has hurt you then yes, but if it has not hurt you then it is not necessary* -regarding a Cyber bullying offense-).

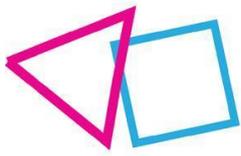
In addition, one of the factors referred to in the previous paragraphs alludes to the **level of trust of the minor with his or her parents**. Some subjects in the sample stated that they had a good relationship with their parents and that is why *they can share all issues with them. Nothing cardinal needs to happen, or they just talk about topics that somehow bother them, it doesn't have to be something specific to them*. The main reason young people in our sample emphasise the trust or good relationship they had with their parents is because trust itself allows young people to talk to them about the experiences they have and what happens to them:

Most things, if not all, I tell my mom, but because she gives me the confidence that I can tell her openly and she's not going to tell me anything. She just likes to know who I talk to or who I don't talk to, or... For example, I tell her: I met this guy, I met him on Instagram, and she tells me: Share the location, just in case... But she doesn't forbid me to meet him.

The same has been found in other cases when analysing focus groups' information in relation to having a good communication between parents and children:

It's the same for me as M3. I have had a lot of confidence since I was little, and I have told her everything. Not because she asked me to but because I like to tell her, and I feel I can tell my mom anything and.... I like to have that confidence with her. I have confidence with my mother and with my father to tell them anything that happens to me.

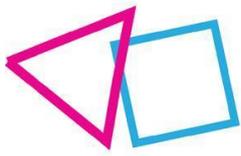
Additionally, it is relevant to be able to speak about topics with their parents that concern the minors, even if they are not bad for themselves. In other words, having a fluid and dynamic conversation sharing concerns and thoughts as, for instance: *I talk about topics that somehow bother me, it doesn't have to be specific to me.*



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

Takeaway points

- Although reactions depend on the specific cybercrime, stronger reactions should be encouraged for all of them. When the participants face fake news, they mainly ignore them or at most block the accounts that publish them. When it is about strangers contacting minors, although some report to the social network, most of them simply ignore or block the account. While general attitude toward cyberhate is quite passive, it seems to be a bit more energetic when the person knows the victim, although more addressed to calm the victim than to stop the bullying. Prevention should be addressed to all the potential situations, including the one in which a girl or a boy discover that a friend is involved in some crime.
- Concern about Internet risks also differs. Cyberbullying is one of the situations most feared by young people (especially when it is concreted as the dissemination of intimate content or as identity theft) followed by online grooming.
- Many participants would tell their friends before (or instead) of their family in case they are dealing with any cybercrime. As previously remarked, excessive parental control could discourage reporting, being a good establishment of trust and communication much more effective.
- As there is a big amount of passive bystanders and young people frequently share or repost cyberhate or fake news, we should encourage them to act differently by explaining the negative consequences of taking an active part in sharing and reposting false information or cyberhate.
- Students are not sure about being legally able to report, but they mostly thought that minors can be prosecuted for causing harm online.
- Some elements must be considered regarding prevention: It should be dynamic and interactive, included in the school curriculum if possible. Special care should be taken for not blaming the victim. A bigger effort should be put in schools..



4.6.- SURVEY RESULTS IN VALENCIA

In order to contrast the information described above, the results of the survey distributed in the city of Valencia will be described below. It has been preferred to analyse both samples separately in order to maintain the sampling carried out in the Community of Madrid with representative data, although this has meant that the Valencia sample, being smaller, has given lower correlations in the crosstabs

A) SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The sample consists of 157 participants ($N = 157$). The majority of the sample was male ($n = 92$) as can be seen in Figure 20. A distribution was slightly different to that obtained in the survey carried out in Madrid, as more male participants answered the questions.

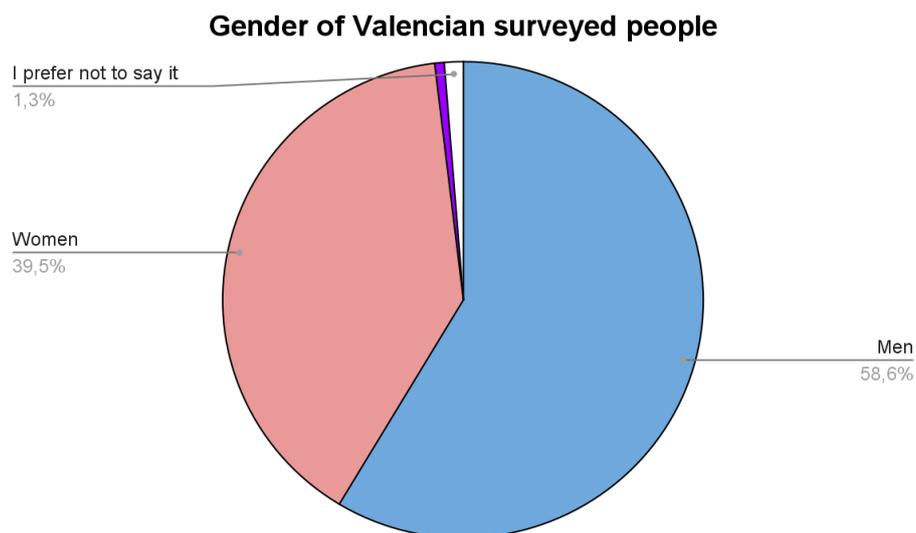
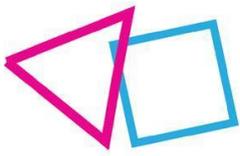


Figure 20. Gender of Valencian surveyed people

In terms of age, the Valencia survey had a higher proportion of young people aged 13-14, in contrast to Madrid, which had a higher proportion of young people aged 14-15.



Students' Age

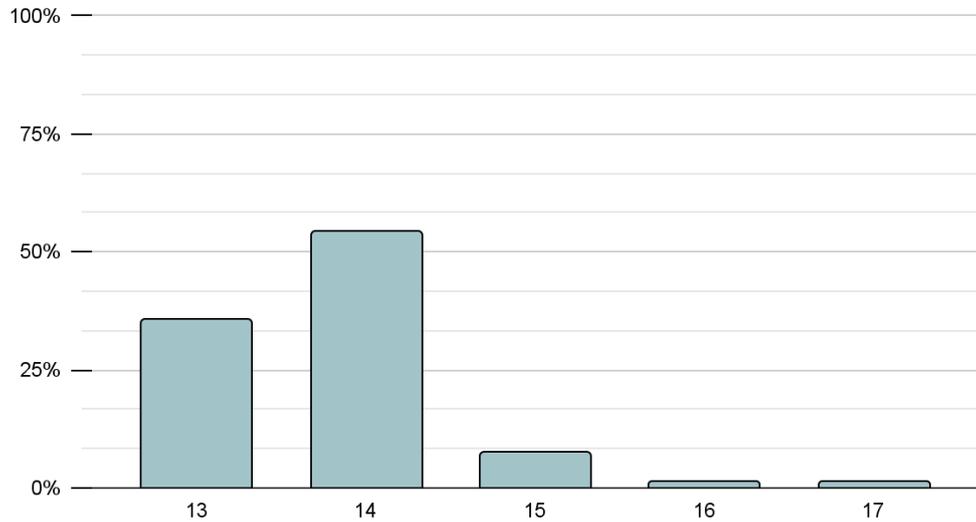


Figure 21. Student's Age Groups from Valencian Survey

In terms of sexual orientation (Figures 22.1), the majority of the students in the survey were heterosexual and, to a lesser extent, unclear, followed by bisexual, homosexual and other sexual orientations. Results were similar to those found in the Madrid survey.

Students' Sexual Orientation

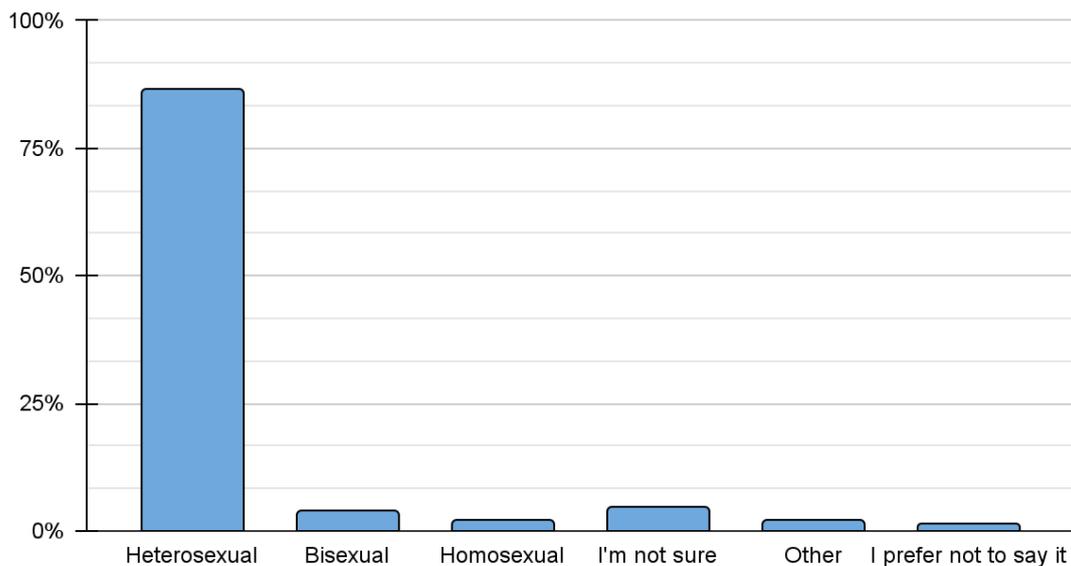
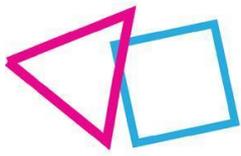


Figure 22.1. Students' Sexual Orientation.



However, for statistical analysis and comparison of variables using the chi-square statistic, as in the Madrid survey, sexual orientations were grouped as follows: "heterosexual", "LGTBI+" (which includes "bisexual", "homosexual" and "other", then "unclear" and "prefer not to say") in 5.1% . For the sake of clarity, this is expressed in the following Figure 22.2.

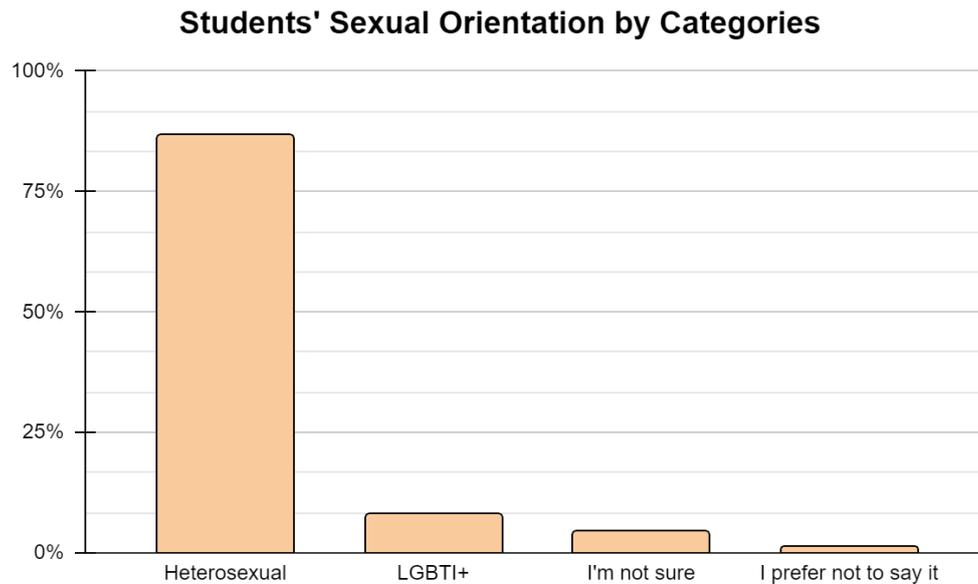
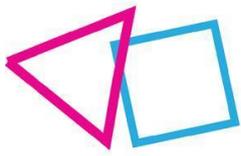


Figure 22.2. *Students' Sexual Orientation by Categories.*

Regarding the parental information about their birth country, it can be highlighted that, as exposed in Figure 23, the origin of most of the participants' parents was Spain, and in smaller proportions, the origin of the parents was in Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina and France.



Parents' Birth Country

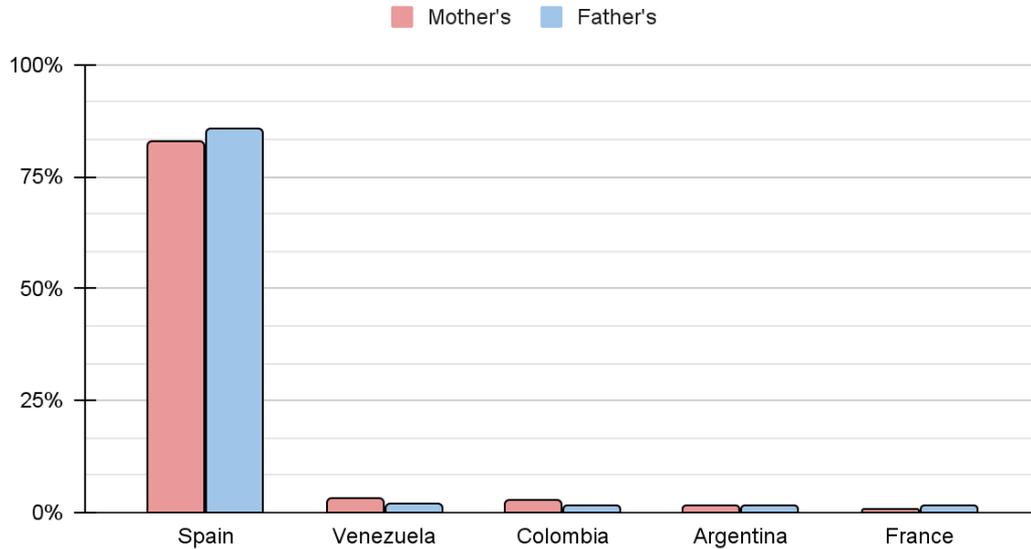


Figure 23. Parents' Birth Country.

Finally, with regard to the origin of the respondents, 88.6% ($n = 278$) are of national origin, 9.1% ($n = 28$) are of peripheral migrant origin and the remaining 2.3% ($n = 7$) are of non-peripheral origin. As can be seen in the sample of young people in Valencia there is less background diversity than in the Madrid survey.

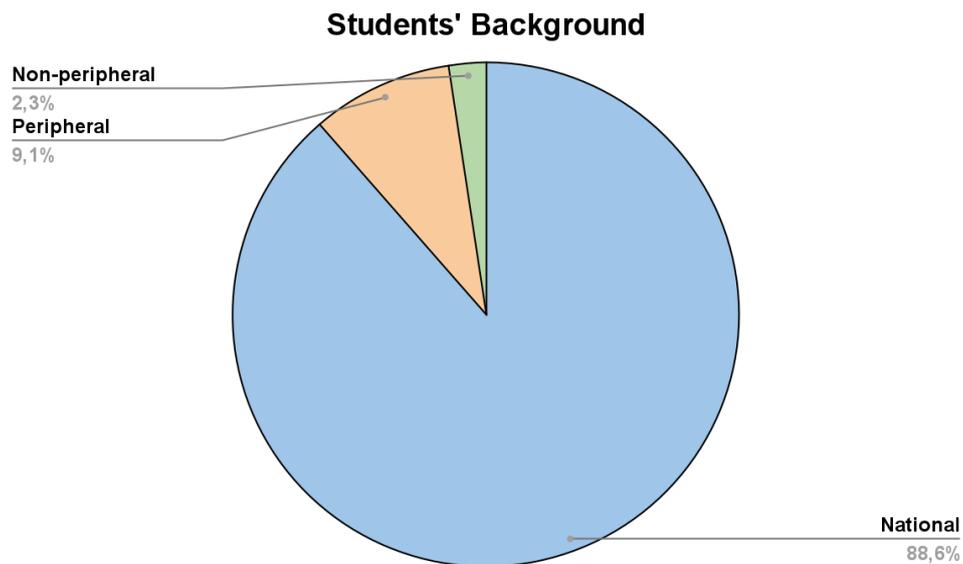
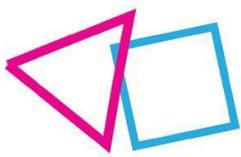


Figure 24. Students' Background.



B) SPENT HOURS ON THE INTERNET

In terms of the hours young people spend on the Internet, it can be observed that they spend more hours at weekends. More specifically, more than 4 hours on weekends (50%; $n = 79$). Whereas, during the week, they tend to spend less time on the Internet, more specifically 1 to 2 hours on weekdays (41%) and 3 to 4 hours (36%).

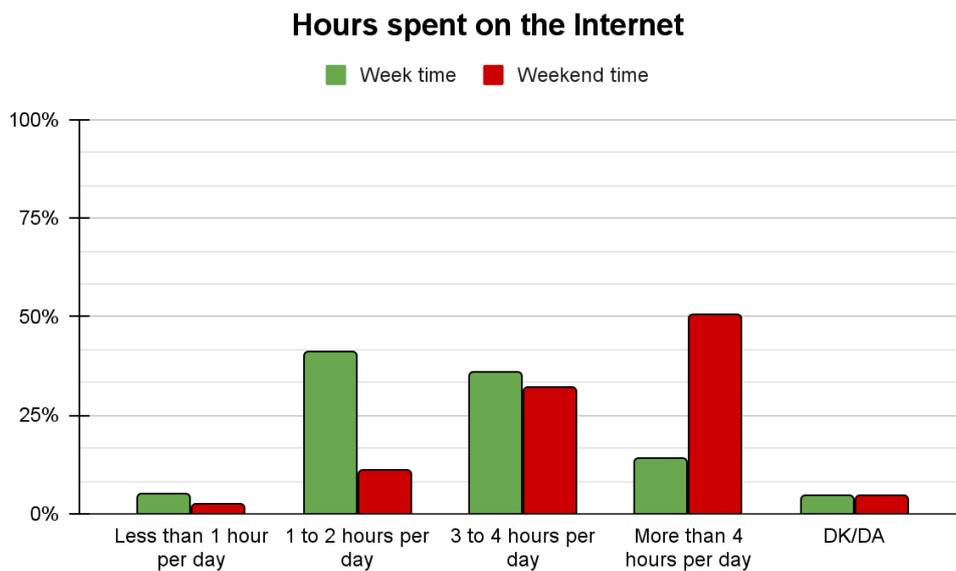
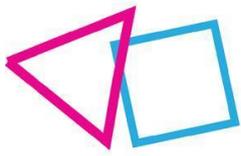


Figure 25. Hours spent on the Internet.

C) RISKS ON THE INTERNET

Figure 26 addresses the level of concern about risks on the Internet and the information respondents have received. In general terms, they reported receiving a lot of information about these risks at home, as well as in educational institutions. However, there is a lower rate of adult supervision when young people surf the Internet. They therefore consider that it would be useful to receive more information about these risks.



Information about the risks of the Internet

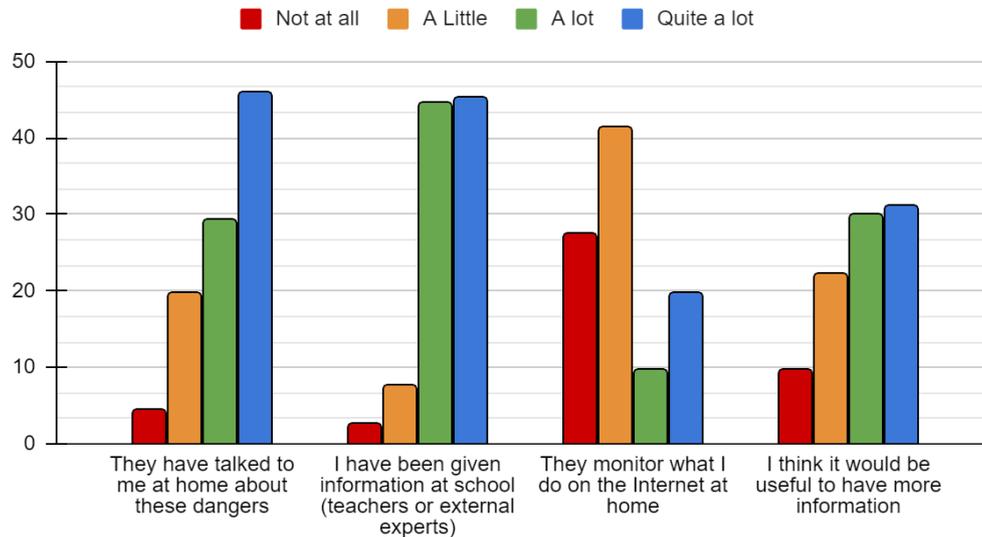
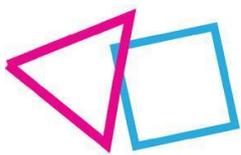


Figure 26. Information about the risks of the Internet.

D) FAKE NEWS

On the other hand, the motivation when sharing online content was measured, as it is important to address fake news. The most valued aspect was checking the content and cross-checked it with other sources of information before posting it (48%). However, 43% said they trusted the people who shared the information with them and 36% knew the source of the information. Also, 33% said they share information because they find it funny, and 32% prefer to share it in photos or images if possible, while 20% prefer to share it in text or stories. Only 17% share information because they know their followers are interested in it, as seen in Figure 27.



When content is shared, it worries a lot and quite

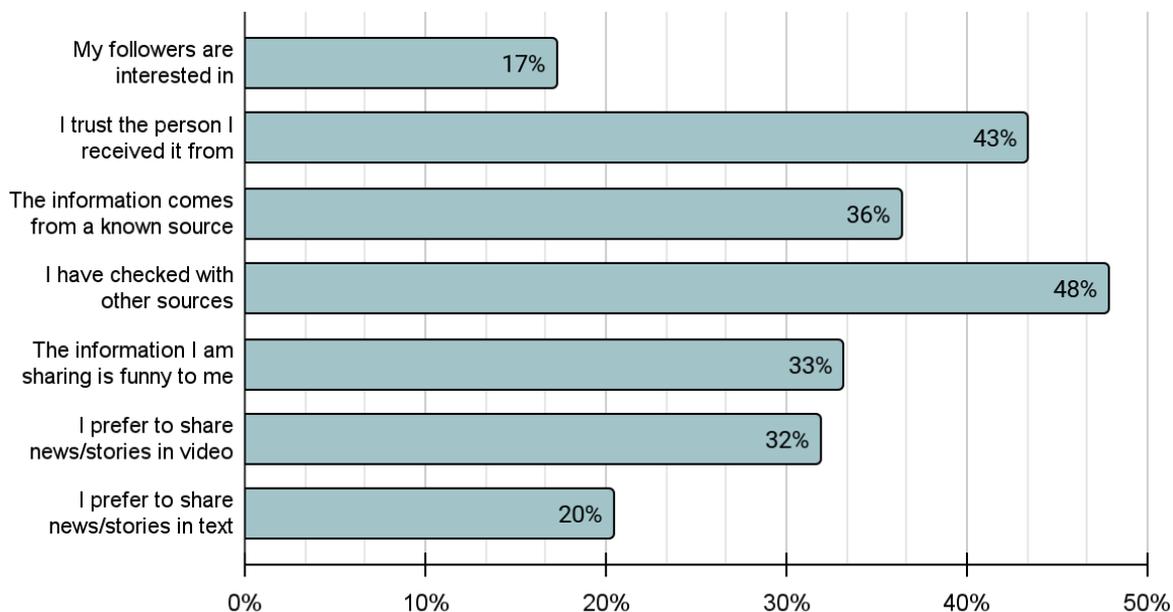
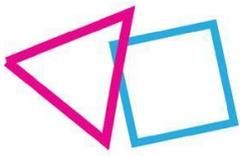


Figure 27. Percentage of respondents' level of importance in sharing information on the following situations.

E) CYBERBULLYING AND CYBERHATE

In the following four figures, the prevalence of behaviours they have experienced, know someone who has experienced, or even committed such conducts are addressed. On the one hand, Figures 28 and 29 refer to cyberbullying or cyberbullying behaviours, more specifically, isolation and receiving insults. On the other hand, Figures 30, 31 and 32 refer to situations that constitute or may lead to a situation of online grooming.



Did someone try to isolate you or someone else from your group of friends or class?

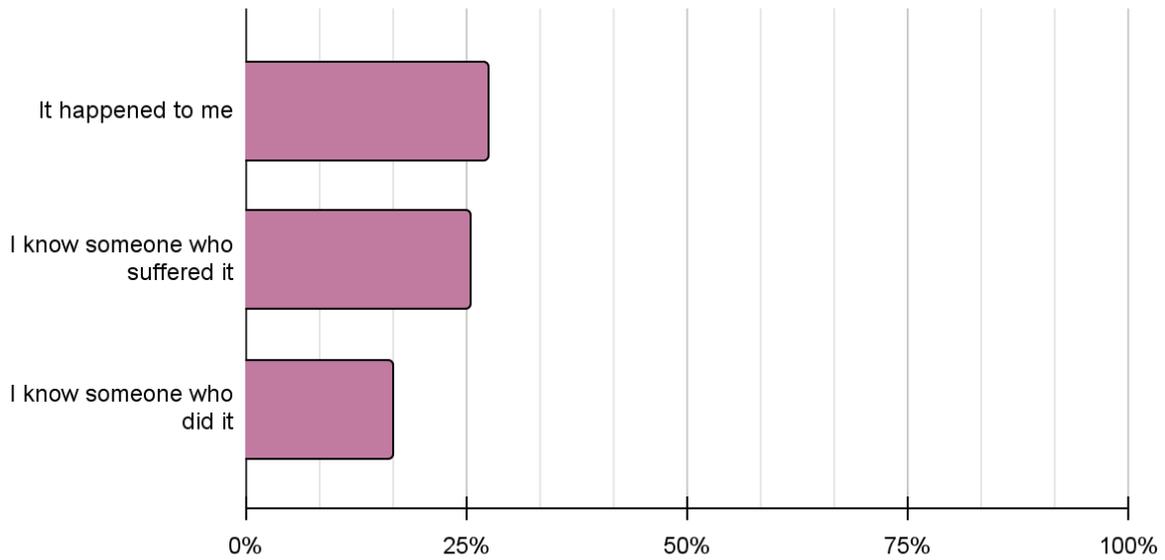


Figure 28. Percentage of Isolation conducts.

Receiving insult repeatedly through social networks

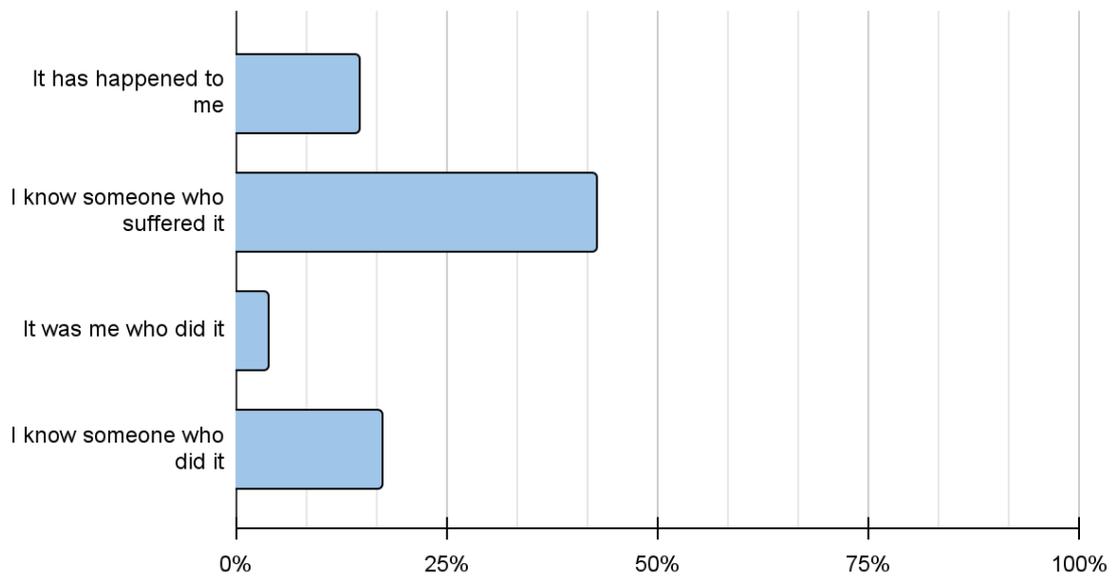
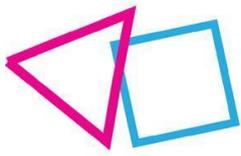


Figure 29. Receiving insult repeatedly through social networks



F) ONLINE GROOMING

The following figures represent the prevalence of behaviours that could be classified as “online grooming” situations; such as receiving a request from an adult, messages or photos and having conversations online with an adult. Percentages are shown regarding direct or indirect experimentation.

Have you received an online friend request from an unknown adult (over 18)?

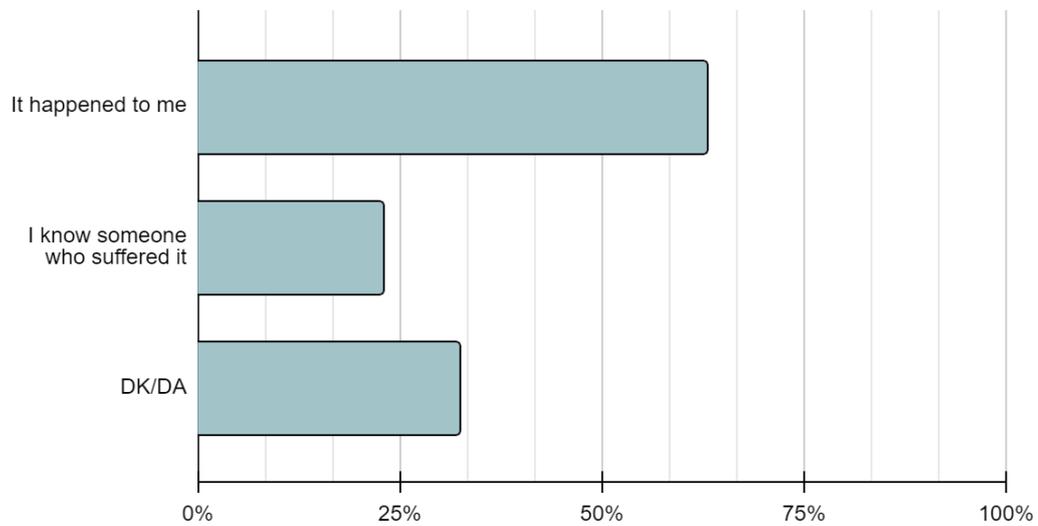
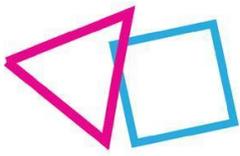


Figure 30. Percentage of people who receive an online friend request from an unknown adults



Have you received online messages or photos from an unknown adult (over 18)?

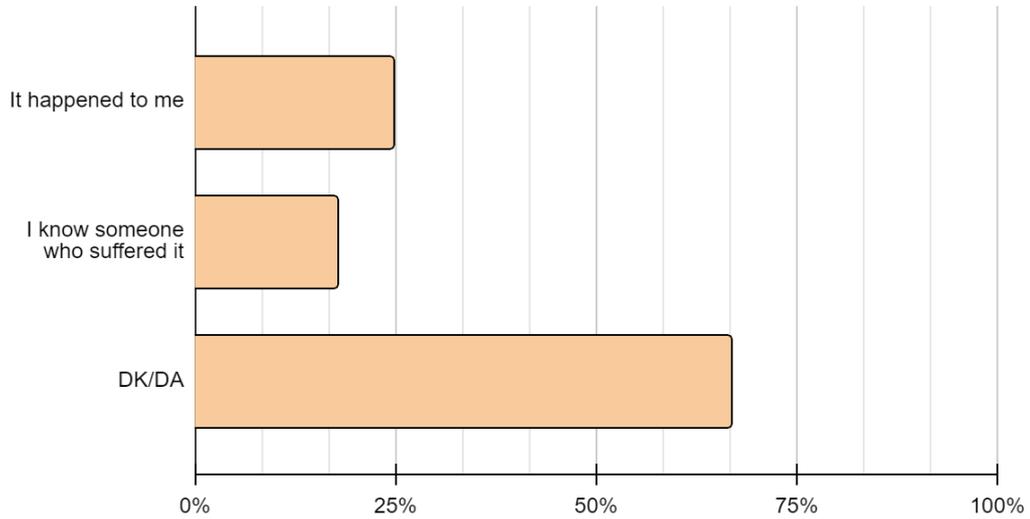


Figure 31. Percentage of people who received online messages or photos from an unknown adult

Have you had online conversations with an unknown adult (over 18)?

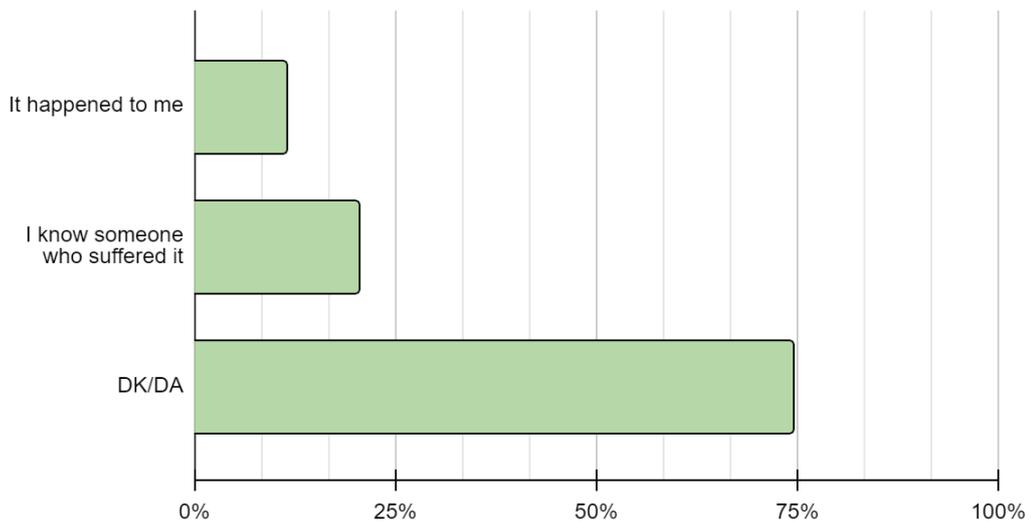
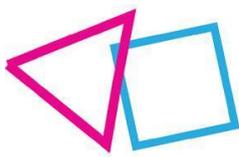


Figure 32. Percentage of people who had online conversations with an unknown adult



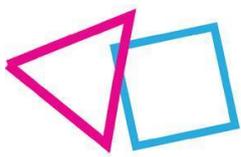
G) VICTIMISATION FACTORS

The following table (Table 17) provides information on the cross-references between variables, highlighting the following vulnerability factors: being a woman to receive requests from unknown adults; having a LGBTBI+ sexual orientation to suffer LGBTBIphobia and insults on the Internet; having a migrant background to be a victim of racism; and spending more than 4 hours on the Internet to suffer unwanted photos and memes.

Table 17. *Victimisation factors associated with the different situations of cyberbullying and cyberhate.*

<i>Situation</i>	Age	Gender	Sexual orientation	Migrant background	Time Spent
Racism	X	X	X	Migrant background $\chi^2 = 123.44$ $p < .001$	X
LGTBI- phobia	X	X	LGTBI $\chi^2 = 123.44$ $p < .001$	X	X
Sexism	X	X	X	X	X
Insults in Social Media	X	X	LGTBI $\chi^2 = 17.45$ $p = .004$	X	X
Group isolation	X	X	X	X	X
Log in to my account	X	X	X	X	X
Memes and photos	X	X	X	X	+ 4 hours/ day $\chi^2 = 10.2$ $p = .037$
Unwanted sex photos	X	X	X	X	X
Adult solicitation	X	Women $\chi^2 = 17.88$ $p < .001$	X	X	X

* "X" means there is no correlation between the situations described. While for those where there is a statistical correlation, the chi-square value (χ^2) and the percentage of significance ($p < .005$) have been provided.



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

Participants who chose Tik Tok or Instagram as their most used application were more likely to receive a friendship solicitation from an adult ($\chi^2 = 17.33, p=.008$).

Finally, Figure 33 shows the percentage of concern according to the behaviours described. Among the youth population, disclosure of intimate content without consent, online grooming, cyberbullying and identity theft stand out to a greater extent. On the other hand, fake news is not of great interest to young people, and inappropriate content and fake profiles are of average or normal concern.

Level of concern of the behaviours described

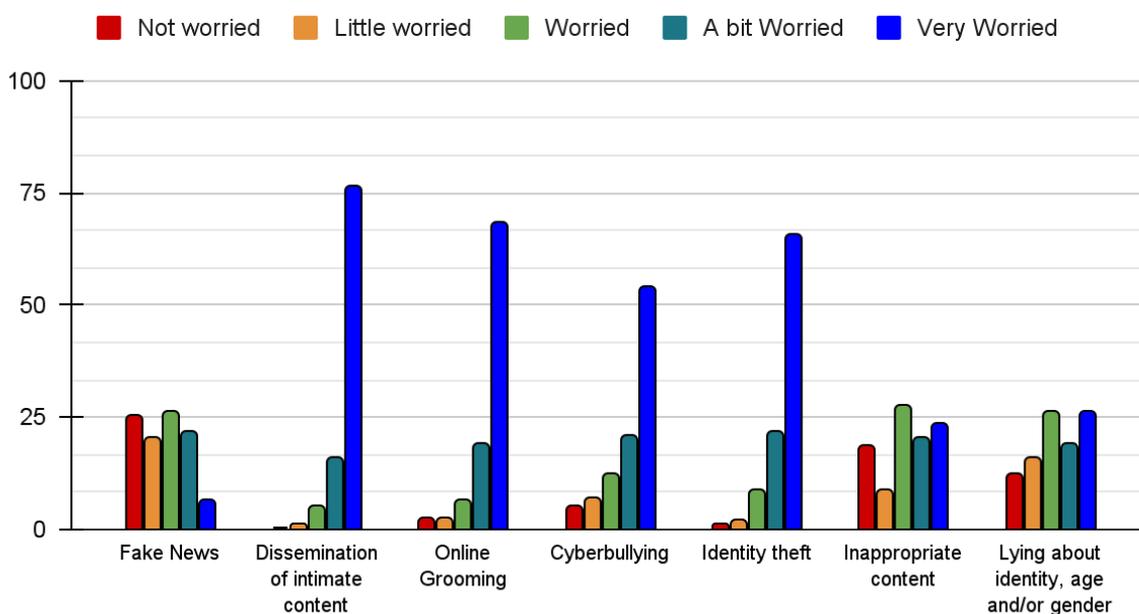
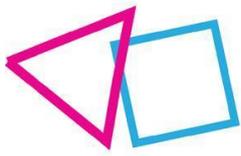


Figure 33. Percentage of the level of concern according to the described behaviours.

Takeaway points

- The majority of the sample is composed of males (58.6%) compared to females (39.5%). The majority are adolescents between 13 and 14 years old, heterosexual, and of Spanish national origin (88.6%). The country of birth of their parents is mostly Spain, both for the mother and the father.
- In terms of the time spent on the Internet, it is worth noting that during the week they spend between 1 and 2 hours per day, as well as between 3 and 4 hours per day, while at weekends this usage increases to more than 4 hours per day.

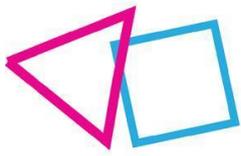


D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

- In general terms, students in the Valencian sample reported having received information at home about the Internet risks described (online grooming, cyberbullying, fake news, cyberhate, etc.). They also acknowledged having received information in class, either from their teachers or from external experts. However, they report that their parents hardly supervise what they do on the Internet when they are at home, and claim that it would be more useful to receive more information.
- When they share information, 48% tend to check it with other sources of information, but 43% say that when they receive information, they do not check it because they trust the person from whom they have received the information.
- With regard to situations of cyberbullying and cyberhate, when it comes to isolation behaviour, the majority say that they have suffered it or know someone who has suffered it, or with regard to receiving insults, they tend to know more people to whom it has happened.
- Some more specific risk factors for cyberbullying and cyberhate are: having a migrant origin to suffer racist behaviour, being a woman to receive friend requests from adult strangers, being on the Internet more than 4 hours a day to suffer ridicule through photos or memes, and having a LGBTBI+ sexual orientation to suffer LGBTBI-phobia and insults on social networks.
- Regarding behaviours that could be classified as "online grooming", around 60% have received friend requests from strangers over the age of 18, as well as having received messages or photos from strangers, while having had a conversation with an unknown adult, it is more common to know other people who have suffered this. These situations therefore constitute risk factors.
- Finally, respondents are very concerned about sharing personal and intimate information without their consent, online grooming, cyberbullying and identity theft.

4.7.- CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Fake news has to be deliberate on behalf of the person creating the news (Shu, et al., 2017), but not necessarily on spreading the news, as most of the spreaders would not know that they are sharing fake content. In the survey sample, while almost one third of the participants had shared them unknowingly -a lower percentage than in other research and without gender differences (Chen et al., 2015), less than 10% did it on purpose. The fast speed at which they expand is one of their main characteristics, which would differentiate it from other kinds of misinformation such as older propaganda, as anyone



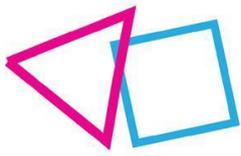
D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

may become a broadcaster. Moreover, false information has an impact on people's future judgment even if they discover the information is false. This situation, as we will see below, is specifically problematic for young people, as Herrero and others (2020) state. Accordingly, Mendiguren and colleagues (2020) emphasize that this could be because young people tend to share and look up for information rather fast, which makes it easier not to pay attention to the characteristics of the misinformation.

According to the results obtained after the application of the described methodology, the typology of the fake news identified by the young people and experts coincide: the most common fake news described are about COVID-19 or health issues, news related to celebrities, scary news that causes social panic, and politics/propaganda. Nevertheless, and contrary to what experts point out, politics is the least pointed out by young people in our focus groups. The reason for this difference is probably that the students interviewed in our sample reported the most influential topics according to their perspectives and the content they mainly consume. These results are consistent with previous research that found that young people seem more likely to share news or information related to their interests, even if it is not true (Herrero-Diz, Conde-Jiménez & Reyes de Cózar, 2020).

Secondly, the main **vulnerable groups** towards misinformation phenomena that have been identified would be, first, older people whose access to misinformation is through WhatsApp groups or social networks such as Facebook, and secondly, minors or young people. Among the reasons for the former's behaviour would be, as noted previously, the continuous search for and rapid consumption of information (Mendiguren et al., 2020). In addition, interviewed experts also suggest that not having yet developed critical and analytical skills, together with having limited knowledge to a variety of topics such as politics, could also play a role in this greater vulnerability. Nevertheless, as the interviewed experts highlight, this is a phenomenon that affects the entire population, regardless of generation and social and/or economic situation.

In relation to the **sources of information** that young people use, although previous research has shown how teenagers tend to mistrust traditional media (Spilker et al., 2020), in our sample, most participants agree considering traditional news as more reliable than social media. Nevertheless, they almost do not consume traditional media, getting informed mainly through social media. Accordingly, more than discussing whether young people lack confidence in traditional media, it is necessary to assess whether children are consumers of traditional media (news channels, print or online channels, etc.). In accordance with our sample, when young people want to consult information, they do it through



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

Google and digital platforms or they look for other media for their news. This trend would make them more susceptible to algorithms, being more exposed to filter bubbles and echo chambers (Fernández, 2017), and "less equipped" for critical thinking.

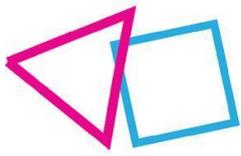
Among the reasons for this preference in the consumption of information, previous research indicates that traditional media does not connect with young people's interests, and that it does not contain opinions, which teenagers take advantage of in order to form their own vision (Marchi, 2012). Similarly, participants in our samples describe social media as places where you can find last minute and controversial information, with different opinions and with "everybody there". Getting informed would have this component of interaction and creating one's own identity.

Although previous research has suggested that the exchange of news would be an important part of young people's way of expressing identity and maintaining social connection (Marchi, 2012), in our sample most of the participants state to not share so much news, reading in many cases mostly only the news that appear in their social networks posted by friend. This could be the reason why, in general terms, they are neither especially concerned about fake news, being the Internet risk less stated in both the focus groups and the survey. Indeed, while participants may show some discomfort with fake news and want to share mostly truthful content as in previous research (Mendiguren and colleagues; 2020), they are not particularly aware of fake news as a problem.

Among the **reasons why people share information that is false**, participants in the focus groups also highlight that people share fake news without knowing that they are fake (Duffy, et al, 2020), with the motivation of helping or simply informing, especially when it is information that connects with the beliefs or on an emotional level with the people who receive this information.

When thinking about risk factors for ending up spreading fake news, we find similarities and differences between those who do it unintentionally and on purpose. According to our sample, the **older teenagers** would recognise to a greater extent to have shared fake news. This is contrary to the idea that younger people, having less reading comprehension and knowledge in general, would be more vulnerable. But it may also simply indicate a trend whereby there is more awareness of having done so.

Between those who did unintentionally, two interesting trends appear. On the one hand, all kinds of participants with migrant backgrounds (not only with what we called peripheral) would be more likely to share them. This could be related to language and greater **difficulty in reading comprehension**. On the other hand, while neither the time on the Internet nor bias towards one or the other application



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

correlates with unknowingly sharing false information, greater use of phones and tablets (and not computers) does. This could be related to the fact that these devices favour **impulsivity**, a characteristic associated with the phenomenon (Herrero et al., 2020). The lack of veracity could also be more difficult on these devices, as the contrast of information is not as easy as it is on the computer.

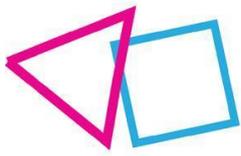
The relation between being a cyberhate offender and a fake news spreader might represent the **ideological** use of fake news, as students who fall on a spectrum of racism, homophobia and sexism may be more exposed to this type of news and thus end up sharing it. In the case of those who did this on purpose, it may in fact be one of the motivations. The connection between fake news and cyberhate, especially with regard to homosexual people or transgender people, as well as migrant people could be explained through a potential link between misinformation and polarisation: people close to these ideologies would be more likely to misinformation, spreading negative stereotypes against those collectives. Considering our results, further research on this link would be interesting.

Gaining popularity or fame, although referred to in the focus groups, **did not** get a significant correlation in the survey. However, **entertainment or having fun** did and in both groups (conscious and unconscious spreaders). As pointed out in the focus groups, news that connects with the teens' interest and emotions were pointed out as the most likely to be shared/believed, as well as funny stories, as it has been found in previous research as well (Herrera et al, 2020) where content affecting them, funny, eye-catching, or novel, often was found out to be more valued than truthfulness.

Finally, while the fact that the information came from a known newspaper/author or had been checked was especially important for unintentional sharers, the reverse trend was found for the intentional ones. This difference could show that while the former might be more aware for having unwittingly fallen for fake news, the latter would not value such actions as they do not value the veracity of the information as much.

Regarding general motivations for sharing news, as found in previous research video and image format was preferred to text (Lerat et al., 2020). However, although the accuracy of the information and the authority of the source was not found relevant to the subjects in previous research (Chen et. al, 2015), in our sample they were the most important aspects to consider. Nevertheless, trusting the sender was pointed out to the same extent, something that can be dangerous when the main channel of information is social media.

Most of the participants recognize that when they suspect news being fake, they rarely verify, unless they want to share it. Nevertheless, they have different criteria to evaluate the information **reliability**.



D1.7 Open report on victim and offender profile description report

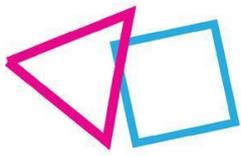
First, the source appears as the main element to consider, being the site where the information is hosted or the authority from whom the information emanates. Secondly, some participants also stress the importance of the style of the content, that it is cohesive and that it is presented in an appropriate and professional manner, since, together with the date of publication of the information, in video format or the content itself, are indications to determine its veracity. Nevertheless, as it has been highlighted in previous research (McGrew et al., 2017), many websites with dubious content are becoming increasingly sophisticated, so young people should be taught how to jump from one website to another to confirm the data, instead of evaluating the web page.

Finally, one of the main strategies for verification, which is also relevant for other Internet risks, is looking through the comments of the publication for signs of falsehood. Although checking comments can be considered a way of critical thinking, it is not exempt from risks, as it can be easily found when for instance, the marketing of a product, also includes sponsored comments. This trend, together with the preference for news with opinions and controversial topics, would fit in the description that Daum (2019) makes about the new generations using less the critical thinking and more the *in-group/out-group* thinking, in which one takes a position after seeing what others think. Thus, being sceptical about comments should be included in the prevention programs.

The last cyber risk that was approached in this section was **cyberhate**. It is defined as a behaviour spreading attitudes devaluating others because of their characteristics (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation etc.), using computer technology (Hawdon, Oksanen, & Räsänen, 2014, Hawdon et al, 2019). In the past, hate speech (cybercrime in general terms) used to be spread through physical spaces, but these days it is facilitated by new technologies and virtual spaces (Weulen et al., 2019).

The most referred situation targets in the focus groups are race and **racism**, together with sexual orientation and physical appearance. In a lesser measure economic status and age are also mentioned. A connection between **fake news** and **cyberhate** is also highlighted and could be due to the link between misinformation and polarization, being people with more radical ideas more vulnerable to misinformation. Regarding the survey, although LGTBIfobia would be slightly more witnesses than racism and sexism, prevalence is similar in all of them, with the highest rates in victims' bystanders, followed by offenders' bystanders, victims and with the last percentage, offenders.

The first connection between cyberhate and cyberbullying is that cyberhate victimisation factors are for cyberbullying as well: being female, LGTBI or having a peripheral migrant background. This trend

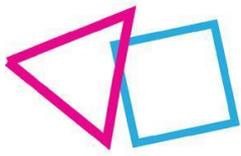


D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

describes how cyberbullying cannot be separated from the social structure and its inequalities (Hong et al., 2016). If the victims of CB are singled out because of their physical and social characteristics (Dennehy et. al. 2020), these characteristics are inseparable from the predominant values in a given socio-historical context. Therefore, it is impossible to address bullying and CB without referring to homophobia, gender relations or racism.

Sexual orientation was then found as the main risk factor for cyberbullying (correlating in three different situations), which support the idea of Pascoe (2013) who states that the study of homophobic bullying is not only relevant from the point of view of those involved, but also as a socialisation mechanism that reproduces gender inequalities. Indeed, another reason to understand the connection between bullying and cyberhate is to attend to the gender variable. Being a girl correlated in the survey with suffering CB in two situations, isolation, and unwanted sex photos. Consistent with the results of other deliverables (D1.1, D1.3 and D1.5), in the focus groups it was described how girls were found to be especially insulted because of their physical appearance, consistently with previous research (Linares et. al, 2019; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). In addition, and as it was shown in the focus groups, girls on the Internet are under pressure to look sexy and receive likes and positive comments, while not showing too much in order not to be insulted, (Sylwander; 2019). According to the focus groups, insults directed at boys are more related to their sexual orientation and masculinity. Gender role socialization then, does not only affect girls. Insults towards boys have more to do with their lack of ability and their sexual orientation (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). Indeed, those participants who did not want to express their gender were more likely to suffer LGBTIphobia. The same pressure to conform to gender expectations would, according to Dennehy and collaborators (2020), encourage boys to engage in non-consensual distribution of sexual images as a way of reinforcing their masculinity among peers. That is, gender roles, sexism and heteronormativity permeate cyberbullying, as found in previous research (Thornberg, 2011).

Although to a lesser extent, having a migrant background also was related to suffering CB in one situation. This fact could be related with the newcomer deviance, the physical deviance, and the cultural deviance, as stated by Mazzone and collaborators (2018). In addition, to spend more time online appeared as well as a victimisation factor, and as an offending factor. In addition, participants from a public school were also more likely to refer to having suffered insults in social networks. On the contrary, participants from private schools were more likely to report having been cyberbullying aggressors. This finding is consistent with some suggestive evidence that young people of higher socio-economic status are more likely to become cyberbullies (Beyazit et al., 2017).



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

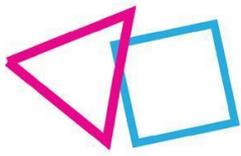
Regarding sex, according to the survey, male participants were more likely to commit all kind of cyberhate offences together with insults in social media and offensive memes and photos. Similarly, the same trend was expressed in the focus groups. This contradicts the preconceived notion of the "mean girl" myth by which girls are more relationally aggressive than boys. Although girls were expected to bully more in cyberspace due to relational violence, the evidence, consistent with our results, shows the opposite (Barlett and Coyne 2014).

A relevant aspect in our result is the correlation between different victimisation and between victimisation and aggression. Regarding victimisation not only do different forms of cyberbullying overlap but do it also with different forms of cyberhate. This result would support the idea that previous victimisation is a risk factor for future one. Regarding offending, if being a victim of sexism correlates with being an offender with other kinds of cyberhate, being a victim of racism and LGBTIphobia also correlates with some situations of cyberbullying. In addition, for victims of cyberbullying it would be even more frequent to be also offenders (except for those who suffered from isolation). This could be explained by two reasons. On the one hand, to have suffered as a victim would become a risk factor for aggression, as shown in previous research. On the other hand, it could also be a way of minimizing responsibility, such as saying that what you did was also done to you by others.

Regarding different types of cyberbullying, they had similar prevalence, but with some interesting tendencies. Although in most of them, the number of participants who stated to have suffered from the situation was much smaller than the number of those who knew someone who did, it did not happen with the group isolation. Similarly, the less participants recognized to have isolated other children. This trend could be related to some bias either in the victims, who may overestimate these situations, or in the aggressors, who may underestimate them.

Another trend found in the focus groups was that both cyberhate and cyberbullying is often masked as humour. This can make it very normalised in society and on social networks, as cyberhate is not always carried out in a direct way. Although this is also related with the contemporary debate about the limits of humour, and with the danger of censorship, it becomes at the same time a way of blaming the victim for not having a sense of humour.

Similarly, another connection is made by the participants between **victimisation** and **self-confidence**, which might be dangerous as it can lead to blaming the victim. Another aspect that appears as worrying and what could be investigated further is the effect of this form of cynicism on networks, for example in comments to strangers on Tik Tok or Twitter. Will it affect or reshape the more interpersonal



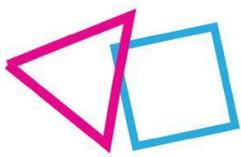
D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

dynamics of CB? Also, does having a certain passive stance towards networks, not commenting on flaming or racism, have implications for more direct experiences?

Regarding the main platforms for the dissemination of cyberhate, all the experts interviewed agree on stating **Facebook** and **Twitter**. Twitter would have some characteristics such as the issue of mentions with hashtags, the possibility of disseminating a message without necessarily interacting with it by retweeting, which would encourage very fast communication and promote the viralization of messages (Bustos et al., 2019). Nevertheless, when participants are asked, they refer to a greater extent to **Tik Tok**, followed by Instagram and online gaming. Regarding the survey, no application correlated with any kind of aggression except a higher use of videogames which was related with racism, LGTBiphobia and the exhibition of violent content. Similarly, a higher use of video games was associated with a higher risk of sexist victimisation and group isolation. In addition, those who used Tik tok as their first app were more likely to suffer for Insults in SSNNs and a higher use of the mobile and tablet correlated respectively with being a victim of memes and photos and of group isolation. Although on the one hand, it seems that beyond the characteristics of each social network, what ends up prevailing is the number of people using it (and age preferences), these results show that some inherent characteristics and dynamics of the application and devices could also be considered. First, a fast (more impulsive) use of some devices such as the mobile could make some forms of cyberbullying easier, like the one through memes and photos. Second, social networks like Tik Tok where criticism is presented in every publication could create a more favorable environment for insults. Finally, video game chat rooms might be places where certain hate speech is tolerated to a greater extent, perhaps in part due to the increased masculinisation of these venues. In any case, these are issues that would be interesting to investigate further.

In terms of **prevention**, we should first talk about the **reactions of minors to fake news**, as they tend to ignore them or, as much, block the accounts that share and broadcast this information. When it comes to deception, although the possibility of denouncing, reporting, and informing app support teams exists -as some of the teenagers describe-, most of the participants usually block those accounts if they are insistent, otherwise they simply ignore it or ask more questions to know who the person is, but they do not generally report.

On the other hand, in the case of **cyberbullying**, the reaction depends on the victim: if they are close to the person who observes the abusive situation, they usually intervene, more through direct support to the victim than through reporting. If the person is not closed, they tend to ignore the content.



D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

However, in this aspect there are three types of profiles: those who derive entertainment from it, those who actively oppose it, and those who do not react.

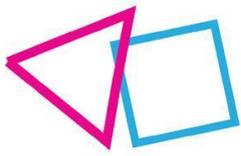
Finally, regarding **online grooming** situations, although it is hard, some students in our sample said that they would end up telling their parents about it, and at the end going to formal control mechanisms of crime, which correlates with literature review (Sobrino, 2020). However, as described in deliverables D1.1, D1.3 and D1.5, disclosure to parents is one of the most difficult actions once the online grooming situation occurs due to different factors such as shame, embarrassment, and fear of punishment.

With regard to **parental control and supervision**, this factor should also be taken into account when developing prevention programmes, as previous studies have found that an overprotective parent model could discourage young people from sharing their concerns with their parents (Walters, 2011). However, according to experts' criteria adequate supervision can be positive for children to know how new technologies work and what self-protection strategies they should carry out. Participants in the focus groups highlight that good communication is necessary for revealing, and it includes not fearing the reaction of the parents. Therefore, the level of trust between children and parents is a **victimisation factor** that also needs to be considered when developing prevention strategies, as trust itself allows young people to talk to them about the experiences they have and what happens to them (Walters, 2021).

Although these criminal phenomena do not affect children equally, while fake news does not almost concern the participants, cyberbullying is one of the situations most feared by young people (especially when it is concreted as the dissemination of intimate content or as identity theft) followed by online grooming. This could be related to the fact that cyberbullying is suffered involuntarily, not participating (in)directly in the development of the crime, where situational precipitators of the crime playing a very relevant role (González-García & Campoy-Torrente, 2018).

Regarding **prevention strategies for Internet risks**, some students in the sample mentioned that lectures on online grooming or cyberbullying were held in some schools, but through the information collected by the survey it seems clear that a bigger effort needs to be put especially in schools, as the students demand more information regarding these dangers.

Finally, in relation to **the results of the Madrid and Valencia survey**, it can be noted that the sample size is varied. While Madrid has a total of 682 cases, the Valencia sample has 157 questionnaires completed, which affects representativeness. In addition, in the Valencia sample there are fewer

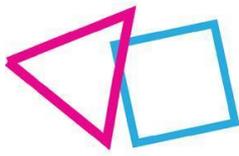


D1.7 Open report on victim and ofender profile description report

female respondents represented and fewer people with a migrant or non-national origin. This affects the crosses made with some variables, achieving fewer results when contrasting victimisation, although some of them keep solid. However, tendencies in news-sharing motivations and in prevalences for both victimisation and offending remain. In both samples, online grooming behaviour, sharing intimate content without consent and cyberbullying are of great concern to the young people surveyed. Similarly, concern about fake news remains low. And finally, in the Valencian sample, they refer to receiving information in schools more than at home, the opposite of Madrid, which shows that more resources are invested in informing the youth population in those schools.

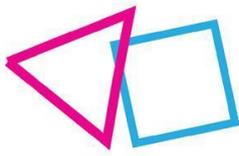
4.8.- REFERENCES

- Barlett, C., & Coyne, S. M. (2014). A meta-analysis of sex differences in cyber-bullying behavior: The moderating role of age. *Aggressive Behavior*, 40(5), 474–488.
- Beyazit, U., Şimşek, Ş., & Ayhan, A. B. (2017). An examination of the predictive factors of cyberbullying in adolescents. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 45(9), 1511–1522.
- Bustos Martínez, L., De Santiago Ortega, P. P., Martínez Miró, M. Á., Rengifo Hidalgo, M. S. (2019). Discursos de odio: una epidemia que se propaga en la red. Estado de la cuestión sobre el racismo y la xenofobia en las redes sociales. *Revista Mediaciones Sociales*,(18), 25-42.
- Chen, X., Sin, S.-C. J., Theng, Y.-L., & Lee, C. S. (2015). *Why Students Share Misinformation on Social Media: Motivation, Gender, and Study-level Differences*. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 41(5), 583–592. doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2015.07.003
- Daum, M (2019). *The Problem with Everything: My Journey Through the New Culture*, Gallery Books, New York.
- Dennehy, R., Meaney, S., Walsh, K. A., Sinnott, C., Cronin, M., & Arensman, E. (2020). Young people's conceptualizations of the nature of cyberbullying: A systematic review and synthesis of qualitative research. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 51(January 2019), 101379.
- Duffy, A., Tandoc, E., & Ling, R. (2020). Too good to be true, too good not to share: the social utility of fake news. *Information Communication and Society*, 23(13), 1965–1979.
- Fernández García, N. (2017). Fake news: una oportunidad para la alfabetización mediática. *Nueva Sociedad*, 269, 66–77.
- González García, A., & Campoy Torrente, P. (2018). Ciberacoso y cyberbullying: Diferenciación en función de los precipitadores situacionales. 16, 1-31. <https://doi.org/10.46381/reic.v16i0.149>.



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

- Hawdon, J., Costello, M., Barrett-Fox, R. & Bernatzky, C. (2019). 'The Perpetuation of Online Hate: A Criminological Analysis of Factors Associated with Participating in an Online Attack', *Journal of Hate Studies*, 15(1), pp. 157–181. doi: 10.33972/jhs.166.
- Hawdon, J., Oksanen, A. & Räsänen, P. (2014). Victims of online hate groups: American youth's exposure to online hate speech. In J. Hawdon, J. Ryan and M. Lucht (Eds.), *The causes and consequences of group violence: From bullies to terrorists* (165–182). London, UK: Lexington Books.
- Herrero-Diz, P., Conde-Jiménez, J., & Reyes de Cózar, S. (2020). Teens' Motivations to Spread Fake News on WhatsApp. *Social Media and Society*, 6(3).
- Hoff, D. L., & Mitchell, S. N. (2009). Cyberbullying: Causes, effects, and remedies. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 47(5), 652–665.
- Hong, J.S., Espelage, D.L., Hunter, S. C., Allen-Meares, P. (2016). Integrating multi-disciplinary social science theories and perspectives to understand school bullying and victimisation. In J. Ireland, P. Birch, C.A. Ireland (eds.) *International Handbook on Aggression: Current Issues and Perspectives* (pp. 109 – 120). London: Routledge.
- Linares Bahillo, E., Royo Prieto, R., & Silvestre Cabrera, M. (2019). El ciberacoso sexual y/o sexista contra las adolescentes. Nuevas versiones online de la opresión patriarcal de las sexualidades y corporalidades femeninas. *Doxa Comunicación. Revista Interdisciplinar de Estudios de Comunicación y Ciencias Sociales*, 28, 201–222.
- Literat, I., Chang, Y. K., & Hsu, S. Y. (2020). Gamifying fake news: Engaging youth in the participatory design of news literacy games. *Convergence*, 26(3), 503–516.
- Marchi, R. (2012). With Facebook, blogs, and fake news, teens reject journalistic "objectivity." *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 36(3), 246–262.
- Mazzone, A., Thornberg, R., Stefanelli, S., Cadei, L., & Caravita, S. C. S. (2018). "Judging by the cover": A grounded theory study of bullying towards same-country and immigrant peers. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 91, 403–412.
- McGrew, S., Ortega, T., Breakstone, J., & Wineburg, S. (2017). The Challenge That's Bigger Than Fake News: Civic Reasoning in a Social Media Environment. *American Educator*.
- Mendiguren, T., Pérez Dasilva, J., & Meso Ayerdi, K. (2020). Actitud ante las Fake News: Estudio del caso de los estudiantes de la Universidad del País Vasco. *Revista de Comunicación*.
- Pascoe C.J. (2013). Notes on a Sociology of Bullying: Young Men's Homophobia as Gender Socialization. *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 0, 87-103.



D1.7 Open report on victim and
ofender profile description report

- Shu, K., Sliva, A., Wang, S., Tang, J., & Liu, H. (2017). Fake news detection on social media: A data mining perspective. *ACM SIGKDD explorations newsletter*, 19(1), 22-36.
- Sobrinho, A. B. (2020). Visión criminológica del delito Online Grooming. *Behavior & Law Journal*, 6(1), 42-50. <https://doi.org/10.47442/blj.v6.i1.73>
- Spilker, H. S., Ask, K., & Hansen, M. (2020). The new practices and infrastructures of participation: How the popularity of Twitch.tv challenges old and new ideas about television viewing. *Information, Communication & Society*, 23(4), 605-620. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2018.1529193>
- Sylwander, K. R. (2019). Affective Atmospheres of Sexualized Hate Among Youth Online: A Contribution to Bullying and Cyberbullying Research on Social Atmosphere. *International Journal of Bullying Prevention*, 1(4), 269–284.
- Thornberg, R. (2011). She's weird! The social construction of bullying in school: A review of qualitative research. *Children and Society*, 4, 258-267.
- Walters, G. D. (2021). Weak parental supervision and lack of child remorse as predictors of proximal crime continuity in early-to-mid adolescent delinquents. *Journal of Criminal Psychology*, 11(1), 59-71. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCP-10-2020-0043>
- Walters, M. A. (2011). A General Theories of Hate Crime? Strain, Doing Difference and Self Control', *Critical Criminology*, 19(4), 313–330. doi: 10.1007/s10612-010-9128-2.
- Weulen Kranenbarg, M., Ruiter, S., & Van Gelder, J. L. (2019). *Do cyber-birds flock together? Comparing deviance among social network members of cyber-dependent offenders and traditional offenders*. 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477370819849677>.