Leen d'Haenens and Christine Ogan

Internet-using children and digital inequality: A comparison between majority and minority Europeans

Abstract: In this research we focus on ethnic minorities, one of the underserved groups in Europe. In particular, we address the internet use of Turkish ethnic children, aged 9 to 16,¹ in several EU countries. We examine the extent to which they can be considered digitally disadvantaged when compared to the majority population in those countries. We also compare Turkish children living in Turkey to those in the diaspora as well as to the majority children living in those same European countries. The data used for this analysis is part of the EU Kids Online research (www.eukidsonline.net). Of the three groups of teenagers examined, those in the Turkish diaspora take a position in between their native European peers, who are the most fervent surfers on the internet, and the Turkish children living in Turkey, who use the internet least often. Generally speaking that is also true for online competencies and online activities. As far as exposure to online risks is concerned, European majority children are more familiar than the two other groups with receiving sex-related images and messages and with face-to-face meetings with online contacts. By contrast, children in the Turkish diaspora are relatively more familiar with cyberbullying.

Keywords: digital inequality, ethnic minorities, Turkish ethnic children, diaspora, EU kids, computer mediated communication, internet use

Corresponding Author: Leen d'Haenens: e-mail: leen.dhaenens@soc.kuleuven.be
Christine Ogan: e-mail: ogan@indiana.edu

1 Introduction

The digital divide was once considered a problem in the West where economic affluence, gender, and age were considered its markers, but is now declining as a concern for policymakers and most internet researchers. Most people now

¹ Depending on the questions asked, children aged 9 to 16 or 11 to 16 were interviewed.

have access to the internet, if not on their mobile devices, laptops or PCs, then at school, work or in publicly accessible locations. For example, 2011 Pew research found that 78 % of all men and women in the United States have access to the internet, and when access was broken down by age, 95 % of those aged 18 to 29 were online. Nevertheless, ethnic differences remain: As many Hispanics as white non-Hispanics are online, with African Americans still lagging behind somewhat in 2011. Recent research on the global internet cites as one of its main findings that newly emergent nations in Asia and Latin America are “becoming the dominant nations online, having the greatest number of users” (Dutta, Dutton, and Law, 2011, p. 3). However, the report goes on to say that those same countries have lower levels of internet adoption.

Lack of internet access is still an issue in EU countries, despite the fact that in six of its member countries, regular internet use was reported by 80 % of the population. Seven other countries, however, reported use levels below 60 % (Seybert, 2011). More alarming is the statistic that one-fourth of all people in the EU-27 countries have never used the internet (Seybert, 2011). Internet researchers who study the digital gap are these days not so concerned with adoption as with inequality among those who have already adopted the internet (cf. van Dijk, 2009; Hargittai, 2010; Hargittai and Hinnant, 2008; Warschauer, 2003; Zillien and Hargittai, 2009).

In this research we focus on ethnic minorities, one of the underserved groups in Europe. In particular, we address the internet use of Turkish ethnic children aged 9 to 16 who live in several EU countries. We examine the extent to which they can be considered digitally disadvantaged when compared to the majority population in those countries. We also compare Turkish children living in Turkey to those in the diaspora as well as to the majority children living in those same European countries. The data used for this analysis is part of the EU Kids Online research (www.eukidsonline.net). The groups we target in this study consist of internet users only, but they may not all be equally well-equipped to both take advantage of all the internet has to offer while simultaneously managing risks they may encounter in its use.

2 Digital divide or inequality?

Policymakers’ concern with the digital divide was based on the Matthew Effect, first articulated by sociologist Merton in 1968 (van Dijk, 2009; Merton, 1968), stating that those who already have will get more bestowed on them and those who do not have will become even worse off. In societal and internet terms, van Dijk (2009, p. 300) puts it this way: “In most, if not all spheres of societal

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participation (economic, social, political, cultural) and citizenship, those already occupying the strongest positions tend to benefit more from access and usage of ICTs as potentially powerful tools than those occupying the weakest positions.”

In its 2011 report on ‘Measuring the Information Society’, the International Telecommunications Union’s research supports this view. Citing data from 31 countries, the analysis shows that internet use is much greater among people with higher levels of education, and that increased educational level positively correlates with higher income and level of computer literacy. However, these relationships are much less pronounced in the developed countries where internet access and use is less expensive. Gender was shown to be a factor across the developed countries of the European Union, where 74 % of men and 69 % of women are internet users.

Even if we could provide access to all people in the world, van Dijk’s research (2009) finds that those with lower levels of education tend to use the simple computer applications more for entertainment, shopping and information, while those with higher education levels use advanced applications more for business, communication, information, work or education. He concludes that this means those with lower educational levels are more passive users of computer technologies while people with higher educational achievements are more active and creative users.

The term “digital inequality” has been more recently preferred to digital divide as it represents the more complex nature of the issue that goes well beyond whether or not people have access to the internet. Digital equality also goes by the term “second level digital divide” (Hargittai, 2002; Mesch, 2011). Paul DiMaggio and Ezster Hargittai (2001, p. 1) argued that researchers should drop the binary focus related to access and begin examining five dimensions of digital equality: “in equipment, autonomy of use, skill, social support, and the purposes for which the technology is employed”. Other researchers have joined them in their call to examine technical and social contexts and environments of users (Ono and Zavodny, 2007) while Matei and Ball-Rokeach (2003) believe that internet connectedness, or the nature of the relationship between people and computers, is also important. Internet connectedness, like digital inequality, is based on multiple (9) dimensions (Jung, Qiu, and Kim, 2001).

3 Digital inequality and ethnic minorities

When Kim, Jung and Ball-Rokeach (2007, p. 293) examined the role of ethnicity in internet connectedness among Los-Angeles-based ethnic minorities, they

found that even after controlling for income, age, gender and immigration history, ethnicity had a significant effect.

Their study looked at several ethnic groups living in different Los Angeles neighborhoods, a city not unlike others where ethnic groups tend to live with others of like ethnicity. The social diversification hypothesis (Mesch, 2007; Mesch and Talmud, 2010) states that computer-mediated communication (CMC) provides a platform to overcome such social and residential segregation.

Mesch’s 2011 study found that FSU (residents from the former Soviet Union), Israelis and Jews in Israel used CMC to maintain social ties, but Arab Israelis, an ethnic minority, instead used it to make new friends, or build social capital. Mesch’s research builds an argument for a cultural rather than a socio-economic status effect for computer mediated communication use. Hampton’s work (2010) supports this finding. Contrary to the Matthew effect that is based on individual attributes, Hampton believes that the focus should be placed on communities. He sees the internet as a “contextual leveler between advantaged and disadvantaged communities by affording the formation of collective efficacy – local social cohesion and informal social control – within a context of concentrated disadvantage” (2010, p. 1128).

The present article examines to what extent ethnic and cultural origin can be indicative of the way children and young people in the 9 to 16 years old range use the internet and how they deal with online risks. We believe that the skill level of children is a good measure of digital inequality, and in this study, children reported on eight different specific skills. Our study compares children and youngsters of the Turkish ethnic-cultural minority in five European countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands, $n = 167$) with two groups: on the one hand, their peers in the majority population of the five countries concerned ($n = 4,949$) and, on the other, Turkish youngsters living in Turkey ($n = 1,018$). In the broader context of these children’s access to and use of the internet we have examined the similarities and the differences in the way they deal with a number of specific risks that surfing the internet involves, such as cyberbullying, sending messages with sex-related content and offline meetings with online contacts. We believe that children who demonstrate higher internet skill levels and who use the computer for a wider range of activities will also be better prepared to deal with the risks of the internet. Because internet-savvy parents can also assist children in becoming more skilled on the internet, their internet use has also been investigated.

According to the Internet World Stats usage and population statistics (<http://internetworldstats.com/stats4.htm>), in all of the countries in our study the internet is used substantially, but among them, the penetration rate at the end of 2011 was the lowest in Turkey (44.4 %). The highest penetration was

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measured in the Netherlands (89.5%) and Denmark (89.0%), followed by Germany (82.7%) and Austria (74.8%), and Bulgaria (48.8%). Although all of the children in our study were internet users, they may not all have access in their homes or own personal computers or laptops. Because of these differences, the northern European children were likely to be at a decisive advantage when considering access.

For the three groups involved we compare online skills as well as the different impact that social-economic status may have. We explore three online risks that teenagers may encounter, the adverse effects they may suffer, and the strategies they develop to cope with the risks. We discuss similarities and differences in the strategies adopted by the three groups under scrutiny, at least in so far as the numbers of subjects in the three groups enable us to. To our knowledge this is the first study which compares Turkish children from minority groups with their peers in Turkey on the issue of online activities in general and their ways of coping with online risks in particular.

4 Measurements and research questions

The survey was only able to measure reported internet skills, as actual measurement of those skills was beyond the scope of the study. A total of eight skills (reported above) was combined into a scale and used as the dependent variable. Independent variables were entered into the regression in steps – demographics, efficacy, and use variables. Demographics included gender, age, and socio-economic status. Self-efficacy, or the child's feeling that he/she has the personal resources to accomplish a certain result and feels empowered to do so, was measured on a scale including 10 variables adapted from the scale devised by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). Efficacy may be as important as skill level in meeting online risks, as the child might believe that he or she can manage the problem despite a lack of internet skills. 'Use' variables included the number of risky online activities in which the child participated, the total number of online activities, the degree to which the parent monitored the child's internet use (as reported both by the parent and the child), the frequency of both the parent's and the child's internet use, the location of the computer in the household, and the number of places where the child went online.

To date, researchers have only given scant attention to the online media use of children with an ethnic-minority background in Europe. The few studies available lead us to assume that the parents of these youngsters do not often intervene in their children's use of the computer, partly because of their own limited understanding of online activities and partly because of their poor abil-

ity to assess the suitability or even the possibly damaging nature of online media content. For these two reasons the present article will confine itself to addressing several exploratory questions in addition to two hypotheses related to digital inequality. To our knowledge, no available research compares children with a Turkish background living in Europe with, on the one hand, their peers still living in Turkey, and their majority European peers on the other. We work on the assumption that Turkish youngsters living in European countries (the Turkish 'diaspora' in Europe), when examined on the point of access to and use of online media, will find themselves somewhere in between the European majority on the one hand and their peers in Turkey on the other, precisely because they have one foot in their 'new' culture and the other in their homeland culture. The following questions and hypotheses will therefore be addressed:

Q 1: How much time do Turkish youngsters living in Turkey, Turkish youngsters living in the European diaspora, and 'native' European youngsters spend online? How much do their parents make use of the internet?

Q 2: How do Turkish diaspora youngsters' internet access and use compare with access to and use of the internet of Turkish youngsters of the same age living in their homeland, on the one hand, and with that of native youngsters in the five European countries analyzed (Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands) on the other? What is the impact of these youngsters' social and economic background?

Q 3: What are the online activities of the three groups of youngsters concerned?

Q 4: Do youngsters living in the Turkish diaspora in Europe face more or fewer online dangers when compared with their peers in Turkey and with the native European majority? Are there any specific risks which they face to a greater or lesser extent?

Q 5: How do these youngsters cope with online risks and what are their strategies for doing so? Are their coping strategies different from those of Turkish youngsters in Turkey and of native European youngsters?

H 1: The reported internet skill levels of European majority children will be higher than that of Turkish diaspora children. Turkish children in Turkey will have the lowest reported internet skill levels.

H 2: Socio-economic levels will be positively related to the skill levels of children in the three groups of children.

H 3: Self-efficacy of children in all groups will be positively related to the skill levels of all children in the study.

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5 Results

5.1 The parents and their internet use

Of the majority European parents, 90 % use the internet. That percentage drops considerably among families of Turkish origin: to 54 % among Turkish diaspora families and a mere 29 % for families in Turkey. The socio-economic background of the majority European families is significantly higher than that of the two other groups, the Turkish families living in Turkey and the Turkish families in the European diaspora. The latter are on an even lower rung of the socio-economic ladder than the families in Turkey, though the difference is not significant. Judging by the marked differences in internet use, socio-economic background does seem to be a strong predictor of online use among families in Turkey and Turkish diaspora families, but much less so for majority European families (see Table 1); in the latter case, less well-to-do families turn out to use the internet less often, but the differences are considerably smaller than in the two other groups.

SES	European parents <i>n</i> = 4,949	Turkish diaspora parents <i>n</i> = 167	Turkish parents <i>n</i> = 1,018
High	96	82	70
Medium	88	61	36
Low	83	40	14

Table 1: Internet use of parents (*N* = 6134) by social-economic status (SES) in %.

The families’ actual internet use also reflects the assessment that the parents make of their ability to surf the web: 15, 23 and 36 %, respectively, of majority European parents, parents in the Turkish diaspora and families in Turkey feel they are not familiar enough with the computer to use the internet. The families who do use the internet show little difference in frequency of their internet use, although Turkish families in general, and in particular those living in Turkey, are less confident about their online abilities ($F = 33.7$; $df = 2$; $np = .000$).

5.2 Youngsters and computer ownership and use

Personal or shared ownership of a desktop or laptop computer is generally considered a prerequisite of internet use. On this point Table 2 reveals hardly

Computer ownership	Majority European youngsters <i>n</i> = 4,949	Youngsters in the Turkish diaspora <i>n</i> = 167	Turkish youngsters <i>n</i> = 1,018
No computer	1.0	4.8	49.5
Personal ownership	29.3	29.9	16.5
Shared ownership	69.7	65.3	34.0

Table 2: Youngsters (9 to 16 years) and computer ownership in %.

any difference between majority European youngsters and ethnic Turkish youngsters, but a marked difference is found in the group of Turkish youngsters living in Turkey (i.e., no relationship with PC ownership, but there is a relationship between the group to which the child belongs and laptop ownership) (Tau C = .12; *p* = .000).

Another interesting parameter in this context is the location of the computer in the house: European children (57.3 %) more often have a desktop computer or a laptop in their bedroom or in some other private room than their Turkish peers, both those of the Turkish diaspora (45.8 %) and those in Turkey (31.9 %). This difference might lead to greater exposure to online risks, for example, pornographic websites for those children who access their computers from the privacy of their bedroom. On school days, three out of four majority European children (76.2 %) spend from 30 to 120 minutes online; a minority spends three to four hours online (13.8 %), while one out of ten (10 %) are never online or just for a few minutes. On weekends or holidays, the average time online is higher.

The average age at which majority European children begin using the internet is eight (8.6 to be precise), and that is, on average, one year earlier than Turkish children (9.6) (*t* = 11.4; *df* = 4,799; *p* = 0.000). Turkish diaspora children are in between, being slightly older than nine (9.3) when they go online for the first time. The age difference between EU natives and children in Turkey is significant (*t* = 3.5; *df* = 4210; *p* = 0.001), but it is not when comparing European with Turkish diaspora children (*t* = 1.6; *df* = 831; *p* = 0.12).

When we examine the reported online skills of the 11- to 16-year-olds (*N* = 4,585) (see Table 3), we find considerable discrepancies between the three groups (*r* = .29; *p* = .000). Majority European children in the five countries concerned have a markedly higher score than their peers in the Turkish diaspora and a very much higher one than children in Turkey. It is worth noting that only on the issue of finding information on how to use the internet safely do Turkish children believe they are better informed than their peers in the Turkish diaspora. On average, majority European children report that they have

Online competencies	EU <i>N</i> = 4,949	Diaspora <i>n</i> = 167	Turkey <i>n</i> = 1,018
Blocking messages from persons you do not want to have contact with	75 ^{2, 3}	52 ^{1, c}	43 ^{1, b}
Finding information on how to use the internet safely	69 ^{2, 3}	41 ¹	48 ¹
Bookmarking a website	69 ^{2, 3}	44 ^{1, 3}	34 ^{1, 2}
Changing the privacy settings on a social network profile	68 ^{2, 3}	46 ^{1, 3}	35 ^{1, 2}
Assessing websites as to correctness of information	62 ^{2, 3}	41 ¹	40 ¹
Deleting the history of websites visited	63 ^{2, 3}	43 ¹	37 ¹
Blocking advertisements or junk mail and spam	57 ³	51 ³	34 ^{1, 2}
Changing filter settings	34 ^{2, 3}	20 ¹	19 ¹

Table 3: Children (11 to 16 years) and their reported online competencies in %.

Note. A superscript figure means that the percentage concerned deviates significantly (bilaterally) from the relevant column indicated by the figure (1, 2, 3). A superscript letter means that the percentage deviates significantly, though only unilaterally, from the relevant column indicated by the letter (a, b, c).

mastered 4.7 of the 8 online competencies, as against 3.2 for Turkish diaspora children ($t = 6.8$; $df = 3818$; $p = 0.000$) and 2.7 for Turkish children living in Turkey ($t = 20.2$; $df = 4,411$; $p = 0.000$). Note the significant gap between the reported competences of Turkish diaspora children on the one hand and of Turkish children in Turkey on the other ($t = 2.1$; $df = 850$; $p = 0.04$). Across the full set of reported online skills (the least frequent skill being the changing of filter settings (31%) and the most frequent (69%), the blocking of undesirable messages) the subjects' socio-economic background correlates with the reported number of skills; that is, the lower the social status of the child's family, the less varied the child's range of online skills.

Two interesting notes need to be made: The correction for socio-economic status does not undo the impact of the group to which the subject belongs, and the parameters of ethnic-cultural group and socio-economic status interact in that it does not matter for native European youngsters to which socio-economic class they belong, whereas for Turkish children the impact of the social class is greater and for those from the lower social class the impact of the ethnic-cultural group is greater. In other words, what seems to be at play here is a 'double jeopardy' effect: Turkish children from a lower social class run a two-fold risk. In terms of average online skills this produces the results in Table 4.

Ethnic-cultural group	Low SES	Medium SES	High SES
Turkish	31	39	48
Diaspora	32	46	61
European	59	61	64

Table 4: Impact of social-economic status on online competences (in %).

Online activities in the month prior to interview	EU n = 4,949	Diaspora n = 167	Turkey n = 1,018
Internet used to do homework	77 ^{2, 3}	62 ^{1, 3}	92 ^{1, 2}
Watching video-clips	82 ^{2, 3}	66 ¹	59 ¹
Downloading music or films	45 ^c	45	41 ^a
Watching/reading the news	38 ²	25 ^{1, 3}	39 ²
Sending/receiving e-mail	62 ^{2, 3}	46 ¹	46 ¹
Surfing a social network	64 ^{2, 3}	56 ^{1, 3}	46 ^{1, 2}
Surfing a chat room	28 ^{2, 3}	17 ¹	18 ¹
Instant messaging	60 ^{2, 3}	51 ¹	45 ¹
Playing games alone or against computer	85 ³	89	91 ¹
Playing games with others on the internet	44 ³	43 ³	52 ^{1, 2}
Spending time in a virtual world	18 ³	15	15 ¹
Using a webcam	27 ³	27 ³	36 ^{1, 2}
Putting a message on a website	35 ^{2, 3}	17 ^{1, c}	23 ^{1, b}
Writing a blog or an online diary	11 ³	8	5 ¹
Sharing photos, videos or music with others	39 ^b	33 ^{a, 3}	42 ²
Creating a character, pet animal or avatar	18 ^{2, 3}	10 ¹	12 ¹
Using file-sharing sites	19	15	20

Table 5: Online activities of children (11 to16 years) in %.

Note. A superscript figure means that the percentage concerned deviates significantly (bilaterally) from the relevant column indicated by the figure (1, 2, 3). A superscript letter means that the percentage deviates significantly, though only unilaterally, from the relevant column indicated by the letter (a, b, c).

The children were asked about their participation in 17 different online activities in the month prior to being interviewed (Table 5). Once again the trends are positive for the majority European children, who claim to be engaged in nearly all activities more often than the other two groups. Strikingly, though, Turkish children report higher levels of internet use for their homework than the other groups as well as of use of webcams and file exchange. The children in the three groups hardly differ as to their use of the internet for games: on average 2.5 on a scale from 1 (often) to 4 (not often), though it is a more prominent activity among Turkish children. The group to which the child belongs

(majority European, Diaspora or Turkish) is positively correlated with the total number of online activities he or she reports, however, with the Turkish group reporting the lowest number ($r = .10$; $p = .000$).

Similar to the finding about reported online skills, socio-economic status is weak, but positively correlates with online activities across the groups in the study ($r = .09$; $p = .000$). This is true of the complete list of activities, from writing a blog or online diary (10 %, the least frequent activity), to using the internet for one's homework (79 %) and watching a video-clip on, for example, YouTube (78 %) as the most popular activities: The lower the social status of the child's family, the less varied the range of online activities in which he or she engages.

5.3 Coping with harassment resulting from online risks

5.3.1 Sex-related images

The children were asked if they had seen sex-related images in the past twelve months, irrespective of the medium. One in four (24 %) reported this was the case, 4 % refused to talk about it, and another 4 % said they did not know. If, for the sake of simplicity, we classify the latter two options as missing ones, we have 28.3 % of majority European children who report having viewed sex-related images in the course of the last twelve months, 19.3 % of Turkish diaspora children and 15.8 % of Turkish children. If we restrict the examination to the internet, however, we obtain a different picture: Of the 15.8 % Turkish children who have come across sex-related images, 83.6 % have seen them on the internet, as against 57.1 % of children in the Turkish diaspora and 62.6 % of majority European children. These figures can be explained by the lower exposure of Turkish children to sex-related images on television, in films, books and magazines, which also accounts for the generally much lower exposure that Turkish children are subject to. The Turkish government actively blocks sites that have sexual material and monitors the content of television programs and films related to sexual content (see Ablak, 2012; Akdeniz, 2010), resulting in reduced exposure.

Taking into account the age of the children, irrespective of their ethnic-cultural background, we find that the older they are, the more often they come into contact with sex-related images online (50.8 % of the 9 to 10 year old children compared to 70.6 % of the 15- to 16-year-olds). Socio-economic status, too, has an impact on the figures, as children from less well-to-do families report having seen more sex-related images online (70.9 %) than children from more

prosperous families (64.9%) and those from the group in between. Being exposed to inappropriate sex-related content is one thing, but it is quite another to be upset by it, so it is important to understand the extent to which children report being upset. Twice as many Turkish children as majority European children say they take umbrage, that is, 43.1% of Turkish children as against 33.4% of those in the Turkish diaspora and 23.4% of majority European children. One further indicator is the duration of the discomfort: Of the majority European children and the Turkish children in Turkey, most shrug it off at once (45.6% of the former group and 64.4% of the latter). The small size of the Turkish diaspora group does not allow for robust results.

Children can cope with this kind of discomfort in several ways. One of three coping strategies is usually adopted. The first is communicative (talk about it with somebody); the second one proactive (general and internet-specific); and thirdly there is the fatalistic attitude (discontinuing internet use for a time, hoping that the problem will disappear automatically). Turkish children resort to the communicative strategy about as often as do the majority European children (56%), while the fatalistic and proactive strategies were used much more frequently by the Turkish children. The percentage of the diasporic children who use such strategies is too small to be reportable.

5.3.2 Encountering/receiving sexual messages

The children were also asked if they had come into contact with sex-related messages on the internet in the previous year (either because they encountered such images by chance or they received them from others). On average, 15.1% of the children in the three groups examined have had such an experience: 15.5% of the majority Europeans, 13.3% of the Turkish youngsters and only 9.9% of the Turkish diaspora children. With regard to the frequency of these occurrences, 4.3% of the children said it occurred every day, 13.9% indicated once a week and 24.3% once a month; the majority (51.5%) mentioned an even lower frequency.

One in two children (46.3%) had been sent a sex-related message via the internet. Sometimes the message was posted online so that others could see it as well (39.9%). The message consisted of images showing people having sex (34.6%). Only rarely was the message a request from someone to talk about sex and sexual acts (13.5%) or even a request to send an intimate photo or video (11.1%). The children usually come across these sex-related messages 'by accident', for example, in sudden pop-ups (28.9%), in instant messaging communication (26.4%) or when participating in a social network (21.9%). Sexual messa-

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ges are observed less often in chat rooms (16.4 %) or in internet messages (16.8 %). Game sites (9.4 %) appear to be least often the carriers of sexual messages (9.4 %).

Exposure to sexual content on the internet resulted in one child in four (24.2 %) saying that he or she felt discomfort as a result of sexual messages, irrespective of the form in which they were presented. It is striking that twice as many Turkish children (42.3 %) as majority Europeans (19.4 %) say they have felt annoyed by sexual messages; the Turkish diaspora children take an in-between position (25.0 %). Here as well the children were asked how long the effects of such messages were felt: On average, half of them forget about it immediately (52.2 %), 41.5 % have it on their mind for a few days, and a small minority (6.5 %) take a few weeks or even months to forget about the matter.

The favorite person to talk to when faced with sexual messages is a friend of approximately the same age (72.3 %), and less often mother or father (41 %) or brother or sister (16.9 %). Understandably, a teacher or another adult enjoying the youngster's confidence is not the preferred confidant (1.2 % and 7.2 %, respectively).

5.3.3 Cyberbullying

The children (9- to 16-year-olds) were also asked if they had been bullied (defined as being treated in a hurtful or nasty way) in the previous year. One striking finding is that bullying is reported twice as often among majority European youngsters as among their Turkish peers (19.2 % as against 10.1 %) and that again Turkish diaspora children find themselves in between with 15.1 % victims. Turkish children living in Turkey more often claim they do not suffer from bullying (5.9 %, compared to 2 % of majority Europeans and Turkish children in the diaspora; in the latter group there is a large number of youngsters who would rather not talk about bullying (7.2 % against about 2 % of the others). It is important to understand whether face-to-face bullying occurred also online (cyberbullying). We find that 6.6 % of majority European teenagers who say they were bullied in any way over the last 12 months (20 %) are subject to cyberbullying; Turkish diaspora children have a comparable score (7.3 %), and children in Turkey appear to be much less often the victims of cyberbullying (3.5 %). Proportionately, then, children in the Turkish diaspora are slightly more often subject to cyberbullying than to 'real-world' bullying.

Although the vast majority of children are (fortunately) not bullied on the internet, there are places on the internet which induce bullying more readily than others. In descending order of importance these include social network

sites (43.2%), instant messaging software (34.8%), chat rooms (20.3%), e-mail messages (13%) and gaming websites (8.7%). The most common form of cyberbullying is the sending of hurtful or mean messages to a particular person (47.8%); online threats occur considerably less often (18.5%), as does the posting of vicious messages which can be read by a larger group (16.5%) or the exclusion from an online group or activity (10.8%). Instant messaging is less often regarded as a potential threat by Turkish diaspora children (9.1%); chat rooms are least often pointed out as threats by Turkish children in Turkey (12.1%). Strikingly, teenagers in the Turkish diaspora never mention gaming sites as places where bullying occurs.

The experience of being faced with online dangers does not imply that the youngster is actually upset or disturbed. Fewer than half of the children, and among those in the Turkish diaspora only one out of ten, claim they feel upset by online bullying.

Among the strategies to cope with cyberbullying, the communicative approach is least often used by children in the Turkish diaspora, either because they do not feel the need to talk with a trusted person, or because there are few or even no such persons at all. Turkish parenting practices tend to tell the child to manage the bullying by standing up to the bully, not by telling others of the problem. This may be the reason for keeping the problem to themselves. The favorite confidants are mother or father, with a friend of approximately the same age ranking second; only in the last instance will a teacher or another trusted adult be contacted. With regard to the proactive approach, it is the Turkish children who turn to all kinds of proactive strategies most often, except for blocking the sender of the message, which is something that youngsters in the Turkish diaspora are best at. Generally speaking, though, teenagers in the Turkish diaspora lag behind in taking proactive action, probably because they do not seem to regard cyberbullying as a real nuisance. Besides, their online skills are slightly less adequate than those of their majority European peers. The fatalistic strategy, that is, discontinuing internet use, is resorted to by nearly one out of two Turkish children, even though it is obviously a tactic that keeps them from making good use of the opportunities that the internet offers.

5.4 Multiple variables considered

Up to this point the analysis of differences among the three groups of children has only offered percentage differences and only provides answers to the research questions. In order to try to determine which characteristics of the children might be most important in understanding their ability to handle diffi-

	EU		Diaspora		Turkey	
	Beta	Sig	Beta	Sig	Beta	Sig
Demographics						
Age	.43	***	.29	.06	.17	.06
Gender	-.10	***	-.13	.41	-.09	.33
SES	-.09	***	-.28	.06	.05	.57
Incr. R ² (%)	19.7		17.2		4.7	
Efficacy						
Self-efficacy	.15	***	.43	**	.40	***
Incr. R ² (%)	2.2		15.2		14.9	
Use						
Risky online activities (5)	.08	***	.16	.22	.04	.66
# Monitoring activities (Child/4)	.04	*	-.25	.29	.30	**
# Monitoring activities (Parent/4)	-.007	.72	-.03	.90	-.01	.94
# Mediations (5)	-.02	.38	-.07	.68	-.03	.73
# Online activities	.34	***	.49	**	.15	.17
Frequency of parent internet use	.01	.44	.14	.34	.004	.96
Frequency of child internet use	-.02	.15	.11	.40	.05	.53
Use of internet in bedroom	-.01	.55	-.20	.10	.07	.57
Use of internet in living room	.02	.14	.12	.34	.12	.36
# Places used	.09	***	.04	.78	.08	.41
Incr. R ² (%)	15.7		32.0		14.6	
Total Adj. R²	37.3		47.1		26.1	
N =	4,949		167		1,018	

Table 6: Regression predicting online skills of children.

cult online situations, we conducted a regression analysis, addressing our three hypotheses. A child's internet skill level is considered the most important defense against a range of problems encountered on the internet, including avoidance of sexual content and prevention against cyberbullying. In addition, the greater the skill set of the child, the better use that can be made of the internet for education and entertainment. Although the amount of variance explained in the model by the three groups was relatively high, different variables predicted online skill levels for children in Turkey, the European diaspora,

or the European majority. A larger number of variables, including all of the demographic variables, were significant predictors for the European children (see Table 6). Of course, this group was also the largest, and in a regression analysis, it is easier to achieve significance when large numbers of respondents are involved. For the Turkish diaspora group, only self-efficacy and the number of online activities predicted the number of skills. For the children in Turkey, only self-efficacy and the child's report of several parental monitoring activities rose to the level of significance. For the diasporic children, age and SES approached the level of significance (.06) but for children in Turkey, only age approached that level (.06) (see Table 6).

Although earlier we reported an importance of socio-economic family status in some of the percentage-based comparisons, that variable only proved to be a predictor for the European majority and the diaspora children. It was not at all a factor for the Turkish children living in Turkey. Self-efficacy and, to a lesser extent, age were the only variables that significantly predicted higher skill levels in all groups.

6 Conclusion

Of the three groups of teenagers examined, those in the Turkish diaspora take a position in between their majority European peers, who are the most fervent surfers of the internet, and the Turkish children living in Turkey, who use the internet least often. Generally speaking that also goes for online competencies and online activities. In the three groups the children's age plays an important part: The older the child, the more often he or she will be online and the more online activities he or she will engage in. Turkish children's internet use is based on their socio-economic status: The lower that status, the fewer online activities the child engages in and the fewer its online skills. However, when other variables were entered into a regression analysis, SES only mattered for the Turkish children in the diaspora and the European majority children. What mattered the most for all groups was the efficacy of children, meaning that if the respondents in this survey think they are capable of doing things on the internet, they will be capable. Efficacy was a much stronger predictor of reported online skill levels for the two Turkish groups than for the European majority children, meaning that any program designed to improve the skill levels of these children must first work to boost their self-confidence. Though not addressed directly in this study, efficacy may well be improved by frequent computer use. If the children are exposed to computers and the internet at an early age and given frequent access as they grow, then they might develop the

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confidence to tackle more skill-based programs and thus increase their range and number of skills.

As far as exposure to online dangers is concerned, European majority children are more familiar than the two other groups with receiving sex-related images and messages as well as dealing with requests for face-to-face meetings with online contacts. By contrast, children in the Turkish diaspora are relatively more familiar with cyberbullying. However, once confronted with these online messages, Turkish diaspora children express more discomfort than the other groups, whereas their peers living in Turkey claim to be more annoyed than the others by cyberbullying and offline meetings with online contacts. To cope with the impact of any unwanted internet content, the youngsters in the three groups have developed three strategies: a communicative, a proactive and a fatalistic or passive strategy. It is clear that no all-purpose strategy exists to prevent or combat each of the various dangers. Still, the communicative approach, that is, talking about the problem with a trusted person of the same age, is the favorite one. Parents are consulted in far fewer cases, and only seldom will a teacher be consulted about the child's disturbing experience.

The above shows that youngsters shape their online development chiefly by means of the mutual exchange of opinions and ideas with their peers rather than by allowing themselves to be guided by those who traditionally educate them, viz. their parents and their teachers.

Moreover, youngsters in the Turkish diaspora as well as their peers living in Turkey cannot really be helped by their parents, most of whom are not at all knowledgeable about computers and the internet. The relatively new field of media literacy still remains in search of policies focusing on youngsters with an ethnic-minority background. Many teenagers are better informed about computers than their parents. Online media presenting sex-related images and messages in a very explicit fashion, exposing youngsters to hurtful and offensive content, trigger the need for youngsters to build defense mechanisms and to increase their internet skill levels. But in Turkey, the government (under the auspices of the Telecommunications Communication Presidency) takes on that responsibility and blocks access to web sites it deems offensive. Official figures show that in May 2009, 2,601 sites had been blocked in Turkey (Akdeniz, 2010, p. 11). However, until recently a website operated by engelliweb.org that has been tracking blocked websites from Turkey listed 16,717 blocked sites. This may explain the limited viewing of sites with sexual images in Turkey by the children in this study.

Policies focusing on media literacy for ethnic minority teenagers ideally include the full range of so-called mainstream media and media from the teenagers' 'country of origin'. Moreover, these policies should aim to increase the

media literacy and the media consciousness of children and adolescents as well as of their parents.

Children in Turkey remain the most digitally unequal of the groups. Fewer of them own their own computers; fewer of them have high activity or internet skill levels; and they have lower levels of self-efficacy than their counterparts in the European majority. It should be noted, however, that the sampling procedures allowed for a wide distribution of geographic locations for the interviews. In general, urban Turkish youths are better educated and have more experience with computers and the internet (and a wider range of locations where the internet can be accessed) than do rural youths. Taken together, these indicate that better education, both in media and internet literacy and in strategies to cope with online risks, and more personal access to computers and the internet would improve the situation. Turkey has already initiated a pilot project that will extend to 42,000 schools over the next four years, equipping them with tablet computers and electronic smart boards to replace blackboards, among other modernizing digital measures (Turkish Daily News, 2012). If teachers are well trained to use the new equipment and the devices are evenly distributed to every part of the country, the project may address the serious inequalities seen in this study. However, if the approach to dealing with potentially dangerous content on the web continues to be paternalistic, attempting to shield youngsters from every possible website that poses a problem, then children will not learn how to defend themselves and may be even more vulnerable than they currently are.

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