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Cross-cultural contexts of research: factors influencing the study of children and the internet in Europe

Report

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THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

EU **Kids Online**

Cross-Cultural Contexts of Research: Factors Influencing the Study of Children and the Internet in Europe

European Research on Cultural, Contextual and Risk Issues in Children's Safe Use of the Internet and New Media (2006-2009)

A project funded by the EC Safer Internet Plus Programme – http://ec.europa.eu/saferinternet

www.eukidsonline.net

Cross-Cultural Contexts of Research:
Factors Influencing the Study of Children and the Internet in Europe

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European Research on Cultural, Contextual and Risk Issues in Children's Safe Use of the Internet and New Media

EU Kids Online is a project funded by the EC Safer Internet plus programme (http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/index_en.htm) from 2006-2009. It examines research carried out in 21 member states into how children and young people use the Internet and new media. This three-year collaboration aims to identify comparable research findings across Europe and to evaluate the social, cultural and regulatory influences affecting both risks and children's and parents' responses to them, in order to inform policy. It will chart available data, indicate gaps and identify factors that shape the research capability of European research institutions. Finally, it will examine methodological issues relating to cross-cultural analyses and the study of children's online experience in order to develop a best practice guide to research. For more information see www.eukidsonline.net

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Executive Summary

(i) Overview

- A 2008 Eurobarometer survey shows that 75% of children (6-18 years old) in the EU27 have used the internet, rising from 60% of 6-12 year olds to 86% of 15-17 year olds. Policy makers, industry, child welfare experts and others are increasingly reliant on research to guide their understanding of online use, risk and issues as they affect children and families in Europe and elsewhere.
- This report seeks to understand factors influencing the research process in this field and the cross-cultural similarities and differences in the nature, extent and contexts of the research that is undertaken across Europe. It also asks why different aspects of children and the internet are researched, or not, in different European countries, and how far research contexts are common across countries.
- The EU Kids Online data repository contains details of nearly 400 national and cross-national empirical studies of children's internet use in European countries. Using this information, a picture of the research availability and gaps – by topic studied, age of child, methodology, countries included and so forth – has been compiled by the network (see Staksrud et al, 2007) and recently updated further.
- Additionally, a range of contextual information has been assembled to explain the characteristics of this picture (by country and across Europe) – the subject of the present report. This report provides the first overview of research activity in relation to children and the internet in Europe. However, it is limited by the scope, quality and comparability of that research, as detailed in the report.

(ii) Main Findings on Research Availability

- 390 separate studies, most of them single country studies (N=355), have been conducted in Europe on children's internet use. If findings for each country included in a single or multi-country study are treated as distinct, the total number of studies rises to over 600.
- These are unevenly distributed across Europe, with most research conducted in Germany, the UK, Greece and Denmark and least available in Cyprus, Bulgaria, Poland, Iceland, Slovenia and Ireland.
- In countries where only a few national studies exist, EC-conducted research has shaped the available knowledge through its inclusion of all countries in pan-European studies.
- Children are often excluded from national studies, though older teenagers may be included in studies of 'the population' (with the start age set anywhere between 12 and 16, depending on the country) - this applies most to data collection by national government surveys.
- Most national research studies address children's access to, use of and interest in the internet. Fewer studies in each country consider their skills, frustrations, search strategies, creative activities, learning or other topics.
- Few studies also include parenting issues, though those countries with a good deal of research have more studies about parenting than those with little research overall. In short, research on parents' knowledge and management of children's internet use is lacking in many countries.
- In around one third of countries, one third of the research conducted addresses online risk; in one third of countries, two thirds of the research addresses risk; in the remaining third of countries, most research addresses risk. Research on online risks to children is fairly evenly divided across content, contact and conduct risks overall. Recent entrants to the EC have, as yet, paid less attention to researching risk especially.

(iii) Setting the Research Agenda

- Different studies can be instigated by different stakeholders for a range of reasons, so that the activities and interests of industry, media, public, academics, government and NGOs may all result in the conduct of empirical research on children and the internet.
- In most countries, there is strategic oversight and shaping of the research agenda, established through the collaboration of universities, research councils and government ministries, sometimes in collaboration also with industry. Nonetheless, there is also scope in most countries for researchers to propose projects of interest/concern to them.
- In most countries, academics are under institutional pressure (or strongly encouraged) to conduct research, to a greater or lesser degree. This pressure takes the form of requiring research publications for promotion, requiring external fund-raising for research and, increasingly, expecting collaboration between universities, governments and industry.
- A range of broad political factors shape research. These include pro-active efforts to support policies of internet diffusion and use, the efforts of educationalists to promote use of the internet in schools, and reactive responses to public concerns and moral panics, this last tending to design research supporting public awareness of safety issues online. It seems the European Commission's influence has been in the forefront of setting the research agenda, with national governments often slower to follow.
- In countries with higher use of the internet among children, media coverage – including media panics – may play a greater role in setting the research agenda or, at least, in stimulating the instigation of research.
- Occasionally, particular events – especially high profile stories of risks to particular children – can stimulate research. Generally, it is contact and conduct risks that stimulate research and public attention, though content risks also receive considerable media coverage in some countries. The risks of commercialisation (advertising, sponsorship, marketing) online receive comparatively little attention across Europe, although there are occasional debates on this topic.
- Despite growing attention to the UN Convention on Children's Rights, certain benefits to children from the internet – notably, the opportunities for civic participation – are also low on the research agenda (although Germany and Norway lead the way here).

(iv) Factors Shaping Institutional Research Contexts

- Establishing exactly which institutions conduct research is a difficult task – academic institutions are differently organised in different countries, market and industry research is not always made publicly known, and the involvement of other bodies (e.g. NGOs) varies considerably across Europe.
- Across European countries, the number of universities in a country is highly correlated with the national population size but is less strongly correlated with the number of studies conducted on children and the internet; nonetheless, the size of the academic base is a fair predictor of the amount of research available in each country.
- Most research conducted on children and the internet stems from the disciplines of psychology, education and sociology albeit with some national variation. The field of media, communication and information studies are more patchily represented in the available research. However, countries where media and communications departments are well established in universities appear to produce more studies of children and the internet (e.g. Belgium, Sweden, UK).

- Most European countries have a tradition of both qualitative and quantitative research in the field of childhood and media/internet studies, although the balance varies (e.g. in the Czech Republic, most research is quantitative, in Denmark most is qualitative).
- In most European countries, research specifically on the internet began in the early to mid-1990s, although it has been only begun more recently in some countries (e.g. Czech Republic, Cyprus, Belgium, Greece). Countries where internet use became widespread soonest (e.g. Scandinavia) tend also to be countries where the internet has been researched the longest. Small research communities (Cyprus and Belgium) also tend to have less established research traditions here.
- Although it is widely recognised that research on children's use of the internet raises significant ethical issues, it seems that in many countries, research institutions apply few if any regulations to the conduct of research in terms of ethical considerations (Ireland and the UK are the most stringent in this regard). However more countries do have formal regulations regarding parent/teacher permissions for interviewing/surveying children. Generally, researchers do not regard these existing regulations as restrictive on their research.

(v) Research Funding Issues

- Countries vary considerably in terms of the range of possible funding sources for research projects. Public funding from national governments and the European Commission are the most important source of funding in all countries. In a few countries (e.g. Bulgaria, Estonia, Cyprus), there are some other sources of research funding, and in most countries, funding from research councils is modest or (in a third of countries) absent.
- In a minority of countries, the regulator is a significant source of research funding. Commercial funding is widespread but sporadic, providing one or two studies in most countries but only substantial in the UK and Germany. Non-profit organisations provide some research funding, especially in the UK, though occasionally also in Spain, Belgium, Austria Poland and Slovenia.
- Overall, countries can be classified by those that rely on public funding (e.g. Czech Republic, France, Norway), those which benefit from public and academic funding (e.g. Austria, Portugal, Spain), those which mix public and commercial funding (e.g. Germany, Denmark), and those with a more hybrid funding structure (e.g. UK, Italy).
- There is no simple relation between funding source and type of study conducted. However, countries reliant on public funding generally have less available research. Since governments and industry are the main funders of research, they also fund most research on risk. However, when charities, NGOs, regulators or the EC do fund research, they are much more likely to fund studies of risk than of other online topics.
- European Commission funding has been crucial in providing directly comparable data across countries, permitting pan European conclusions regarding children's internet use, and especially developing an adequate evidence base in countries which otherwise lack funding sources.

1. Introduction

Sonia Livingstone

1.1 Towards evidence-based policy

In 2008 a Eurobarometer survey showed that 75% of children (6-18 years old) in the EU27 have used the internet, rising from 60% of 6-12 year olds to 86% of 15-17 year olds. Cross-national differences remain substantial, ranging from half or fewer in Italy, Cyprus and Greece to over 90% in Sweden, The Netherlands, Estonia, Denmark and the UK. Put simply, across Europe and indeed globally, children and young people are going online in ever greater numbers for more and more activities.

The burgeoning of empirical national and cross national research is one the many responses to this development. Policy makers, industry, child welfare experts and others are increasingly reliant on research to guide their understanding and approach to online use, risk and issues as they affect children and families in Europe and elsewhere. As such, research is needed to map which children have access to what technologies, what consequences this has for the opportunities and risks they may experience, and for guiding practical interventions – identifying those most at risk, targeting safety advice, evaluating awareness programmes and anticipating new trends.

Evidence-based policy' demands expertise in the design, conduct, evaluation and use of research findings - those who are not active researchers may lack the expertise required to identify, interpret and evaluate available research about what is know and not known in the area. This requires combining both the knowledge and experience of researchers and research users from a range of academic disciplines and policy domains. Far too often, such expertise is not readily accessible when needed, partly because of the range of specialisms involved, partly because of the gap between academic knowledge and policy makers' needs.

For these reasons the EU Kids Online network (see Annex A) aims to support the provision of evidence-based policy by:

- **First by identifying the research that is available across Europe and pinpointing gaps outstanding for the future research agenda (Staksrud, Livingstone and Haddon, 2007).**
- **Second, by seeking to enhance the understanding of methodological issues involved in studying children and online technologies across countries (see Lobe, Livingstone, & Haddon, 2007) and by developing a Best Practice Research Guide (Lobe et al, 2008), available at www.eukidsonline.net as a series of Frequently Asked Questions.**
- **Third, by contributing to the network's systematic comparisons of the available evidence, by revealing cross-national similarities and differences in children's internet use and risk experiences (Hasebrink, Livingstone and Haddon, 2008).**

1.2 The Present Report

Cross-Cultural Contexts of Research: Factors influencing the Study of Children and the Internet in Europe (hereafter WP2) is the deliverable for Work Package 2. This central purpose of this report is to take a step back from the findings in past reports in order to understand firstly, the range of factors influencing the research process in this field and secondly, the cross-cultural similarities and differences in the nature, extent and contexts of the research that is undertaken across Europe and where and why they may matter. In order to do this, an interpretative framework is

provided to evaluate the body of available research, use this as a basis to identify remaining evidence gaps and offer explanations for these. Drawing on material assembled through the EU Kids Online network, this report specifically seeks to raise and address two types of questions:

- **Where it is possible to make a comparative analysis, why are different aspects of children and the internet researched, or not, in different European countries? How far are research contexts common across countries and how much is country specific?**
- **Pooling some of the insights provided across the counties, how can we develop a more detailed appreciation of how contextual factors influence the research process?**

This report further examines funding arrangements for research across Europe, differences in research traditions and disciplines dealing with the Internet and children,. It also examines how children's experience of the Internet has been analysed in different contexts, with what types of research question and for which purposes. Part of the context includes the effects on research of media coverage, national policy decisions, particular events, particular lobbies, and educational activities, for example.

1.3 The EU Kids Online Network

The EU Kids Online thematic network comprises research teams in each of 21 countries across Europe, tasked with keeping track of recent and ongoing empirical studies. In order to provide a bridge between the specialist domain of empirical research and the policy imperatives of safer internet initiatives, the EU Kids Online network is examining European research (national and multi-national) on cultural, contextual and risk issues in children's safe use of the Internet and new media. It focuses on the intersection of three domains:

- **Children (mainly up to 18 years old), their families, domestic users;**
- **Online technologies: mainly but not only the internet; focussing on use and risk;**
- **European empirical research and policy, prioritising the 21 countries in the network.**

Working closely together from June 2006 to June 2009, the 21 national teams that comprise EU Kids Online have developed constructive working arrangements that capture diversity across Europe and facilitate the identification of common patterns, themes and best practice.

EU Kids Online outputs are the collective effort of the EU Kids Online network. Network members meet several times per year and work in close contact electronically in between. The editors then integrate contributions and produce the final text for each report.

For further information, see Annex A and www.eukidsonline.net.

2. Outline of the Report

Gitte Stald and Leslie Haddon

2.1 Goals

This report seeks to contextualise the findings in an earlier report by Work Package 1, Staksrud et al (2007) *What Do We Know About Children's Use of Online Technologies? A Report on Data Availability and Research Gaps in Europe*, which identified the patterns of studies both across and within the countries participating in EU Kids Online. One of the findings of this report, was the need for further research in certain areas. Following up on this, the purpose of this report is investigate, highlight and further explain the national contextual factors within countries that influence and impact upon what research takes place and, why, about children and the internet. This report shows how contextual factors can and do directly influence the patterns of nations research into children and the Internet that takes place. Understanding patterns of research can help us to appreciate the degree to which, and perhaps reasons why, different countries have different perceptions of 'risks'. To achieve this, we have captured and attempted to explain the specific factors shaping the context within which research is carried out within 21 European countries in order to help us understand why particular research into children and the internet has and has not taken place to date within these countries. In a European context, comparative research into national patterns of research into children and the Internet is important and relevant for research and policy problems, especially as they relate to differing national perceptions of risk.

2.2 Methodological Procedures

The results reported here were developed from 21 national reports in a series of stages.

First, the various national funding sources, methods used, ages of children studied, topics covered and, indeed, risks examined - the very patterns this report seeks to explain - were identified by an analysis of material collected in January 2007 in the Data Repository, and described in the report by Staksrud et al (2007) as noted above. Given that the network then continued to collect studies, the picture of national research was updated in October 2008.

Second, discussions within the working group systematically developed a range of questions to investigate national contextual factors and histories for each country. drawing up the template for national reports. It should be noted that while the experts in the network provided a starting for addressing these questions, other sources were also consulted, such as checking documented information, consulting with peers and national advisory panels.

Finally, using the same approach initially developed in Work Package 3 for analysing the findings from national reports about children and the internet, a number of teams within Work Package 2 each took responsibility for examining the different areas that ultimately formed the substantive areas of concern in this report, with each team looking at a specific section within each of the 21 national reports.

2.3 Research Limitations

Certain consequences and limitations arose from the research design. First, in order to design a scoping statement, specifying the relevance of certain material for collection, boundaries were imposed in order to define the field and focal point of the report.

Second, when reviewing the initial material collected, grey areas inevitably emerged that helped to focus the boundaries initially established – such as what could and could not be counted as a study. This also helped, overall, to more systematic prioritising influence to the material collected,

given resource constraints. For example, in countries where there was less research in this field, the instruction was to consider Masters and PhD theses. However, these we not prioritised in countries where there were more studies from other sources. A further design decision was to collect later studies, after 2000. But in countries with few studies, the teams could include older studies considered important. More generally, the corollary is that while exact numbers or percentages are noted in this report these have interpreted with some caution, and that emphasis is instead placed on the broad trends identified and on the particular patterns of findings.

Third, the ease of searching both for studies and for contextual influences varied cross-nationally. In some countries, information on research is centralised (e.g. the national data archive in The Netherlands called DANS: Data Archiving and Networked Services), in others it is disperse. In some countries, the history of research funding resulted in a consistent body of research collated in a single place (e.g. the Economic and Social Science Research Council in the UK). Where research was dispersed to a degree, country researchers held direct communication with participants to identify studies and where research communities were small, such as Denmark and Poland, research sources could be more easily located.

In sum, although the EU Kids Online national team members were in a good position to locate material in their respective countries, there was also some scope for different material being found because of variations in the very research process. After the publication of Staksrud et al (2007) the teams continued to search for older material in the event of potential gaps, as well as adding details for new studies, in order to be as comprehensive and inclusive as possible.

Further, ne has to consider the background knowledge of participants and the actual process of searching for information when writing the national reports. In preparatory discussions it was recognised that in principle it might be easier to look at the various contextual factors in some countries than in others, reflecting the reality that the ability to make contact with organizations and decision-makers may vary and as such it may not be possible or too time consuming to obtain certain data in different countries. In practice, this was the case, but the various national teams addressed the questions as best they could, often producing lengthy and detailed reports.

2.4 Framework

Figure 1 provides an overview of a variety factors influencing the body of data that is available on children and the internet. This includes:

Political/Policy (policy initiatives, laws)

National/Regional (regulators)

NGO's (Church, Trade Unions, and Charities)

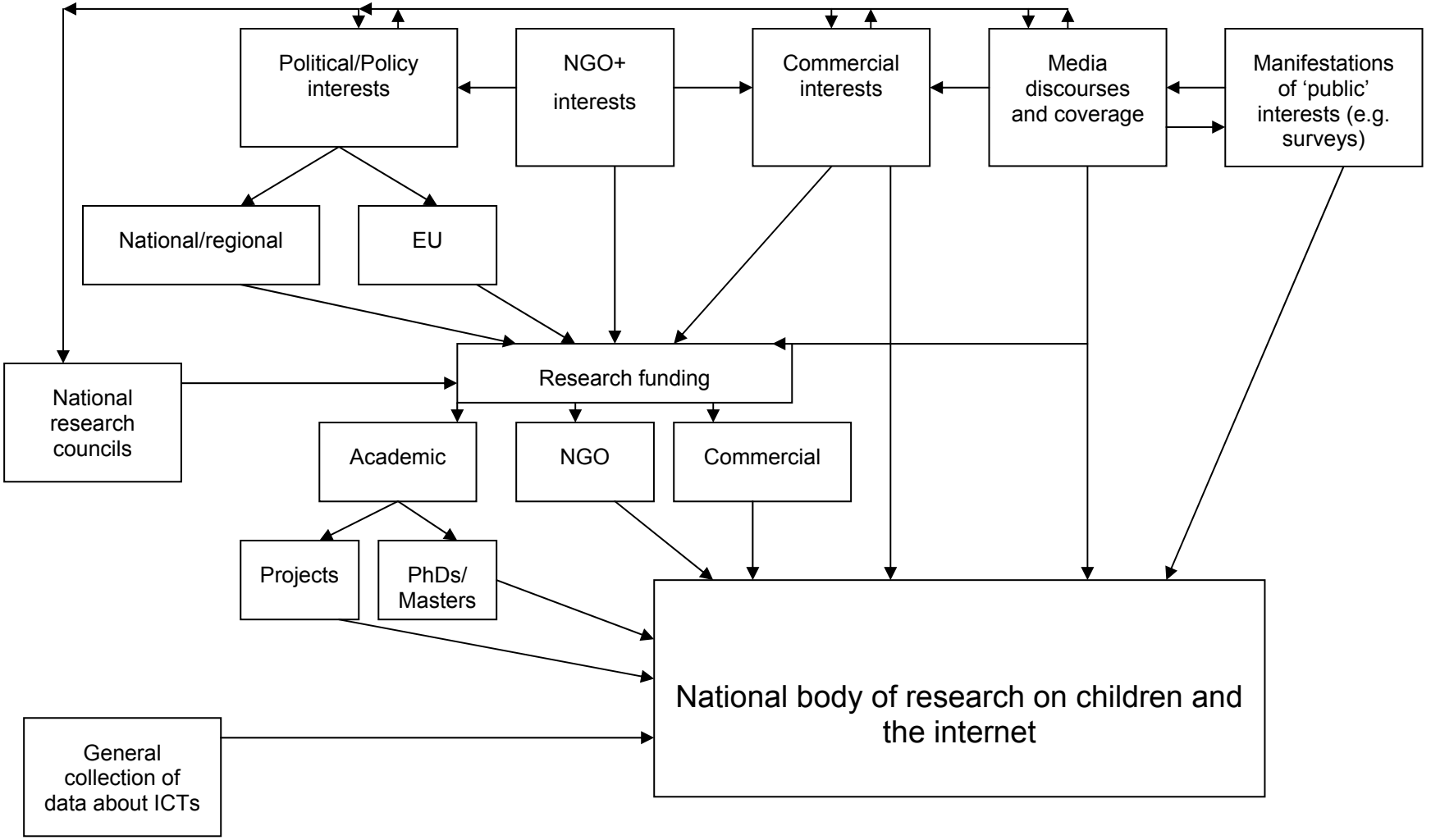
Commercial (includes companies, trade associations);

Media

National Research Councils

Institutional collection of data about ICT use (broader than Internet use, in some countries they have been collecting TV data that expanded to include the Internet. Mainly national/Government statistics).

Figure 1: Factors influencing research data availability



2.5 Organisation of this Report

This report is divided thematically into three sections and subsections as follows:

Section 3 outlines the amount of research on children in the internet as identified in the EU Kids Online repository, indicating the rationale for the particular choice of figures used in this report. The section then considers the distribution of topics studied in the different countries and, of particular interest, the distribution of different risks studied. The section ends with some introductory examples of how projects emerged in preparation for the more systematic analysis developed in later chapters

Section 4 provides the core findings of the report with respect factors shaping the research contexts and is divided into a number of thematic subsections:

Section 4.1 Addresses whether the academic base (number of universities) in different countries influences the number and nature of studies conducted, including whether the prevalence of certain departments such as media and communications studies have a bearing upon the amount of research carried out. It also asks if national variations in the lower age limits of general population surveys exist, and if this influences the amount of data available for children of different ages.

Section 4.2 assesses the possible influences of various institutional arrangements and norms, and their consequences for the research process. It examines where pressures to conduct research exists and if so how these operates. It also considers the potential influence of various research traditions and cultures on what is researched, pressures towards collaboration between academia and industry, and whether and how governments and research councils direct research to certain areas.

Section 4.3 focuses on funding issues, sources and arrangements. It then charts the diversity of funding cross-nationally, before examining the different sources of funds with the view to developing a classification of countries according to funding arrangements. Finally it considers whether funding arrangements appears to influence the amount and range of studies overall and, more specifically, whether this has any bearing on the study of risks.

Section 4.4 examines the nature and potential influence of, broadly defined, political initiatives, and their consequences for research in this field. Attention is given to the central role of government, followed by a consideration of more specific initiatives, including education programmes, awareness raising campaigns as well as developments in other fields such as media regulation and self-regulation. It also examines the EC's pivotal role in funding this field.

Section 4.5 looks at the role of public discourses and gauges their potential influence on research, focussing on media coverage, the NGOs lobbying and the influence of particular national events, offering specific examples.

Section 4.6 determines whether particular debates exist in the EU Kids Online countries around three issues: the commercialisation of childhood, children's rights and whether public spaces are dangerous for children. In all three cases, illustrations are provided to demonstrate how these concerns are expressed in various forms and at different levels.

Section 5 reviews the information presented and associated claims made in the report.

3. Research Patterns

Gitte Stald and Leslie Haddon

3.1 Overall Amount of National Research on Children and the Internet

For the purposes of charting the field (in WP1) and analysing children online experiences (in WP3), we wanted to maximise the number of studies, and hence data, available, and hence tables produced in reports from these packages included multi-national studies and masters/PhD material. The logic of this report is slightly different and this is reflected in the tables and figures. Since the aim of WP2 was to focus mainly on national factors affecting research, the first point to note is that Figure 2 shows only the number of national studies by country.

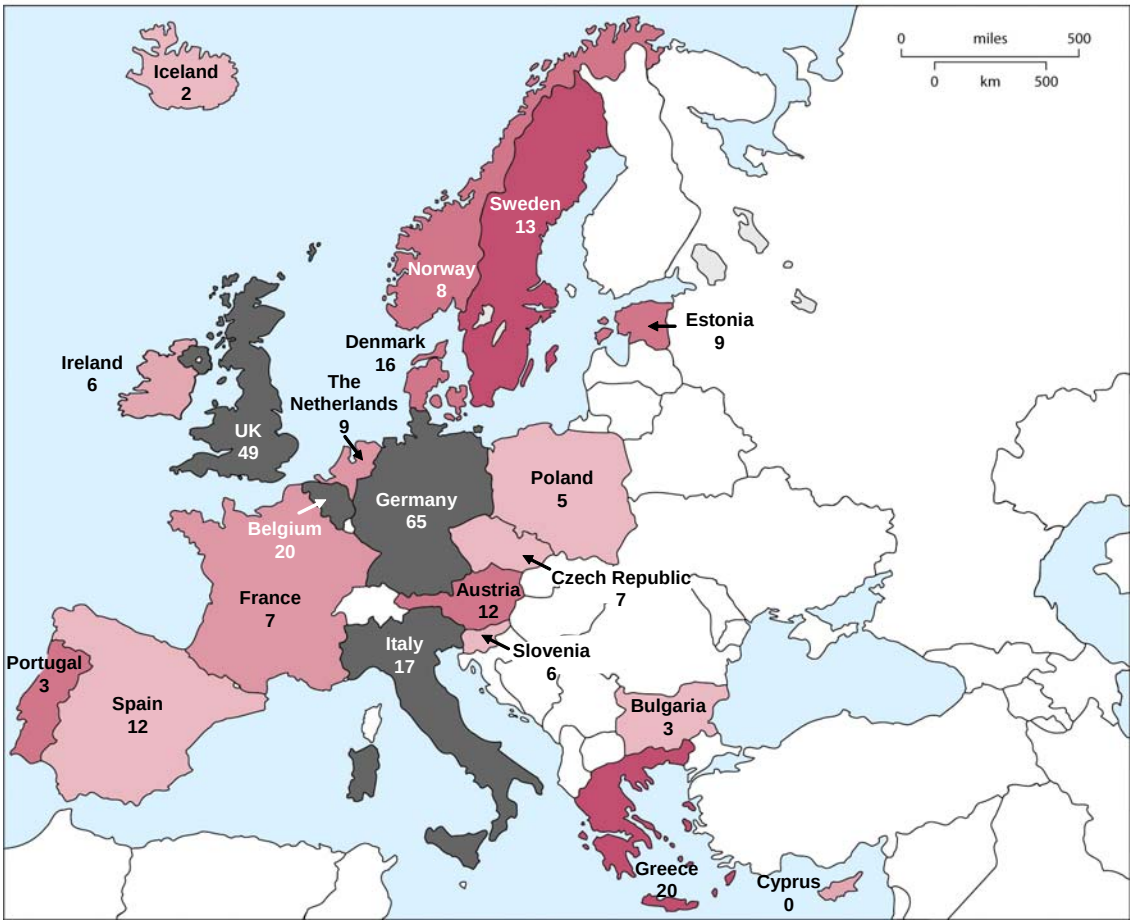
Table 1: Studies of children and the Internet (2008)

Country	Total number of studies	Number of single country studies	Number of single country studies excluding MAs/PhDs
Austria	27	16	12
Belgium	39	23	20
Bulgaria	9	3	3
Cyprus	5	0	0
Czech Republic	15	7	7
Denmark	40	25	16
Estonia	23	13	9
France	26	9	7
Germany	84	71	65
Greece	33	23	20
Iceland	13	2	2
Ireland	14	6	6
Italy	29	18	17
Norway	26	12	8
Poland	14	5	5
Portugal	33	21	3
Slovenia	14	6	6
Spain	25	12	12
Sweden	37	22	13
The Netherlands	19	10	9
The UK	66	51	49

The numbers in the third column of **Table 1** exclude the Masters/PhDs studies. This was mainly because of the influence of the collection process noted above[1] First, a Masters degree, for example, does not mean the same thing in all the countries concerned. It involves more time and effort in some than in others. Hence it would be inappropriate to simply compare the number of these across countries[2]. There is also the issue of the public availability, and indeed visibility, of theses and once again, this varies by country. For example, in Poland there was no index of Phtitles whereas one can search electronically for PhDs in libraries in Norway. Another dimension of visibility is how much Masters theses and PhDs are cited in academic bibliographies in different countries. If in some places they are rarely cited, it is difficult to know of their existence.

Table 1 shows that the countries with the most studies are Germany, the UK, Greece, Belgium, Italy and Denmark (column3). Those with the least are Cyprus, Iceland, Bulgaria, Portugal, Poland, Slovenia and Ireland. The pattern of research is clearly unevenly distributed, with some of the new EU entrants having the fewest studies.

Figure 2: Overall research on children and the Internet: Single country studies



3.2 Topics Researched

Several qualifications need to be discussed with respect to the following:

The balance of national versus international studies varies by country. For example, the Polish team pointed out that about half of their studies are funded by the EC – so in a high proportion of studies the decisions about what should be researched is not particularly a Polish one. This contrasted with countries where most funding was national. In other words, the choice of subjects in countries that lacked established national research was in large part shaped by EC interests. While it is still possible to focus on and try to understand only the national studies, this needs to be borne in mind when looking at the figures above.

Second, in many studies, the majority in our data repository, children and the internet are the central focus. But in some, they are a minor part of research that has a much broader scope. As noted in Staksrud et al (2007), some studies cover the internet as one ICT or one example of media/new media/multimedia amongst others (e.g. in the UK, the Netherlands, Norway, Germany), or else focus on another technology but include data on internet use. Some studies focus on children and youth in general, or youth and media, where once again use of the internet is one activity amongst other (e.g. Germany, Estonia). Many studies of the internet or ICTs cover the population in general, but also some children, although the lower age of these studies vary (e.g. starting with 14 year olds, 15 year olds). Occasionally we have research looking at time use

data which also includes the internet (e.g. the Netherlands) or studies of particular groups such as ethnic minorities, that picks up children's experience of the internet amongst other facets of their life (the Netherlands). This has a consequence for the above figures on the distribution of topics researched. For example, although this would apply to other countries, it was pointed out that in Denmark various topics may have been 'covered' and so appear in the tables but in practice they were minor themes, only examined to a very limited extent, within larger studies.

Finally, the quality of the studies may vary, though only those of a certain quality were included.

Table 2: Percentage of single country studies on topics (multicoded) by country

	Access	Usage	Interests	Competencies/ skills	N[3]
Austria	75%	100%	67%	33%	12
Belgium	40%	55%	45%	25%	20
Bulgaria	67%	33%	67%	33%	3
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	
Czech Republic	71%	86%	86%	57%	7
Denmark	75%	94%	63%	50%	16
Estonia	67%	78%	56%	33%	9
France	86%	86%	43%	29%	7
Germany	89%	97%	68%	43%	65
Greece	70%	75%	55%	40%	20
Iceland	50%	100%	50%	100%	2
Ireland	83%	83%	67%	17%	6
Italy	76%	76%	53%	29%	17
Netherlands	33%	44%	44%	22%	9
Norway	50%	63%	63%	50%	8
Poland	100%	60%	80%	0%	5
Portugal	67%	100%	100%	33%	3
Slovenia	67%	100%	50%	17%	6
Spain	100%	100%	100%	67%	12
Sweden	54%	100%	77%	23%	13
United Kingdom	55%	76%	61%	51%	49
Average	70%	83%	63%	40%	289

One main priority is to understand the distribution of studies of various risks; it is worth putting this into context by seeing the distribution of research topics more generally in Tables 2-7. First, Tables 2-5 look at children's behaviour[4].

Table 2 shows that with the exception of Cyprus all participating countries commonly have researched, in order of priority, the main issues of internet use, access, and to a slightly lesser extent interests and then skills. These are basic questions, certainly ones asked in general studies of the population that include some children. But one can already observe in the case of aspects that some countries with higher adoption and, in some case, more research are asking this slightly less, such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden and the UK, reflecting the fact that they now have more specialist, focused studies

In **Table 3**, below, and subsequent tables on children, we can see generally lower levels of research and for many questions more gaps. It is perhaps more surprising to see that some countries with a generally stronger research tradition and quite a number of studies overall have such gaps (e.g. in the Netherlands, several key areas are not covered in studies, and to a lesser extent this is also true of Germany).

Table 3: Percentage and number of single country studies on topics (multicoded) related to children by country

	Interpreting content	Creating content	Concerns and frustrations when online	Strategies for finding things	N
Austria	0%	8%	17%	8%	12
Belgium	5%	10%	30%	10%	20
Bulgaria	0%	0%	0%	67%	3
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	
Czech Republic	0%	14%	0%	0%	7
Denmark	44%	31%	44%	38%	16
Estonia	11%	11%	0%	0%	9
France	0%	0%	0%	0%	7
Germany	3%	8%	2%	2%	65
Greece	15%	5%	5%	15%	20
Iceland	0%	50%	0%	50%	2
Ireland	17%	33%	33%	17%	6
Italy	6%	12%	6%	6%	17
Netherlands	0%	11%	11%	0%	9
Norway	38%	25%	38%	38%	8
Poland	40%	0%	80%	0%	5
Portugal	0%	0%	0%	33%	3
Slovenia	0%	0%	0%	0%	6
Spain	25%	33%	8%	58%	12
Sweden	0%	31%	38%	8%	13
United Kingdom	6%	14%	43%	6%	49
Average	9%	13%	19%	11%	289

It is worth commenting on just two of these columns because they have some bearing upon the risk agenda at the heart of this report. The first is 'interpreting content', strong in Denmark and Norway, since this is looking at issues of media awareness and literacy. Indeed, one strategy for parents and for policy more generally is to improve children's ability to interpret content rather than simply protect them from it. Yet this differentiates countries, with some having no research on this aspect, and geographically this includes diverse countries. The second column of interest is 'children's concerns', important in Poland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, because this is generally indicative of whether research addresses children's perspectives and definitions of problems. Once again, this is absent in some countries.

Table 4: Percentage and number of single country studies on topics (multicoded) related to children by country

	Learning	Games	Identity play	Seeking advice	N
Austria	8%	8%	8%	0%	12
Belgium	5%	30%	15%	5%	20
Bulgaria	0%	33%	33%	33%	3
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	
Czech Republic	0%	0%	14%	0%	7
Denmark	31%	38%	69%	31%	16
Estonia	56%	11%	11%	33%	9
France	14%	29%	14%	0%	7
Germany	2%	17%	2%	3%	65
Greece	45%	25%	5%	10%	20
Iceland	50%	100%	50%	50%	2
Ireland	33%	33%	17%	17%	6
Italy	18%	18%	6%	6%	17
Netherlands	0%	11%	11%	0%	9
Norway	38%	38%	38%	38%	8
Poland	0%	0%	40%	40%	5
Portugal	0%	33%	0%	0%	3
Slovenia	0%	17%	0%	0%	6
Spain	58%	42%	25%	25%	12
Sweden	8%	62%	31%	38%	13
United Kingdom	33%	20%	10%	4%	49
Average	19%	24%	15%	11%	289

Table 4 shows that quite a few countries have little research on learning online (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, the Netherlands Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Germany), which is perhaps surprising given the overall importance of education as an established disciplinary tradition and area of study in relation to children and the Internet. Online gaming, identity play and seeking online advice seem to have attracted more attention in the Nordic countries, if one also takes into account the number of studies.

It is clear in **Table 5**, below that although there are country differences in the percentage of studies, most countries have single country national studies of the increasingly popular phenomenon of social networking**.** National studies usually cover gender differences, although there are some gaps as regards the consequences of going online. While the Nordic countries were high on civic participation were high when multi-country studies were included, this is less the case when focussing on single country studies.

Table 5: Percentage of studies on topics (multicoded) related to children by country

	Civic/ political participation	Social networking	Gender differences	Consequences of going online	N
Austria	17%	17%	25%	8%	12
Belgium	0%	20%	30%	30%	20
Bulgaria	33%	0%	33%	33%	3
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	
Czech Republic	14%	71%	57%	57%	7
Denmark	0%	22%	11%	11%	16
Estonia	0%	14%	0%	0%	9
France	0%	10%	20%	20%	7
Germany	13%	56%	81%	69%	65
Greece	0%	50%	50%	0%	20
Iceland	6%	29%	12%	6%	2
Ireland	17%	67%	33%	33%	6
Italy	0%	56%	22%	56%	17
Netherlands	13%	50%	25%	50%	9
Norway	0%	40%	80%	0%	8
Poland	0%	33%	33%	33%	5
Portugal	17%	0%	17%	0%	3
Slovenia	15%	85%	69%	15%	6
Spain	0%	8%	23%	3%	12
Sweden	33%	25%	92%	42%	13
United Kingdom	8%	33%	8%	31%	49
Average	7%	28%	30%	22%	289

Certain types of research on parents are also relevant for the issues of risk and opportunities since parents' skills, attitudes, and behaviour – and in particular whether they are aware of issues and try to influence their children's use in this respect – may have a bearing on children's experience, which in turn may vary across countries. **Tables 6 and 7** show the data on parents.

Table 6: Percentage and number of single country studies addressing topics (multicoded) related to parents (and children's response to parents) by country

	Parents knowledge of children's practices online	Parents styles of regulation of children's use	Children's responses to regulation	Parents media/information literacy	Parents awareness of online risks	N
Austria	0%	17%	0%	0%	17%	12
Belgium	5%	15%	15%	5%	10%	20
Bulgaria	67%	33%	0%	67%	67%	3
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	-	-
Czech Republic	14%	0%	0%	0%	14%	7
Denmark	19%	19%	13%	6%	13%	16
Estonia	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9
France	29%	43%	14%	14%	29%	7
Germany	17%	17%	5%	12%	22%	65
Greece	15%	10%	5%	15%	10%	20
Iceland	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2
Ireland	50%	50%	33%	17%	33%	6
Italy	24%	29%	0%	0%	18%	17
Netherlands	11%	11%	0%	11%	11%	9
Norway	50%	50%	38%	38%	25%	8
Poland	20%	60%	20%	0%	20%	5
Portugal	33%	33%	0%	33%	0%	3
Slovenia	0%	17%	0%	17%	17%	6
Spain	25%	42%	8%	17%	17%	12
Sweden	31%	31%	0%	0%	15%	13
United Kingdom	22%	41%	20%	8%	18%	49
Average	19%	25%	9%	10%	17%	289

Table 6 shows, once again, that compared to children's access, use and interests, there is less research material on parents. Most countries had studies concerned with parents' knowledge of their children's internet usage and parents' style of regulating their children use. In general, countries with more studies overall tended to have ones covering these areas, such as Germany, the UK, Belgium and Greece.

Table 7: Percentage and number of single country studies addressing topics (multicoded) related to parents (and children's response to parents) by country

	Effective-ness of filters	Parents' attitudes to online technologies	Parents' concerns about online technologies	Parents' Competencies	N
Austria	0%	8%	8%	8%	12
Belgium	5%	5%	10%	10%	20
Bulgaria	0%	33%	67%	67%	3
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	
Czech Republic	0%	0%	14%	14%	7
Denmark	0%	19%	25%	25%	16
Estonia	0%	11%	0%	0%	9
France	10%	14%	14%	14%	7
Germany	0%	11%	11%	11%	65
Greece	0%	25%	25%	25%	20
Iceland	6%	0%	0%	0%	2
Ireland	17%	50%	67%	67%	6
Italy	0%	24%	29%	29%	17
Norway	0%	25%	25%	25%	8
Poland	0%	0%	0%	0%	5
Portugal	0%	33%	0%	0%	3
Slovenia	8%	0%	33%	33%	6
Spain	11%	17%	17%	17%	12
Sweden	8%	8%	15%	15%	13
The Netherlands	38%	11%	11%	11%	9
The UK	8%	18%	22%	22%	49
Average	7%	15%	18%	18%	289

In **Table 7**, the same principle applies as in Table 6, with more coverage of all these issues in countries with more studies. The general exception is that there is overall far less enthusiasm for research filters.

3.3 The Nature and Distribution of Risk Studies

One first observation to make is that although Figure 3 and Table 9 will later show the distribution of studies examining risks, in some cases 'risk' is the focus of the study whereas in others it is only one topic studied amongst many – and indeed one study may address several different risks (hence the multicoding below).

The other factor is that 'risks' may be framed in different ways in different studies. For example, some see a risk simply as a 'social problem', and data collection is one step to overcome it – whereas others might discuss risk within a wider context of children's own perceptions of what counts as being a 'problem', and even think about the importance of balancing any risks against opportunities, as discussed in Hasebrink et al., 2008.

Next, it is important to appreciate the process by which the research evolved. In the initial phase of data collection the team generated a list of risks[5] by which studies in the repository were classified. Subsequently these were grouped into the following clusters of risks: content, contact, privacy and commercial, as reported in Staksrud et al, 2007. Later, in Hasebrink et al, 2008 a more systematic typology of risks was developed as shown in **Table 8**.

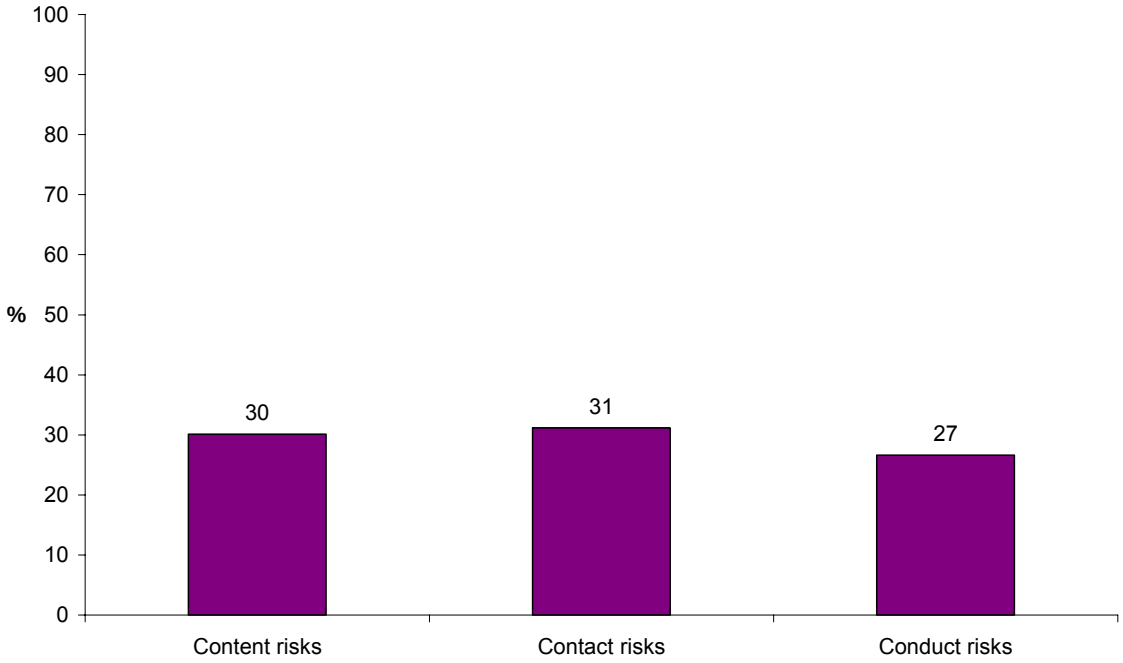
Table 8: Typology of Risks

	Commercial interests	**Aggression**	**Sexuality**	**Values/Ideology**
Content	Advertising, exploitation of children's personal information	Violent web content	Problematic sexual web content	Biased information, racism, blasphemy, health 'advice'
Contact	More sophisticated exploitation, children being tracked by advertising	Children being harassed, stalked, bullied	Children being groomed, arranging for offline contacts	Children being supplied with misinformation
Conduct	Children making illegal downloads, sending offensive messages to peers	Children cyberbullying another children, happy slapping, putting up a violent website, posting violent videos	Children publishing porn	Children providing misinformation, children somehow ''cheating' using the WWW

Source: Hasebrink et al, 2007

To get a first general perspective, **Figure 3** shows the overall distribution of different risks covered across all the participating countries[6]. Clearly differences between the three are only small at this level of analysis.

Figure 3: Percentages of studies covering different risks (multicoded) (2008)



In **Table 9**, since risk studies constitute the key area of interest, figures showing the actual number of studies per risk have been added in this, to underline the fact that numbers in general are low some sometimes percentages can be misleading. In many countries, the number of studies of different risks is very similar (e.g. Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands), while in some countries the larger percentage hides that fact that there are only a few studies overall (e.g. Czech Republic, Slovenia).

Table 9: Percentage and number of single country studies addressing topics (multicoded) related to risk by country

	Content risks		Contact risks		Conduct risks		Total No. of single country studies
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	
Austria	33%	4	8%	1	0%	0	12
Belgium	5%	1	25%	5	25%	5	20
Bulgaria	100%	3	67%	2	67%	2	3
Cyprus	0%		0%		0%		
Czech Republic	0%	0	29%	2	14%	1	7
Denmark	29%	5	41%	7	35%	6	16
Estonia	10%	1	10%	1	20%	2	9
France	29%	2	29%	2	14%	1	7
Germany	18%	12	17%	11	22%	14	65
Greece	23%	7	23%	7	19%	6	20
Iceland	0%	0	0%	0	50%	1	2
Ireland	67%	4	67%	4	50%	3	6
Italy	22%	4	28%	5	11%	2	17
Norway	67%	6	44%	4	67%	6	8
Poland	60%	3	80%	4	40%	2	5
Portugal	67%	2	67%	2	33%	1	3
Slovenia	67%	4	33%	2	17%	1	6
Spain	50%	6	50%	6	67%	8	12
Sweden	33%	5	33%	5	27%	4	13
The Netherlands	33%	3	22%	2	22%	2	9
The UK	30%	15	36%	18	20%	10	49

As a way of summarising the material below, the middle column of **Table 10,** below, shows the range of areas covered in national research. This reclassifies the data in the tables on topics and risk[7]. Most countries cover a majority of the topics, but there are clearly some differences in the range of topics covered, with the new EC entry countries covering less. However, it must be borne in mind that this excludes MAs and PhDs – if the latter were included, Portugal, for example, would be much higher in this table.

The last column shows specifically the range of the parental topics covered – i.e. knowledge of children's use, styles of regulation, media/information literacy, risk awareness, attitudes, concerns and competencies[8]. This is somewhat strategic for this report, since the role of parents is often considered to have a vital bearing on children's experiences of risks. Yet while all countries have research on parents' roles to some extent, there is variation in how many aspects are covered. The pattern is not identical to the one for the range of topics covered in general (e.g. Slovenia and Bulgaria score high on this but lower on overall range). Nevertheless, the picture somewhat mirrors the overall range of research.

Table 10: The range of topics, and range of parental topics studied by country

Country	Range of different topics studied	Number of different parental topics studied
Germany	28	7
Ireland	28	7
The UK	28	7
Belgium	27	7
Denmark	27	7
Spain	25	6
Greece	24	7
Norway	24	7
Sweden	24	6
Iceland	23	4
The Netherlands	22	6
Austria	21	5
Bulgaria	21	7
Italy	21	3
Estonia	20	5
Poland	20	5
France	19	4
Slovenia	18	6
Czech Republic	17	5
Portugal	16	5

Finally, **Table 11,** below, shows the number and proportion of risk studies compared to all national single-country studies, in order to gain some general appreciation of how central the risk issues are on the overall research agenda. When looking at the right hand column, about a third of the EU Kids online countries have up to 33% of their studies touch upon risk issues, a further third have 34-66% of studies touch on risk, and for the last third of the countries, the proportion is greater then this. However, that is misleading since these percentages in part reflects the total number of studies. Hence the actual number of risk studies is also reported in this table. Bulgaria, at the extreme can reach 100% but only have 3 risk studies, and several of the countries with a high proportion of risk studies are in a similar situation. In contrast, the UK has 26 studies which cover risk issues, but the percentage is only 52% because there are so many UK studies, and perhaps this is even more striking in the case of Germany, because its total is so high.

Table 11: Percentage of studies including risk issues (by 2008)

Country	No. of single county studies of children and the internet[9]	No. of single country studies that were about or included risk issues	Percentage of national children and the internet studies that included risk issues
Austria	12	5	42%
Belgium	20	6	30%
Bulgaria	3	3	100%
Cyprus		0	0%
Czech Republic	7	2	29%
Denmark	16	8	47%
Estonia	9	2	20%
France	7	3	43%
Germany	65	19	29%
Greece	20	8	26%
Iceland	2	1	50%
Ireland	6	5	83%
Italy	17	8	44%
Netherlands	8	3	33%
Norway	5	7	78%
Poland	3	4	80%
Portugal	6	2	67%
Slovenia	12	4	67%
Spain	13	10	83%
Sweden	9	6	40%
United Kingdom	49	26	52%

3.4. Examples of How Projects Emerged

It is useful to give some idea of how particular projects emerged through examples provided by the EU Kids Online national teams.

In some cases one can see the influence of commercial funders, which in this case was then implemented by academic researchers:

> *Telekom Austria (an Austrian telecommunication company for telephone, mobile phone, internet, TV on the internet and IP TV) started a project to encourage the use of Web 2.0 (Wikis and Weblogs) in Austrian schools. In this project several schools tested these applications in teaching. The Telekom Austria asked one of the EU kids Online team member) if she would like to conduct an evaluation study.*
>
> (Austria)

The example below illustrates both the role of public discourses, elaborated in a later chapter, as influencing of research undertaken in others countries:

> *The TIRO-project was… inspired by the public debate about the Internet and children and the…UK Children Go online–research project. This research project was funded by the Belgian Service of Science Policy.*
>
> (Belgium)

In some cases, media coverage of high profile stories of children and the internet, particularly when related to risk, can be influential: in the case of Germany this situation led to regional government funding, although once again academics had a role in shaping how the research was conducted.

> *In 2007 one study considered the phenomenon of Happy Slapping and Cyberbullying. It was the first study about these new kinds of online risks in Germany. After the media coverage about cases of Cyberbullying and Happy Slapping, the Media Authority of Schleswig-Holstein (ULR) invited some researchers to submit proposal regarding the topic (internal call for papers). The call for proposals applied no restrictions, the researchers were invited to make own suggestions.*
>
> (Germany)

NGOs can also be the pivotal agents in the generation and funding of research, in this Italian case operating within the wider EC initiative concerning risks online.

> *A significant research project aimed at investigating online experiences by teenagers was recently promoted and presented by Save the Children Italy. The study represents one of the first attempts in our country to investigate teenagers' use of social networking websites and instant messaging services with a special focus on risky experiences. The study was conducted by a well known research institution but was initiated by Save the Children Italy as part of its involvement in the Safer Internet Programme and the Easy4 activity.*
>
> (Italy)

Certain studies still originated within academia, however, as various teams noted. Sometimes this was without funding from outside the universities.

> *The study "Communication of Adolescents in the Internet Environment", was conducted by our colleague from the Department of Psychology of our faculty. His choice of this topic interest was stimulated by his long-term interest in developmental psychology and the influence of new communication technologies on the adolescents' behaviour*
>
> (Czech Republic)

Finally, not only can research in other countries lead to national studies, but more specifically participation in the EU Kids Online project itself led to a few studies as national teams tried to address research gaps identified in their own countries[10].

> *Even though the researchers were already interested in studying the Internet, the fact of being members of the EU Kids Online network made our interest in the issue grow.. The funding came from the University of the Basque Country. Naturally, we frequently apply to our own institution for the funding of our research projects and in this case, our university clearly considered the project worthwhile.*
>
> (Spain)

4. Factors Shaping Research

4.1 Academic Base, Disciplines and Age Limits

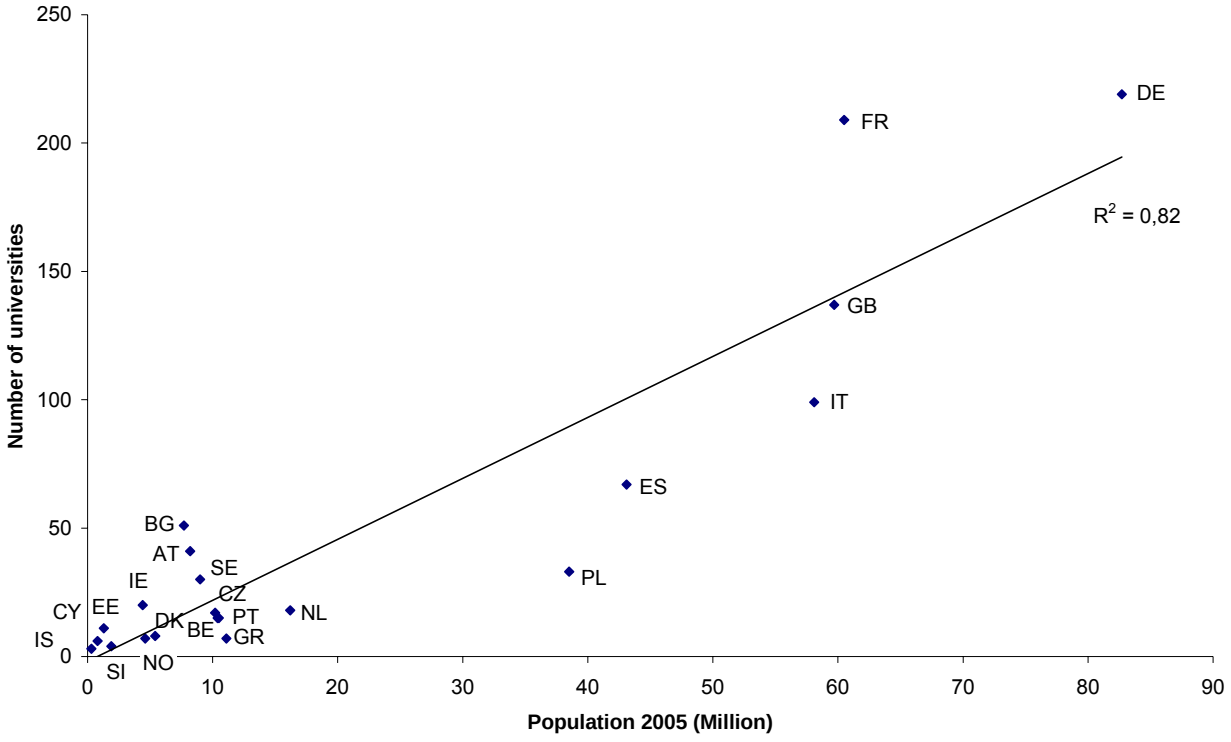
Leslie Haddon

The chapter focuses on the influence and impact of the academic setting within which much research on children and the internet is carried out by considering: 1) the degree to which the academic base of countries has a bearing upon the amount and type of research conducted on children and the internet; 2) the historical pattern of disciplinary influences on research through a focus on media and communications departments and finally 3) national variations in the lower age limit employed in studies of the internet behaviour of the population more generally, and their implications.

The Academic Base of Countries

Does the size of institutional academic bases in different countries, here measured by the number of universities[11], necessarily produce more research on children and the internet? Before reporting on findings, some methodological considerations merit attention. Mapping academic institutions and identifying which ones conduct research was and is by no means a straightforward task. Academic institutions are organized differently in different countries. In France, for example, the Grandes Écoles and Grands Établissements are universities except in name, and so were counted as universities in this report. Other adjustments of this kind were made to take into account the circumstances of particular countries

Figure 4: Number of Universities by Population

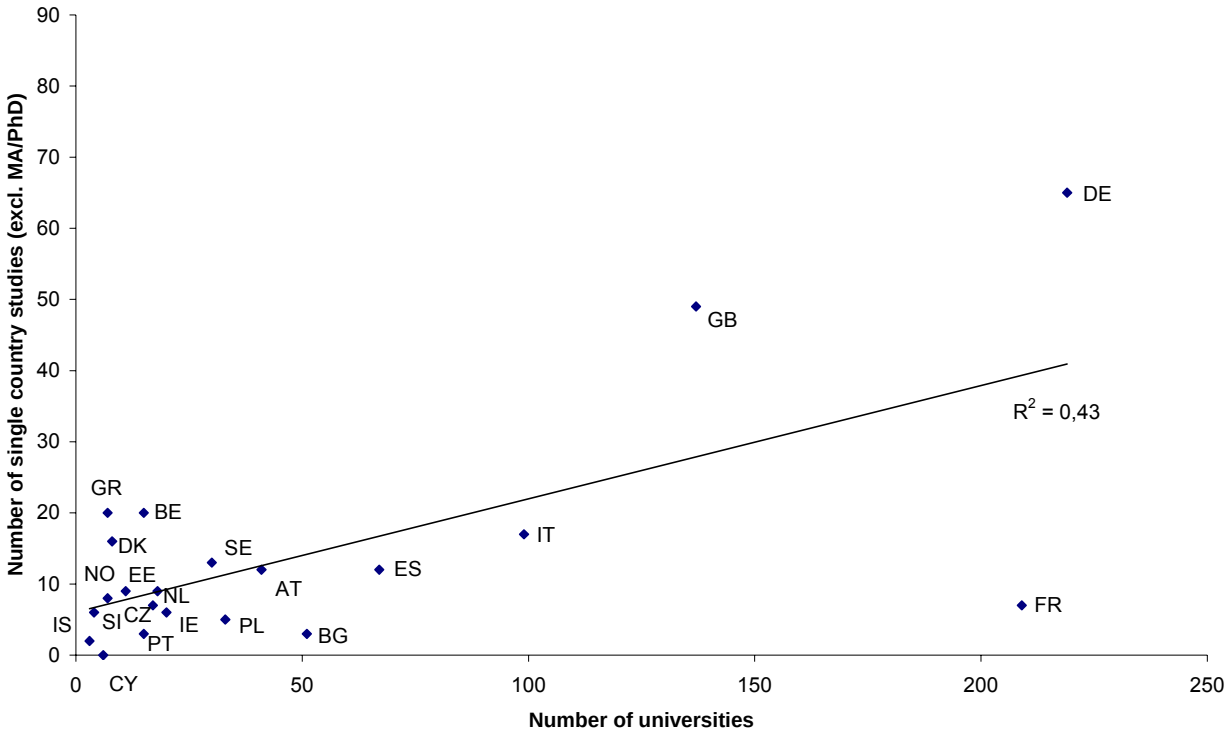


Looking across the 21 European countries, **Figure 4** above **shows that there is a high correlation, by and large and with some exceptions, between the number of universities in a given country and the size of the population base.** This is not, however, an identical correspondence: Estonia, Ireland and Bulgaria have a larger academic base relative to small populations, with Greece and Italy a slightly lower one.

In **Figure 5,** however, there is an equivalent graph comparing the number of universities to the number of single country studies. In this case the correlations are far less high, with France having far fewer studies in relation to its sizeable academic base, and the UK and Germany have more.

Nevertheless and despite notable variations mentioned above, it appears that the academic base does correlate to a degree to the number of studies conducted on children and the internet in this field.

Figure 5: Number of single country studies by number of universities



Disciplines

A further element considered here is the role that national disciplinary traditions have in explaining national variations in the number of national studies on children and the Internet. However, because most European countries have strong national disciplinary traditions in sociology, education and psychology, counting these would no highlight differences between countries – the overall focus of this report - for comparative purposes. Hence, the focus here is on disciplines likely to conduct studies on children and the internet that relatively new and still developing in some countries, such as media and communication studies[12].

Although the figures are not shown here, a number of the larger countries have more departments and smaller countries have fewer, although the fit is not perfect. To take this into account, in **Table 12** the numbers of department for each country was divided by that countries' academic base to give the percentage of such departments relative to the number of universities

Table 12 demonstrates in some of those countries where media and communication studies are well established in universities appear to produce more studies on children and the internet – such as Belgium, Sweden and the UK.

Table 12: Academically oriented media and communications departments

Percentage of national universities with academic Media or Communications departments	Country grouping	No. of single-country studies of children and the internet	Country grouping
0-20%	Austria. Bulgaria Czech Republic Greece Italy	0-10	Bulgaria Czech Republic France Iceland Ireland Netherlands Poland Slovenia
21-50%	Denmark Estonia Ireland Germany Netherlands	11-20	Austria Estonia Italy Norway Spain
51+%	Cyprus France Belgium Norway Iceland Poland Portugal Sweden UK	21+	Belgium Denmark Germany Greece Portugal Sweden UK

This finding however, is not without qualification. In the course of pursuing this hypothesis, a number of methodological and practical issues became apparent for ascertaining media and/or communications University departments, detailed below. This related to:

- Considerable country differences exist in the naming of departments studying media and communications, with many departments not using that precise name. In France, for example, the subject matter of media and communications studies are usually under the heading 'Science de l'Information et de la Communication', while in Denmark what is in effect communication studies is sometimes called 'Information Studies'.
- More problematic, many media studies and sometimes communications studies departments are very practically oriented (particularly in Germany and often in the Czech Republic), teaching production skills or journalism[13].
- Furthermore, while studies into media and communication research issues may exist, they may be be researched and taught within sociology and social psychology[14]. In

French speaking Wallonia, for example, the subject matter is often taught within social and political sciences.

- Finally, where separate media and communications studies departments exist, their orientation depend on the larger faculty within which they are located. For example, in Denmark, if they are located in the humanities they have a more philosophical, literacy and aesthetic orientation but within the social sciences they are more empirically oriented.

These issues clearly make the figures for departments in Table 12 problematic in their explanatory value for national variations in the amount of research undertaken. As such the data presented below in Table 12 did not merit very precise graphical representation, but rather clusters of countries.

Finally, the problems of counting departments provide to be even worse to even newer subject areas like New Media, IT and Society and Informatics and it was and eventually the EU Kids Online network decided to abandon trying to quantify these subjects.

National Data Collection

In many countries the state regularly collects data about the population. Non-Government agencies also regularly involved in the collection such data, usually as national samples of the adult population.

Table 13: Lower age limits in Government surveys of internet use by the general population

Lower age limited of Government survey data collected regarding the general population's internet use	Countries
16 year olds	Austria[15], Cyprus[16], Czech Republic[17], the UK[18]
15 year olds	Belgium[19], Estonia[20], Ireland[21], Portugal[22], Spain[23]
14 year olds	Germany[24]
13 year olds	Greece[25]
12 year olds	Bulgaria[26], France[27], The Netherlands[28]
11 year olds	Italy[29]
10 year olds	Slovenia[30]
9 year olds	Norway[31], Sweden[32]
7 year olds	Denmark[33]

Table 13 indicates that in government studies of internet use in the general population there is considerable national variation in the range of lower age limits in different countries. The corollary of this means the countries with the lower age range routinely collect information about younger children and as such more data on younger children exists, such as in the Nordic countries.

One caveat, true also for non-Governmental data, is that the published information is often in age bands, rather than for specific years (e.g. the Austrian non-Governmental data below is for 14-19 year olds)

Turning to non-Governmental data **in Table 14, half the countries in the EU Kids Online network had non-governmental agencies collecting information about the general population that included children, and as with Government data, the lower age limits varied.**

Table 14: Lower age limits in non-Government surveys of internet use by the general population

Lower age limited of non-Government survey data collected regarding the general population's internet use	Countries
16 year olds	Belgium[34]
15 year olds	Denmark[35], Estonia
14 year olds	Austria[36], Germany[37], the UK[38]
13 year olds	France[39]
12 year olds	Czech Republic[40], Norway[41], Slovenia[42]

Furthermore, some other observations can be gleaned:

- In a minority of countries – Estonia[43] and Italy[44] - governments do occasionally collect data specifically on children
- In some countries – Austria[45], Belgium[46], Bulgaria[47], Italy[48] and the Netherlands[49] - non-Government agencies, commercial and charities for example, also regularly collect data specifically on children:
- Finally, in some countries there are occasional one-off surveys, such as the 2008 study by the Hellenic Audiovisual Institute of 12-18 year olds in Greece, the Irish study by the Internet Advisory Board and the TIMIS study every 4 years in Slovenia.

Conclusions

- Although calculating the academic base of countries is not straightforward, this in large part reflects the countries population size and correlates somewhat with the number of studies per county
- The amount of data available on children of different ages varies across countries in part because the lower age limit of surveys of the general population varies. In some countries, especially but not only in Government surveys, more younger children are included than in others.

4.2 Institutional processes

Gitte Stald

This chapter explores the institutional regulations, policies and norms that are found to influence the amount, kind and conduct of research that takes place on children and the internet.

Regulatory Mechanisms for Research

Despite the obvious ethical issues involved in researching children's use of the internet, **what emerges from research into regulatory mechanism is that there are few, if any, 'hard' regulations' that institutions apply that explicitly affect what and how children and the Internet are studied across the countries.** Out of the 21 countries examined, 15 countries reported there were no regulations - some reports state that there are no regulations *within this area.* For example, in Bulgaria: "*There are no regulations in the fields of journalism and mass communication.*" Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Portugal and Sweden reported that there while regulations did exist, these were less stringent in the form of parent/teacher permission for interviewing/surveying underage children and importantly did not create an obstacle to research. Only two out of the six, Norway and Portugal, stated that research regarding children must go through a specific governmental process. However, in cases where researchers wanted to look into controversial areas in very experimental and perhaps barrier-breaking ways the institutions would very likely wan t to become more involved in monitoring and potentially regulating what can and what cannot be researched

In addition to external regulations, a degree of self-regulation was also mentioned in terms of the expected chances of success, given that it takes a good deal of energy to put an application together.

Overall, there is a balance, varying from country to country, between the general principles of free research, ethical conduct, and an interest in protecting children against being exploited by commercial interests or against transgression of the boundaries of intimacy.

Applications: Stages and Institutional Checking

A further issue examined was whether there where stages involved in the application process, for having research proposals approved – for example being checked by a University ethics committee.

From the data collected represented in **Table 15 a clear pattern regarding stages emerges: of the 21 countries, more than half (12) of the national teams confirmed stages existed** and 9 claimed they did not. Moreover, what procedures did exist are not very restrictive and the stages that research proposals have to go through are often locally rooted.

Table 15: Stages and institutional checks on research progression

Country	An application has to go through stages through	Institutional check required
Austria	No	Yes[50]
Belgium	Yes[51]	Yes
Bulgaria	Yes[52]	Yes
Cyprus	Yes[53]	Yes
Czech Republic	No	No
Denmark	No	Yes[54]
Estonia	No[55]	Yes[56]
France	No	N/A
Germany	No	No[57]
Greece	No	No
Iceland	No[58]	No
Ireland	Yes[59]	Yes
Italy	No	Yes[60]
Norway	Yes	Yes[61]
Poland	Yes[62]	Yes
Portugal	No	Yes
Slovenia	No	No
Spain	Yes	Yes[63]
Sweden	No	Yes
The Netherlands	No[64]	Yes[65]
The UK	Yes	Yes

Table 15 also shows in 13 countries applications have to be checked at the institutional level (e.g. department, university). In the case of Austria:

> *At Universities all proposals are checked by a central research service within the respective University concerning formal and judicial aspects and the contribution of the university to EU proposals. It is not checked concerning the research programme, the research questions, the methodology etc.*
>
> (Austria)

Only few reports answered that they had a considerable freedom to conduct research, which is specifically noted in Germany:

> *There is no stage that all proposals have to go through. As a basic principle, the researchers are free in their decisions (according to the German constitution, Art. 5 Abs. 3 Satz 1). In practice, they only have to inform the president about new projects or proposals.*
>
> (Germany)

The Ethical Conduct of Research

From a methodological perspective, there are certain obvious ethical implications of researched focused on children. Out of 21 of the national reports, **nine countries reports - Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Slovenia and Sweden - specifically mention the ethical conduct of research as providing a general code for guiding good research. But is not experienced as being restrictive on their research.**

Six of the national reports also noted that this holds for all research in general but these were 'soft' rather than 'hard' regulations. In other words, they were not in the form enforced regulation but rather a general good practice code[66]. Presumably, in line with research traditions in Europe in general, ethical good practice codes are considered to be obvious.

Furthermore, out of the 21 studies, only two countries, Ireland and the UK, noted the institutional application of regulations as regards the ethical conduct of research, with research proposal in both of these countries being subject to local ethics committees. In the case of Ireland:

> *It is standard practice that all research, especially research involving children, will require ethics approval by the University-appointed ethics committee. The Dublin Institute of Technology's Ethics Committee, for instance, was established to formulate ethics policy and procedures for all research and scholarship across DIT; to provide researchers with the resources and 'best practice' models for understanding and addressing ethical issues which arise in their research and scholarship; and to promote responsible research and scholarship across the organisation. Funding agencies, whether at national level or at European level – as for example in the Seventh Framework Programme - routinely require an ethics statement regarding the research.*
>
> (Ireland)

In a further study of this area, however, it would be relevant to ask directly if there are nationally formulated or implied ethical "rules" for doing research and if this has specific implications regarding research on children.

Pressure to Conduct Research

Seventeen of the national reports confirmed a growing institutional pressure (or in some case strong 'encouragement') on both universities and academics to conduct research. Moreover, it was noted that while pressure did exist in some countries in media, communication, journalism, education or social sciences and humanities this was not as great for researchers working in the natural sciences and technology.

Out of the 21 national reports only one country reported a clear "no" (Iceland) and three reported "no, but …" in Cyprus[67], Germany[68] and Sweden[69].

A good example demonstrating the combination of pragmatic, strategic and tradition-bound factors that lead to "pressure" to do research is found in Austria:

> *Yes, there is some pressure that is not directly articulated towards single researchers but results from the way the annual budget is set up. Every University has to document the research activities of every single employed researcher in a data base (fodok). This database is regularly checked by the ministry and is basis for arguments when negotiating the budget for the University with the ministry. On the level of the departments there is a similar procedure: every department gets additional money for research projects with external funding, so there is a pressure to increase funded projects. Moreover every department has to sign an agreement on objectives they want to reach in the next two years. The departments themselves sign such agreements with their different section and the leader of the section sign agreements on objectives with every single researcher working in their section.*
>
> (Austria)

In other words, the local agreements in Austria are used for internal evaluation, which in the future have consequences for the budget.

Following from this, perhaps unsurprisingly, a recurrent issue in all questions about what shapes research is that relating to funding interests. This was noted by a large number of countries, demonstrated below:

> *The amount and relation of teaching and research are regulated individually, but among others in cause of a shift in the remuneration of university employees (in certain Federal States) there are accretive incentives to do and/or acquire research projects and/or funding, because the funds are appointed with regard to the activities*.
>
> (Germany)
>
> *In Iceland the research pressure combined with funding interest is even notable at the level of the personal interest of the individual researcher: Research activity is essential for academic promotions and also affects payments to individuals.*
>
> (Iceland)

Furthermore, for some countries, there is not so much an explicit pressure to research as a strong 'encouragement'. For a number of researchers in different countries this has translated in a rather personal domain, where encouraged and incentivised research – and more emphatically their publication rate – has becomes a 'personal strategy' for some academics to advance their career or to even keep a position. Other incentives to research include the benefits such as funding for attending seminars (noted by the Cypriot team) or time released from teaching. This is the case in Sweden where a lecturer may earn time off teaching in order to conduct research:

> *If you are employed as a lecturer you have to teach 100% of the time in theory – 400 lessons or teaching hours a year. Hence it is good to apply for research money since you can free yourself from teaching – e.g. this may be reduced by 50%. The universities are sympathetic to this because they know that it is not good that people teach so much – it will lead to burn out or illness. In addition, conducting research enables you to progress in terms of your career. e.g. to Docent (Reader) or Professor. And for the university this is also good. The three main tasks of Swedish universities are to educate, to perform research, and to cooperate with the surrounding society and inform about its activities. Research is, thus, on of the three basic pillars. On the other hand, no-one says that you have to research, you will not be dismissed if you do not.*
>
> (Sweden)

The influence of expectations about publication rates was illustrated by the Netherlands, whose team stated that there is no pressure to research, but rather to publish. Variations on this theme occur in other countries, such as Italy and Norway:

> *More than on research itself, the pressure is generally exercised on publications: so staff need to publish articles and books in order to get a confirmation, though these published may be or not based on empirical research.*
>
> (Italy)
>
> *Yes, for permanent scientific staff, traditionally 47% of their time was supposed to be used for research (however this was hardly ever the case). This system is in the process of being changed. But there is intense pressure to publish, at least 2 international articles a year. And there is constant monitoring and book keeping of what the scientific staff publishes, in a system called FRIDA*
>
> (Norway)

One final example of how pressure is manifest came from Denmark[70] Here the ratio between teaching and research is 50/50, based on the principle that the two areas are qualitatively interdependent. Research based teaching is a fundamental rule. But the ratio varies in the countries where regulations of obligations to teach and to research can be found:

> *In Flanders, a professor's contract usually specifies 40% teaching and 60% research. In order to progress and to get promotion, professors need to do research. Pressure has become greater, due to the Bologna reform[71] and the rationalisation plans of the Minister of Education (less, but bigger universities), which both led to a higher competition among the universities and their staffs to excel and therefore to legitimate their continued existence.*

(Belgium)

Research Traditions

Traditions of quantitative and qualitative research within the social sciences and media and communication studies

Most countries have strong traditions of qualitative as well as quantitative research, as **Table 16** below, indicates with the exception of the Czech Republic, which had no traditions of qualitative studies within the social sciences and media and communication studies.

Moreover, it appears that that media and communication research generally use more methods and that there may be a general openness towards cross-disciplinarity in this area.

In most countries media and communications studies started within the social sciences that have long traditions of quantitative methods, whereas in some countries (e.g. Denmark) media and communication studies took off in the humanities with a much stronger tradition of qualitative methods. This may be one explanation for the relatively late beginning of media studies in Denmark as illustrated in Table 16.

Table 16: History of research within the participating countries[72]

Country	Quantitative research tradition	Qualitative research tradition	Start of mass communication studies	Start of interpersonal communication studies (telephony)	Start of internet studies
Austria	Yes[73]	No	1920-30	1990s	Early 1990s
Belgium	Yes	Yes	1920s	?	2000
Bulgaria	Yes	Yes	1952	N/A	N/A
Cyprus	N/A	N/A	N/A	2004	2004
Czech Rep.	Yes	No	1930s	2006	2000
Denmark	Yes[74]	Yes	1976 / 1985	1990	1995 / 2000
Estonia	Yes	Yes	1950s	2000s	1998
France	Yes	Yes	N/A	Late 1980s	1994
Germany	Yes	Yes[75]	1945	2001	1995
Greece	Yes	Yes	1988	2004/2005	2000
Iceland	Yes	Yes	1968	1997	1998
Ireland	Yes	Yes	1980s	Mid-1990s	Mid-1990s
Italy	Yes	Yes	1970s	Late 1990s	Late 1990s
Norway	Yes	Yes	1970s	1987	1992
Poland	Yes	Yes	1956	1991	1996
Portugal	Yes[76]	Yes	1980s	End of 1990s	Mid-1990s
Slovenia	Yes	Yes[77]	Mid 1970s	Mid-1990s	1996
Spain	Yes[78]	Yes	1970s	Early 1990s	1999
Sweden	Yes	Yes	1928[79]	2000	1995
The Netherlands	Yes	Yes	1975	N/A	1990 /1998
UK	Yes	yes	1958	Early 1990s	1995/1996

Traditions of Studies within Mass Media and Interpersonal Communication

In general media and communication research has followed developments in media and communication technologies. For example in most countries research on TV started as television first became a mass market. In Germany for example, "*mass media research is related to the development of the media landscape*", which is why this area started up in Germany after the second world war with the official launch of television. While this is the case with most countries, it is not true for all. In Denmark[80], Greece and Ireland no researchers were interested in studying media phenomena as they arose.

In some countries, particular political agendas and conditions have evident impacts on research communities and the ability to conduct research within certain area, not least to do independent research. Strong examples here are Spain where many sociologists had to leave the country after the Civil War, with the consequence that little empirical research was done till the early 1990s, and Portugal where the political dictatorship decided everything regarding research.

Traditions of Internet Research

In most European countries, internet studies originated in the 1990s with the emergence and burgeoning popularity of the internet. In some countries however, research has only begun more recently – the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Belgium and Greece. Based on comparisons developed below, a connection in many countries is evident between the penetration of the internet and the academic awareness of this as being an important and interesting area for generating research.

In countries where research on the internet begun as the online would became more popular - Austria, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK – it is possible to connect this with the level of internet use by children and identify a cross-national pattern with respect to historical conditions influencing research in the social sciences.

Four of the countries with early studies are in category 1[81], with the highest child internet use (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, The Netherlands) while five were in category 2 (Austria, France, Ireland, Italy, and the UK). The remaining country is Portugal, which is in category 3, the group with the lowest internet use by children. A possible explanation for this *may* be found in the historical conditions faced by the social sciences in Portugal and in the national strategic plans for internet research.

In countries where internet studies started relatively lately, two, Cyprus and the Czech Republic, are in category 2 while another two are in category 3, Greece and Bulgaria. Cyprus has the latest start in this field - this may not only relate to middle penetration, but also to the fact that the research community in Cyprus is not large.

Collaboration between Academia and Industry

As noted earlier, there is in many countries a growing pressure on universities and academics to conduct research. In this section we deal with a very specific type of pressure, political, in the form of a demand or strong encouragement for greater research cooperation between academia and industry. Three questions are addressed: Is there pressure to cooperate with industry? Does industry ever approach universities to collaborate or ask academics to conduct research? Do universities ever approach industry with suggestions for research?

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given its consistency with earlier finding about institutional pressure, there is growing political pressure in the form of 'encouragement' or in some specific cases, polices, for academia to cooperate with industry. From the 21 countries studied, 11 of the participating countries confirmed this was the case: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia and the UK. In the case of the Czech Republic, Denmark and Ireland there is even an increasing pressure on academia as well as on industry to cooperate:

> *The pressure is definitely growing – not just to cooperate with industry but to make the study programs more "practically oriented", to enable students with knowledge and skills*

which they can utilize on the job market. Our Department of Media Studies and Journalism, for example, cooperates with one of the biggest newspaper publishers in the country which provides short-term studentships for our students. However, in respect to research, this kind of cooperation is not very usual for humanities/social sciences (most research is state-funded).

(Czech Republic)

Increasing emphasis has been placed in Irish research policy to promote research allied to national needs and according to national priorities as defined by government agencies. National research policy recognised that the emergence of the knowledge society has fundamentally transformed the economic and social organisation of advanced societies. There is increased competition between Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) both within Ireland and internationally, but conversely increased opportunities exist for productive research collaborations with public and private partners.

(Ireland)

While this exemplifies cooperation between academia and industry, in countries with established relationships with industry, this is not without qualification nor might it entirely capture the full dynamics of contact between industry and academia. For example, the German report states there is no pressure to cooperate, yet in Table 19 in the funding chapter shows that 50% of the projects are commercially funded. The situation in Ireland is the reverse: as we saw above there is an increasing interest in university/industry cooperation but none of the Irish research projects are commercially funded.

Table 17: Cooperation and contact between universities and industry

Country	Pressure to cooperate with industry exists	Industry approaches universities	Universities approach industry
Austria	Yes	Yes [82]	No[83]
Belgium	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bulgaria	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cyprus	No	Yes	Yes
Czech Rep.	Yes[84]	No	No
Denmark	Yes	Yes	Yes
Estonia	Yes[85]	Yes	No
France	Yes	Yes	N/A
Germany	No	Yes	Yes
Greece	No	Yes[86]	Yes[87]
Iceland	No	Yes	Yes
Ireland	Yes	Yes	Yes
Italy	No [88]	Yes	Yes[89]
Norway	No	Yes	Yes
Poland	No	No	No
Portugal	Yes	Yes	Yes
Slovenia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spain	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sweden	No[90]	Yes	Yes
The Netherlands	No	Yes	Yes
UK	Yes[91]	Yes	Yes

Another important national variation between countries is terms of how pressure is experienced, and in turn formulated in national reports. Some of the national reports did not use the actual word "pressure" but instead state that the government and various ministries "strongly encourage" cooperation with industry:

> *In the social sciences the research councils strongly encourage universities to cooperate with industries. In fact, on application forms there is a section of 'cooperation with users', which can mean the Government, NGOs but also industry.*

(The UK)

Or

There is no pressure to cooperate with industry – it is not necessary to have some funding from this source. Generally there is talk about it being desirable and so cooperation sometimes happens.

(Sweden)

Furthermore, there are various motivations for agreeing to cooperation with industry:

- ***Funding opportunities*:** This is the case in reports from Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Greece and Iceland. For example, the German report says that "*there is a kind of implicit pressure in order to organise research grants*". The Greek report states that departments and researchers who cooperate with industry have stronger networks, and therefore are more likely to secure research funding.
- ***Political considerations:*** In the case of Slovenia, "*Government funded or Research Agency funded projects sometimes require as a condition of financing participation of industry partners in the project's consortium".*
- ***The need for socially beneficial research****:* In some countries the funding collaborations between academic and industry may be supplemented by public funding. Examples of this are two Danish research and development project on mobile content for young Danes (Mobile Content Lab 2004-6 and Mobity 2008-9) which could not have been conducted without this joint funding. This leads to the next motivation which is a. This is most explicitly mentioned in the Danish report[92]:

In terms of the second and third questions dealing with collaborations between academia and industry with respect to initiating research partnerships, **Table 17, above, shows, there is a balance of approach, with direction is two-way in many countries with 18 approaches from industry to universities and 16 approaches from universities to industry.** Only the Czech Republic report stated that industry never approaches universities, whilst Austria, the Czech Republic and Estonia said universities never approach industry.

To some degree this mirrors the fact that the research in this field arises from several traditions around Europe and in some countries there are longer traditions of institutionalized forms of cooperation with industry.

Strategic Research

How do governments', including research councils' implement their interest in strategic research across Europe and how does this relate to researchers freedom to research?

Firstly, it is important to note not all countries have research councils (Greece and Cyprus[93]) but may have other alternative institutions for funding.

For countries that do have research councils however, the structure of these vary greatly - from the very broadly defined general councils to councils with very specific obligations towards certain areas in society. In the case of the latter, in Sweden research councils have a 'special focus *e.g. on working life, the Baltic Sea Research Foundation….These topics are the constant focus on these bodies rather than having a particular programme lasting a few years like the PICT programme in the UK",* whilst in Denmark there is a strong notion of strategic independent research and the research programs are launched and funded through two major councils.

In many countries the research councils are built into a structure whereby they provide both advice and funding. This structure has two major implications for research communities and individual researchers, namely, for application procedures and for the amount of funding. Changes of and within this structure have an impact upon the public support for research. For example, in Denmark changes regarding the amount of public funding and in the balance between strategic and independent research means that very little research is fully funded by

public research money. Basically research institutions need to cover overheads and other costs (which sometimes means that researchers and institutions cannot afford to bid for new programmes) or that other kinds of external funding must be found (e.g. industry cooperation).

Table 18 gives an overview of whether national governments and research councils ever invite, with funding, academics to conduct research in specific areas.

Table 18: Government and research council invitations to conduct research in specific areas

Country	Government ministries' invite researchers and universities	Research councils' invite researchers and universities
Austria	Yes	Yes[94]
Belgium	Yes	Yes
Bulgaria	Yes	N/A
Cyprus	N/A	Yes
Czech Rep.	No	No
Denmark	No	Yes[95]
Estonia	Yes	Yes[96]
France	N/A	N/A
Germany	No	No[97]
Greece	Yes[98]	No
Iceland	Yes	Yes
Ireland	Yes	Yes
Italy	No	No
Norway	Yes[99]	Yes
Poland	N/A	N/A
Portugal	Yes	Yes
Slovenia	Yes	Yes[100]
Spain	Yes[101]	Yes
Sweden	Yes	Yes[102]
The Netherl	Yes	Yes[103]
UK	Yes	Yes

Fourteen countries reported that there are some forms of government directed research; four countries claim that this does not happen (the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany and Italy).

> *The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) usually doesn't offer tendering procedures for research. It is common to apply there for financial support for your own studies.*
>
> (Germany)

This may in part reflect conflicting ways of answering this question as some national teams answer "yes, there are government directed research – in the form of research areas, and other countries like Denmark and Germany answer "No, but it exists in the form of research areas".

There are, however, many examples of research invitations by ministries, often as part of their long term strategic planning within an overall research policy. For example:

- In Belgium *"The Ministry of Media and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport in the Flemish Community sometimes ask for certain types of research and invite universities to bid. One recent example was a bid to do research on news magazines for teenagers"*.
- In Spain the *National Plan of Investment + Development+ Innovation* establishes the mid-term targets and priorities of the research policy, development and innovation for periods of four years: "*This plan favours research being carried out in five strategic fields, defines objectives, decides upon priorities and accepts budget obligations for the duration of each Plan."*
- In the case of Portugal government ministries asked Education Departments to conduct the evaluation of National Plans/Initiatives regarding the introduction of ICT in schools: *"The focus of this research has been placed on teachers' training and implementation of IT in the academic curricula and classrooms, in a kind of top-down model that did not include all the dimensions of media literacy (see below)."* Besides this the Portuguese report mentions examples of strategic research demands that are not directly related to the EU Kids Online area: "*Some national demand for research also includes public policies around children at social risk, such as child labour or children dropping out of school, two relevant social problems in Portugal."*

Some reports note the strong connections between the ministerial level and the research councils. For example in Denmark and Belgium:

> *Generally this is done through research councils and not directly by government or politicians. Ministries do ask for some research to be conducted, e.g. the Ministry of Culture statistics in 4.a. In the cases of The Center for Cold War Research*[104] *and The Environmental Assessment Institute*[105] *of Bjørn Lomborg strongly suggest that politicians got directly involved in managing the projects.*
>
> (Denmark)
>
> *The Brussels Government launches every year a call for research that must lead to social, economic and cultural policy recommendations. Every year several topics are listed as top priorities. Researchers are asked to submit research proposals within these topics. A few industry-orientated programmes such as FRIA and FIRST by the Walloon region give grants for PhD research projects.*
>
> (Belgium)

The launching of prioritised themes by the research councils also occurs in Norway, where the Norwegian research council "*mainly defines programmes that last for some years and with certain themes that they prioritize*[106]." Examples of such programs related to ICT are the KIM program[107] (2003-2007) and the earlier programme for ICT related research, SKIKT[108]. Another example comes from the UK report:

The first of the programmes where funding was specifically allocated for research on ICTs was PICT (Program for Information and Communication Technologies). This was followed by the Virtual Society? Program and then the eSociety Programme.

(The UK)

Some research councils also ask for certain types of research:

In Belgium, the public funding organisation Federal Science Policy has a research programme called 'Future and Society' which explicitly invites researchers to do research on ICT. In Flanders, the Institute for the Promotion of Innovation by Science and Technology (IWT) is a funding organisation that focuses on stimulating and supporting technological and scientific innovation. ICT is one of the main research themes on which researchers are invited to submit research proposals.

(Belgium)

The general pattern is that research councils promote or launch themes or areas where researchers and universities can make bids for specific research projects. However, in the case of the Czech Republic:

There are no specific bids for certain types of research – every proposal to the two main Czech research agencies (The Czech Grant Agency and the Grant Agency of the Academy of Science, both fully state-funded) falls into the same "basket".

It is notable that research projects are very often proposed by the researchers or universities as is the case in Germany where *"the research topics are proposed by the scientific community and the proposals are evaluated in a peer review process*."

In some countries the tendency is that research councils increasingly invite researchers to bid for research in specific areas, and that researchers/institutions are likely to compete for the projects (and funding):

The Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) has a number of schemes for funding research. These include Fellowships and Scholarships and a series of project funding schemes. The latter initially were open in any of the disciplines supported by the Council. More recently, major project grant funding (in excess of €300k) has been linked to themes proposed by the Council, which in turn are aligned with national and European research priorities as for instance in the 7th Framework Programme. Universities are invited to compete for funding under these thematic categories.

(Ireland)

Finally some research councils invite researchers to participate in the direction and formulation of new research programmes as it is the case in Slovenia where the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS) "*invite researchers before releasing the bid to suggest which fields and themes should and need to be researched.*"

Conclusions

- There are generally no strong 'hard' regulations in the participating countries regarding what can and what cannot be researched. Where rules exist they are 'softer', for example, relating to getting parental permission for child studies
- How funding is managed, as opposed to the sources of funding discussed in a later section, influences the amount of studies and the topics being researched, at the national, institutional and the personal level.
- Awareness of ethical best practices, in some countries organized at the national level but primarily expressed in relation to the institutional check-up policies, may vary by country.

- National research histories and traditions in combination with the origins of new research fields in older research disciplines and with the different timing of when new media and communication technologies appear in different countries may all influence national patterns of research.
- The connection in many countries between the penetration of the internet and the academic awareness of this as a being an important and interesting research area may shape research.
- Increasing pressure to research in countries where this has not so far been the norm is another factor. At the personal level this relates to the prospects for potential promotion, access to other funding and publishing as a general standard for measuring levels of research.
- Increasing demand at the political and the institutional level for research cooperation between industry and academia can and does influence research.
- There is tendency for research council funding to be increasingly directed towards strategic research but also the fact that researchers are invited to suggest projects in certain areas can cause different patterns of national research.

4.3 Funding

Christina Ortner and Claudia Lampert

Perhaps by far one of the most important contextual factors influences national research on children and Internet, is unsurprisingly, funding. Put simply, without external funding, research institutes and universities would not be able to undertake much research. The aim of this chapter, firstly, is to provide insights and hypotheses regarding the influence of funding on European research dealing with children and the Internet by 1) exploring the scope of possible funding sources, arrangements and as such their impact on the national research and 2) identifying the possible relations between the amount of studies, and the relevance of specific topics in the different countries. Due to the limitations of the underlying data these analyses can not come up with hard facts and clear evidence, but rather provide insights and hypotheses regarding the influence of funding on European research dealing with children, young people and online-technologies. It is worth adding that in contrast to the tables in the other chapters, the ones here include multi-country studies because it is important to show the importance of the EC in this field.

Patterns of Funding in Europe

Whilst countries vary considerably in the source and range of possible funding sources for research projects, from the 21 countries[109] examined, three distinct sources of funding become were identified as being present, to varying degrees in the participating countries. These are later used in the chapter to distinguish and categorize countries according to their national patterns of funding.

The three sources of funding identified are:

- **Public institutions (national/international)** European Commission, national governments or ministries, national research councils, regulators, regional governments or public TV stations.[110]
- **Commercial funding:** comes from either commercial companies or from trade association representing a number of single enterprises in the same industry.
- **Non-Profit Funding** are more diverse, including charities or charitable foundations, consumer organisations, the church and other NGOs or non-profit organisations. Studies financed by research institutions and student's PhD or Master thesis are classified as academic funding

Diversity of Funding

An important factor distinguishing countries is the diversity of different forms of funding, with implications for amount of breadth of studies on the way children, teenagers and their families deal with online-technologies. It goes without saying that the more institutions fund research in this field, the more possibilities universities and other research bodies have to get financing for their work.

In some countries, studies on children and online media are funded by several different funding bodies, while in other countries the funding is focussed on only one or two funding categories. For example: In Belgium, the UK and in Germany the diversity of funding sources is relatively high compared with, for example, Bulgaria, were studies are funded mainly by public funders or non-profit organisations.

Table 19: Different means of funding research by country

	Studies Funded by public body		Studies Commercially funded		Studies Funded by academia		Studies Funded by non-profit organisation		Total number of studies
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	
Austria	74%	17	9%	2	17%	4	4%	1	23
Belgium	66%	23	17%	6	23%	8	9%	3	35
Bulgaria	78%	7	0%	0	0%	0	11%	1	9
Cyprus	80%	4	0%	0	0%	0	20%	1	5
The Czech Republic	93%	14	7%	1	7%	1	0%	0	15
Denmark	76%	22	10%	3	14%	4	7%	2	29
Estonia	56%	10	17%	3	28%	5	0%	0	18
France	75%	18	25%	6	8%	2	0%	0	24
Germany	60%	47	50%	39	4%	3	1%	1	78
Greece	81%	25	6%	2	6%	2	0%	0	31
Iceland	90%	9	10%	1	0%	0	10%	1	10
Ireland	92%	12	0%	0	8%	1	15%	2	13
Italy	50%	14	21%	6	29%	8	14%	4	28
Norway	83%	15	17%	3	6%	1	0%	0	18
Poland	90%	18	5%	1	5%	1	10%	2	20
Portugal	86%	12	14%	2	21%	3	7%	1	14
Slovenia	73%	11	7%	1	27%	4	0%	0	15
Spain	93%	13	7%	1	0%	0	0%	0	14
Sweden	64%	16	24%	6	28%	7	8%	2	25
The Netherlands	88%	23	8%	2	15%	4	0%	0	26
UK	59%	38	39%	25	11%	7	22%	14	64

Base: all studies (including multi-country studies) without Master- and PhD-theses

The Role of Public Funding

Whilst countries vary overall in the range of possible funding sources, when examined country, by far the most important source of funding comes from public financiers: national governments, the European Commission, national research councils, regulators, regional governments or public TV stations. Within this source of public funding, national governments and the European Commission are the most important source for the majority of countries, with the exception of the UK and Norway.

Furthermore, even if an overall pattern emerged with public sources of funding being most important, and crucial for some countries as the only source if funding, the amount of government funding varies, with higher percentages in Spain, Slovenia, Greece and Czech Republic but very little governmental funding in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Iceland, Italy and Portugal.

Table 20: Public funding for research by percentage (and number) of studies (multicoded)

	Studies funded by National government or ministry		Studies funded by National research council		Studies funded by the EC		Studies funded by the Regulator		Studies funded by Public TV		Studies funded by Regional government	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Austria	22%	5	0%	0	39%	9	0%	0	0%	0	17%	4
Belgium	14%	5	6%	2	34%	12	0%	0	9%	3	6%	2
Bulgaria	11%	1	0%	0	67%	6	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Cyprus	0%	0	0%	0	80%	4	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
The Czech Republic	40%	6	7%	1	53%	8	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Denmark	28%	8	7%	2	52%	15	0%	0	0%	0	3%	1
Estonia	17%	3	0%	0	39%	7	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
France	29%	7	13%	3	42%	10	4%	1	0%	0	0%	0
Germany	21%	16	1%	1	9%	7	23%	18	23%	18	1%	1
Greece	39%	12	3%	1	68%	21	6%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Iceland	10%	1	20%	2	60%	6	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Ireland	31%	4	0%	0	69%	9	8%	1	0%	0	0%	0
Italy	11%	3	7%	2	25%	7	7%	2	0%	0	7%	2
Norway	17%	3	28%	5	39%	7	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Poland	30%	6	5%	1	50%	10	20%	4	0%	0	0%	0
Portugal	21%	3	7%	1	57%	8	33%	1	0%	0	0%	0
Slovenia	7%	1	7%	1	60%	9	7%	1	0%	0	0%	0
Spain	43%	6	0%	0	50%	7	0%	0	0%	0	7%	1
Sweden	32%	8	0%	0	32%	8	0%	0	0%	0	4%	1
The Netherlands	19%	5	8%	2	54%	14	8%	2	0%	0	4%	1
UK	13%	8	23%	15	16%	10	16%	10	6%	4	0%	0

Base: all studies (including multicountry studies) without Master- and PhD-theses

National Research Councils

With the exception of the Netherlands and in the UK, where national research council funding is high and actually the most important source, **when examined by country, in general funding from research councils are more modest.** In some countries they play no role – in a third of participating countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Ireland, Slovenia and Spain) they do not even exist.

European Commission

In comparison to national variations with the amount and importance of government funding, **there is more balance in EC funding, in the sense that a larger number of countries have a significant amount of studies funded through from this source.** In other words, the European Commission has been crucial in providing a source of public funding for the majority of countries (two-thirds). In Ireland, Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Greece for example, the percentage of EC-funded studies is relatively high (66-69%). For other countries, such as the UK and Germany, the proportion of EC funding relative to total funding was quite low.

Patterns of Commercial Funding

Commercial funding within is widespread but sporadic in many countries. When compared to public funding and examined country by country, the contribution of commercial financiers is rather modest all over Europe, with notable exceptions in Germany and the UK (shown Table 19).

In spite of this, commercial financiers are the second most frequent source of funding for studies on children and the internet, which may, in part, relate to growing political pressures for cooperation between academia and industry.

With the exception of Bulgaria, Cyprus and Ireland, there is at least one commercial study in every participating country, and a substantial number in the UK and Germany. Moreover, even for countries with a large number of commercially funded studies, it is found the actual number of commercial funders may be small. For example in Germany, while almost half of studies are funded by commercial companies, in practice this means just a few companies (e.g. a Publisher, a TV-Broadcaster or ISPs) conduct regularly (market) research, sometimes in the form of annual surveys.

Variation of Non-Profit Funding

Overall, non-governmental organisations have not been significant funders of studies on children and the Internet within the 21 countries examined, with the exception of the UK. Whilst some research funding from NGO's was reported, this was overall modest and only in a minority of countries, with 8 countries stating an absence NGO funding and only six having one study in this category.

The exception is the UK where 22% of studies into children and Internet are funded by charities and other NGOs or non-profit organisations. National report refers to several non-profit organisations (e.g. NCH, ChildLine, Banardos the NSPCC and Children International) that take an active interest in researching children and online media and points out that especially "*the establishment of the Home Office Task Force for Child Protection on the Internet, a unique body in Europe, has been useful in linking agencies and giving NGOs a stronger lobbying power than in some countries.*"

Besides that, surveys on children, youngsters and the online-technologies are sporadically funded by charities in Belgium and Spain, by the church in Austria, by consumer organisations in Belgium and by other non-profit organisations in Belgium, Poland and Slovenia.

Differences in Academic Funding

It should be noted that of all the different kinds of funding, academic funding is the most difficult to interpret because it covers many institutions that differ significantly concerning their interests and institutional backgrounds - students projects conducted in university courses, research conducted by employees of University institutes, and the work of private or public non-university research bodies that do not necessarily have an academic background[111] .

However, on the whole, what could be determined is that **academic research is to a large extent funded by other institutions like the national governments, ministries, research councils or other organisations mentioned above.** Although funding from research institutes is rather modest overall in Europe, 18 countries have at least one study in this category.

These country specific differences should be considered when interpreting the data or speculating about consequences. Moreover, these figures only describe the amount of research with academic *funding* not academic *research* in general.

Overall Classification of Countries by Funding

Based on these findings, it is possible to create a typology of funding sources and patterns to classify national similarities and differences as measured by the predominance of proportions of public, commercial and academic sources. However, it should be noted that the overall structure or type of funding does not clearly correlate to the amount of research.

Predominance of Public Funding:

- Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden.

- Public funding is not only the most important financial source, but - compared to other countries - it dominates funding of research on children and the internet.
- The percentages of studies funded by public bodies are clearly above the average (more than 75%).
- Other forms of funding (commercial, non-profit or academic) play a minor role or do not exist at all.

***High relevance of public and academic funding**:*

- Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Portugal and Spain.
- Public funding is the most important form of financing for the nations in this group. Yet, compared to countries of the first group it plays only a modest role.
- In addition to public funding, academic funding is important for these countries. All of them show relatively high percentages in this category. Non-profit as well as commercial funding is rather low or does not exist.

High relevance of public and commercial funding

- Germany, and Denmark.
- Besides public institutions, commercial companies and trade associations finance a sizable proportion of studies in these countries, and therefore enforce research in the field of children and the internet. Academic and non-profit funding are of little or no relevance.

Hybrid funding structure

- In the UK and Italy.
- In these countries, significant amounts of funding come from several different groups of financiers.
- The percentage of public funding is at most 60% and there seem to be many are other possibilities to get money for research.
- In the UK, financial resources come from public, commercial and non-profit organisations. In this group, public, commercial and academic funding plays an important role.

Influence of Funding on the Amount of Research

On the whole, it has been concluded that funding strongly affects the extensiveness of this research field - but does it necessarily affect the amount of research?

Overall, there seemed to be little if any correlation between the overall funding arrangements and amount of research. For example, within the group of countries producing the greatest amount of research, there are considerable differences with regard to funding. In the UK, public, commercial and non-profit funding play a relevant role, whereas in Germany financial resources predominately come from public and commercial institutions,

Nevertheless, there seems to be some influence of funding structures on the amount of research concerning those countries with little research. Although these nations also differ from each other, a key feature among them is that they are strongly dependent on public funding (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Iceland, Ireland, Slovenia). As Greece shows, some nations seem to get enough money from public institutions to produce a fair body of research without needing other financial sources that urgently, while in other countries the limitation on public financing seems to result in a small amount of research on this topic.

Finally, only small correlation also exists between the diversity of financiers and the number of studies. On the whole countries that have diverse sources of funding bodies financing studies of children and the internet, such as Belgium, the UK, Germany, often have higher number of studies, with the exception of Poland. The corollary of this is that those countries with less diverse funding – Bulgaria, Slovenia and to some extent Iceland[112] - producing small amounts of

research. However, some countries with few financial sources produce a relatively big or at least modest body of work on that topic, although this is the exception rather than the rule.

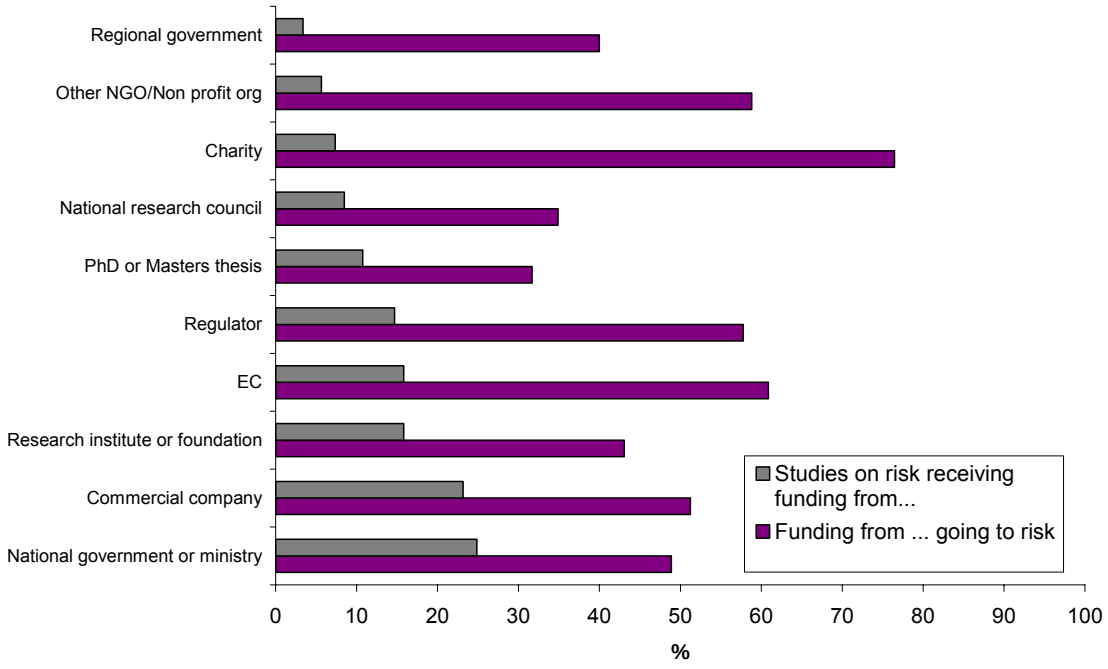
The Influence of Funding on Risks Studies

Comparing funding structures to the topics researched in the different European countries results in a very diverse picture with very few clear cross-national patterns. T**he overall balance of funding – in terms of the proportion of public, commercial, academic and non-profit resources – seems to have little influence on which topics are researched in which countries.** For example, countries with a large amount of public funding do not have more research on parental mediation or risks, while nations with a substantial amount of commercial funding do not have a larger of studies on access or usage, as may be expected.

The lack of a correlation between forms of funding and the relevance of different topics may indicate that the interests of specific financiers differ within European countries. Public institutions like national or regional governments, ministries, regulation authorities or research councils in one country may need other kinds of data than in others, and commercial companies in Germany are possibly interested in different aspects of children's online use than in the UK.

This leads to the question of how studies which focus on children and online risks are funded. As **Figure 5** shows, studies on online risks receive their funding almost always from national government or ministries and commercial companies. It can be assumed that the studies differ with regard to the actual amount of funding as well as to the intention, interest and perspective.

Figure 5: Funding of studies with focus on risks



Charities and NGOs seem to have the highest interest in risk topics, followed by the EC and the regulators. Whereas for commercial companies and national governments/ministries the figure shows that only 50% of the funding invested in research on children and online media, refers to risk related topics.

Moreover, the decision about which issues are to be addressed in a study is not only made by the organisation providing financial resources but in many cases also by the institution or even the person conducting the research. Therefore one and the same financier – e.g. a public body like a national government or ministry – can ask either ask a university or a market research institute to

conduct research on children and the internet. In both cases the funding organisation and even if the object of interest is the same, but which questions are asked, which aspects are considered may differ significantly according to the interests and traditions of the conducting research institution.

The Role of EC Funding

The European Commission plays an indispensable role as a primary source of creating funding opportunities for many countries on children and the Internet: **in all countries a significant proportion of studies is funded by the EC and in most it is even the most important funder, with percentages about 50% (see Table 2)**. M The relevance of the EC is especially high for nations with few data, with limited diversity concerning funding bodies and with few single country studies collecting data only for their own population. For example:

- In Bulgaria, 6 out of the nine studies were funded by the EC.
- In Cyprus, four out of the five studies were funded by the EC.
- In the Czech Republic 8 out of 15 studies, were funded by the EC.
- In Iceland 6 out of 10 studies were funded by the EC.
- In Ireland 9 out of 13 studies were funded by the EC.
- In Poland 8 out of 14 studies were funded by the EC.
- In Portugal 9 out of 15 studies were funded by the EC.
- In Slovenia 7 out of14 studies were funded by the EC.

Importantly, the European Commission is of utmost insignificance for multinational studies delivering comparable data on the way children, youngsters and their families deal with online technologies in Europe. For example, half of all surveys including more than one country were conducted with financial support of the European Commission. 11 of these 15 studies were funded only by the EC, in the remaining three cases the EC was the main financier. As Table 21 shows, all other kinds of funders have financed far fewer multinational studies. Moreover, EC funded surveys tend to include a wider range of countries than international studies of other financiers.

Table 21: Number of international studies by research funders (multicoded)

	Only funder	Main funder	Additional funder	Overall
European Commission	11	15	0	15
National government/ ministry	3	2	5	7
Commercial company	4	5	2	8
National research council	3	3	0	3
Charity/ charitable foundation	1	1	0	1
Trade association	0	0	1	1
Research institute/ foundation	1	2	1	2
Regulator	0	0	0	0

Conclusions

The analysis of the research funding leads to some hypothesis, which could be discussed with regard to recommendations:

- The more institutions fund research, the more possibilities universities and other research bodies have to get financing their work.
- Governmental funding is relevant regarding risk orientated research. Most of the studies were financed by national governmental or ministry, followed by commercial companies.
- Charities and NGOs, but also the EC and regulators, direct attention to risk related topics.
- Governmental funding and EC funding are especially important in those cases where other funding bodies are not available.
- EC funding is pivotal to the conduct, financing and proliferation of national studies for many countries, especially those with limited sources funding and low amounts of government funding. This has also been critically important utmost importance for multinational studies across Europe.

4.4 Political Actions

Leslie Haddon and Brian O'Neill

This chapter considers how national political[113] action, often but not always associated with government initiatives, has an important bearing on research in general in this field. National team were asked if they could identify examples of political initiatives that had created or contributed to the amount and type of research in the form of specific research projects, the details being shown in **Table 22,** where 'Y' means 'Yes, an example exists'.

Table 22: Known examples of national political actions leading to research

	General Government initiatives	Media Regulation	Internet in Schools	Awareness raising campaigns	Internet self-regulation codes
Austria			Y		
Belgium	Y				
Bulgaria	Y				
Cyprus					
Czech Republic					
Denmark	Y				
Estonia	Y		Y		
France					
Germany	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Greece					
Iceland	Y				
Ireland	Y		Y		
Italy	Y			Y	Y
Norway	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Poland					
Portugal					
Slovenia					
Spain				Y	
Sweden	Y		Y	Y	
The Netherlands	Y				
UK	Y		Y		

Although this is illustrative material only, what emerged through the research and is evident from the Table 12 that **the national political context, specifically government initiatives have a bearing upon research in the majority of the countries examined,** in the form of proactive policies towards supporting information society developments such as the incorporation of the internet in schools and communities, to more reactive responses to growing public concern, sometimes triggered by specific events or moral panics surrounding internet use, all of which have led to in some countries to empirical studies.

Based on this finding, some examples are provided in order to develop a more focused understanding of exactly how such political initiatives have been influential.

Government Actions

For the majority of countries national governments are the central political actor in shaping the climate for research in the area of children and the internet. Of the 21 countries included in our analysis, about half the national teams identified government-initiated research studies and nearly half of all studies included in the research database were directly government-sponsored projects, show in **Table 22. Examples of how both general and specific government initiatives in some countries are offered below:**

- I**n** Ireland, the Government created the infrastructure and a directive to facilitate more research on ICTs in general, which in principle also provides a background to research on children and the internet, for example: *The national research agenda which prioritises ICT and Biotechnology as research themes was the outcome of an intensive Technology Foresight study conducted in 1999".*
- In Sweden, Estonia, Iceland, The Netherlands, a cross-national pattern emerged in terms of the promotion of specific policies in support of the 'Information Society' that created various opportunities that influenced research, for example in Sweden, "*The Media Council studies risks, at present mainly when it comes to the new digital media (computer games and the Internet). The Council receives certain general directives from the Government and has the goal of reducing the risks of harmful media influences on children and young people".*
- New research context emerged resulting the role of the government's response to events and through intervention into the policy field: In the case of Belgium, for instance, regional governments, given the two major language communities involved, were especially influential. *"In Flanders, viWTA, Flemish Institute for Scientific and Technology Assessment Research, also plays an important role in providing discussion documents on ICT related topics. This research institute is associated with the Flemish Parliament. It commissions research on scientific and technological topics that have wide public impact".*
- Finally, from material provided by the Belgium, UK and Norway, examples of particular studies that emerged from other indirect government activities. In the case of the UK, *"The Byron Review (2008) across arose through the Prime Minister asking for an independent review of the risks children face from the Internet and video games. This review process also included commissioning some new research".*

Media Regulation

Media regulators, often officially separate from governments, are nevertheless funded and guided by them and in turn commission research. For example, within the UK, Ofcom:

> "*Has commissioned literature reviews of children's and adults' media literacy research, major national audits of children's and adults' levels of media literacy – since Ofcom is charged with developing media literacy".*

The example below shows the history of concerns that led to British Government involvement in the specific area of children and internet risks, and illustrates how a political intervention can lead to and influence the development of a general body of research.

> *There was a concern about child abuse images in 1994/5 and this lobbying originally led to the setting up of the IWF (an NGO) in 1996. 'Stranger danger' in Chatrooms was also an early risk that was discussed and was the basis for the report ChatWise/Streetwise in 2001. This was produced by a consortium of industry, charities and the Government. It led to Home Office Task Force in 2001. Following on from this, CEOP (the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Agency) was launched in 2006 as a new Government-sponsored multi-agency body, managed by the police, and involving academics, industry, children's charities etc in a multi-stakeholder collaboration that seems unique in Europe. CEOP commissions some research.*
>
> (The UK)

It is important to mention that the UK's model of a having a combined regulator for several fields has lead to regulatory initiatives in media literacy and children and internet research.

In many other countries regulatory frameworks tend to deal with more traditional content regulation and usually they do not have a specific remit for internet content. This model is now changing, however, and European Commission influence as well as the impact of the Audio Visual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) is leading to changes in media regulation in this area. For example, the BBFC in the UK and the Irish Film Censor's Office (IFCO) regularly commission research to inform guidelines on film and videogame regulation, and contribute to national debates on media literacy.

Educational Initiatives

In addition to the role of general government initiatives in establishing the climate for research, a further important entry point for political influence has been in the field is through education. As the examples below indicate, research through educational initiatives often arises because of government initiatives either in supplying IT in school or developing teacher-training in relation to IT. Various EU Kids Online national teams pointed out how more general (often pedagogical) research on the internet in schools emerged from this source.

> *The Tiger Leap Foundation was established in 1997 to support use of the internet in Estonian schools. This has stimulated studies of the internet in the school environment and in learning contexts.*
>
> (Estonia)
>
> *There has been some pedagogical research, originally academic initiatives, because of programmes in schools undertaken by the Government e.g. examining the usefulness of IT in school. The Knowledge Foundation has money for researching IT in schools and produces yearly reports on learning and IT in schools.*
>
> (Sweden)
>
> *The Network for IT Research and Competence in Education (ITU) was founded in 1997 as a key project in the Ministry of Education and Research's first action plan, "Information Technology in Education 1996–1999" In 2003, ITU was evaluated by the Norwegian Institute for Studies in Research and Higher Education (NIFU).*
>
> (Norway)
>
> *In 1997 the National Grid for Learning was launched to get the Internet into all schools by 2002. This may well have helped to frame some of the educational related research on the Internet. Becta (British Educational and Communication Technology Association), which advises schools on Internet safety, produced the two earliest large surveys of children's Internet use in 2001 and 2002.*

(The UK).

Although fewer in number, there are also some examples of how research in this field can also originate from the initiatives of companies. In Ireland, companies such as Intel have supported school-based internet projects, including software learning resources designed to encourage take-up with evaluation research providing a further useful source of data. A similar example in Austria is also found:

> *"There was an initiative from a commercial organisation, the main telecom company, to encourage the use of Internet – in this case Web 2.0 applications like Wikis and Weblogs – in Austrian schools. The evaluation of the work with these tools in schools was done by a team headed by member of EU Kids Online, Paus-Hasebrink at the University of Salzburg".*
>
> (Austria)

Awareness Raising Initiatives

The three examples below once again show various different ways in which an interest in awareness raising as regards internet safety has an influence on on-going evaluations (Sweden), and research (Spain, Norway). Although this chapter is focusing on national initiatives, as before the last two examples underline the wider influence of the work of the EC in this field. In the case of Sweden, where awareness raising lead to evaluations on children and risk:

> *"There is no research related to a specific campaign. The Media Council was involved in SAFT and there have been several attempts to measure whether children are engaged in more risks than earlier. So there is more of an ongoing evaluation of this issue rather than specific research - and if awareness increases it is assumed that the campaigns were effective".*

In the case of Ireland, the awareness-raising activities of the Internet Advisory Board have had a central influence on research.

> *Amárach Consulting (www.amarach.com) was commissioned by the Internet Advisory Board (www.iab.ie) to undertake research on the use of new media technologies by children and the awareness of both parents and their ten to fourteen year old children of some of the downside issues that may be associated with their use. This was the second time Amárach has research and reported for the Internet Advisory Board. In 2001 Amárach conducted research which focused exclusively on the downside issues associated with children's use of the Internet.*

Other National Developments Influencing Research

Changes in government policy in the field of media regulation have also led to research in a handful of countries. In UK, this led to a review and in Norway it led to emprical research:

> *The Communications Act 2003 had been preceded by a Green (consultation) paper in 1997. This is when the Government decided not to regulate the Internet but to leave it to self-regulation by industry. To inform guidelines on film and videogame regulation the BBFC regularly commissions research, as does the regulator Ofcom. To inform its proposal for the Extreme Pornography Act the Home office commissioned a literature review.*
>
> (The UK)
>
> *The re-organisation of the Norwegian Board of Film classification in 1997, leading to an institution that now also gives advice regarding new media (e.g. computer games and the Internet) led to several new studies initiated and financed by the NBFC. It also led to the establishment of the SAFT project and its studies on children and parents knowledge and use of the Internet in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Ireland (2003), Norway and Ireland (2006) and Norway (2008).*

(Norway)

Furthermore, developments in the field of commercial self-regulation codes have also encouraged some studies, such as in the case of Italy:

> *The introduction of the Self Regulation Code about the Internet and Minors in 2003 and the public conference promoted by Ministry of Communication in 2004, "Online pornography. Strategies of contrast and prevention", have contributed substantially to create a more responsive climate towards this subject. Since this moment, Telefono Azzurro and Save The Children Italy, two major NGOs engaged in children's protection and rights safeguard, have actively promoted research projects about children and new media. The annual National Report on Childhood and Youth of Telefono Azzurro has introduced a special section dedicated to risks and opportunities related to media consumption. Recently Save The Children funded research on social networking.*
>
> (Italy)

The Role of the EC

As has become evident, the role of EU has been indispensable in a number of ways for many, if not all 21 countries examined here. **Although Table 22 charts specifically national political initiatives, the EU has played a significant role in initiating research politically. For example:**

- The major Eurobarometer survey was initiated by the EC. As noted in earlier chapters, such studies sometimes provide the main information we have about children and the internet in some countries where there are relatively fewer specifically national studies.

  In the case of Spain, the EC has also been responsible for contributing research to one of the few studies on internet safety and Children, "*Safer Internet For Children. Qualitative Study in 29 European Countries", in December in April 2007.*

- The Italian example below also underlines the background influence of the EC's work in this area, as acknowledged earlier in the Estonian example.

  Partially thanks to the propulsion of EC politics, during the years 2001-2006 there have been many government recommendations, discussion documents, ministerial reports which for the first time focused on the Italian delay in ICT diffusion and on the possible political strategies for promoting the E-Society. Since this period, Istat (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica – Central Institute of Statistic) has started to introduce into its surveys on cultural consumption a specific section dedicated to ICT availability and the range of usage in Italian families. At the same time, trade association of media and ICT industries have begun to write and publish annual reports about technological endowment of Italian families, showing data and features of the national digital divide.

Finally, in terms of more general comparative cross-national research, the European Commission has played an increasingly active role, for example in promoting media literacy as one of the key instruments in supporting a safer internet environment. In December 2007 it established a Media Literacy Expert Group and issued a Communication on *Media Literacy in the Digital Environment,* subsequently adopted by the Council of Ministers.

Finally, a research study on *Current trends and approaches to media literacy in Europe (2007)*[114] has mapped current practices in implementing media literacy in Europe, and was carried out for the Commission by the Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona in the second half of 2007.

Conclusions

- Political factors, specifically government and to a lesser degree regional bodies, broadly shape the national context of research in a number of ways.

- To date, European influence has been decisive on the national level in creating the impetus for greater awareness and greater research on the impact of the internet on everyday life particularly for children.
- What remains unclear, and a topic for further for research is the extent to which greater domestic and national forces will influence the political agenda and the degree to which NGOs and private sector interests will become more prominent as political actors within the research environment.

4.5 Public Discourses

Cristina Ponte and Joke Bauwens

This chapter addresses the question whether and how public discourses socially shape and in some instances directly penetrate national research agendas in the different European countries by considering the role of 1) the media coverage of young people and online technologies 2) NGOs, such as organisations that devote themselves to child protection, internet safety, and raising risk awareness and finally 3) significant events have influencing in the research agenda of academics and other research institutions.

Table 23 summarises examples that national teams identified, showing public discourses factors have a role to play in shaping research agendas, either major or minor. **In sum, the majority of teams did not identify the influence of all three types *of* public discourse. Where one or more factor was present, this was more likely to be in countries with less national research, lower levels of Internet use among children or a lower level of risk perception.** Moreover, for those that did claim a degree of influence, hard and fast connections between discourse and research were difficult to make, with many suggestions of a more indirect impact on research.

Table 23: Factors that may have influenced the national research

No examples	Examples of media coverage influencing research	Examples of the lobbying of NGOs influencing research	Examples of particular events influencing research
Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Greece, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden	Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Ireland, The Netherlands, UK	Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Spain, UK	Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, UK
9 countries	7 countries	9 countries	7 countries

- Out of the 21 reports, half of the claimed there was no influence of any of the three public discourses on the field of research on young people and online technologies. One explanation for this may the high correlation with countries, except for Greece, that produce a low number of national studies in general.
- Drawing on this last point, of the four countries that identified the influence all three factors influencing their national research (Belgium, Germany, Italy and the UK), two of these lead in the number of national studies in the data repository (Germany and the UK). As will be clearer later, research in these countries has been influenced by

dynamics of particular events and by the pressure that national organisations have put on the public debate.

- With the exception of Sweden and Estonia, where internet use is high among children, most of other countries with high identified at least one factor that had contributed to the research
- In contrast, countries with lower levels of use - Cyprus, Portugal and Greece and countries with medium use - Austria, France, Slovenia and Check Republic could not identify any of these factors.
- Half of the national teams in countries with high-risk perception identified at least one factor and recognise some impact of the public discourse on the research activities. Here the UK leads, identifying the presence of all three factors.

Media Coverage

In order to assess the attention that media pay to young people and online technologies, a two-month (October – November 2007) content analysis of print media coverage in 14 participating countries was conducted. This media analysis illustrated the fact that the different European national print media differ significantly in their coverage of this field. It also showed that in some countries in some countries there is much more limited media coverage of children and the internet than in others. The findings in this section are also based on the more general reflections of all participating academics upon the influence of the media on (their) research.

In general **it appears that mainstream media coverage play some role, at least indirectly, in shaping the national research agenda or at least stimulating the conduct of research in countries. Media coverage as a factor is more frequently mentioned by countries with high levels of internet use such as Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK, than in countries with lower internet use.**

Most of the teams in countries with medium or low internet use by children do not point to connections between media coverage and national research. This seems to suggest that a lower level of internet use among children means there is less to stimulate media coverage of this topic.

However, this relation is not simple, as the two-month analysis shows, and the exceptions suggest that not only the level of internet usage, but also the general cultural attitude towards young people's use of and exposure to online technologies is probably influential here.

For instance, Spain and Italy, two countries with a lower internet use among children, had the highest rate of coverage per newspaper in the short-term two-month media coverage analysis.

In contrast, whereas Denmark has high usage it had lower media coverage. The information on media coverage that was drawn from the national reports is probably based on a long-term view and an overall impression, perception of view of all media coverage (television included). For this reason, the conclusions occasionally conflict with the results achieved in the media coverage analysis that focused only on two months of print media coverage.

Based on the national reports it is impossible to establish some direct connections between, on the one hand, the type and amount of media coverage and, on the other hand, the emergence of research.

However, some patterns and trends could still be identified with respect to the type of media coverage on young people and the Internet:

- Some reports note that media not only perpetrate dystopian and pessimist discourses, but also utopian, optimist discourses about young people and the internet as was noted in Belgium and Italy. In the case of Italy:

  "*it is the overall media coverage that seems to create a specific climate of concern (cyber bullying), of worries (privacy of our children), but also a climate of hope (e.g. the recent*

coverage about the educational opportunities of gaming) that seem to encourage specific types of research"

- However, despite the presence of some positive stories on young people and online technologies, the moral panic framework appears to dominate national media with a focus on the risks rather than the opportunities about the relationship between children and the Internet. In this respect, the influence of the UK news media coverage of the happy-slapping phenomenon on NGOs was stressed in the UK report: "*The media picked up on the phenomenon of happy-slapping. Some NGO commissioned research probably followed from this (e.g. the NCH survey). Certainly one cyberbullying study was commissioned by an NGO.*

In sum, happy slapping-stories (strongly present in the UK and in Germany), news stories on sexual risks and reports on cyber-bullying, presenting young people as both victims and perpetrators, were the media topics most identified as having influenced the national research. However, it is important to note that this kind of media attention does not necessarily reflect children's concerns, as was noted in the case of Ireland.

Finally, other types of influences from the media were identified by some country reports and illustrated below:

- The report from Belgium reflected:

  Academics (social scientists and media and communication scholars in particular) often write their research proposals with a close eye and ear to the public debate. So, one could say that media coverage, in general, does influence the research, mostly implicitly and indirectly, but surely it co-constructs the soil where research proposals and projects stand a good chance of being financed and/or carried out.

- Several national reports point out that there is evidence for assuming that there are strong connections between media coverage, policy priorities and research agendas. In the case of The Netherlands:

  If at all, public discourse has only indirectly influenced research in the Netherlands. Discussions in newspapers and on television on especially online grooming and on internet addiction have contributed to the rise of the Safer internet programme in the Netherlands and policy attention to these matters. As a result of this more research has been done.

- Additionally, specific processes were also identified, such as that of recurrent national and international news stories. For example, the Danish report points to the influence of the year timetable in the amount of media coverage of children's internet use:

  Around August, shortly after schools begin there tends to be more media coverage on issues concerning children and risk issues. This has led to research being commissioned – in the field of obesity and food, at least.

- Larger international news media flows can also have some influence on the national media and the research topics, evidenced in the case of Germany:

  It seems that in the case of Happy Slapping and Cyber Bullying, research was influenced by the media coverage, because this phenomenon was firstly raised up by the media (by presenting isolated cases from other countries, e.g. Great Britain).

Finally, in contrast with the media visibility in several countries, there are also countries where little media coverage can be found, for instance in Bulgaria - in spite of NGO's awareness raising activities. Here it seems that the silence of the media might be symptomatic of the general lack of interest in the online risks that children might encounter when they go online.

The Role of NGO Lobbies

Varying according to different national contexts, NGOs played some part in raising awareness, funding research and sometimes conducting research themselves into Children and the Internet.

- In Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Spain and the UK lobbying of NGOs had some influence on research. Within this group, four of the countries have a high use of internet among children (Belgium, Iceland, Norway and the UK) while three have low internet usage among children (Spain, Italy and Bulgaria).
- In the case of Belgium:

  "It is clear that they play an active role in keeping the issue of Internet safety of the children and safety awareness of children and parents in the public debate. For instance, the Bond (Flanders)/Ligue des Familles (Wallonia), an organisation of family matters, frequently asks attention for this issue in their magazines, on their website and in their education initiatives for parents. As such, this NGO keeps the public and political world sensitive for this issue."
- Other reports noted the influence of particular NGOs oriented to parents, such as in Belgium, Bulgaria and Iceland, addressing teachers, in Bulgaria and Iceland and promoting children's rights (Bulgaria, Norway, Spain and the UK).
- The activism and research of NGOs targeting on children's well being is also noted by the UK and the Polish reports:

  "*Apart from lobbying, a range of NGOs also conduct research. The children's charities are active in this area and regularly commission new research to draw attention to key challenges to children's safety from internet/mobile technologies – examples include the recent bullying survey, the activities of Childnet International, Barnardo's research on child victims of online grooming, etc."*

  (The UK)

  "At the beginning the Nobody's Children Foundation was interested in child abuse by paedophiles, then this expanded to child abuse by the media and the influence of the internet."

  (Poland)
- However, the level of internet use does not in itself help to explain whether NGOs play a dynamic role in shaping the research agenda and field. For example, in Bulgaria, despite low internet use by children and in general a limited amount of research conducted on children and the internet, NGOs have been active in raising awareness about internet safety.

The Influence of Particular Events on the Research Agenda

Finally, **the role and impact of particular and often highly mediatized events can be a further element in shaping national research contexts**. Out of the 21 countries, 7 reported this as a factor in generating or shaping research. Out of the 7, 3 of the countries had a high use of internet by children (Belgium, the UK and Denmark), one had low use (Italy) and the remaining ones had a medium level of use (Germany, Poland and Ireland).

In particular, two types of event were identified as influencing research: particular one-off events that receive high media coverage in their own right and the cumulative or 'drip' effect of seeing the same type of event repeated over time.

Mostly emotionally and morally charged, whether presenting children either as victims or perpetrators, these events are often reported in research. For example in the UK:

> *"The Byron Review, an independent research report for the UK government on the effects of violent media on children, edited in May 2008, refers to some of the on-going concern about the effects of new media, which forms part of the context in which this review was commissioned. And that included killings in the UK (James Bulger, in 1993) and in the US (the Columbine School Massacre, in 1999)."*
>
> (The UK)

As we have seen above, Germany leads in the number of national studies in the data repository and it is interesting to note the different contexts/events that the German report identified as being possibly connected with the national research:

> *"There are some particular events, which have influence on research, for example: a) Problematic events like school shootings or rampages heightened the interest on studies about the impact of violent media on the aggression of adolescents; b) Cases of Cyber bullying in schools raised up the attention for studies about violent media content in the internet and on mobile phones; c) Technological developments in general (e.g. videogames or Web 2.0) and in particular (e.g. the success of the social platform schuelerVZ) rose up interest on questions about the relevance for and use of social software by adolescents; d) Political developments (e.g. reformulation of the Law) drew the attention to the Protection of Minors and improvement of regulation."*
>
> (Germany)

The Irish, the Polish and the Italian reports are more focused on recent times and identify more than one particular event. In Ireland for example:

> [In Ireland],*"two specific stories related to the Internet received massive attention in the national media in the past year (2007). One involved an underage boy who was the victim of statutory rape on more than one occasion at meetings set up on a gay dating website. The other was a suicide pact between a two young men whom in an online community. There have been several other stories that spread moral panic related to paedophiles use of social networking sites that are popular with children."*
>
> (Ireland)

Besides a trial where a known child therapist was accused as a paedophile, largely covered by the media, the Polish report refers to a sexual aggression of a student by peers, a scene filmed with a mobile phone by one of the molesters, where neither the victim nor the other children witnessing the scene reported this event to teachers or parents (the girl committed suicide the next day):

> *"There were long discussions of these events in media. Two weeks later the Minister of Education announced the project on "Zero tolerance for school violence". There were studies undertaken on school aggression by psychologists from Warsaw University and sociologists from the Łódź University on the prevalence, forms, mechanisms and gender difference related to school aggression."*
>
> (Poland)

Pointing also to recent times, the Italian report joins the three factors as part of the public discourse and stresses key events and political contexts as constitutive for the emergent research agenda:

> *"Recently Italian public opinion has become very sensitive especially to the problem of cyber bullying, consequently to a long series of key events emphasized by the press.. This intensive media coverage and the legislative intervention of government could have stimulated some of the studies published at the end of 2007 and focused mainly on mobile phones' usage by children*
>
> (Italy)

In sum, while some countries clearly identify 'hot' moments based on singular cases or events, others point to the media attention to the same kind of recurring events, feeding a continuous presence in the news and contributing to a wave of concern and to the intervention of regulators/policy makers.

Conclusions

Based on the data presented, some cross-national trends and patterns can be identified:

- The inability to precisely identify the influence of public discourses tends to occur more in countries with less national studies in the data repository and with both lower levels of Internet use by children and risk perception.
- In contrast, countries with more national research (Germany and the UK) identified the influence of all three factors: media coverage, the role of NGOs and particular events.
- Countries with high Internet use by children which have also experienced traumatic events receiving enormous media coverage in the past are also among those that also refer the indirect influence of the three factors (UK and Belgium).
- Media coverage as a factor influencing research is more frequently mentioned by countries with high levels of internet use by children. This seems to suggest that a lower level of internet use among children does not stimulate the media coverage of this topic.
- So-called 'moral panic' stories in the media on the risks associated with children's use of the internet can play a role in shaping the national research agenda or of stimulating specific research.
- Some national teams reported examples of academic research, in general and specific projects, being influenced media coverage.
- The ways in which NGOs can have an impact on the agenda, funding and priorities of researchers, is stressed in the majority of country reports.
- Two types of event were identified as influencing research: particular one-off events and the cumulative or 'drip' effect of seeing the same type of event repeated over time. Both can influence research.

4.6 Particular Debates

Liza Tsaliki

The aim of this chapter is twofold. One is to explore whether or not the more frequent occurrence of certain debates in some countries correlates with the existence of a larger number of studies related to these areas. The second is to draw on material from the EU Kids Online national reports to show at what level and how such debates operate, in the attempt to make some sense of the existing concerns within various national contexts.

The first area considered is the commercialisation of childhood. Although the content, contact and conduct risks are reported in chapter 2, Table 10, more detailed information was collected about specific risks such as commercial ones.

In **Table 26** it is clear that some countries have less research on the matter than others. Looking into the percentage of related studies conducted in the data repository of EU Kids Online, although there is a continuum, one can divide the countries into three broad groups. The first group (1) comprises Bulgaria, Cyprus, Iceland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, Greece, Italy, Austria and Estonia Here the level of existing research in the area of the commercialisation of childhood is rather low and ranges of 0-10%.

The next group of countries (2) consists of Denmark, the UK, the Czech Republic, France, Belgium, Spain and Poland, where the rate of related research ranges between 11-20%.

Finally, in group 3, consisting on Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia and Norway, there is a marked higher rate of research on the commercialisation of childhood, with over 20%, (in fact 33% of more) of studies addressing this topic. Obviously one has to be a little careful, because the percentages are also influenced by the fact that the total number of single country studies is in some countries is low.

Table 26: Percentage of studies addressing the commercialisation of childhood by country

Group 1 countries	%	Total number of single country studies[115]	Group 2 countries	%	Total number of single country studies	Group 3 countries	%	Total number of single country studies
Bulgaria	0%	3	Denmark	12%	17	Ireland	33%	6
Cyprus	0%	1	The UK	12%	50			
Iceland	0%	2	The Czech Republic	14%	7	Slovenia	33%	6
Portugal	0%	3	France	14%	7	Norway	44%	9
Sweden	0%	15	Belgium	15%	20			
The Netherlands	0%	9	Spain	17%	12			
Germany	2%	65	Poland	20%	5			
Greece	6%	31						
Italy	6%	18						
Austria	8%	12						
Estonia	10%	10						

Going through the respective national reports of the EU Kids Online project - and taking into account that, as in many other cases, the length and depth of information on the national reports vary, and as a result we are more knowledgeable about some countries in relation to others- here are some points to be made. In Bulgaria, Cyprus, Iceland Greece and Austria. there is little or no debate about the commercialisation of childhood, either at a governmental, media or academic level. For example:

> *In the media these issues are rarely discussed, mostly when there is a special event (e.g. an exhibition of trade marks for children or an EU initiative on advertisement for kids). Some concerns are also uttered in parental papers and in media education settings*
>
> (Austria)

This is interesting because it indicates that the low level of existing studies on the commercialisation of childhood in these countries correlates with the little public debate on this issue. While there is also little debate in the Czech Republic and France there is, however, a medium level of research. A certain amount of debate in Poland correlates with a medium amount of research

> *There had been debates about advertisements, especially on commercial websites for children (where there was little education content and many advertisements). Both media and academics had discussed this. The right wing discusses this in terms of bad content, the left wing discusses it in terms of children's rights.*
> (Poland)

However, in Estonia, Italy, Sweden and the Netherlands there are lively public debate but nevertheless little research – especially vivid for the latter two countries

Turning now to more detailed observations from the national reports about the nature of public discussions, in Belgium, a lively academic debate has taked place while governmental concern has resulted in the banning of all product advertising that targets children before and after children's programmes on commercial media. In Denmark the government as well as the media and academia are also engaged in the matter, the Nordic Media and Communication Research yearbook of 2007, *Children, media and consumption*[116] providing an example of academic debate. In Estonia, there is some media debate about advertising targeted at children (e.g. whether it is too extensive, whether it should be allowed in schools to the current extent etc.). On an academic level, there is a discussion about whether or not consumer culture leads to vulnerable and manipulated children or to empowered and creative ones. In Germany, concerns about the commercialisation of childhood peaked during the nineties, with a great number of studies focusing on children and television advertising. Media phenomena like *Pokémon, Digimon, Dragonball, Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings* and their merchandising, have resulted in making the discussion broader and bringing to attention global and cross-media marketing strategies (see Paus-Hasebrink et al. 2004).

> *Currently, due to online and viral marketing strategies, attention on the topic resurfaced. The Erfurter Netcode, a non-profit organisation which focuses on the quality of websites for children, is one initiative which discusses advertising and marketing-strategies on websites for children*
>
> (Germany)

In Italy, the debate concentrates mainly on television while ICTs receive scant attention. There are various consumer protection organisations at work here that generally denounce the close relationship between the media exposure of children and their consumption choices regarding food, clothing and new gadgets which are used as status symbol especially among teenagers. When it comes to academic debate, in Italy, the commercialisation of childhood has been discussed mainly by psychologists and pedagogues focusing on the relationship between children and commercial spots broadcast on television. In Norway, there has been widespread concern about the commercialisation of childhood in the Norwegian media, expressed by both the government and academia[117]. In Portugal, the debate originates mostly within Marketing Studies that focus on the potential of children as consumers. In Spain, there is public concern TV advertising directed at children. In Britain, concern at academic, public, governmental level has been pinpointed for some time now[118].

Looking into the level of discussion on children's rights and their participation in civil society, it seems that this is, overall, an under-discussed issue, as only a few countries have a marginally better track record to show in comparison to others. Using data from the EU Kids Online data repository, here is the picture that emerges:

Table 27: Percentage of studies addressing civic/political participation of children by country

	Civic/ political participation	N
Austria	17%	12
Belgium	0%	20
Bulgaria	33%	3
Cyprus	-	-
Czech Republic	14%	7
Denmark	13%	16
Estonia	0%	9
France	0%	7
Germany	0%	65
Greece	0%	20
Iceland	0%	2
Ireland	17%	6
Italy	6%	17
Norway	0%	8
Poland	13%	5
Portugal	0%	3
Slovenia	0%	6
Spain	17%	12
Sweden	33%	13
The Netherlands	15%	9
The UK	8%	49

Base: Single country studies excluding Masters and PhDs

There is a group of countries where there is no research on the civic/political participation of children: Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Norway, Portugal and Slovenia have nothing to show in this respect whereas in Italy and the UK only 6% and 8% respectively of academic research on children is actually devoted to the study of their political participation.

The next group of countries consists of Denmark, the Czech Republic, Austria, Ireland and Spain in this case, the percentage of national studies on civic/political participation of children ranges between 13% and 17%. This is followed by Bulgaria and the Sweden which show the highest proportion of relevant research among the EU Kids Online countries (33% in each case). One must, as always, be careful in interpreting percentages since there reflect different total numbers of studies in each country. Overall, it seems that the relative to other topics the civic/political participation of children does not feature as a major research issue and is actually under-researched across the EU.

We can compare the level of existing research on children participation in civil life and the degree of public discussion of children's rights, which, although not being identical issues, share an understanding of the child as an autonomous agent whose rights implicitly include political rights. In Cyprus, France, and Sweden, there is no reported public discussion on children's rights, which corresponds to the total absence of research on polical/civic participation. However, in Estonia, despite the lack of research, there is some low level of public discussion;

> *There is some debate in the media and academia, but it is not very prominent* (Estonia).

In Bulgaria and the Netherlands, the two instances with the highest score of related research (33%), there is some public discussion going on (though the national reports do not provide more specific information). For example:

> *In 2007-2008, a working group of four professors from Sofia University developed a project for a National Strategy for Human Rights Education in schools*
>
> (Bulgaria).

In Belgium, Greece, Denmark, Portugal and Italy there is some prominent discussion taking place despite the absence of such research;

> *In Flanders, there is the so-called Children's Rights Centre, founded in 1998; in Wallonia, there is the Observatoire de l'Enfance, de la Jeunesse et de l'Aide à la Jeunesse, founded in 2004. Both organisations contribute to a better understanding of young people's rights and participation in civil life; in Flanders, the research centre Child and Society is also devoted to a more participatory approach of children*
>
> (Belgium).

In Greece, there was very little activity regarding the rights of children until 2003- when the Children's Rights Ombudsman was set up as part of the Greek Ombudsman, an independent authority, accountable to the Parliament, set up in 1997 in order to protect citizen rights.

> *The mission of the Children's Rights Ombudsman is to defend and protect the rights of all minors under 18; the authority, which liaises with the Greek school network, is also responsible for raising awareness on the rights of children, as well as for ensuring they participate in the matters that concern them and that their voices are heard.*
>
> (Greece)

2008 was another important year regarding the rights of children in Greece, since the National Observatory for the Rights of Children was set up within the General Secretariat for Youth. Young students in Greece experience some level of political participation in the form of 'student councils', which are elected annually by secret ballot at school level, and the 'Parliament of Youth', an educational programme set up for the first time in 1994 by the Greek Parliament that involves 'educating' young adolescents in constitutional and civic affairs by role playing in the Greek Parliament.

The Faculty of Law at the University of Coimbra in Portugal has for some years run a post-graduate course on Children's Rights, based on the juridical perspective. A focus on participatory rights is much more recent, and it is now emerging in universities. At a governmental level, there is an initiative from the National Commission for Child Protection.

In Italy, the debate about the rights of children is encouraged mainly by NGOs like Unicef and Telefono Azzurro, as well as other minor civil associations less known at a national level but very active in local contexts. The annual report about Childhood and Youth from Telefono Azzurro receives very strong media coverage each year. Another important contribution comes from the C*entro Nazionale di Documentazione per l'Infanzia e l'Adolescenza* – the National Centre for Documentation and Analysis for Childhood and Youth - and is one of the most important tools used by the Italian government, the Parliament and local institutions for promoting safe childhood through policy initiatives and communication campaigns. However:

> *Despite these numerous activities that undoubtedly witness a national culture sensitive to childhood, Italy still gets left behind in the establishment of a national independent authority for childhood and youth rights, as provided in 1990 by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*
>
> (Italy)

Judging from Table 27, in Iceland and the United Kingdom the level of discussion of rights is more intense than the level of research into children's political participation:

In Iceland, the children's ombudsman has set up for several years now a programme aimed at engaging young people in debating various issues

(Iceland).

In the United Kingdom, there is some material on children's rights (coming from those working in the sociology of childhood and social policy) but it does not enjoy high visibility. There is more on participation in civil life, trying to get children involved politically and as citizens (e.g. by Ruth Lister, Stephan Coleman, Brian Loader)

(The UK).

It is only in Germany and Norway where the level of public discussion of rights corresponds with the rate of research in children's political participation. In Germany, there are many institutions which promote the rights and participation of children on different levels, e.g. for preschool children, in schools, in extracurricular context, etc. In the current public discourse, it seems that subjects like child poverty or social discrimination have the most relevance in this respect. In conjunction with this, programmes and projects regarding the rights of children have increased since the end of the 1990s - although due consideration has to be paid to the fact that the activities are very different in the different Federal States. Since 2000, some experts argue there has been a general modification in the perception of children, increasingly taking into account children's perspective and their participation[119]. Norway is another example of an attempt to enhance political participation of young people:

There is a recent public and political debate about allowing 16 year olds to vote in parliamentary and local elections (voting age at present is 18)[120]

(Norway).

In Austria, the Czech Republic and Spain there exists a low level of public discussion which can be seen to match the moderate level of research on the issue. For example,

In Austria there is the beginning of such a 'problematique', as exemplified in the initiative to establish children's rights in the Austrian constitution. The Institute for Democracy in Lower Austria offers courses for pedagogues on political education, while the Media-Educational Advisory Centre at the Lower Austrian State Academy discusses political participation of young people (through the mass media) in courses for social education workers and so forth. The media coverage of this topic is not very extensive, as is also the academic debate.

(Austria)

In the Czech Republic the issue of the rights of children and the participation in civil life only recently emerged – in fact, as an after-effect of a media scandal that broke up in spring 2007 (whereby the Czech police discovered a case of two children having been brutally molested by an allegedly religious group). There was – and still is – a heavy debate concerning the fact that the TV and tabloids repeatedly showed photos and videos of these children, subjecting them thereby to a secondary victimization.

(The Czech Republic)

In Spain, there is some public concern about protecting children but there is no interest in promoting their participation in civil life.

(Spain)

The final debate considered is whether or not there is national concern about public spaces posing a threat for children, although in this particular case we cannot make comparisons with any specific research areas covered in the data repository. Nevertheless, the reason why this is salient is that it has the potential to make children's domestic use of the internet, as well as the use of ICTs in general, attractive to parents if there are concerns about the alternative of children spending time in public spaces. There is an implicit comparison here between the perceived risks

of the real world, here the risks associated with public spaces, compared to risks in the virtual world.

In some national contexts, such concerns seem to be totally non-existent. This is the case for Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France and Iceland. The Dutch national report only mentions that such a debate exists in the Netherlands. In Greece, there has been the odd newspaper article, written by architects, debating the loss and decline of public space in Athens, but other than that the issue of children safety on public spaces receives scant attention[121].

There are also countries where there appears to be no ground for concern. Children are not regarded as being particularly vulnerable in Spanish public spaces. Certainly Spanish parents tend to be more protective nowadays, as they have fewer children and new technological devices, such as mobile phones, give them the chance to protect their children and control their whereabouts. That said, Spanish children are still allowed to spend a good deal of time playing in public spaces in comparison with many other European countries. Moreover, in Spain there has not been moral panic about youth generally. In a similar vein, in Sweden, parents do ferry their children around in the car to sports centres, and elsewhere, but this happens because of logistical consideration (it is often impractical for the children to travel alone to these places) rather than because the outside world is seen as being dangerous.

In the course of investigating the relationship between concerns and research, as has occurred frequently in this report, a very complex picture emerged. Clearly what counted as a debate or concern could occur on a range of levels and in a variety of guises. To illustrate this further, heightened concern about public spaces being dangerous for children in Belgium has resulted in NGOs initiating a vivid discussion about the disappearance and abduction of children. In Flanders, the research centre Child and Society is also devoted to a more constructive approach to the public space debate. In Norway, adults and parents have set up themselves a number of places where they can be present with the youngsters. These organised efforts are called *Natteravnene*.

The NGOs in Portugal are also active, a number of them (APSI, DECO) having presented an analysis of the safety of urban spaces in an attempt to promote new public policies. One such effort, one of the most visible, focused on children's safety on public transports and received considerable media attention in 2005. There is also some academic research on the ways children experience the spaces where they live.

The issue has recently drawn media and academic attention in Estonia, especially about youngsters "hanging out" without any "meaningful purpose" in shopping malls. In Norway, there is some media attention related to youngsters being out in cities, especially during weekend evenings, and to their drinking age.

Governmental agencies work closely with the public broadcaster in Germany, discussing the specific risks of road traffic, which leads to restrictions on the mobility (and hence room for experience) of children and conflicts between adolescents in public spaces. Having said that, the relevance of public spaces for the development of children is also a topic in German academic research, which often emphasises opportunities and how to make public space safer for children rather than recommending that children have to stay at home.

Perhaps the most clearly articulated debate regarding children's safety when outdoors takes place in the United Kingdom, reflecting upon children's greater absence from unsupervised public spaces[122]. The related practice of children socialising with peers in their home has been identified as 'Bedroom Culture'. In the last decade or two has also seen the process whereby there has been a growing concern for children's safety in public spaces. The UK "Young People, New Media" study of children and ICTs described how parents felt under pressure to keep their children indoors[123].

Conclusions

- The level of public debate about the commercialisation of childhood, children's rights and the dangers to children in public spaces varies by country and the more detailed comments illustrate how such concerns can be manifest in different ways through different channels.
- Across countries it very difficult to find an absolutely systematic link between the level of concern and the actual amount of related research – at least for the first two debates outlined above. Perhaps more clearly in the case of the commercialisation of childhood at best one can say that in quite a few countries there is some relation between a high and low level of debate and a greater and lesser number of relevant studies.
- Debates about the safety of children in public space vary by country, but can be relevant to parents allowing their children domestic access to the online world as an alternative 'space' where they can spend time.

5. Summary and Conclusion

Overview

The report investigated the contextual factors that influence what research takes place and, where possible, asked why different aspects of children and the Internet are researched, or not, drawing from national studies of 21 different European countries. The important task in this report has been to identify the specific contextual processes affecting research and the areas where it was possible to compare whether these vary between countries.

In sum, the overall findings can be summarised as follows:

Academic base, disciplines and lower age limit of general population studies

- The academic base (number of universities) in European countries is highly correlated to the population since but less strongly correlated with the number of studies conducted on children and the internet. Nonetheless, the size of an academic base can, but not always, be a useful indication of the quantity of research available in each country.
- Measuring the number of disciplinary departments is problematic. However, in principle the effect of disciplines was illustrated by the case of media and communications departments, where several countries with more of these departments had more studies of children and the internet
- In the case of general studies of internet use in the population, both in terms of the official and non-Government surveys, there is a considerable national variation in the range of lower age limits of these surveys in different countries. This means there are more data on younger children available in some countries (e.g. Nordic ones) compared to others.

Institutional Processes

- There are generally no strong direct regulations relating to the ethics of what can and cannot be researched in the 21 countries studied. Where rules exist they are ‘softer’, for example, relating to getting parental permission for child studies
- How funding is managed, as opposed to the sources of funding, influences the amount of studies and the topics being researched, at the national, institutional and the personal level.
- Awareness of ethical best practices, in some countries organised at the national level but primarily expressed in relation to the institutional check-up policies, may vary by country.
- National research histories and traditions in combination with the origins of new research fields in older research disciplines and with the different timing of when new media and communication technologies appear in different countries may all influence national patterns of research.
- The connection in many countries between the levels of penetration of the internet and the academic awareness of this as a being an important and interesting research area may shape research.
- In many countries academics are under increasing pressure to research and specifically publish research. This relates to the opportunities for potential academic promotion, access to further funding and publishing as a general standard for measuring levels of research.
- Increasing demand at the political and the institutional level for research cooperation between industry and academia can and does influence research.

- There is tendency for research council funding to be increasingly directed towards strategic research but the fact that researchers are invited to suggest projects in certain areas can cause different patterns of national research.

Funding

- Based on the findings, it was possible to create a typology of funding to classify countries, taking into account the range of funding and relative predominance of public, academic and commercial sources. However, this produces no clear correlation between the overall structure of funding and the amount of research: having a large amount of research can result from different funding structures.
- Nations with diverse funding sources (the UK, Belgium, Germany, Sweden) are shown to produce research on a relatively wide range of topics although this can also occur for some countries with less diversity in funding.
- Perhaps surprisingly, the overall patterns of funding – in terms of the proportion of public, commercial, academic and non-profit resources – seem to have little influence on which topics are researched in the different countries.
- The basic figures on children's use of online media are of the same interest for both public and commercial institutions.
- The interests of specific funders of research differ between European countries. Public institutions like national or regional governments, ministries, regulation authorities or research councils in one country may seek different kind of data from their counterparts in others, while commercial companies, say, in Germany are possibly interested in different aspects of children's online use than, say, in the UK.
- There are several issues that are mainly addressed by public institutions or to a minor extent by academic funding: interpreting online content; identity play; social networking and learning online.
- Commercial funding is relatively important for research on concerns and frustrations, search strategies, privacy risks and online gaming.
- Studies on risks, which are of special interest for EU Kids Online, are most frequently financed by commercial and public institutions. While companies rather focus on contact and privacy risks, the European Commission deals more often with content and commercial risks.
- The relevance of the EC is especially high for nations with fewer data, with limited diversity concerning funding bodies and with few single country studies collecting data only for their own population.

Political Actions

- Examples were provided of how political factors, specifically government and to a lesser degree regional bodies, broadly shape the national context of research in a number of ways.
- National governments are the most central actors in creating the climate for research into the area of children and the internet. Of the countries included in our analysis, about half reported government-initiated research studies. Apart from examples of government initiatives leading to new research they can also lead to an expansion of the data already collected relating to children's use of the internet. Related examples of political initiatives included occasionally, the regional governments and the regulator.
- Examples were provided showing how attempts to introduce the internet into schools, initiatives to train teachers in internet use and awareness raising campaigns have also led to empirical studies. While these are often government influenced, some arise from commercial initiatives.

- There are some, but fewer, examples of changes in media regulation and self-regulation leading to research.
- EC funding is pivotal to the conduct, financing and proliferation of funding research and played a major role in shaping research.

Public Discourses

- Media coverage as a factor influencing research is more frequently mentioned by countries with high levels of internet use by children. This seems to suggest that a lower level of internet use among children does not stimulate the media coverage of this topic.
- In countries with higher use of the internet among children, media coverage – including media panics – may play a greater role in setting the research agenda or, at least, in stimulating the instigation of research.
- Some national teams reported examples of academic research, in general and specific projects, being influenced by media coverage.
- Various national teams also reported examples of academic research, in general and specific projects, being influenced by the activities of NGOs.
- Two types of event were identified as influencing research: particular one-off events and the cumulative or 'drip' effect of seeing the same type of event repeated over time. Both can influence research.

Particular Debates

- The level of public debate about the commercialisation of childhood, children's rights and the dangers to children in public spaces varies by country.
- In the case of the commercialisation of children, there was some indication that in certain countries the debates, or lack of them, did correlate with the amount of related research. This was less clear for children's rights, which appeared to generally attraction less attention.
- Debates about the safety of children in public space vary by country, but can be relevant to parents allowing their children domestic access to the online world as an alternative 'space' where they can spend time.

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Annex A: EU Kids Online

European Research on Children's Safe Use of the Internet and New Media, see www.eukidsonline.net

EU Kids Online is a thematic network examining European research on cultural, contextual and risk issues in children's safe use of the Internet and new media between 2006 and 2009. This network is not funded to conduct new empirical research but rather to identify, compare and draw conclusions from existing and ongoing research across Europe.

It is funded by the European Commission's Safer Internet plus Programme (see http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/index_en.htm) and coordinated by the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics, guided by an International Advisory Board and liaison with national policy/NGO advisors.

EU Kids Online encompasses research teams in 21 member states, selected to span the diversity of country and of academic discipline or research specialism: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands and The United Kingdom.

The objectives, to be achieved via seven work packages, are:

- To identify and evaluate available data on children's and families' use of the Internet and new online technologies, noting gaps in the evidence base (WP1)
- To understand the research in context and inform the research agenda (WP2)
- To compare findings across diverse European countries, so as to identify risks and safety concerns, their distribution, significance and consequences (WP3)
- To understand these risks in the context of the changing media environment, cultural contexts of childhood and family, and regulatory/policy contexts (WP2&3)
- To enhance the understanding of methodological issues and challenges involved in studying children, online technologies, and cross-national comparisons (WP4)
- To develop evidence-based policy recommendations for awareness-raising, media literacy and other actions to promote safer use of the Internet/online technologies (WP5)
- To network researchers across Europe to share and compare data, findings, theory, disciplines, methodological approaches, etc. (WP1-7)

Main outputs are planned as follows:

- *Data Repository*: a public, searchable resource for empirical research (now online)
- Report on *Data Availability*: a mapping of what is known and not known (Sept 2007)
- Preliminary Report *Comparing Three Countries* (Sept 2007)
- *Methodological Issues Review* (Sept 2007)
- Report on *Cross-National Comparisons* over 18 Countries (Sept 2008)
- *Best Practice Research Guide* (for future research in this field; Sept 2008)
- Report: *Cross-Cultural Contexts of Research* (March 2009)
- *Final Conference* (June 2009)
- Report: *Summary and Recommendations* (June 2009)
- *Final Report* and *Book* (Sept 2009)

For further information, see www.eukidsonline.net or contact p.tsatsou@lse.ac.uk

Annex B: Network Members

Country	Institution	Researchers
Austria	University of Salzburg	Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink
		Christina Ortner
		Christine Wijnen
		Andrea Dürager
Belgium	Catholic University of Leuven	Leen D'Haenens
		Verónica Donoso
		Bieke Zaman
	Free University of Brussels	Nico Carpentier
		Katia Segers
		Joke Bauwens
Bulgaria	GERT	Jivka Marinova
		Mariya Gencheva
		Maria Dimitrova
		Ilina Dimitrova
	Internet Rights Bulgaria Foundation	Christina Haralanova
Cyprus	Cyprus Neuroscience and Technology Institute	Yiannis Laouris
		Tatjana Taraszow
Czech Republic	Masaryk University, Brno	Jaromir Volek
		Vaclav Stetka
Denmark	IT University, Copenhagen	Gitte Stald
		Jeppe Jensen
Estonia	University of Tartu	Veronika Kalmus
		Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt

		Anda Zule
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		Pille Runnel
		Kadri Ugur
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		Cédric Fluckiger
Germany	Hans Bredow Institute For Media Research	Uwe Hasebrink
		Claudia Lampert
Greece	London School of Economics	Liza Tsaliki
		Despina Chronaki
		Valia Papadimitraki
Iceland	University of Iceland	Thorbjorn Broddason
		Gudberg K. Jonsson
	University of Akureyri Research Institute	Kjartan Olafsson
Ireland	Dublin Institute of Technology	Brian O'Neill
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		Marion Duimel
		Esther Rozendaal
	University of Amsterdam	Patti Valkenburg
The UK	London School of Economics and Political Science	Sonia Livingstone
		Leslie Haddon
		Panayiota Tsatsou

Endnotes

[1] In countries where there was a good deal of research, these studies had a lower priority and were not collected (e.g. in the UK). But they were collected in ones where there was less overall research on children and the Internet. In fact, Portugal had quite a few Masters theses in the repository and relatively few other studies, whereas Sweden and Austria had both.

[2] In addition, the particular topics of Masters degrees may reflect particular processes at work in the country concerned. For example, educational research is strongly represented in the collection of Portuguese studies since this in large part reflects the pressure on teachers to take part on graduate courses in order to help career. But in practice this also led to a disproportionate amount of research in schools rather than, say, in more informal settings.

[3] Number of single country studies excluding MAs and PhDs. Note, the N is not identical to Table 1 – where the data on topics was noted coded that study was excluded

[4] In keeping with the early decision, all these tables exclude MAs, PhDs and multi-country studies.

[5] Exposure to illegal content, exposure to harmful content, encountering sexual/violent/racist/hate material, misinformation, (problematic) user-generated content, challenging content (e.g. suicide, anorexia, drugs, etc.), contact with strangers, cyberbullying, advertising/commercial exploitation,, illegal downloading, gambling, giving out personal information, invasion of privacy and hacking.

[6] Although it was now important to show the prevalence of the clusters content, contact and conduct studies for the work of WP2, the problem was that this involved classifying the original list of risks into the 3 new clusters. In many cases this was straightforward: on balance most studies of a certain type fitted into one of the three general types of risk, one of the 3 Cs. However, in the case of one of the original risks - 'advertising/commercial exploitation' risk – there was a problem because with no further information this could be content or conduct (other risks in that first list fitted into conduct). On checking the repository, the titles of the actual studies were often rather general, so this provided no clue as to the cluster in which to put the various advertising/commercial exploitation items. Especially given the timing of the exercise, it was impractical to ask all EU Kids Online national teams to go back to check the details of the original research and re-classify it. Hence the solution adopted was to check whether studies involving advertising had other risks that could be classified as being content, contact or both and classify the advertising ones accordingly, assuming some consistency across questions, e.g. if the other items all involve only content, the advertising one will also be of that nature.

[7] If there is at least one study of access, this counts as a score of one, and so on for the other topics, giving a top score of 28.

[8] Hence each country can achieve a maximum score of 7 if they cover them all.

[9] Excluding MAs and PhDs

[10] This was also the experience of the Portuguese team, for example.

[11] The original interest was in the overall amount of research there is in a country, but this would be difficult to measure. The only measurable unit where data are available in all the countries is number of universities. The main single alternative source to academic research was commercial research, accounting for only 18% of all studies, varying by country, and problematically this research is not always publicly accessible. In sum, while it has its limitations, the number of universities is used as proxy for the amount of overall research.

[12] This would be even more true of newer subjects like New Media, IT and Society and Informatics

[13] In Bulgaria the study of mess media can include Public Relations, Public Communication and Book Publishing; in Greece in can include Publicity, Marketing, Public Relations.

[14] Moreover, the internet tends to be studied by academics based in philosophy, discussing more general effects on society than conducting empirical studies of internet behaviour.

[15] In the near future this age limit will be 14 years old in regard to research undertaken through Statistik Austria.

[16] Statistics Service of Cyprus

[17] The Czech Statistics Office

[18] The General Household Survey (GHS), the Family Expenditure Survey (FES) and the Omnibus Survey by the Office of National Statistics (a private body, but the data is paid for by the government)

[19] OIVO-CROC, the research centre of the consumer organisations but funded by the federal Government. In addition there are regional statistic bodies for Flanders and Wallonia that collect such data

[20] The State Information Office (RISO) (through private market research bureaux) and the National Statistics Office

[21] ComReg

[22] Portuguese Official Statistics Department (INE) – there are current plans to lower the age limit to 8.

[23] The National Statistics Institution

[24] The Federal statistical Office.

[25] National Statistical Service of Greece, Observatory for the Greek Information Society.

[26] The State Agency for Information Technologies and the National Statistics Institute.

[27] Credoc

[28] Statistics Netherlands (CBS). But for younger children parents are asked about their children's activities

[29]Central Statistical Centre (ISTAT)

[30] Statistical Office RS

[31] National Bureau of Statistics (Norwegian Media Barometer)

[32] The Swedish Government funds the collection of data by Nordicom, for the Media Barometer.

[33] This is data by the Ministry of culture. The cut off point for Statistics Denmark is 16 years old

[34] In-Sites Consulting

[35] FDIM, The Association of Danish Internet Media.

[36] Austrian Internet Monitor, GfK online Monitor, Media-Analyses

[37] ARD/ZDF and (N)Onliner Atlas

[38] The Oxis survey by the Oxford Internet Institute

[39] Mediametrie

[40] Czech Internet Project

[41] TNS Gallup Norway.

[42] RIS project at Ljubljana University

[43] The Estonian governments buys this data from a market research company each year, covering 6-14 year olds.

[44] ISTAT collects data on the media consumption of 11-19 year olds every 2 years, as has conduced studies with children from 6 years old.

[45] A survey of lifestyle, interests, consumer activity and leisure time activities of 12-24 year olds

[46] InSites Consulting, continuing the Belgian Online Study looking at the evolution of New Media for ages 6-11, 12-17 and 18-24.

[47] The National Centre for the Study of Public Opinion (NCIOM) is occasional commissioned to do research e.g. in 2006 on 12-17 year olds.

[48] Confindustria, a trade association.

[49] 'The Internet and Youth' by IVO

[50] Yes, partly

[51] Yes, at university level

[52] At university level

[53] Yes internal and external

[54] Yes in practice not by law

[55] No, not within sociology/media studies

[56] Yes, but it varies locally

[57] Yes, but it varies locally

[58] Only except studies that fall under te jurisdiction of the Data Protection Authority or the National Bioethics Committee.

[59] Yes / university level

[60] Yes, partly

[61] Yes, when applying for external funding

[62] Applications to the Ministry and Science and Higher Education must pass an ethical committee and research on children need the permission of school principal, parents, children, and the ethical committee at the research institution.

[63] Yes - formally

[64] But academic research proposals are peer reviewed for scientific quality.

[65] Regarding the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP), internal check.

[66] In Belgium, Denmark and Iceland especially bio-ethical regulations are mentioned, in Denmark with the notion that research on children in this area has to be especially aware of ethical considerations.

[67] No, but researchers are encouraged to research

[68] No, but funding interest

[69] No, but personal interests

[70] This is reported for the IT University of Copenhagen, but universities may prioritize differently. The ratio is in general around 50/50.

[71] http://www.eua.be/bologna-universities-reform/

[72] This part does not cover research in general but areas of interest for studies of children and online media:

Quantitative and qualitative studies within the social sciences, education, and the humanities and studies of mass media such as TV and radio. Regarding history of studies of the internet, however, we asked for the internet generally, as this is likely to have influenced the interest in and conduct of research in children and the internet.

[73] Yes quantitative methods are used in general but not in communication studies whereas qualitative traditions are not general except in communication studies.

[74] Denmark, Italy and Slovenia: Traditionally not in the humanities, but in social sciences and media studies.

[75] Yes, but it depends on specific area as it does in Italy (media studies) and Portugal (educational studies).

[76] Yes, now quantitative studies are used in Portugal.

[77] In Slovenia "some projects include qualitative methods", while it is "Yes, but less" in Spain and The Netherlands.

[78] Quantitative methods are predominant in relevant areas in Spain.

[79] First study on Radio

[80] Even if there is a strong tradition for film studies, dating back to (check year), but focusing on film as art.

[81] Based on data from EU KidsOnline report D3.2: *Comparing children's online opportunities and risks across Europe:*

Cross-national comparisons for EU Kids Online. The categories were:

Group 1: Countries, in which more than 80 per cent of the young online users access the internet at home.

Group 2: Countries with more than 58 and less than 70 per cent using the internet at home.

Group 3: Countries with less than 50 per cent of young online users who use the internet at home.

[82] Yes, but seldom in Austria, Estonia and Sweden, while the Czech report says: “No, seldom”.

[83] Austria, Sweden and The Netherlands say “yes, but seldom”.

[84] Yes, increasingly in the Czech republic and Ireland.

[85] In Estonia, Germany Greece and Iceland the reports state that the primary argument is to ensure funding.

[86] It happens “sometimes” in Greece and Norway, and “regularly” in Belgium .

[87] Yes but primarily through personal networks

[88] No, in Italy and Norway, it doesn’t happen in social science, the humanities and media studies)

[89] Yes, but more often the other way around,

[90] No, but it is considered desirable.

[91] Yes, it is strongly encouraged

[92] This information comes from the provost at the IT University of Copenhagen but it is increasingly being implemented in a number of universities and research departments.

[93] In Cyprus there is the Research Promotion Foundation which to some degree equals research councils in other countries.

[94] Yes, one of two councils does so

[95] Yes, the strategic research council does so

[96] Yes, in specific areas in Estonia, Norway, Portugal, Sweden

[97] No, but they recommend specific areas

[98] Yes, but to researchers known by the ministry

[99] Yes, but in other area than online media

[100] Yes, and researchers are also specially invited.

[101] Yes, research plans favours specific areas

[102] The general Research Councils do not do this. But in Sweden there are some research councils that have a special focus – e.g. the Knowledge Foundation (interested in IT).

[103] Yes, but not lately

[104] http://videnskabsministeriet.dk/site/forside/nyheder/pressemeddelelser/2006/Forskningidenkoldekrig

[105] http://imv.net.dynamicweb.dk/Default.aspx?ID=65

[106] http://www.forskningsradet.no/en/Home+page/1177315753906

[107] Communication, ICT, and Media Program: http://www.forskningsradet.no/en/Funding/KIM/1049653792087

[108] Samfunnsvitenskapelige og kulturelle forutsetninger for Informasjons- og Kommunikasjonsteknologi – Societal and cultural premises for ICT:

http://www.forskningsradet.no/servlet/Satellite?cid=1088005959163&pagename=skikt%2FPage%2FHovedSide.

[109] As noted in earlier chapters, the emphasis is on single countries not on the overall picture on a European level.

[110] Research financed by public-service broadcasters are counted as public form of funding, because in the three countries were this kind of funding exists (UK, Belgium, Germany) the public-service broadcast stations receive their money to a large extent from public fees and less from commercial activities.

[111] For example some (market) research institutes in Austria conducted studies on the internet use of teenagers. As these institutes financed these studies themselves the studies were coded in this category. However, the findings of the surveys are not publicly available but can only be obtained by paying. As the costs of the institutes are refinanced through selling the results, this could be seen as a form of commercial rather than academic funding.

[112] In Iceland, 90% of the studies are funded by public bodies, one by commercial bodies and on by a non-profit-organisation (see. Table 1).

[113] 'Political' is here deliberately used very broadly, but chiefly focusing on government activities.

[114] http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media_literacy/studies/index_en.htm

[115] Excluding Masters and PhDs

[116] Ekström, Karin M. and Tufte, Birgitte: Children, media and consumption, 2007.

[117] The Norwegian Public Documents published in 2001 the *Oppvekst med prislapp. Om* http://ncom.nordicom.gu.se/ncom/research/children_media_and_consumption(41702)/*kommersialisering og kjøpepress mot barn og unge* (Childhood with a price tag. About the commercialization of and buying pressure towards children and young people). Two recent government initiatives include a webpage for parents and a recent brochure called "Blir du påvirket? (Are you influenced?), both to be used for raising consciousness about advertising and commercial pressure in secondary school. Recent academic concern about this topic has resulted in the research project "Consuming Children" and the recent conference on "Child and Teen Consumption 2008".

[118] Two of the best known academic publications on this theme are David Buckingham's 'After the Death of Childhood: Growing up in the Age of Electronic Media', Polity Press, Cambridge, and Buckingham and Bragg's 'Sex and the media'. The National Consumer Association has funded research on children's awareness of commercialisation on the Internet - in its report Fielder, A., Gardner, W., Nairn, A. and Pitt, J. (2008) Fair game? Assessing commercial activity on children's favourite websites and online environments, National Consumer Association, London. Finally, the DCSF has commissioned a review on commercialism on the Internet and children, currently underway.

[119] Current initiatives include "Participation and international youth work" at the Ministry for Family, Seniors and Youth (http://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/generator/Politikbereiche/Kinder-und-Jugend/partizipation.html); the Ministry also launched a website for children (www.kinder-ministerium.de | "ministry for children"), where young children can find information about their rights. In June 2008, the Ministry organised an event for adolescents "who want to make a difference" (http://www.du-machst.de). From 2002-2007, the Commission of the Confederation (Bund-Länder-Kommission) – responsible for school development – had a special programme which focused on "Learning and Living Democracy". The project was sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Research and the Commission of the Confederation (http://www.blk-demokratie.de/index.php?id=83). Another important player is the Bertelsmann Foundation which has started the initiative "mitWirkung!" ("withImpact!") which wants to force the participation of children and adolescents; similarly, the German Children and Youth Foundation is another important player in this context. "Learning Democracy" is one the central topics of the foundation. One example for a project is *Youth bank* where Adolescents have the opportunity to apply for money for realising projects (www.youthbank.de).

[120] In fact, the issue has been the major focus in a lot of the research performed at NOSEB, the Norwegian Centre for Child Research, NTNU.

[121] Having said that, the focus of the discussion is on the deterioration of urban space in Athens rather than the (safe or not) use of public space by young children

[122] Livingstone, S. (2002), *Young People and New Media*, London: Sage

[123]Livingstone, S. and Bovill, M. (1999). *Young People, New Media*, London: London School of Economics.