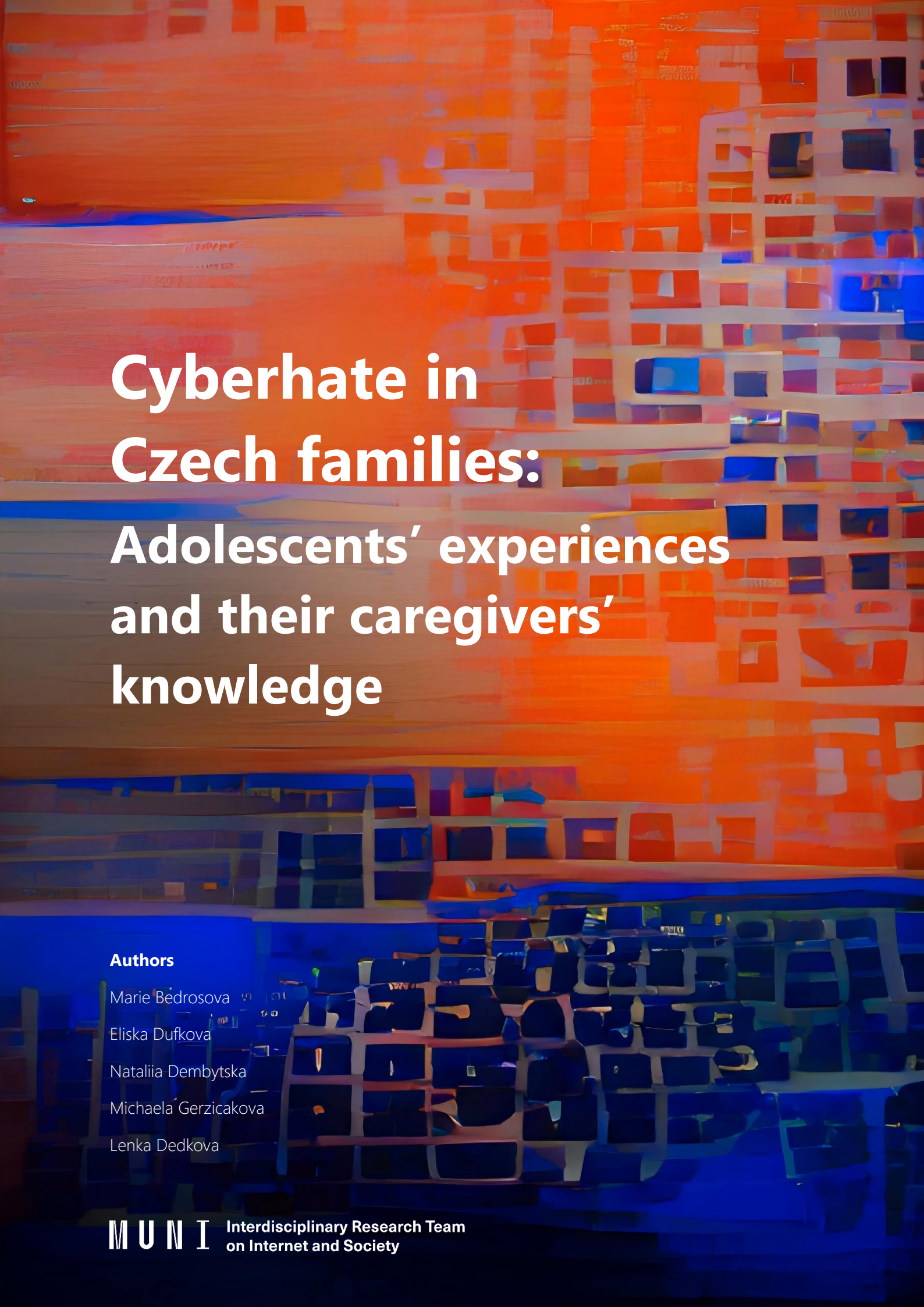

Cyberhate in Czech families:

Adolescents' experiences and their caregivers' knowledge

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Contents

Overview

This report presents findings about **Czech adolescents' cyberhate experiences and their caregivers' knowledge**. Caregivers refer to the parents, step-parents, and legal guardians of participating adolescents. Cyberhate refers to hateful and biased contents that are expressed online and via information and communication technologies. Our findings are based on data from a representative sample of **3,087 Czech households collected in 2021**.

The report is intended to provide a comprehensive picture of adolescents' involvement with cyberhate as the exposed bystanders, as the victims, and as the perpetrators. It also provides information about their caregivers' cyberhate exposure, and their knowledge of their child's cyberhate victimisation.

The report can serve as a resource for adolescents and caregivers, but also for policymakers, academics, teachers, educators, professionals working with children and families, and for the interested general public.

Key findings about adolescents' experiences

Adolescents' overall experiences with cyberhate are displayed in **Figure 1**. Out of the three involvement types, exposure to cyberhate is the most common, followed by victimization and perpetration.

Cyberhate exposure

- During the past six months, **59.3% of 11–16-year-old adolescents reported being exposed to cyberhate at least once**.
- The gender differences were small and both boys and girls were exposed to cyberhate to a similar extent. However, cyberhate exposure **increased with age** and its prevalence was the highest among 15-16-year-old adolescents.
- **The majority of the adolescents who were exposed to cyberhate were exposed unintentionally (81.6%)**, but there was 18.4% of exposed adolescents who intentionally searched for cyberhate content. **Boys and older adolescents reported intentionally searching for cyberhate more** than girls and younger adolescents.
- **Almost all of the exposed adolescents (90.1%) reported being at least a little upset by the cyberhate exposure**. However, the majority of them (52.1%) got over it immediately or felt upset only for a few minutes.
- Such feelings after exposure did not depend on age but rather on gender. **Girls reported feeling upset by cyberhate exposure more than boys**.

Cyberhate victimisation

- During the past six months, 15.9% of adolescents were victimised by cyberhate. We focused on three types of cyberhate victimisation. Being victimised due to their **sexual orientation was the most common (12.1%).** Cyberhate victimisation due to **race, ethnicity, or nationality** was reported by **8.0%**, and due to **religion** by **6.2%**.

- The gender differences were very small across all three victimisation categories. However, cyberhate victimisation **slightly increased with age** for all three categories.

Cyberhate aggression

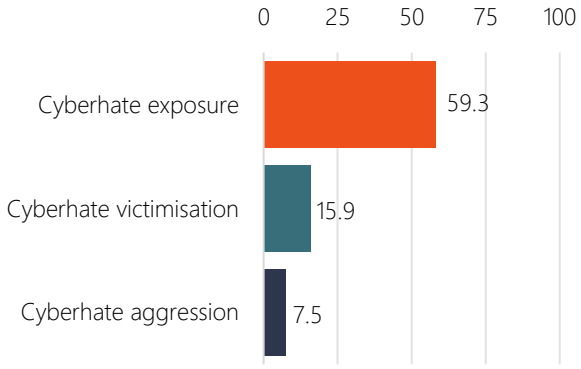
- Cyberhate aggression was **the least common cyberhate experience among adolescents**. Only 7.5% of them reported being involved in it.
- Again, **the most common type of aggression was cyberhate that targeted sexual orientation, which is reported by 5.9% of adolescents**. Cyberhate aggression that targeted **race, ethnicity, or nationality was reported by 4.3%**, and cyberhate aggression that targeted **religion was reported by 3.6%**.
- **Slightly more boys than girls reported being the aggressors** in all three types of aggression. Aggression also **increased with age**.

Online campaigns against hatred and aggression

- Exposure to online campaigns against hatred and aggression was quite prevalent among adolescents: **63.6% of them reported being exposed to such a campaign** at least once during the past month. This percentage was slightly **higher for girls** (66.6%) than for boys (60.5%), and the exposure **increased with age**.

All interviewed adolescents aged 11-16

Figure 1. Frequency of cyberhate exposure, cyberhate victimisation, cyberhate aggression, adolescents, %



Note: Please refer to Figures 2, 12, and 15 for the question phrasing. Sample: cyberhate exposure *n* = 2,973; cyberhate victimisation *n* = 2,991; cyberhate aggression *n* = 2,991.

Key findings about caregivers' experiences and knowledge

Cyberhate exposure

- During the past 6 months, **71.9% of caregivers reported being exposed to cyberhate at least once**.
- There were no gender differences between women and men.
- **Almost three-quarters (70.4.%)** of caregivers **were rather bothered or very bothered** by the exposure.

Knowledge about child's victimisation

- Caregivers of adolescents who had been victimised underestimated the **occurrence of this experience** and only a minority of them knew that the child had been victimised due to sexual orientation (11.2%), due to race, ethnicity, or nationality (12.0%), and due to religion (9.3%).
- **More mothers and female caregivers** than fathers knew **accurately** that their child had been victimised.
- Caregivers of **younger adolescents** also knew **more accurately** whether their child had been victimised.

Introduction

In this report, we present the main findings about cyberhate experiences from a survey conducted within the *Modelling the future: Understanding the impact of technology on adolescents' well-being (FUTURE)* project (irtis.muni.cz/research/projects/future). The data was collected in 2021 from a representative sample of 3,087 Czech adolescents (11-16 years old) and their parents, step-parents, or legal guardians (all of whom are considered "caregivers"). In this report, data from 2,991 households was used (we omitted data from 96 households due to invalid or missing data about the relationship between the caregiver and the adolescent respondent).

Cyberhate is online hate speech and hateful content that is shared through information and communication technologies. Cyberhate is understood as various types of contents and expressions that target people because of group membership and group characteristics (Council of Europe, 2022). It is often motivated by stereotypes and prejudice. It can target both individuals and whole groups and it can take various forms, including direct public or private messages to someone, comments in discussion fora or on social media, audio-visual content, and extremist websites. Cyberhate increasingly enters popular social media platforms, news websites and discussions, and it involves young internet users and adolescents (e.g., Hawdon et al., 2015; Reichelmann et al., 2021; Weimann & Masri, 2020). A forthcoming UNICEF report shows that exposure to hate messages is a global issue affecting children and adolescents around the world (cyberhate exposure is ranging from 8% in Indonesia and Vietnam to 58% in Poland), and Czech Republic is similarly to Poland among the countries with the highest prevalence of adolescents' exposure to such contents (Kardefelt-Winther et al., forthcoming).

In our report, we will focus on cyberhate that targets three group identities and characteristics:

- **sexual orientation**
- **ethnicity, race, or nationality**
- **religion**

These group identities are among the most common targets of cyberhate as reported by young people (e.g., Costello et al., 2016; Reichelmann et al., 2021).

Furthermore, it is important to distinguish that people can have different roles in cyberhate incidents. We will report three types of involvement:

- **Cyberhate exposure**, which happens when people see or hear cyberhate, but they do not have to be targeted by it.
- **Cyberhate victimisation**, which happens when people are targeted and feel victimised by it.
- **Cyberhate aggression**, which happens when people write, create, send, or share it.

As cyberhate is often connected to harmful stereotypes and prejudice, and it justifies intolerance and discrimination, it is a particularly worrisome phenomenon among adolescents, who are developing their identities and their in-group and out-group attitudes (Cortese, 2005). In these processes, parents and family can play crucial roles. Therefore, in addition to asking adolescents about their experiences with cyberhate, we also asked their caregivers about their knowledge of their child's victimisation. To

have a better understanding about adolescents' online experiences related to cyberhate, we also wanted to capture the potentially positive role of online campaigns against hatred and aggression, so we asked adolescents about the frequency of their exposure to such campaigns.

In our survey, we asked about cyberhate in the various forms it can take and on the various digital devices and platforms where it can be encountered. Specifically, we provided the following definition: *On the internet, you may see different types of content (e.g., photos, videos, articles, or online discussions). Please state how often you see hateful content that targets groups of people or individuals (e.g., people with a different colour of skin, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation) on the internet. When thinking about this, keep in mind all of the devices (e.g., phone, computer) and places on the internet (e.g., websites, social networks, apps) where you may see it. We are asking about content you were intentionally searching for and content you saw by accident. It can be photos, videos, articles, or online discussions*.

Methodology

Survey preparation and data collection

This report is based on the first wave of survey data obtained within the *Modelling the future: Understanding the impact of technology on adolescents' well-being (FUTURE)* project (irtis.muni.cz/research/projects/future). The data was collected from May to June 2021 in Czech households, using an online questionnaire (CAWI method) that was filled out by adolescents and their parents or caregivers/legal guardians. The survey was conducted by media research agency STEM/MARK. A quota sampling based on parents' education, municipality size, and region (NUTS 3) was used. The sample is evenly distributed across adolescents' gender and age groups. The questionnaire went through cognitive testing (semi-structured interviews, 30 adolescents, aged 11-16, 2 mothers) and pilot testing (195 adolescents, aged 11-16, and 195 parents).

Sample

Our sample consisted of 3,087 Czech households with adolescents aged 11-16. We omitted households with missing or invalid data about the relationship between the caregiver and the adolescent respondent (n = 96). The final sample in this report consists of 2,991 adolescents aged 11-16 (M = 13.46, SD = 1.74) of whom 49.8% were girls. In addition, we included their 2,991 caregivers aged 18-77 (M = 43.35, SD = 6.33) of whom 67.0% were women. The majority (94.0%) of the included adults were the father or mother of the child, 4.5% were the step-parents, and 1.5% were legal guardians.

The majority of our adolescent respondents was of Czech, Moravian, or Silesian nationality (98.6%). We also asked about their sexuality: 80.1% reported they would like to date a person of the opposite gender, 5.7% said it did not matter whether it would be a person of the same or opposite gender, 1.7% stated they would like to date a person of the same gender, and 12.9% indicated that they do not yet think about dating.

Ethical procedure

The data collection was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Masaryk University. The agency is a member of ESOMAR and SIMAR, and it conforms to those ethical guidelines. We obtained informed consents from the parents or legal guardians for their and their child's participation in the survey. The caregivers were advised to ensure adolescents' privacy during the survey completion. After the completion of their part, the questionnaire was locked, so the caregivers could not go through their children's answers and vice versa. Each questionnaire included a short debriefing with a link to a helpline and encouragement of participants to ask for help if they needed it. A financial reward for participation was provided by the agency.

Data analysis

All questions included an '*I prefer not to say*' option, which was treated as a missing value. Only valid data was used for results. The sample size for the respective findings is specified in each figure.

Adolescents' cyberhate exposure

Our results show that cyberhate exposure is a common experience for adolescents. They can be exposed to cyberhate by seeing or hearing some online hateful content that does not necessarily attack them or their group.

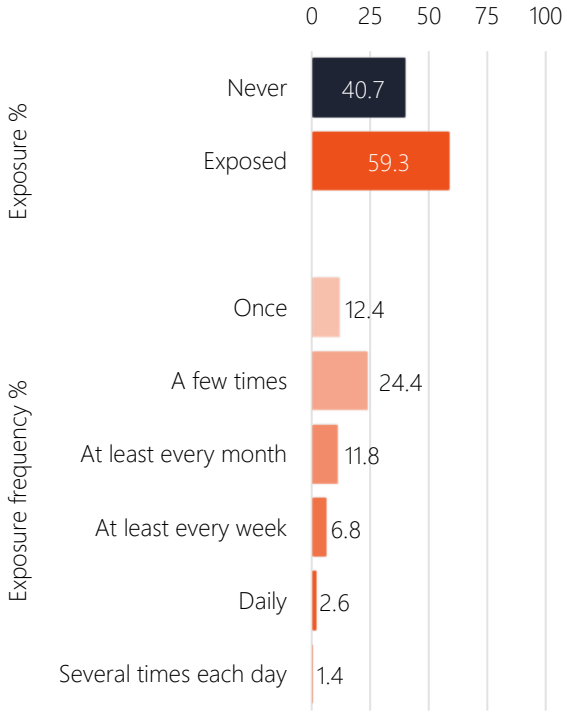
As Figure 2 shows, 59.3% of them reported that they have encountered some hateful content (e.g., photos, videos, articles, or online discussions) on the internet during the past 6 months. This experience was not frequent because it happened mostly once (12.4%) or a few times (24.4%). However, there are still some adolescents who reported being exposed to cyberhate daily (2.6%) or several times each day (1.4%).

The experience of being exposed to cyberhate and its frequency is not strongly related to gender (Figure 3). However, we can see an overall tendency for girls (61.2%) to report being exposed to cyberhate slightly more than boys (57.4%). They also report being exposed to cyberhate frequently to a slightly higher extent than boys. For example, 5.0% of girls reported being exposed to cyberhate daily or more often, whereas only 3.0% of boys reported such an experience. However, this is only a small difference and our results show that age is a more important predictor for cyberhate exposure.

Specifically, the frequency of cyberhate exposure increases with age, as shown in Figure 4. In the youngest age group (11-12 years old), 44.3% of adolescents reported being exposed to cyberhate once or more often. This was the case for 61.5% of those aged 13-14, and for 73.3% of the oldest adolescents (15-16 years old). Most adolescents, across all age groups, were exposed to cyberhate just a few times (28.0% of 15-16 year olds, 25.7% of 13-14 year olds, and 19.8% of 11-12 year olds) or monthly (16.0% of 15-16 year olds, 12.7% of 13-14 year olds, and 7.1% of 11-12 year olds). In the case of daily exposure or exposure several times each day, there were only very small differences.

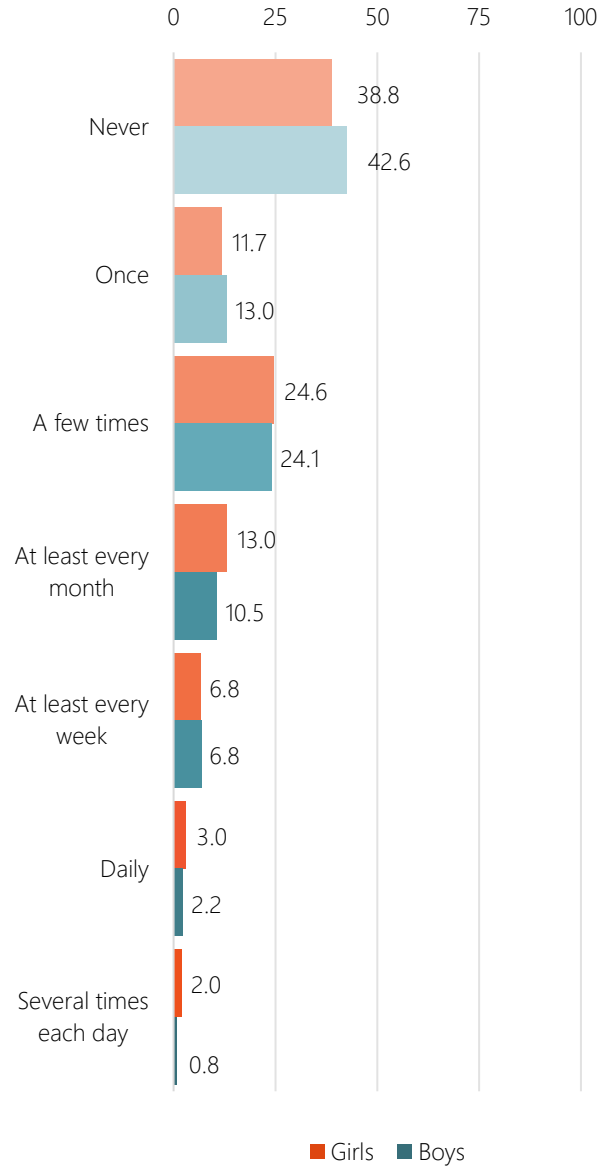
All interviewed adolescents aged 11-16

Figure 2. Frequency of cyberhate exposure, adolescents, %



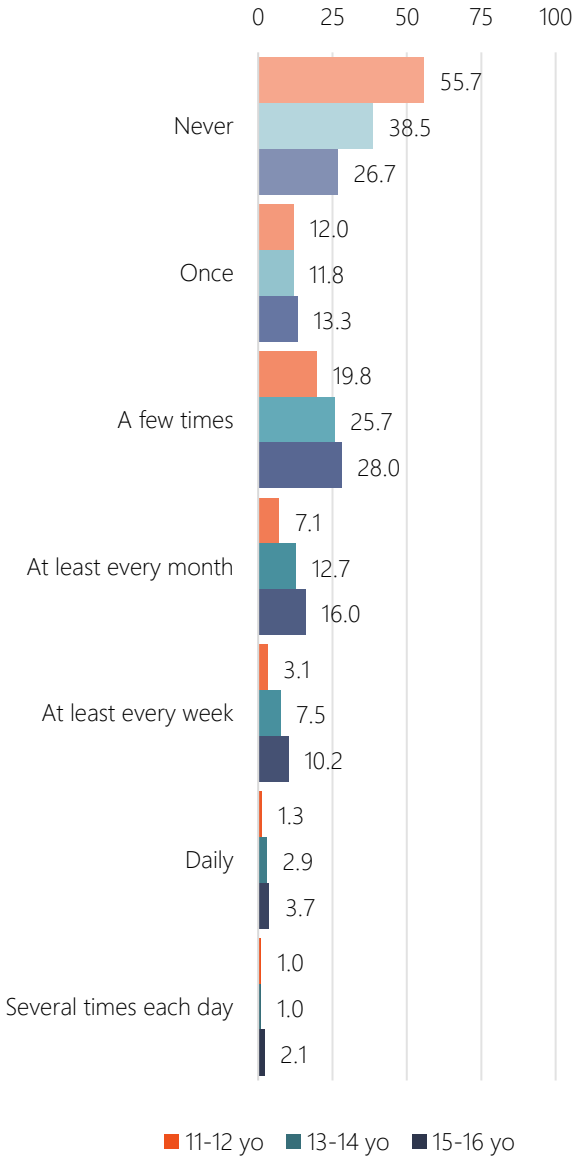
Question: *How often during the past 6 months have you seen on the internet contents that included the following: hateful content that targets groups of people or individuals (e.g., people with a different colour of skin, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation)?* Sample: *n* = 2,973.

Figure 3. Gender differences in frequency of cyberhate exposure, adolescents, %



Question: *How often during the past 6 months have you seen on the internet contents that included the following: hateful content that targets groups of people or individuals (e.g., people with a different colour of skin, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation)?* Sample: *n* = 2,973.

Figure 4. Age differences in frequency of cyberhate exposure, adolescents, %



Question: *How often during the past 6 months have you seen on the internet content that included the following: hateful content that targets groups of people or individuals (e.g., people with a different colour of skin, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation)?* Sample: *n* = 2,973.

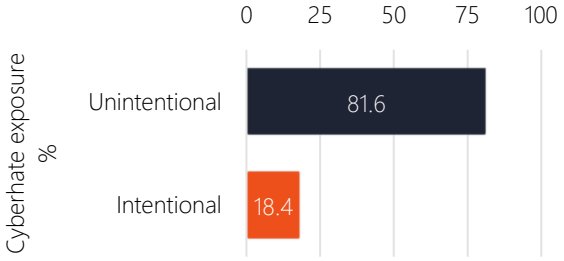
Intentional and unintentional exposure

We asked adolescents who were exposed to cyberhate content whether they were exposed because they intentionally searched for it or because they unintentionally encountered it. Most of them were exposed unintentionally (81.6%). Only 18.4% of them stated they intentionally searched for such content at least once (Figure 5).

Figure 6 shows that slightly more boys searched for cyberhate content – 20.6% of the boys who were exposed to it were exposed intentionally. In comparison, this was the case for only 16.4% of the exposed girls. The rest of the boys and girls were exposed to cyberhate unintentionally.

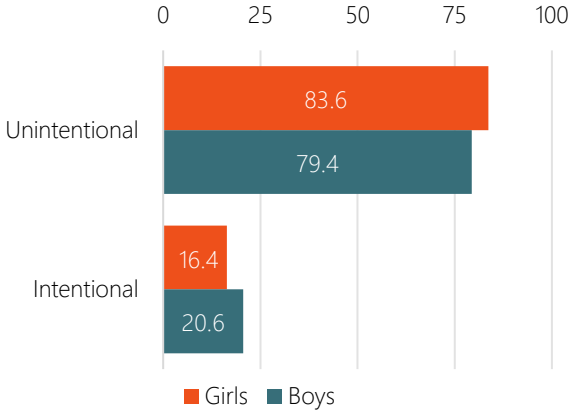
There is also the tendency for intentional exposure to increase with age. Figure 7 shows that the older adolescents (aged 15-16) were more likely to be exposed to cyberhate by searching for the content, whereas this was the case for only 13.0% of the youngest adolescents (aged 11-12).

Figure 5. Intentional and unintentional cyberhate exposure, adolescents %



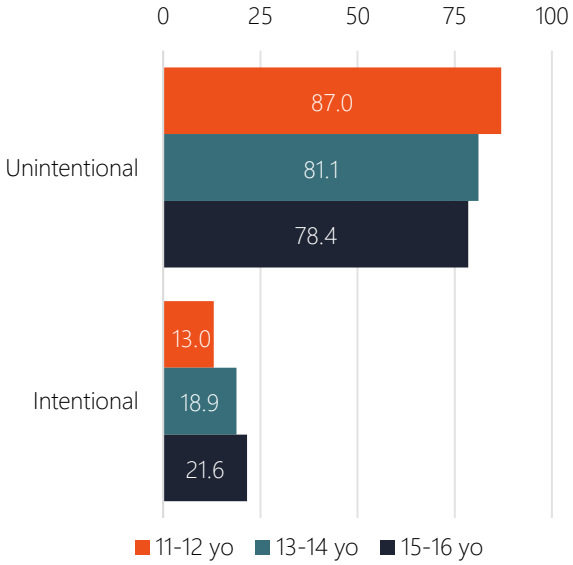
Question: *You stated that you saw on the internet hateful content that targeted groups of people or individuals (e.g., people with a different colour of skin, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation). Did it happen because you were intentionally searching for it?* Sample: *n* = 1,747, 58.4% of the full sample.

Figure 6. Gender differences in intentional and unintentional cyberhate exposure, adolescents, %



Question: *You stated that you saw on the internet hateful content that targeted groups of people or individuals (e.g., people with a different colour of skin, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation). Did it happen because you were intentionally searching for it?* Sample: *n* = 1,747, 58.4% of the full sample.

Figure 7. Age differences in intentional and unintentional cyberhate exposure, adolescents, %



Question: *You stated that you saw on the internet hateful content that targeted groups of people or individuals (e.g., people with a different colour of skin, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation). Did it happen because you were intentionally searching for it?* Sample: *n* = 1,747, 58.4% of the full sample.

Feeling upset after cyberhate exposure

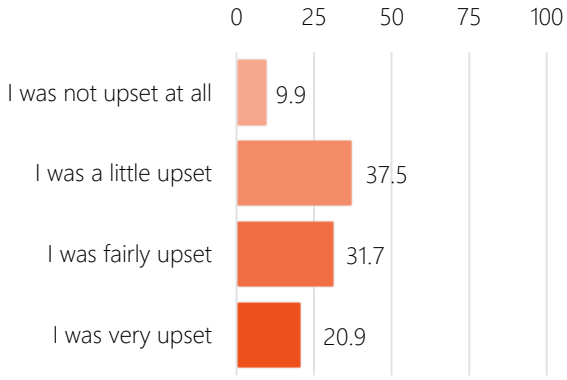
Even though not all cases of cyberhate exposure upset all adolescents, it can result in emotional harm in some instances. Therefore, we asked those adolescents who were exposed to cyberhate (regardless of whether their exposure was intentional and/or unintentional) whether they felt upset after this experience. Our results show (Figure 8), that only a minority of adolescents (9.9%) were not upset by their exposure experience. The majority of adolescents were a little upset (37.5%) or fairly upset (31.7%). Yet, there was one fifth (20.9%) of adolescents who were very upset by being exposed to cyberhate.

To better understand this, we also asked about how long they felt like this, which is displayed in Figure 9. Most of the adolescents did not feel upset by their exposure experience for very long. The majority of them reported that they got over it after a few minutes (38.0%) or after a few hours (20.1%). However, there is a substantial group of adolescents who were upset for a few days or longer (17.7%).

In Figure 10, we can see a general tendency that girls were more upset by the cyberhate exposure. In comparison to boys (28.6% fairly upset, 13.1% very upset), girls stated that they were fairly upset (34.6%) or very upset (28.4%). Boys stated more often than girls that they were not upset at all (15.0%) or only a little upset (43.3%). Only 5.1% of girls stated they were not upset at all, and 32.0% stated they were a little upset. Our findings indicate that girls are more sensitive to cyberhate content that they encounter, and it seems to be the case regardless of age.

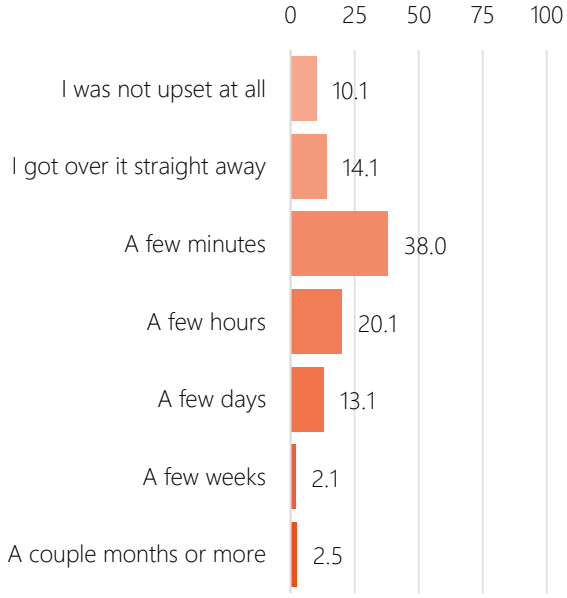
As displayed in Figure 11, in comparison to the gender differences, the differences in being upset after cyberhate exposure across age groups were rather small.

Figure 8. Being upset by cyberhate exposure, adolescents, %



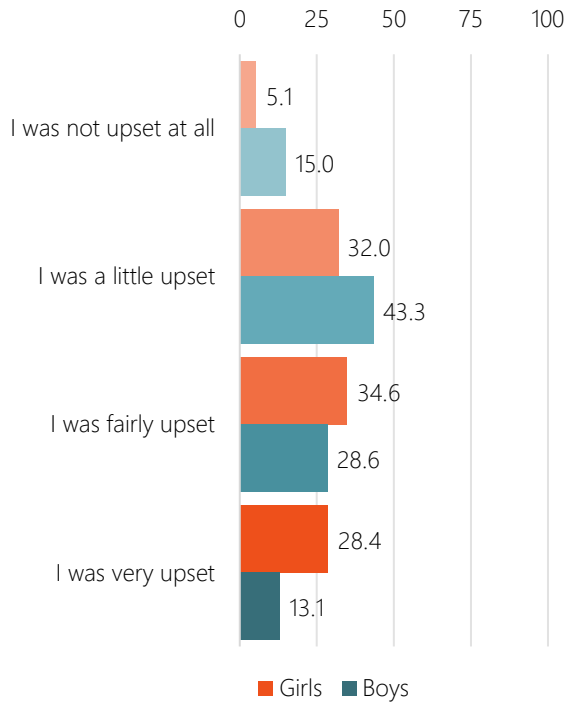
Question: *Some people don't care when they see something like that. Some may be upset about it. Select how you felt about it.* Note: The percentage of adolescents who were not upset at all are slightly different from Figure 9 due to the different amount of missing values in this question. Sample: *n* = 1,725, 57.7% of the full sample.

Figure 9. Duration of being upset by cyberhate exposure, adolescents , %



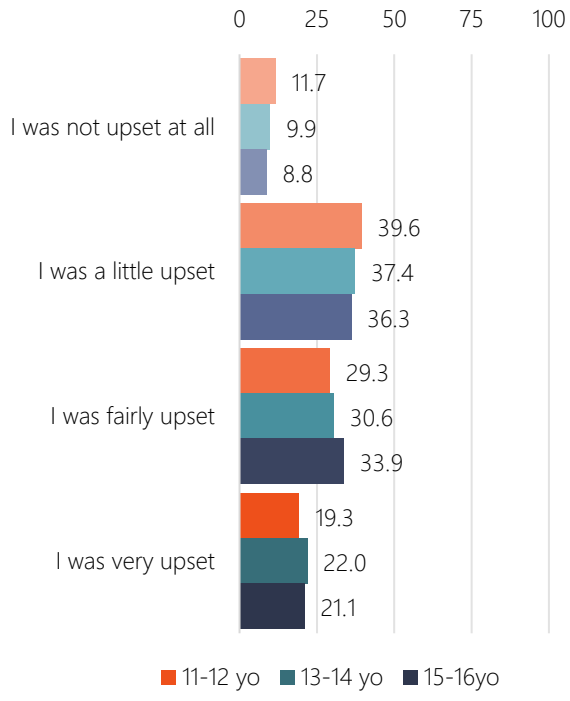
Question: *And how long did you feel upset about it?* Note: The percentage of adolescents who were not upset at all is slightly different from Figure 8 due to the different amount of missing values in this question. Sample: *n* = 1,696, 56.7% of the full sample.

Figure 10. Gender differences in being upset by cyberhate exposure, adolescents, %



Question: *Some people don't care when they see something like that. Some may be upset about it. Select how you felt about it.*
Sample: *n* = 1,725, 57.7% of the full sample.

Figure 11. Age differences in being upset by cyberhate exposure, adolescents, %



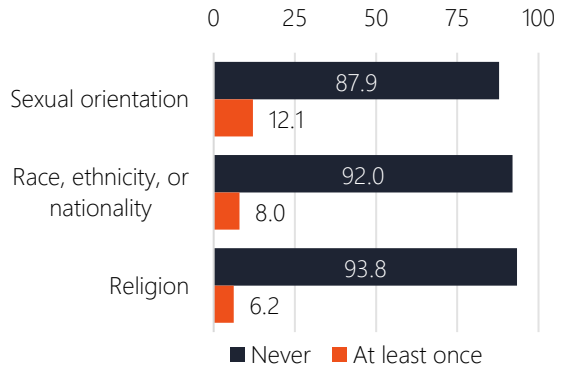
Question: *Some people don't care when they see something like that. Some may be upset about it. Select how you felt about it.*
Sample: *n* = 1,725, 57.7% of the full sample.

Adolescents' cyberhate victimisation

When people are exposed to cyberhate, they do not have to be or feel targeted by the content because they do not possess the group identity that is targeted. But, when the cyberhate attacks their group or group characteristics, they can be and feel victimised by it, and such experience can have negative effects on their well-being.

All interviewed adolescents aged 11-16

Figure 12. Cyberhate victimisation, adolescents, %



Question: *How often have the following happened to you in the last 6 months: You received hateful or degrading comments or messages about your sexual orientation (this means whether you like boys or girls); about your race, ethnicity, or nationality; or about your religion*. Sample: sexual orientation *n* = 2,980; race, ethnicity, or nationality *n* = 2,983; religion *n* = 2,978.

Therefore, it is important to ask about victimisation experiences. In our study, we focused on cyberhate victimisation that targeted three types of group identities: 1) sexual orientation, 2) race, ethnicity, or nationality, and 3) religion.

The majority of adolescents did not report victimisation due to any of the group identities, and our findings (Figure 12) show that cyberhate victimisation concerns a much smaller group of adolescents than cyberhate exposure. Specifically, 12.1% of adolescents reported being victimised during the past 6 months due to their sexual identity, 8.0% due to their race, ethnicity, or nationality, and 6.2% due to their religion.

Because none of the victimisation experiences was prevalent among adolescents, we report the frequency of victimisation in the form of a table (see Table 1). Most of those, who were victimised, reported it happened only once or only a few times. Only a rare cases (less than 0.5% for each type of victimisation) report that this happened on a daily basis or more often.

Table 1. Frequency of cyberhate victimisation, adolescents, %

%	Never	Once	A few times	At least every month	At least every week	Daily	Several times each day
Sexual orientation	87.9	6.0	4.2	1.1	0.5	0.4	0.0
Race, ethnicity, or nationality	92.0	3.9	2.6	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.2
Religion	93.8	2.9	2.1	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.1

Question: *How often have the following happened to you in the last 6 months: You received hateful or degrading comments or messages about your sexual orientation (this means whether you like boys or girls); about your race, ethnicity, or nationality; or about your religion*. Sample: sexual orientation *n* = 2,980; race, ethnicity, or nationality *n* = 2,983; religion *n* = 2,978.

As shown in Figure 13, boys reported victimisation experiences slightly more often than girls, but the difference was very small for all of the categories.

The more important factor was adolescents' age. The results show (Figure 14) the tendency for cyberhate victimisation to increase with age for all three categories.

All interviewed adolescents aged 11-16

Figure 13. Gender differences in cyberhate victimisation, adolescents, %

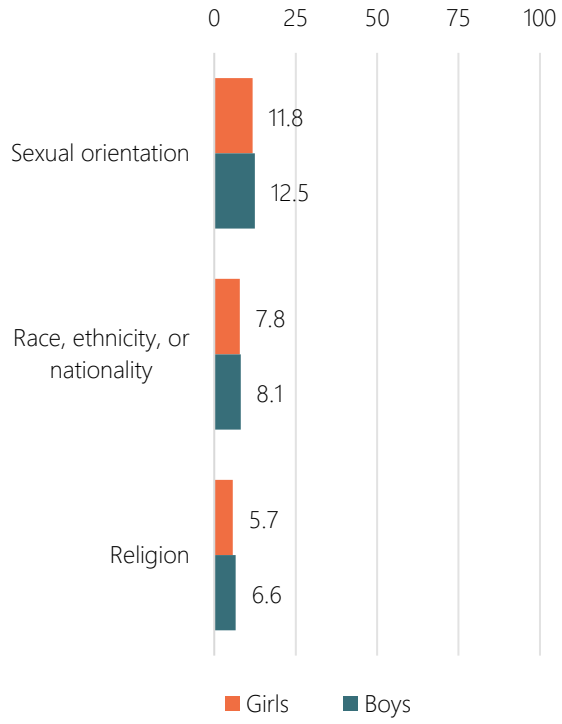


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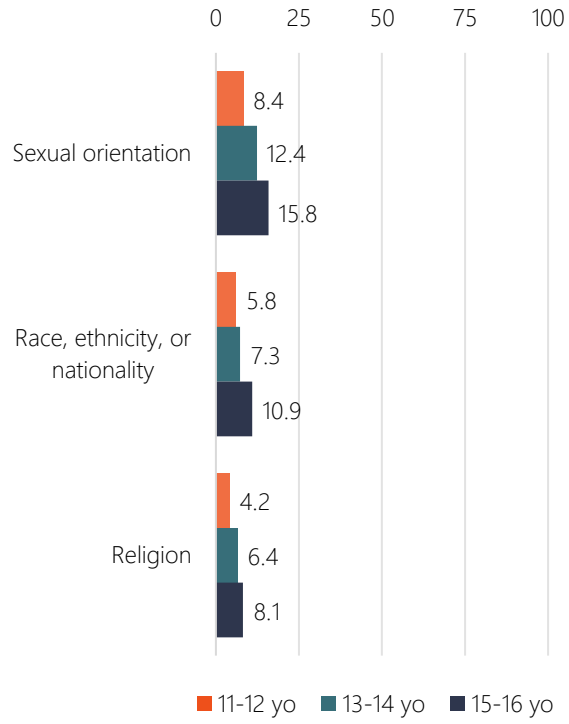
Figure 14. Age differences in cyberhate victimisation, adolescents, %



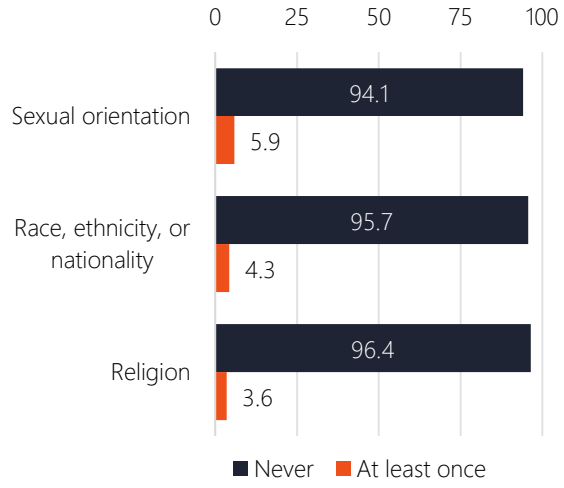
Question: *How often have the following happened to you in the last 6 months: You received hateful or degrading comments or messages about your sexual orientation (this means whether you like boys or girls); about your race, ethnicity, or nationality; or about your religion*. Sample: sexual orientation *n* = 2,980; race, ethnicity, or nationality *n* = 2,983; religion *n* = 2,978.

Adolescents' cyberhate aggression

Adolescents can also be involved in cyberhate incidents as the aggressors. This means that they can send hateful messages, write hateful comments, or create or share hateful contents.

All interviewed adolescents aged 11-16

Figure 15. Cyberhate aggression, adolescents, %



Question: *Have you treated any other children or teens online in the last 6 months in a way similar to the following: I wrote hateful or degrading comments or messages about someone or to someone about their sexual orientation (this means whether they like boys or girls); about their race, ethnicity, or nationality; or their religion*. Sample: sexual orientation *n* = 2,986; race, ethnicity, or nationality *n* = 2,983; religion *n* = 2,984.

We asked adolescents about their involvement as the aggressors in cyberhate that targeted the same three group identities – 1) sexual orientation, 2) race, ethnicity, or nationality, and 3) religion.

Our results (Figure 15) show that cyberhate aggression is an even less prevalent experience than victimisation and it concerns only a very small portion of adolescents. Adolescents reported being the aggressors mostly in the case of cyberhate that targeted sexual orientation (5.9%), and less that targeted race, ethnicity, or nationality (4.3%), and religion (3.6%).

Being the aggressor was not a very frequent experience for adolescents in any type of attack, so we again report the frequency in the form of a table (see Table 2). The majority of aggressors behaved like this only once during the past 6 months – 3% of adolescents reported being the aggressor in cyberhate incidents that attacked sexual orientation, 2.2% that attacked race, nationality, or religion, and 1.6% that attacked religion.

Table 2. Frequency of cyberhate aggression, adolescents, %

%	Never	Once	A few times	At least every month	At least every week	Daily	Several times each day
Sexual orientation	94.1	3.0	1.6	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.0
Race, ethnicity, or nationality	95.7	2.2	0.9	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.1
Religion	96.4	1.6	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.0

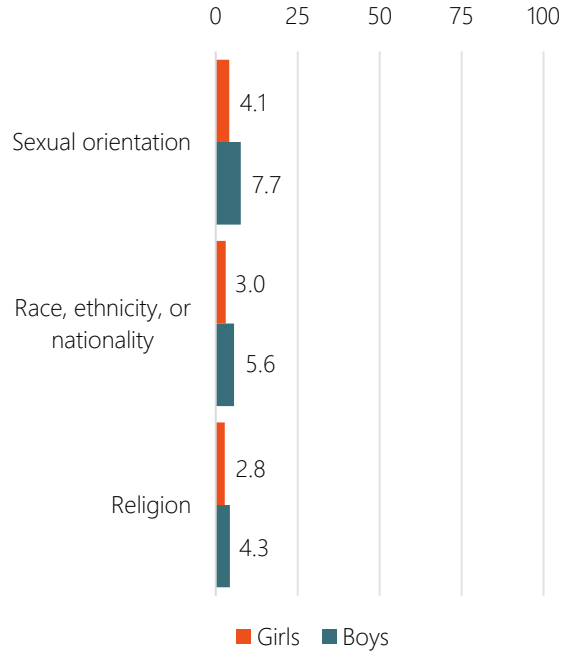
Question: *Have you treated any other children or teens online in the last 6 months in a way similar to the following: I wrote hateful or degrading comments or messages about someone or to someone about their sexual orientation (this means whether they like boys or girls); about their race, ethnicity, or nationality; or their religion*. Sample: sexual orientation *n* = 2,986; race, ethnicity, or nationality *n* = 2,983; religion *n* = 2,984.

The findings displayed in Figure 16 show there were some gender differences when it came to cyberhate aggression. Specifically, we can see that boys reported being the aggressors slightly more than girls in all of the categories. The biggest gender difference was in the case of cyberhate due to sexual orientation (7.7% of boys compared to 4.1% of girls).

As displayed in Figure 17, cyberhate aggression increased with age in all three categories of attacks. Younger adolescents (aged 11-12) reported the least cyberhate aggression in all of the categories (4.5% sexual orientation, 2.8% race, ethnicity, or nationality, and 2.4% religion), whereas the oldest adolescents (aged 15-16) reported the highest amount (4.5% religion, 5.59 race, ethnicity, or nationality, and 7.3% sexual orientation).

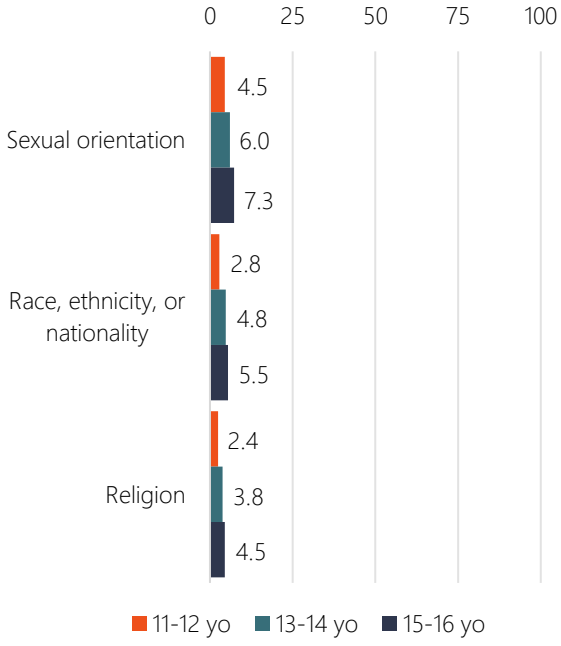
All interviewed adolescents aged 11-16

Figure 16. Gender differences in cyberhate aggression, adolescents, %



Question: *Have you treated any other children or teens online in the last 6 months in a way similar to the following: I wrote hateful or degrading comments or messages about someone or to someone about their sexual orientation (this means whether they like boys or girls); about their race, ethnicity, or nationality; or their religion*. Sample: sexual orientation *n* = 2,986; race, ethnicity, or nationality *n* = 2,983; religion *n* = 2,984.

Figure 17. Age differences in cyberhate aggression, adolescents, %

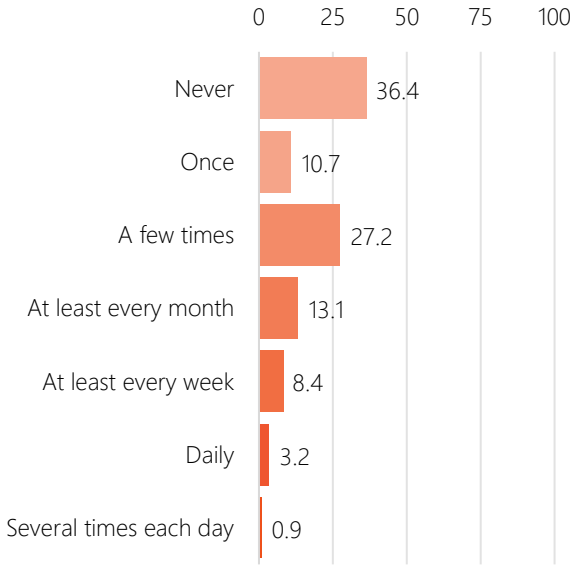


Question: *Have you treated any other children or teens online in the last 6 months in a way similar to the following: I wrote hateful or degrading comments or messages about someone or to someone about their sexual orientation (this means whether they like boys or girls); about their race, ethnicity, or nationality; or their religion*. Sample: sexual orientation *n* = 2,986; race, ethnicity, or nationality *n* = 2,983; religion *n* = 2,984.

Adolescents' exposure to online campaigns against hatred and aggression

We asked whether adolescents were exposed to online campaigns against hatred and aggression, which potentially present a positive influence and teach them about the negative consequences of hatred and aggression. Our results show that experience with such campaigns is common for adolescents. About 63.6% of adolescents reported that they saw such a campaign at least once. Most of them saw such campaigns a few times (27.2%) or they reported seeing it at least every month (13.1%), as displayed in Figure 18.

Figure 18. Exposure to online campaigns against hatred and aggression online, adolescents, %

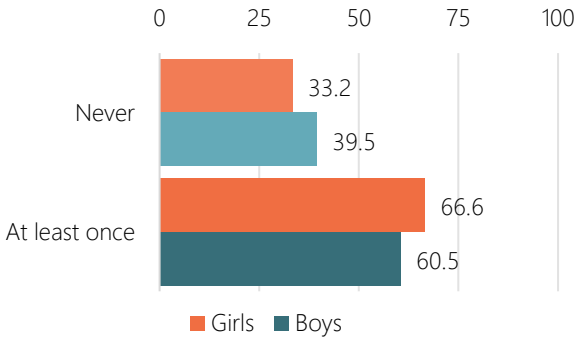


Question: *How often during the past 6 months have you seen on the internet contents that included the following: campaigns against hatred and aggression*. Sample: *n* = 2,969.

Girls reported being exposed to these campaigns more than boys. As Figure 19 shows, 66.6% were exposed to such campaigns at least once during the past 6 months, whereas only 60.5% of boys reported such exposure.

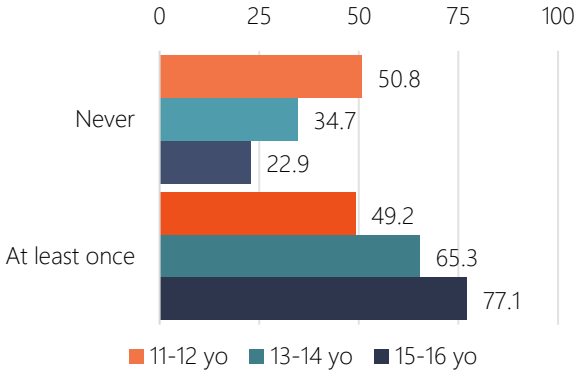
The exposure also increased with age (Figure 20). Almost half of the youngest adolescents (49.2%) reported being exposed to such campaigns, which increased for the majority of the oldest adolescents (77.1%).

Figure 19. Gender differences in exposure to campaigns against hatred and aggression, adolescents, %



Question: *How often during the past 6 months have you seen on the internet contents that included the following: campaigns against hatred and aggression*. Sample: *n* = 2,969.

Figure 20. Age differences in exposure to campaigns against hatred and aggression, adolescents, %



Question: *How often during the past 6 months have you seen on the internet contents that included the following: campaigns against hatred and aggression*. Sample: *n* = 2,969.

Caregivers' cyberhate exposure

We interviewed adolescents' caregivers (their parents, step-parents, and legal guardians) and asked them about their cyberhate exposure experience.

Similar to the adolescents' experiences, seeing or hearing cyberhate content was rather common for their caregivers. As displayed in Figure 21, 71.9% of them reported being exposed to cyberhate during the past 6 months. This mostly happened only a few times (38.9%) or on a monthly basis (14.9%). A total of 3.3% of them reported being exposed daily or several times each day.

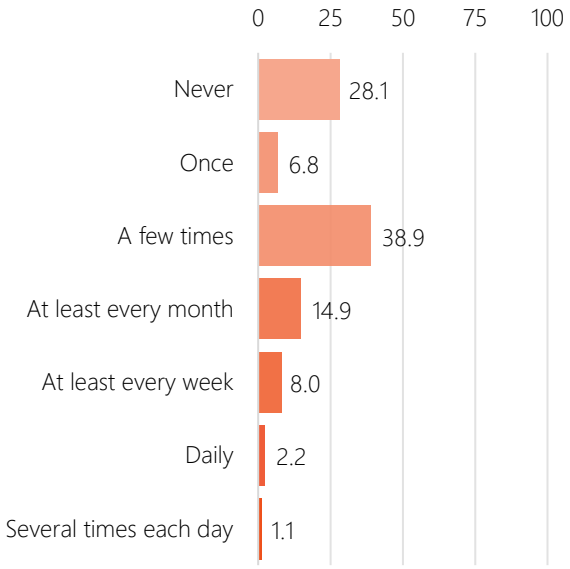
In addition, we looked at gender differences. We discovered that both male caregivers and female caregivers reported being exposed to cyberhate at least once to a similar extent – 71.3% of women and 73.1% of men. We did not compare caregivers' experiences based on their age.

Feeling bothered after cyberhate exposure

We also asked caregivers who stated that they had been exposed to cyberhate, whether they felt bothered by the experience. Only 2.8% of caregivers who were exposed to cyberhate stated they were not bothered by it at all, but 7.2% reported they were rather not bothered and 19.7% neither not bothered nor bothered. However, the majority of caregivers (70.4%) who were exposed to some cyberhate felt rather (34.8%) or very (35.6%) bothered.

Interviewed caregivers of adolescents aged 11-16

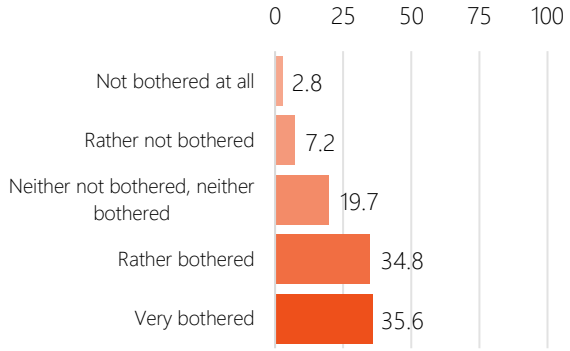
Figure 21. Frequency of cyberhate exposure, caregivers, %



Question: *On the internet, you can see hateful content that targets groups of people or individuals (e.g., people with different a colour of skin, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation). It can be in the form of photos, videos, articles, or online discussions. How often have you seen something like this during the past 6 months?* Sample: *n* = 2,969.

Caregivers who were exposed to cyberhate during the past 6 months

Figure 22. Being upset by cyberhate exposure, caregivers, %



Question: *Some people or bothered by such content. Others are not. What is your attitude about it?* Sample: *n* = 2,134, 71.9% of the full sample.

Cyberhate exposure in families

We compared adolescents' and their caregivers' cyberhate exposure (Table 3). In 46.9% of the families, both the adolescent and the caregiver were exposed. In 15.6% of the families, neither the adolescent nor the caregiver were exposed.

All interviewed adolescents aged 11-16 and their caregivers

Table 3. Cyberhate exposure in families, adolescents and caregivers, %

%		Caregiver's exposure	
		Never	Exposed at least once
Adolescent's exposure	Never	15.6	25.0
	Exposed at least once	12.5	46.9

Question for adolescents: *How often during the past 6 months have you seen on the internet contents that included the following: hateful content that targeted groups of people or individuals (e.g., people with a different colour of skin, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation)?* Question for caregivers: *On the internet, you can see hateful content that targets groups of people or individuals (e.g., people with a different colour of skin, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation). It can be in the form of photos, videos, articles, or online discussions. How often have you seen something like this during the past 6 months?* Sample: *n* = 2,953.

Caregivers' knowledge of adolescents' victimisation

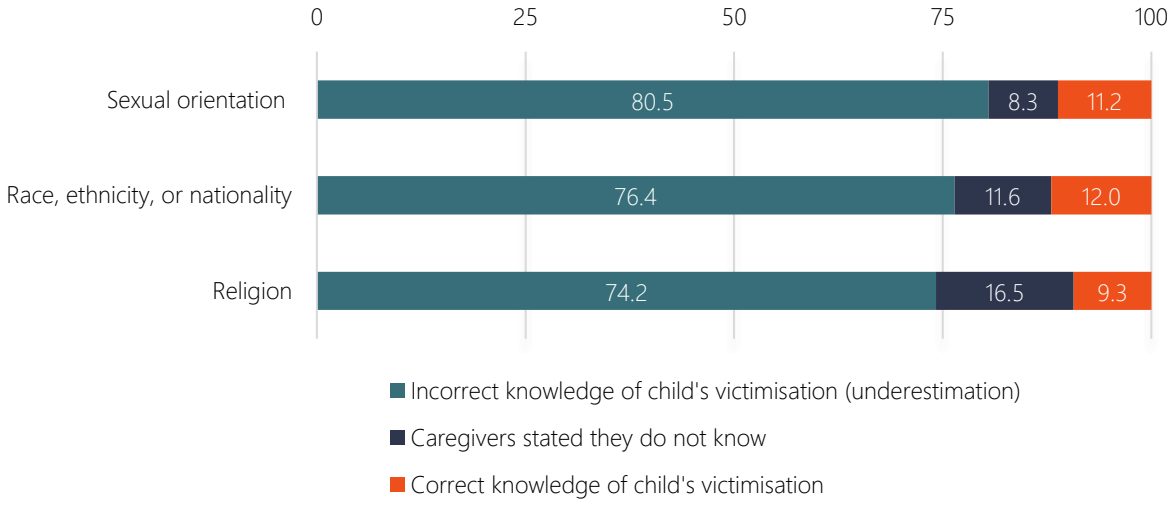
Our research addressed the caregivers' knowledge of their children's experiences as well. We asked them whether they think their child experienced any of the three types of cyberhate victimisation, and compared their answers to their children's.

Overall, the results showed a high degree of agreement between the adolescents' and the caregivers' responses – 87% of caregivers correctly knew whether their child had/had not been victimised due to their sexual orientation, 90.2% of them correctly reported if their child was victimised due to ethnicity, race, or nationality, and 92.5% correctly reported whether it happened due to religion. However, it must be stressed that the high percentage of agreement was due to the fact that a large majority of pairs (i.e., caregiver and adolescent) equally reported that the adolescent did not have such an experience.

A more detailed look at the reports of the caregivers of adolescents who were victimized is provided in Figure 23. The results show that the majority of the caregivers did not know about their child´s victimisation experience. Only 11.2% of them correctly knew their child was victimised due to sexual orientation, 12.0% knew about victimisation due to race, ethnicity, or nationality, and only 9.3% correctly knew about victimisation due to religion. This suggests that children tend to not tell their caregivers when they are being harassed online.

Adolescents aged 11-16 who were victimised by cyberhate at least once during the past 6 months and their caregivers

Figure 23. Caregivers' knowledge of adolescents' victimisation, adolescents and caregivers, %



Question for adolescents: *How often have the following happened to you in the last 6 months: You received hateful or degrading comments or messages about your sexual orientation (this means whether you like boys or girls); about your race, ethnicity, or nationality; or about your religion*. Question for caregivers: *From what you know, how often have the following things happened in the last 6 months: Someone said nasty things to him/her on the internet because of his/her sexual orientation; because of his/her race, ethnicity, or nationality; or because of his/her religion.* Sample: sexual orientation *n* = 182, 6.1% of the full sample; race, ethnicity, or nationality *n* = 223, 7.5% of the full sample; religion *n* = 349, 11.7% of the full sample.

In addition, we investigated whether there are any differences in the knowledge about the adolescents' victimisation based on the caregivers' gender and based on the gender and age of their child. Our results showed that mothers and women knew whether their child was the victim of cyberhate more accurately than fathers and men.

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Similarly, the caregivers of younger adolescents knew more accurately about their child's victimisation than caregivers of older adolescents. On the other hand, there was no difference between the caregivers of boys and caregivers of girls.

Conclusions

This report summarises findings about Czech adolescents' (aged 11-16) and their caregivers' experiences with, and knowledge about, cyberhate involvement.

Firstly, we asked about the **adolescents' experiences** of cyberhate exposure, victimisation, and aggression. Cyberhate refers to various types of hateful and biased contents produced and shared online and via information and communication technologies. It can attack different groups and group characteristics. In our report, we specifically focus on cyberhate that targeted sexual orientation; race, ethnicity, or nationality; and religion.

Our findings show that being exposed to cyberhate is a common experience for adolescents, and the majority of them reported that they had encountered some hateful content during the preceding 6 months. On the other hand, the majority were not targeted by such content. Being victimised by cyberhate was reported only by a minority of adolescents. Even fewer reported that they had been the aggressors who had created or shared cyberhate content or messages.

We also discovered some age and gender differences. With increasing age, **cyberhate exposure** also increased. One of the possible explanations is that older adolescents are more active online, they visit more online spaces, use more platforms, and interact with more people (Smahel et al., 2020). Therefore, they might also be more likely to encounter some hateful and aggressive content there. In addition, they might be better at recognising cyberhate and reporting encounters with it in comparison to younger adolescents. This is in line with our findings that most of the adolescents report being exposed to cyberhate unintentionally, when they did not look for such contents specifically. However, older adolescents were more likely to intentionally search for cyberhate content. The majority of adolescents were also upset after cyberhate exposure, even though this feeling generally lasted only for a short time of a few minutes or hours. Even though girls were slightly more likely to report being exposed to cyberhate, the gender differences were not very big for this type of involvement. However, there was a bigger difference when it came to feeling upset after such exposure and girls tended to be more upset by the experience than boys. This indicates that girls might be more sensitive toward cyberhate content than boys and feel more disturbed by it. It can also be connected to the fact that girls were less likely to report that they intentionally searched for cyberhate in comparison to boys. However, in general, the tendency for intentional searching for cyberhate was very small for both genders. In addition, we found that girls were exposed to **online campaigns against hatred and aggression** slightly more than boys, which might have also contributed to their sensitivity toward cyberhate content.

Further, we found age differences in relation to **cyberhate victimisation** and the experience increased with age. However, it generally concerned only a minority of adolescents, which indicates that there is a specific group of vulnerable adolescents who are at a greater risk of being victimised due to their group identity. Among the three investigated identities that can be targeted by cyberhate, sexual orientation was reported to be the most common reason for victimisation and aggression. Boys and girls reported being victimised to a similar extent.

Our findings show there is a small group of adolescents who are **cyberhate aggressors**. Aggression increased with age and there were also some gender differences. Boys reported being the aggressors slightly more than girls. Sexual orientation was the most common reason for the attacks.

It is also worth mentioning that the Czech Republic is an ethnically and religiously homogeneous country, so the sample naturally did not include a large number of adolescents whose ethnicity, race, nationality, or religion was outside the majority of the society, and it is therefore understandable that they were not as affected by cyberhate on these topics.

Secondly, we investigated the **caregivers of adolescents**. Being **exposed to cyberhate** was also a fairly common experience for the adults and the majority of them encountered some hateful contents during the past 6 months. Most of them felt bothered by the experience. In comparison to the adolescents, caregivers seem to be more bothered by seeing such content online. This might be due to their higher recognition of the problematic content. Another possible explanation may be that today's adolescents, who are exposed to cyberhate from a young age, are more used to seeing such content and they have become less sensitive to it (Anderson & Bushman, 2018) as opposed to their caregivers, who did not have as much exposure to cyberhate content during childhood and early adulthood.

In about half of the interviewed families, both the adolescent and the caregiver reported being exposed to cyberhate at least once. However, there were also families in which neither of them were exposed. This invites future studies to explore the family characteristics, how the characteristics of their technology usage predicts cyberhate exposure, and how it can be prevented.

Further, the caregivers can guide their child's online activities and help them cope with negative experiences, one of which can be cyberhate victimisation. Therefore, we also wanted to discover what **caregivers know about their child's victimisation**. The majority of them correctly knew that their child was not a cyberhate victim. However, when we looked at the caregivers of the victimised children, we discovered that they often thought cyberhate victimisation did not happen to their child or they did not know about it. This is a particularly worrisome finding because, in these instances, they cannot offer support or resources to the victimised child to cope with the experience. Current studies suggest that a crucial part of parental knowledge is also a child's self-disclosure (Stattin & Kerr, 2000). In practice, this means that caregivers often gain knowledge from what the child tells them. Further, we discovered that female caregivers had more knowledge about whether their child was a victim of cyberhate. A possible explanation is that they spend more time with their children (e.g., after school) and have more opportunities to discuss their lives with them. This was also the case for the caregivers of younger children. It is advisable for all parents and caregivers (as well as other workers with children, such as teachers) to try to build a trusting environment that allows adolescents to confide their negative online experiences, even when they get older.

Lastly, we discovered that caregivers rather correctly knew whether their child was victimised due to their religion or race, ethnicity, or nationality. They least knew about their child's victimisation due to sexual orientation. We can assume that religion and ethnicity, race, and nationality are commonly known group identities within the families,

thus it might be easier for adolescents to discuss them with their parents and legal guardians and to disclose their victimisation. The caregivers in these families might even share the same victimisation experiences and more easily recognise if their child has been victimised. This is not the case for sexual orientation, which is a more private area, and could be much more difficult to discuss, especially for adolescents with non-normative sexual orientation. This finding highlights the need for adults to create a supportive and communicative environment in which adolescents feel safe to disclose their negative experiences. We also suggest that the topic of cyberhate that targets various group identities, including sexual orientation, should be addressed at schools and by prevention and intervention programs.

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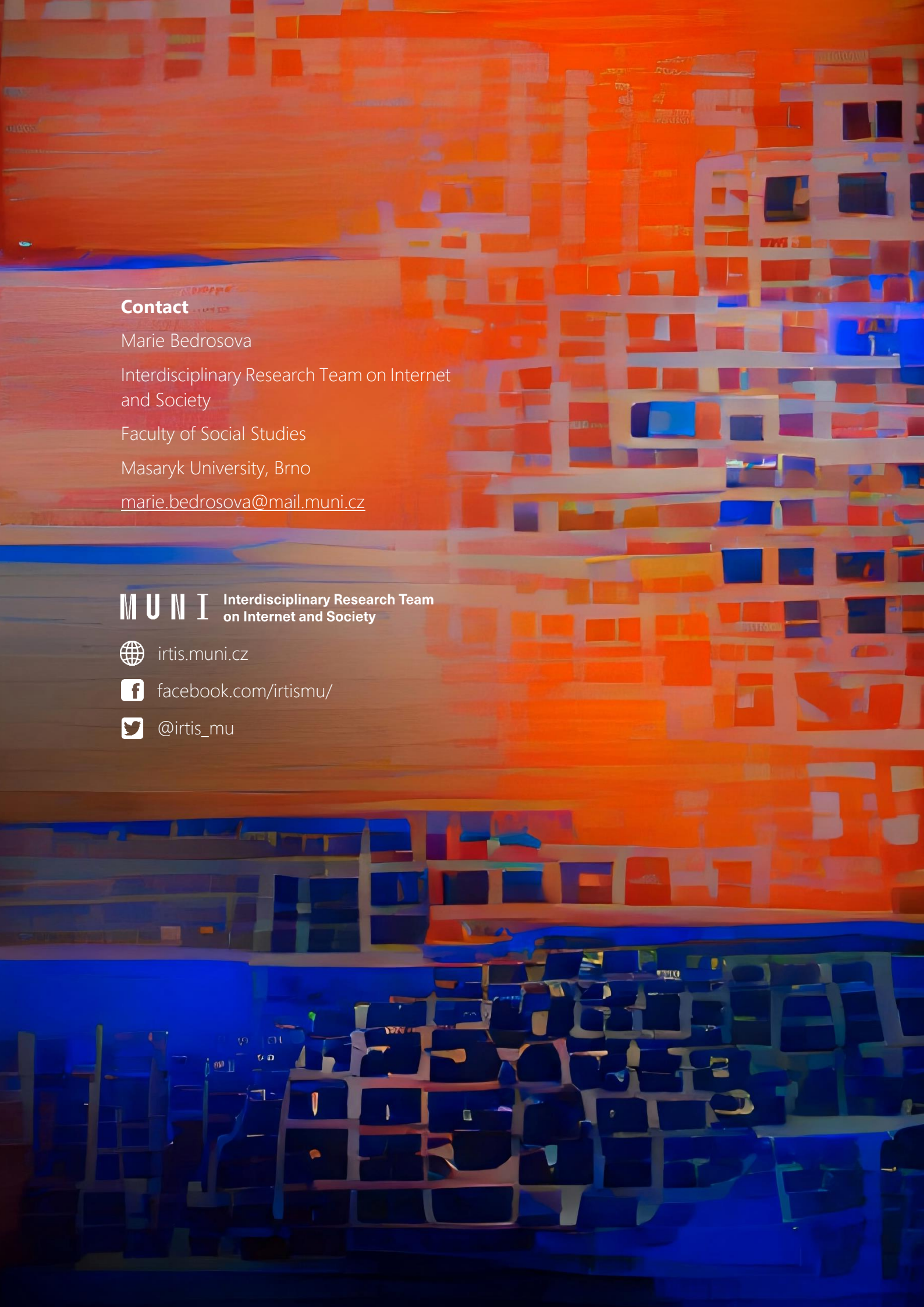

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