

EUYOUPART Final Symposium

“Why participate? Youth, Politics and the Future of European Democracy”

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Which Factors Can Motivate Youth Participation in European Democracy ?

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Part One

Youth Participation in European Democracy

Common Trends

Relationship to politics

More or less

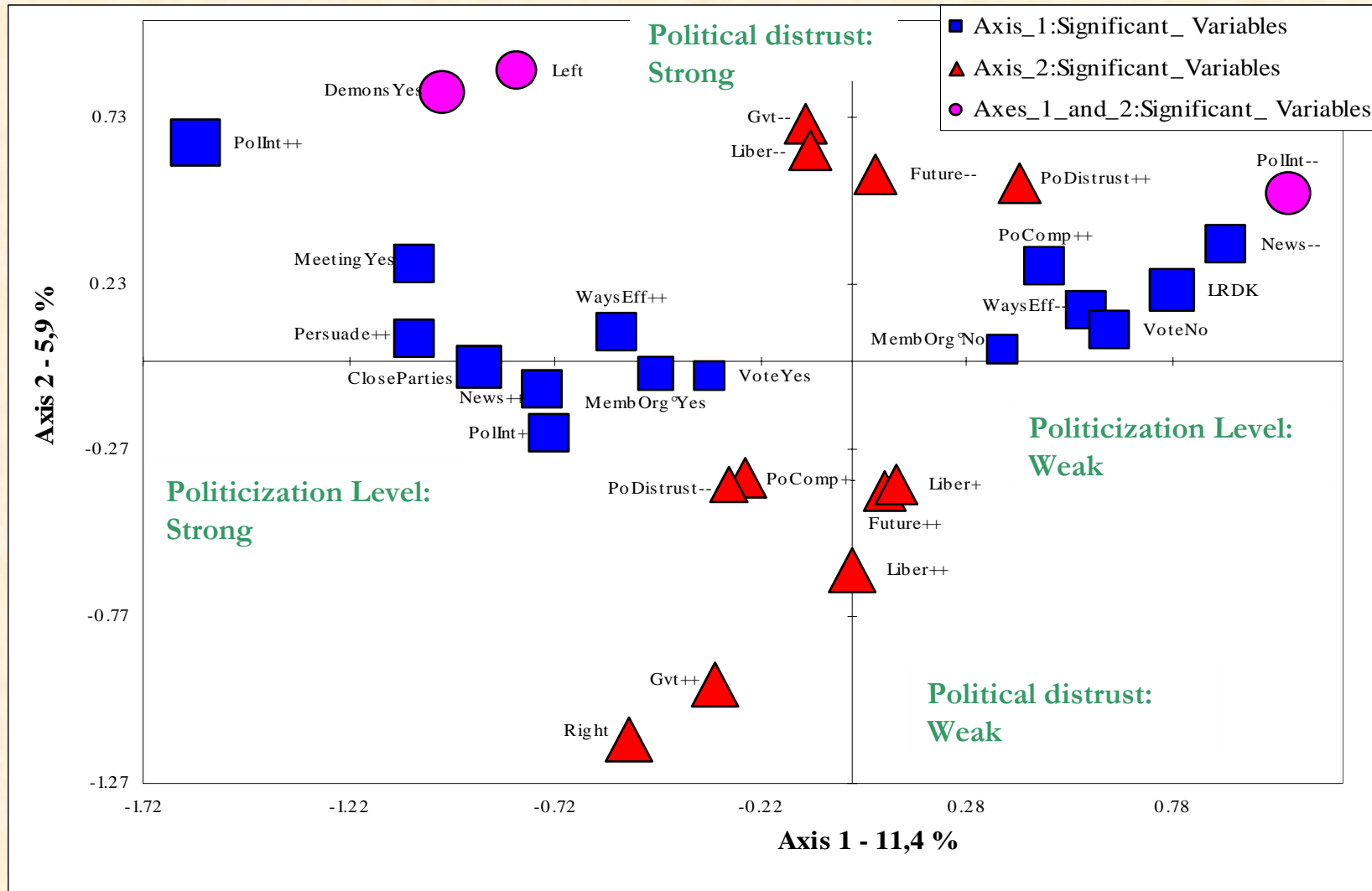
- ✓ Low interest in politics
- ✓ Distrust towards politicians
- ✓ Significant political knowledge
- ✓ Good level of information

} Age effects
Gender effects
Education level effects
Familial background effects
Country and contextual effects

Political participation

- ✓ Attachment to representative democracy
- ✓ Voting as the most effective political action
- ✓ Already an experience of voting
- ✓ Protest not so used
- ✓ Weakness of political involvement

➤ Political Participation related to Politicization and to Trust in Politics



Part Two

Which Factors Do Motivate Political Participation ?

1. Influence of school and education
2. Influence of media
3. Influence of the young people's personal environment

1. Influence of School and Education

- The more active people are in school, the more active they are outside school.
- The more active people have been in school, the more active they are after they graduate.
- The opportunity structures for participation in school foster political participation behavior.

➤ Discussing politics with teachers (participation in school) correlates with participating in legal demonstrations (participation outside school).

Discussing with teachers	Participating in legal demonstrations (in %)					
	Never	Not during the last 12 months	Once	Twice	3-5 times	5 times and more
Always	63	5	13	5	4	9
Often	68	4	15	8	2	3
Sometimes	77	4	10	5	2	1
Rarely	85	4	6	3	1	1
Never	87	3	5	2	1	1

N = 6206 valid cases, missings excluded, relationship is positive in all countries

➤ Supporting election campaigns is more often done by young people who have been a representative for their class.

Countries (total numbers)	Percentage of “speaker for the class”	Supported election campaigns (in %)	
		Not been “speaker for the class”	Been “speaker for the class”
Austria	42	6	11
Estonia	34	5	8
Finland	33	7	18
France	40	2	9
Germany	54	6	8
Italy	56	9	16
Slovakia	21	9	18
UK	12	2	17

➤ Informal support for election campaigns is more frequent, if young people have been involved in protest movements in school (even if they have already left school).

	Ever convinced others to vote for a party or candidate (in %)	
Countries	Never participated in a protest movement in school	Ever participated in a protest movement in school
Austria	22	40
Estonia	16	21
Finland	29	33
France	11	24
Germany	23	42
Italy	24	37
Slovakia	15	38
UK	4	50

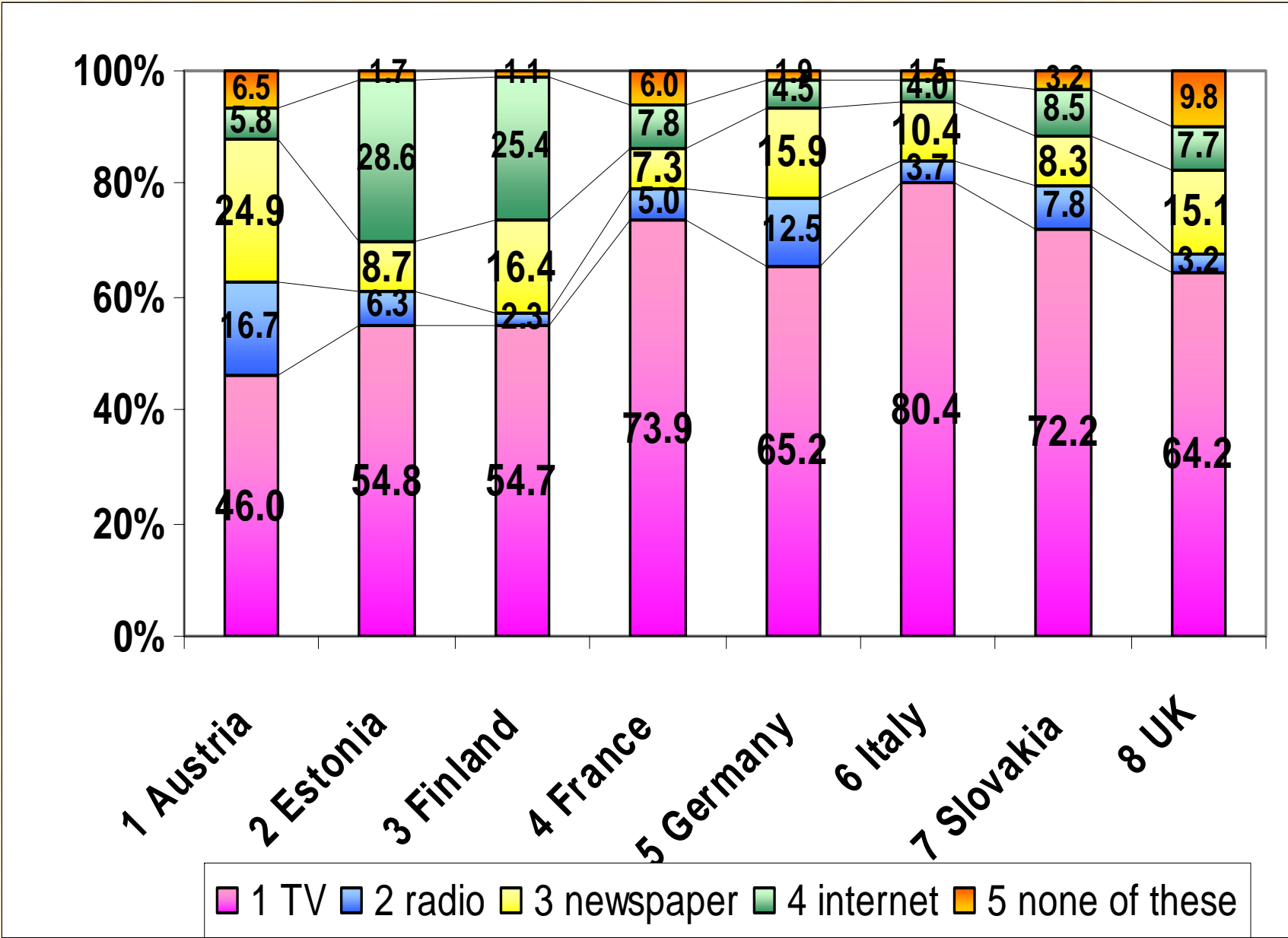
Young people in paid work; this relationship is not significant in Finland and Estonia.

Promoting political participation in schools, either through formal institutions like boards, representatives, pupils unions, or informal like political discussions or protest movements, fosters political participation outside school and fosters as well political participation after school.

❖ **Policies to encourage participation in school will strengthen European democracy**

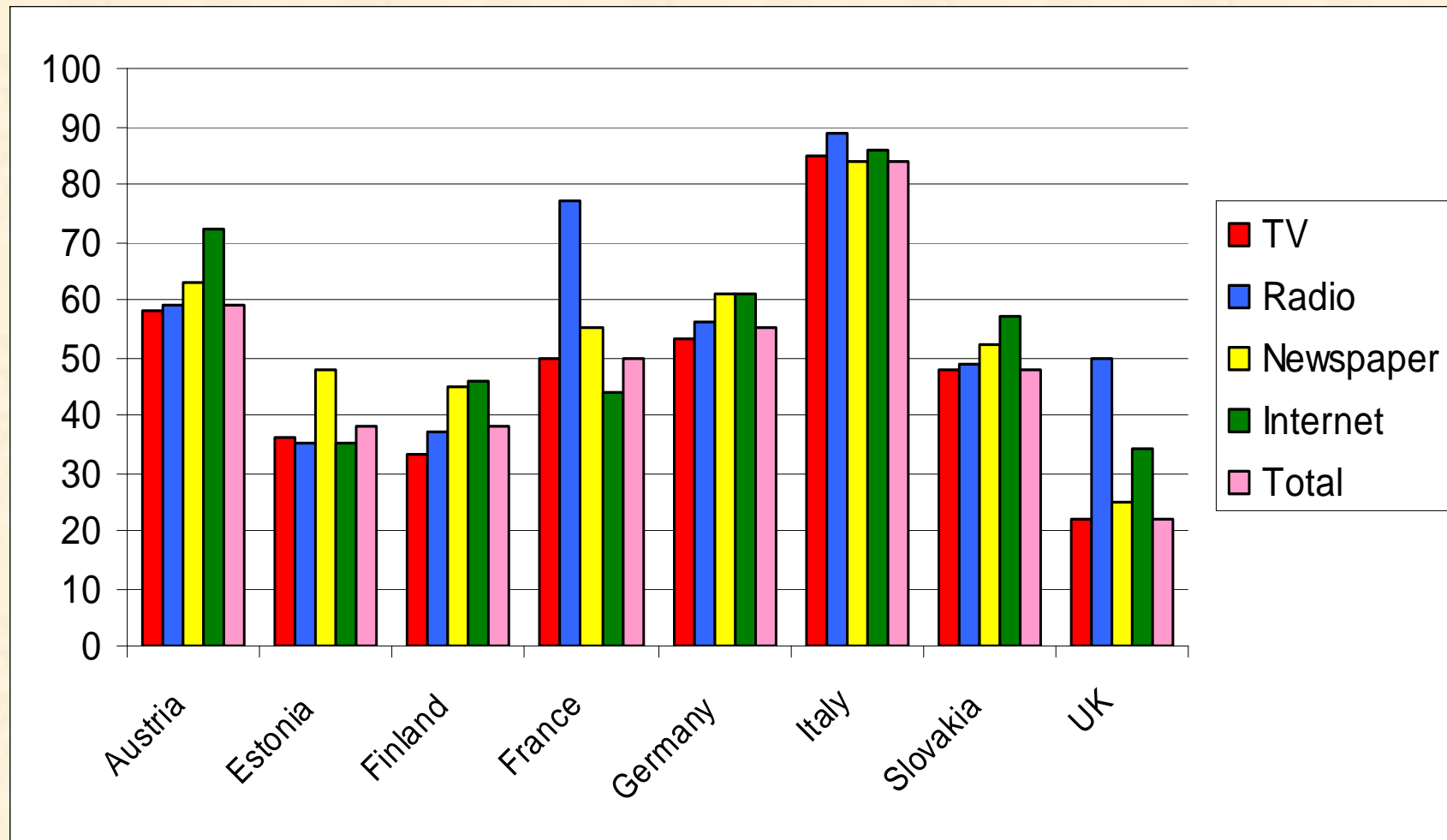
2. Influence of Media

- Television is most frequently used to follow politics.
- Each country presents its peculiarities:
 - in **Austria and Germany**, **radio** still keeps an influential role,
 - in **Estonia and Finland**, the **use of internet for political purposes** is already established,
 - in **France, Italy and Slovakia**, **television** is heavily predominant,
 - in **the UK** a remarkable number of young people does **not make use of any mass media**.

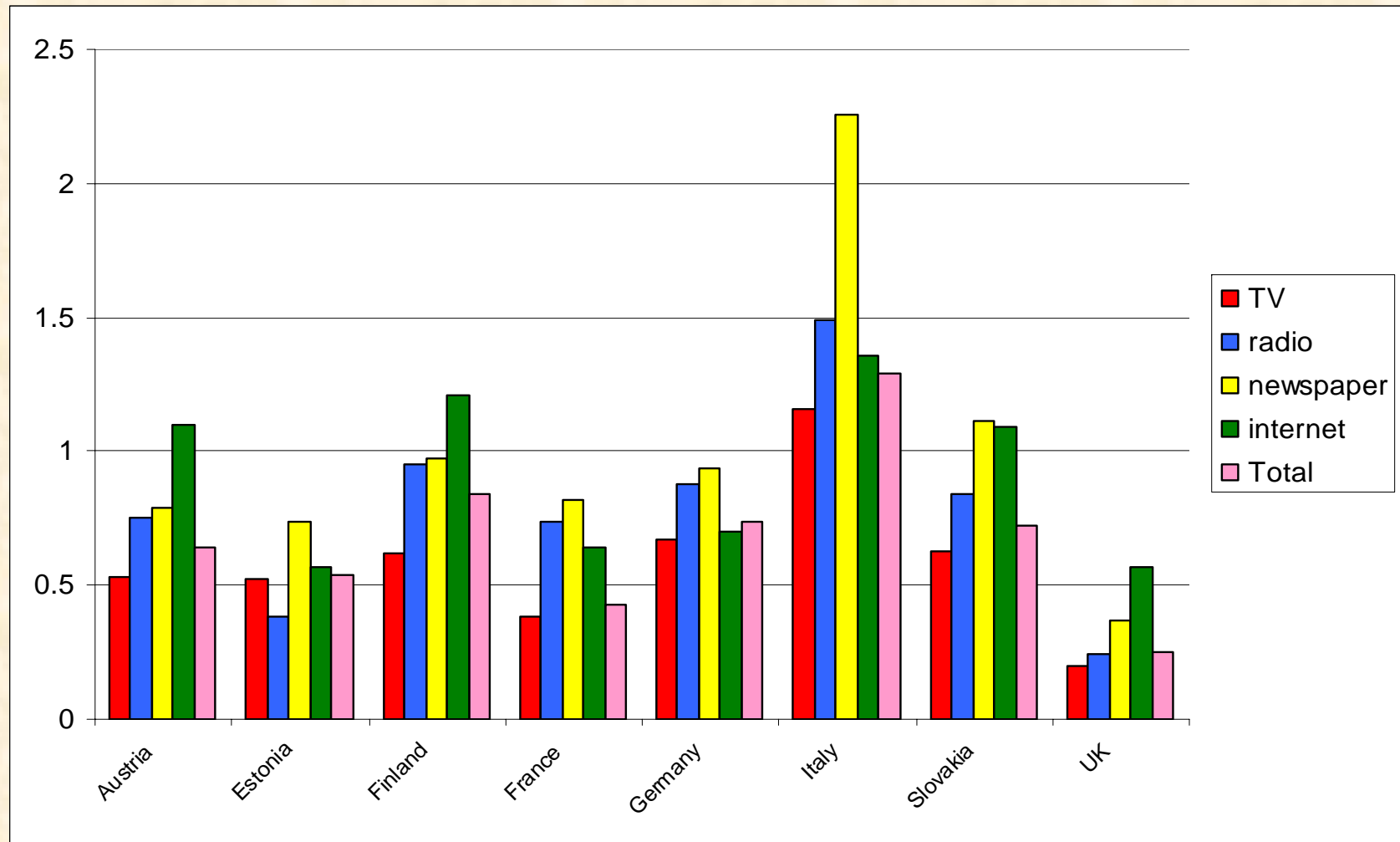


- There is a relationship between the choice of some mass medias (TV, radio, newspapers and internet) and young people's democratic behavior.
- Active-reception media (newspapers, internet) strengthen political participation.
- Passive-reception medias (TV, radio for some aspects) are less decisive and associated to lower participation.

➤ Percentage of young people voting in 2004 European elections according to their media use / per country (only young people eligible to vote)



➤ Average number of associations in which young people took part during last 12 months, according to their media use / per country (sport clubs are excluded).



❖ Policies to encourage the use of active-reception media to inform young people about politics (newspapers, internet) will help to support active political participation.

3. Influence of the Young People's Personal Environment

- Weakness of the level of parental politicization as of the peers' one:
 - only 20% have strongly politicized parents,
 - only 16% present their peers as having a strong level of politicization.

- Nevertheless, the political family background is always decisive: The higher the level of parental politicization is, the more the young people are politicized. The lower it is, the less the young people are politicized.

- The correlation is similar concerning the influence of the politicization of their friends. The more the latter are politicized, the more the young people are also politicized.
- The ideological affiliation has a direct impact: There is a major difference between the young people who can locate themselves in an ideologically leftist or rightist continuity with their parents and the young people who cannot. The first ones have more structured and more consistent political choices, while the second ones stay more distant towards politics, less involved and less participative.

➤ Ideological Affiliation and Political Behavior

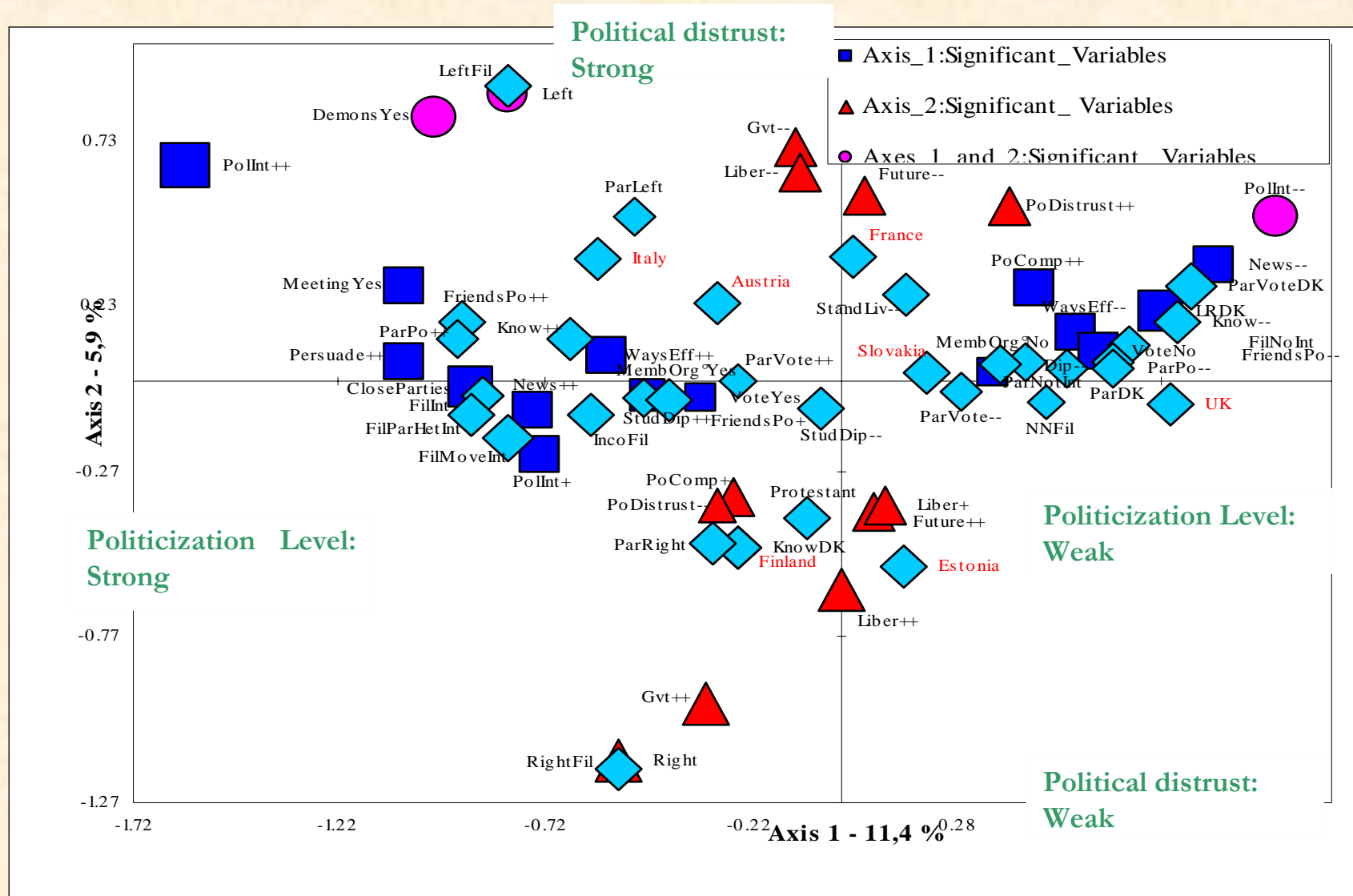
	Political interest	Partisanship proximity	Have already voted	Have already taken part in a demonstration	Member of an association	Effectiveness of political actions	Trust in political institutions
	Very fairly interested	People who declare a proximity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Very effective	Strong
Total	37	17	59	19	48	25	14
<i>Khi-Deux</i>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Right filiation	52	37	75	17	54	30	26
Left filiation	57	31	74	40	56	38	16
Neither nor filiation	25	8	50	10	42	19	11
Incoherent filiation	52	27	66	28	56	29	15
Change	58	30	74	37	59	34	16
Disconnection	29	12	54	18	47	23	9
Others	31	10	54	16	51	21	13

Do the family's influence and the friends' one have the same impact on political participation of the young people?

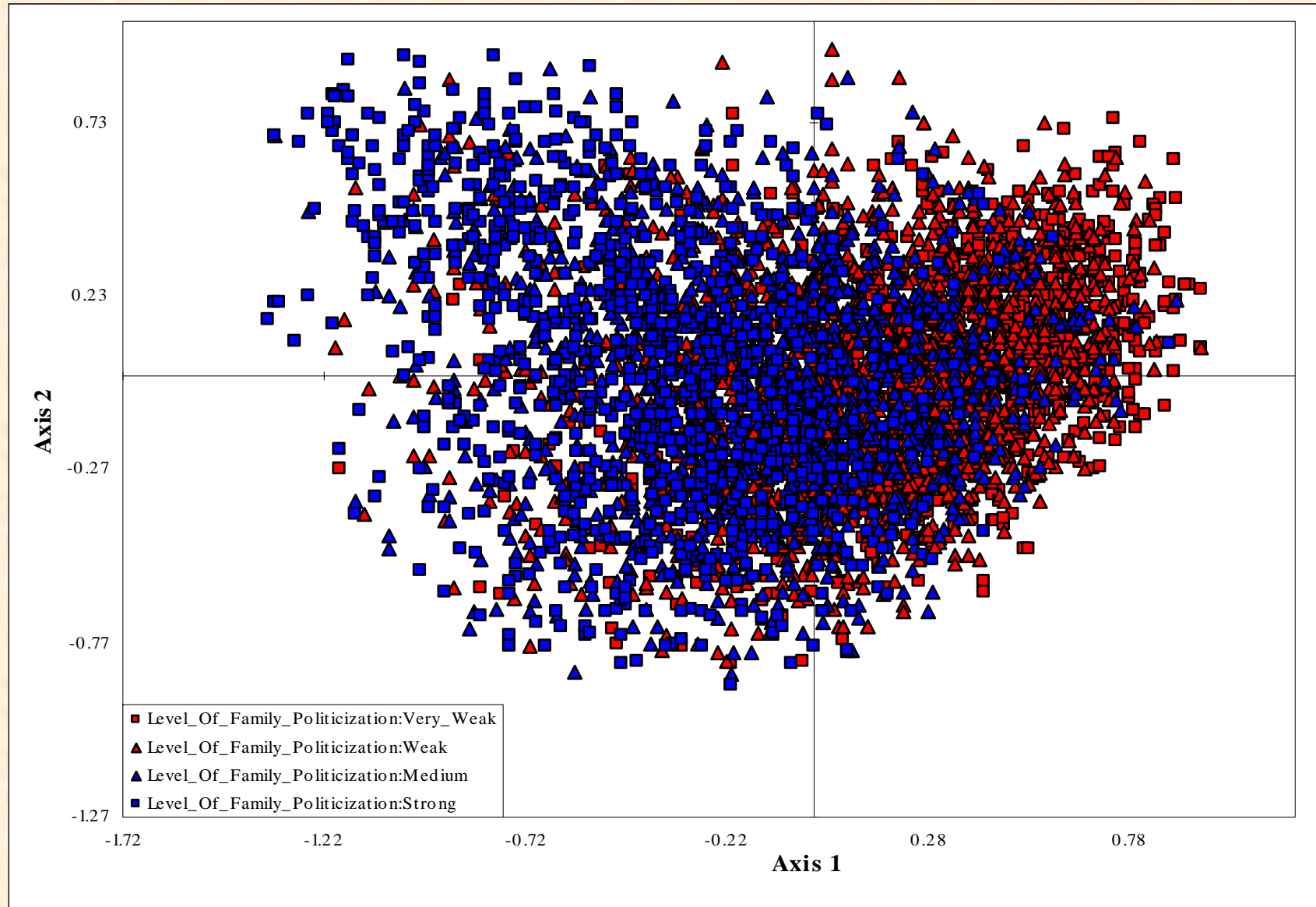
- The politicization of the personal environment is always very significant and in most cases more explanatory than the other factors, no matter whether they are social or political.
- The parental socialization seems more effective on the political attitudes and on the ideological orientations of the individuals.

- The peers' socialization, even if the family background has an impact, seems to have more effect on the political behavior and on political participation.
- In other words, political attitudes are more printed according to a vertical process of socialization (intergenerational) while political behavior is mostly generated in an horizontal one (generational).

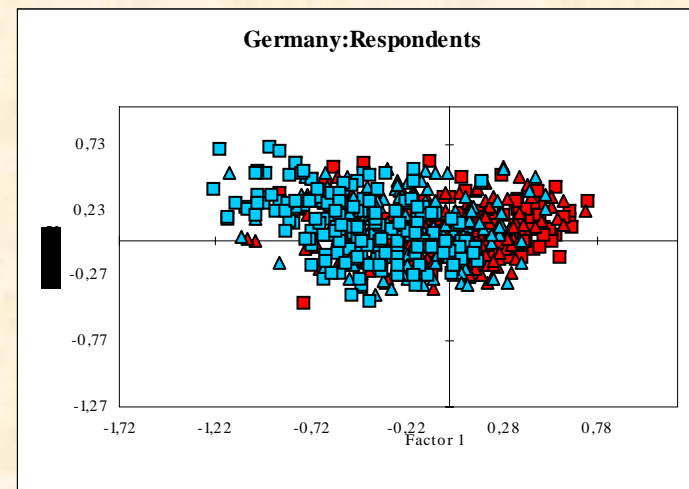
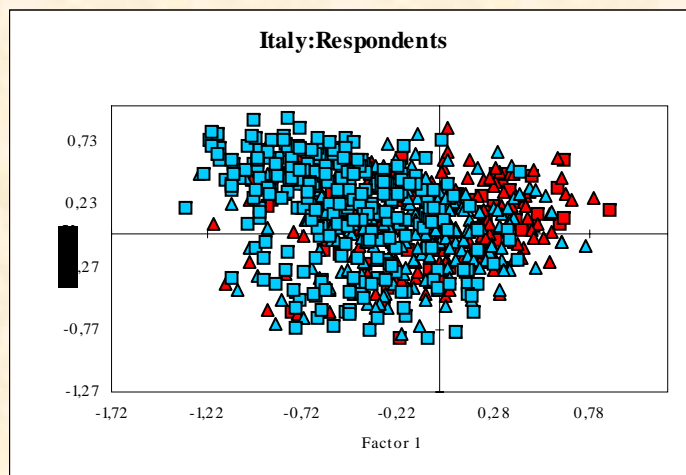
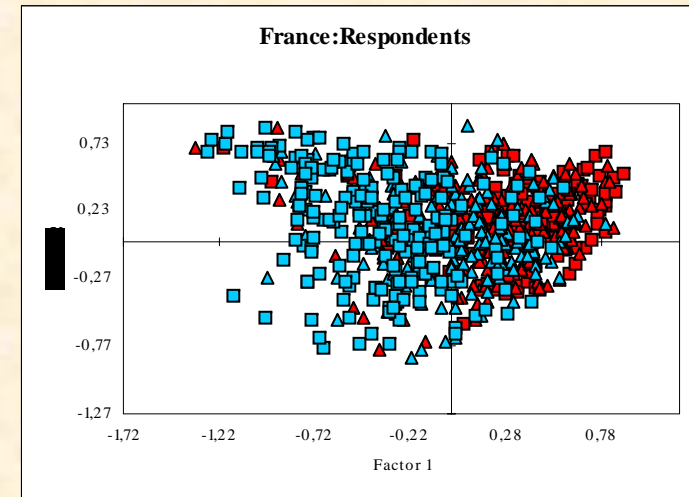
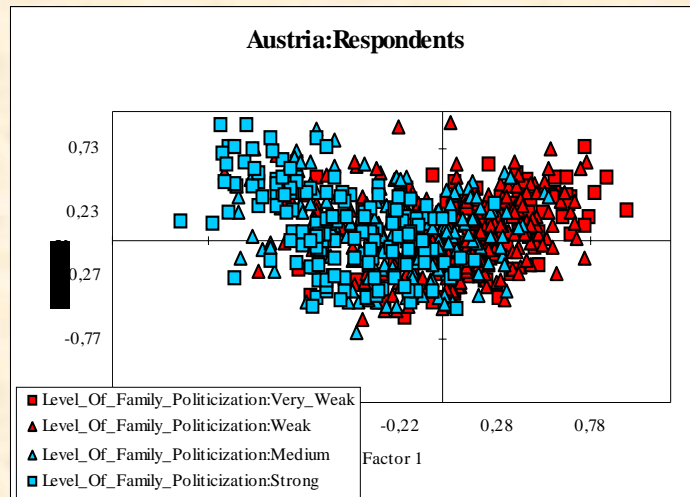
➤ Political Socialization and Political Participation



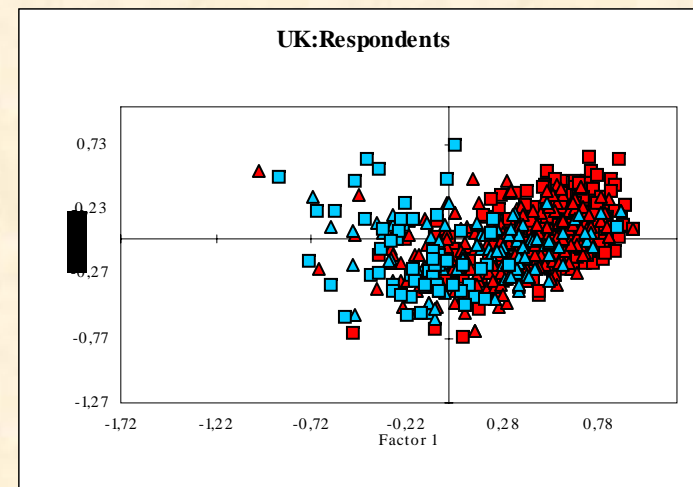
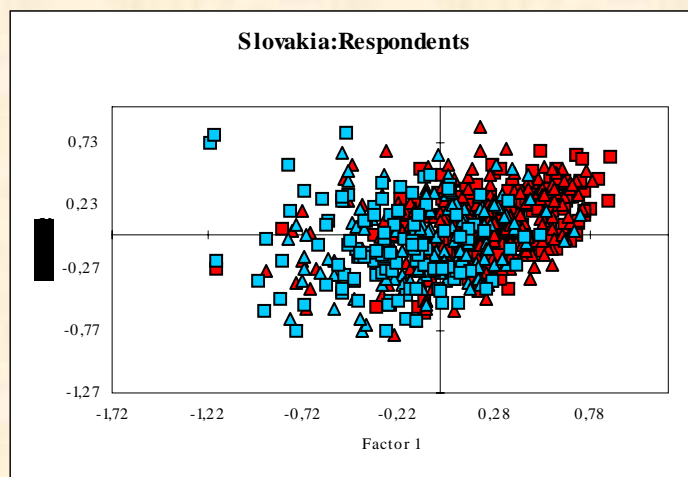
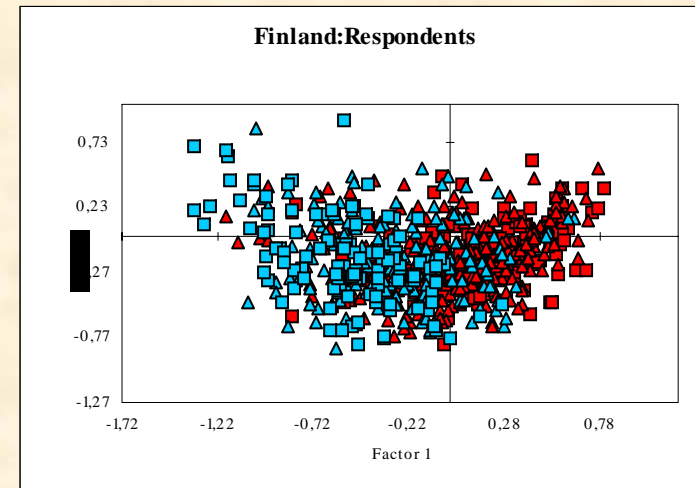
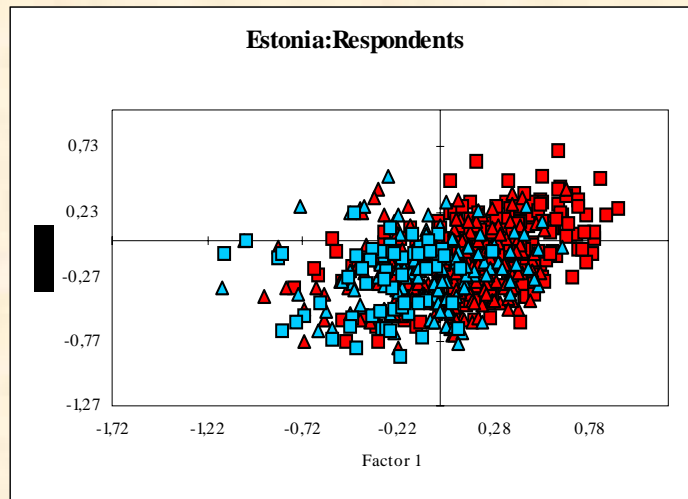
➤ Family Politicization in Europe



➤ 4 countries where parental politicization is quite strong and where there are the most numerous politicized and participative young people: Austria, France, Italy, Germany.



➤ 4 countries where parental politicization is weak and where young people are also less politicized and less participative: Estonia, Finland, Slovakia, the UK.



❖ Democratic paradoxes and shifts between political representation and political behavior

- Young people are more and more critical about the political system but they still participate within the framework of the representative democracy
- As a social and political representation, protest is more and more considered as important, but in practice it is not yet used very much by the young people
- New social movements and new political organisations are well considered and are more attractive than traditional ones, but they concern only very few young people