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Political Cynicism and Kynicism of Croatian Citizens. Profiles of Political Thinking and Behavior

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Abstract

In the last thirty years uneasiness among scholars and political actors has been growing larger as more citizens demonstrate cynical attitudes. These citizens feel that politicians are immoral and incompetent, have less faith in democracy, and show lower levels of political participation. However, Peter Sloterdijk points out that the dominant view of cynicism is simplified. He divides cynical reason into two separate ways of thinking: cynicism and kynicism. The main difference between them is in individual's reaction to the cleavage between public ideological mask and individual's idea of social reality. Cynics persist in keeping the ideological mask on and have an "enlightened false consciousness", while kynics highlight this cleavage, oppose the dominant ideology and point out misuses of political power. This research was conducted with the goal of creating cynicism and kynicism scales. Their validity was tested for two samples – a smaller sample of students and later on the representative sample of Croatian citizens (N=1002). Also, connection of cynical and kynical thought with an array of relevant political attitudes and political behaviour was tested. Results indicate that cynicism and kynicism are relatively separated and coherent types of political thought. Kynicism is primarily related to low trust in political institutions, but also to lower support of democracy. Specific combinations of these two types of thought have a highly negative potential for abandoning the democratic way of thinking. This work offers an empirical confirmation for Sloterdijk's model, and confirms usefulness of it in understanding political thought and behaviour of Croatian citizens.

Keywords: political cynicism, political kynicism, cynicism scale, kynicism scale, alienation, political participation

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Introduction

Cynicism (Greek *κυνισμός*, *kynismós*, literally „dog-like“) as a modern phenomenon usually bears a meaning of ironical arrogance, rejection, contempt, and scorn towards established moral values and aggressive conduct towards others (see HJP, 2013). In this sense, a cynic would be a person who openly, cold-bloodedly, and often scornfully displays distrust of human honesty, sincerity, and moral values and who acts insolently and without any moral scruples (*ibid.*). This kind of general view of the human nature is the core of the trait-approach to cynicism (e.g. Cook & Medley, 1954; Lepore, 1995). Other approaches usually coming from the field of social psychology broadly define cynicism as a negative set of attitudes toward particular social object(s). For example, organisational cynicism is conceptualized as the belief that the organisation in which the employee works has no integrity, the employee experiences negative affect towards the organisation and shows a tendency of undermining and criticising the organisation (Dean, Brandes & Dharwadkar, 1998). Similarly, holding politicians and politics as disreputable (Agger, Goldstein & Pearl, 1961), or having the conviction about immorality, hypocrisy, subordination of public interests to personal ones and the conviction about the incompetence of politicians are considered to be the core of political cynicism (Dekker, 2006; Eisinger, 2000; Schyns, Koop, 2007a; Schyns, Nuus, 2007; Pattyn et al., 2012). Later on, this kind of thinking may, due to the accumulation of negative experience, become generalised and applied to political institutions and the political system as a whole. Thus, political cynicism is often perceived as the consequence of corruptness of the existing system, negative campaigns, political scandals and a media image of politics permeated by such issues (Cappella, Jamieson, 1997; Goldfarb, 1991; Pharr & Putnam, 2000; Dancey, 2012) and it consequently often contributes to the loss of trust in democracy, political pessimism, withdrawal from political participation or leads to voting for ideologically extreme and populist parties and candidates (*ibid.*, Peterson & Wrighton, 1998; Bélanger & Aarts, 2006; van der Brug & Fennema, 2007). However, recent studies show that the image of political cynicism is not so uniform or exclusively negative with respect to political behaviour. Different types of cynicism are discussed, such as the negativistic, alienated, and the critical one (Dekker, 2006) or Peter Sloterdijk's concept of cynicism established in the well-known philosophical study „Critique of the Cynical Reason“ (1992). This concept was further elaborated and empirically tested by some authors (e.g. Chaloupka (1999), Rijkhoff, (2008), Blanuša, (2011), etc.). In our opinion, there are several good reasons for testing Sloterdijk's conceptualization. It introduces the more nuanced psychological description of cynical thinking, sensitive to subjective power position of cynical enunciation which has different political consequences. It gives a rich analysis of its historical roots and social phenomenology. It also gives an opportunity for further research of dynamics and

relationships of different types of cynical reason. This paper should be considered as the first step of such research.

Sloterdijk considers the cynical reason to be a universal and diffuse phenomenon of the nowadays and a reaction to the nihilism of contemporary societies, derived from the loss of faith in stable and immutable values. According to him, such a situation is the consequence of the Enlightenment which, in a few centuries, terminated the dominance of Christianity in the Western world in the ontological, metaphysical, and moral senses. For a long time, enlightenment managed to maintain the idea of a unique rational subject which functioned as a substitute for previous truths and ideals. However, in the end, through its main weapon - the critique - it merely destroyed all the ideals in which people believed and according to which they structured and organized their lives, and made them perceive their lives as miserable, grey, and depressing (ibid.). As a consequence, they turned to cynical reasoning.

The cynical subject is a split one. According to Sloterdijk, the cynical subject is entirely aware of the distance between the ideological mask and (what (s)he considers to be) the social reality. Therefore, on the level of everyday experience, during reception and interpretation of, for instance, relevant political events, the subject experiences a cleavage between the *ideological meaning of discourse*, i.e. the formal vocabulary by which the event is publicly explained and, on the other hand, *a premonition*, which has a function of deciphering what this event would „actually“ mean on the level of political game of particular interests of the actual players. In this respect, Sloterdijk distinguishes between two forms of consciousness of cynical reason: cynicism and kynicism – which deal with this cleavage in different ways. Cynicism still clings to the ideological mask, whereas kynicism actually points to the existence of this cleavage and criticises the hypocrisy of cynicism. Cynicism is, therefore, the „enlightened false consciousness“ and the average social character which is „fundamentally asocial, but it’s fully integrated “ (Sloterdijk, 1992, p. 21), a consciousness which is simultaneously well-situated and miserable and which is no longer „affected by any critique of ideology“ (ibid.). Kynicism, on the other hand, is the cheekiness of resistance, a bold, untamed attitude which casts aside unconditional truths, screams out loud that which the cynics pass over in silence and which may, but does not have to, assume the form of vital and „joyful“ criticism.

Kynicism and cynicism both have in common the „motive of self-preservation in a time of crisis“, arrogance, „releasing the breaks“ and „blurting things which are not for the public“ (Sloterdijk, 1992, p. 118), i.e. „a kind of shameless, ‘dirty’ realism“ (Sloterdijk, 1992, p. 193). However, they speak from different positions of power. Sloterdijk associates

cynicism with the ruling culture, „lordship“, as he calls it, while kynicism is associated with the popular, plebeian thought, i.e. with opposition to official ideology, which finds its most plastic form in satirical subversion.

Cynicism strives to reduce all that which is „high“ to the lowest common denominator and represents an „antithesis to its own idealism as ideology and as masquerade“ (Sloterdijk, 1992, p. 118), while kynicism is seriously „allergic“ to the pose of seriousness of those in power and based on moral-critical irritability towards authority. Kynicism acts as a „resoluteness not to let the naked truth“ hiding behind cultural habits slip away (Sloterdijk, 1992, p. 158). An example of kynicism would be the statement „The Emperor is naked“, while an example of cynicism would be Stalin's statement „The death of one man is a tragedy; death of a million is a statistic“.

Historically, kynicism appeared first; it started with Diogenes (412 – 323 BC) as a dramatic figure of a cosmopolitan wise man opposed to the upper-class idealism of Athens, only to turn into cynicism with Lucian (125 – 180 AD) who considered kynical scorn to be dangerous for the state (Sloterdijk, 1992, p. 179). Through this and numerous other historical examples, Sloterdijk defines cynicism as kynicism which passed on the side of power and idealism of the dominant ideology and became its shadow, i.e. the reverse side of the coin.

Therefore, cynicism is the hidden „evil gaze“ (Sloterdijk, 1992, p. 20.), nihilistic, bitter, hypocritical, the one which supports a worldview in which it does not honestly believe and presupposes its own position of wise and cold authority devoid of illusions. It is opposed to kynicism as rudeness, plebeian scorn and irony aimed at the cynicism of the ruling class. Kynicism opposes the lies of the ruling class (Sloterdijk, 1992, p. 110.), to the pathetic, the sublime and deadly serious tone of the ruling official ideology and unmasks their egotistical interests, violence and brutal claims to power (see Žižek, 2002, p. 50). According to Sloterdijk, due to their distrustfulness kynics perceive politics as „a threatening coercive relation between human beings, a sphere of dubious careers and questionable ambitions, a mechanism of alienation - in brief, a hell that imposes on us the existence of Others above us who are capable of violence.“ (1992, p. 113).

In the modern age, the historical „development“ of an increasingly socially organised seriousness and establishing of „public respectable stiffness“ (Sloterdijk, 1992, p. 125.) led to the maiming of kynical impulses which used to dwell in urban societies, on universities, carnivals, and among the bohemians (ibid.). The theatre and some forms of literary expression, in particular journalism, may as well be added to the list, since they function as an everyday pillar of the public. With time, their satirical and critical potentials

weaken, simultaneously with the depolitization of politics (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 173, Žižek, 1999, p. 221 etc.).

However, despite the awareness of the bluntness of the critical blade and general banalisation of mass media and their cynicism, critical potentials still exist in various forms of public action, in particular in political and investigative journalism. It is exactly this (non- sensationalistic) orientation towards uncovering political affairs, conflicts, faction wars, secret political aims, malversations, corruption, organised crime, abuse, irregularities in operation etc., which rises the public awareness of the so-called dark side of politics and the action of specific political players in such „hidden“ processes are considered as a significant area in which cynicism finds expression.

If the formula of cynicism is „they know what they are doing, but still, they are doing it“ (Sloterdijk, 1992, p. 21; 218), the formula of cynicism is „they know what „those above“ are doing and they denounce it and deride it (in a more or less loud manner)“. Therefore, while cynicism undermines not only the system's transparency, but also the political culture as a whole, cynicism exposes the „dirty linen“ of the political community. Cynicism is self-splitting through psychological repression, while cynicism represents self-embodiment in resistance. These are two polemic kinds of consciousness the criticisms of which are directed from top to bottom in the case of cynicism and from bottom to top in the case of cynicism, the study of which, according to Sloterdijk (1992, p. 219) always forms the contours of the combative history of ideas. Their cardinal forms appeared in politics, the army, sexuality, medicine, religion, and knowledge (ibid.).

The objective of this paper is to contribute to the study of this combative ideas and consciousness by designing two scales of political aspects of the cynical reason, by determining their metric characteristics and their relationship with relevant aspects of political thinking and behaviour at two levels; youth in Zagreb and, more important, the general population of Croatian citizens. The first scale would address the cynical and the second one the cynical thought in relation to politics, primarily the behaviour of key protagonists, institutions, political processes, and the political system in general.

Apart from the fact that this procedure empirically tests Sloterdijk's theory of the cynical reason, the designed scales may find their application when explaining the political behaviour of citizens, improving the understanding of political alienation and participation. Also, these scales may help us understand the confidence in institutions of the democratic system (e.g. Norris, 1999; Dalton, 2004) which, as a rule, are disturbed in times of global, economic and political, crisis and especially in a country with a young democratic political culture, such as Croatia.

Therefore, starting hypotheses of this paper are:

1. *Political kynicism and cynicism are separate and structurally coherent forms of political thought relevant for the understanding of political behaviour.*
2. *Political kynicism and cynicism have a different explanatory and predictive power for relevant political thinking and behaviour:*
 - a) *Kynicism should be more critical to institutions and performance of democracy,*
 - b) *Cynicism should be more alienated and to a lesser degree support democratic order,*
 - c) *Both of these modes of political thought should lead to lower conventional political participation*

Research Method

Scales of political kynicism and cynicism have been designed separately. The following procedure has been conducted for the purpose of checking the basic hypotheses.

a) The scale of political kynicism was designed in January 2010 as part of the seminar of the course *Political Psychology* at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb. The course was attended by second year students of political science and journalism, who had been previously introduced to Sloterdijk's definition of the phenomenon of the cynical reason through teaching, reading, and discussion about original literature. When formulating certain statements, the students were instructed that kynicism is an attitude which encompasses the belief in the malignity of politicians, political institutions and/or the political system as a whole (Schyns & Koop, 2007a; Schyns, Nuus, 2007) to cover the whole range of objects of cynical remarks. Accordingly, it was their task to formulate statements as criticisms of only one of the three afore mentioned subjects per each statement. They were, further, told that kynical statements need to be formulated in a manner as to express criticism on the side of those who do not possess power and who express distrust, scepticism, irony, and disdain of political protagonists, institutions, and the system as a whole, and are convinced in their immorality and/or incompetence; that the statements need to be „rough“, „cruel“ and „poignant“, and that they should try to find examples thereof in the daily press. After the statements had been formulated and the final choice of clear and unambiguous statements through group discussion, 29 of them were subjected to evaluation of a group of first year political science students (n=97) who had the task to express their agreement or disagreement on a scale with the categories: *completely disagree, partly disagree, both agree and disagree, partly*

agree, completely agree. During data input these results were numerically coded from 1 to 5. In the subsequent procedure, the statements which in this phase of analysis scored an item-total correlation below 0.300 were the first to be excluded. This was followed by the exclusion of all those statements which did not discriminate in a sufficiently good manner the subjects in the whole range of the scale and did not have a distribution of results similar to a normal one. These were the statements having the following characteristics:

- their arithmetical mean was below 2 or above 4,
- their standard deviation was small, less than 0.9,
- their index of distribution asymmetry fell below -1 or above +1.

The statements were then grouped according to the objects of the attitude, in this case in relation to the political protagonists, institutions, and the system as a whole. The statements having lower item-total correlation were excluded from further analysis. Following this, the scale's structural validity was assessed by factor analysis using the principal components method. Within the initial factor extraction existence of one general factor was assumed. In order to assess the scale's reliability a measure of internal consistency was calculated. In the end 6 statements were included in the final version of the scale.

b) The political cynicism scale was designed in January 2011 through an identical procedure, with the creators and judges of content appropriateness being political science and journalism students of the following generation. However, they received an instruction for designing particular statements which was different than the previous one. The new instruction defined cynicism as a split and hypocritical consciousness which is aware of political ideals, but it insolently and shamelessly undermines and despises them. They were told that cynicism speaks as from a position of political power defending political manipulations of the ruling class (regardless of the political orientation of the ruling class) and that it reduces political struggle to power conflict and sees it as the most important objective; for the attainment of which it is legitimate to make use of all means. The object of the cynical attitude may be different political ideals, values, the democratic system as a whole, its protagonists and institutions, the citizens and the people in general. In the cynical worldview, the last two are perceived as weaker in relation to the „political class“. With respect to all objects, cynicism expresses distrust, despise, and arrogance and talks about them in an ironical or arrogant manner. Moreover, the general attitude of cynicism is nihilistic. They also had to find models for their statements in the daily press and express the final statements in a clear and unambiguous manner in as a little as possible „poignant“ and „rough“ words. A total of 34 statements was chosen for the following phase in which

they were presented to a group of first year political science students (n=108). The selection procedure of the final statements was based on principles identical to the ones used for the previous scale. Like the kynicism scale, in the final phase this scale consisted of 6 statements.

c) Both scales were applied in the study of lifestyles and political opinion of the young population of Zagreb, Croatia. The research was prepared and conducted in the framework of the course *Research Methods* in the period between April 19th and May 2nd 2011. The multi-phase random sample (n=124) consisted of young people aged between 15 and 25. The structural validity of both scales was calculated by principal component analysis with varimax rotation and checked by alternative extraction (Principal Axis Factoring and Maximum Likelihood) and rotation methods (direct oblimin, $\delta = 0$). This procedure has been also obtained in further analysis on national sample. In both cases alternative extraction methods produced very similar factorial structures as original PCA method and oblique rotations didn't produce simpler solutions. The existence of two factors representing political kynicism and cynicism was assumed and reliability of the internal consistency type was calculated for both scales. Since in previous studies (e.g. Schyns, Koop, 2007b; Schyns, Nuus, 2007) cynicism was associated with a low level of confidence in political institutions, reduced political participation and alienation from politics, the relationships between cynicism and kynicism with these variables were analysed as well.

d) On the basis of previous results, reduced versions of the scales of political kynicism and cynicism were created (criteria for shortening will be discussed later) which were applied to a probabilistic representative national sample of Croatian citizens (n=1002) in January 2012 in the framework of a survey study of post-election voters' behaviour. An analysis of structural validity and an analysis of the relationship between kynicism and cynicism with measures of diffuse and specific support to the democratic system (Easton, 1975), confidence in political institutions, alienation, and other political behaviour of citizens were conducted again.

Results and Discussion

a) Scale of political kynicism

On the basis of the implemented construction procedure, a total of six statements were chosen with the following metric characteristics which we used as a criterion for their selection:

Table 1. Metric characteristics of the statements for the scale of political cynicism

Statement	Item-total correlation	M	σ	Asymmetry index	Factor saturations
6. Politicians look only to their own interests.	0.733	3.69	0.972	-0.382	0.839
12. The Parliament is merely a show for the people, all decisions are made elsewhere.	0.522	3.52	1.182	-0.597	0.669
19. Political parties are a hotbed of corruption and incompetence.	0.593	3.21	1.314	-0.447	0.760
22. Democracy is merely a mask by which the rich keep the others obedient.	0.581	2.98	1.136	0.128	0.733
26. Politics in Croatia serves only for providing jobs for layabouts and time-wasters.	0.391	3.09	1.164	-0.063	0.551
29. Crime lies not far from politics.	0.558	3.71	1.070	-0.751	0.715
n=97	$\alpha = 0.806$			Var. explained: eigen:	51.36% 3.082

Individual items have satisfactory metric characteristics and the Cronbach alpha coefficient of internal consistency for the whole scale is $\alpha = 0.806$. Factor analysis was used to extract the principal component which, by its characteristics represents the general factor since the saturation factors of all items are high and significant, and the factor itself explains 51.36% of result variance. Another factor of borderline statistical significance (eigen = 1.025) was obtained by further extraction. However, this factor was not interpretative and was thus excluded from further analysis.

b) Scale of political cynicism

A year after creating the previous scale, by means of a procedurally identical design, but with different instructions for creating the contents of a scale of political cynicism, another set of six statements was chosen with the following metric characteristics:

Table 2. Metric characteristics of statements in the scale of political cynicism

Statement	Item-total corr.	M	σ	Asymmetry index	Factor saturations
2. The problem lies not in the shortage of workplaces and the crisis, but in the general laziness of the people.	0.386	2.99	1.164	-0.235	0.620
5. The quality of democracy does	0.483	2.73	1.272	0.105	0.684

not matter that much, people are sheep who need a shepherd anyway.					
6. Propaganda is to democracy what violence is to dictatorship.	0.451	2.97	0.912	-0.095	0.663
10. Great ideas in politics are merely excuses and half-truths in which naive people believe.	0.379	3.07	1.047	-0.150	0.577
13. Laws are written so that weak people would stick to them.	0.438	2.79	0.938	-0.183	0.665
26. To be in power and act morally is possible, but not desirable.	0.331	2.79	1.340	0.019	0.524
n=108				Var.	39.04%
$\alpha=0.685$				explained: eigen:	2.342

As in the previous scale, items have satisfactory metric characteristics, although in this case, average values are more shifted towards the dimension of disagreement, which is to be expected, given the nature of the group which served for the construction. The group consisted of, primarily, young people who are, in general, less cynical than the rest of the population (e.g., Lariscy, Tinkham & Sweetser, 2011; Rubenson et al., 2004), and also, specifically, a group having a strong interest in politics. The members of this group have a greater conviction in the possibility of action through political institutions of the democratic system which is partly visible in the previous results of the design of the scale of political cynicism.

Cronbach alpha is somewhat lower than in the previous scale ($\alpha = 0.685$), but it is still satisfactory given the small number of statements in the area of political attitudes. Factor analysis extracted only one principal component which, according to its characteristics, represents the general factor by which 39.04% of the result variance was explained.

c) Structural validity of the scales

In the second half of 2011 both scales were incorporated in a survey questionnaire used on young people in Zagreb. The sample consisted of 52.4 % female and 47.6 % male subjects. The results of the testing of structural validity through principal component factor analysis with varimax rotations are presented in the following table. The adequacy of the correlation matrix for factor analysis was tested before the actual implementation. The table also shows affirmative and very high scores of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy test and the Bartlett's test of sphericity.

Table 3. Factor structures of the scales of political cynicism and cynicism in the young population of Zagreb, n=124.

Statement	P. KYNICISM	P. CYNICISM
1. Politicians look only to their own interests.	0.784	
2. Politics in Croatia serves only for providing jobs for layabouts and time-wasters.	0.738	
3. Democracy is merely a mask by which the rich keep the others obedient.	0.802	
4. The Parliament is merely a show for the people, all decisions are made elsewhere.	0.658	
5. Political parties are a hotbed of corruption and incompetence.	0.800	
6. Crime lies not far from politics.	0.690	
7. The quality of democracy does not matter that much, people are sheep who need a shepherd anyway.		0.682
8. Propaganda is to democracy what violence is to dictatorship.		0.647
9. Great ideas in politics are merely excuses and half-truths in which naive people believe.	0.558	0.513
10. The problem lies not in the shortage of workplaces and the crisis, but in the general laziness of the people.		0.608
11. Laws are written so that weak people would stick to them.		0.612
12. To be in power and act morally is possible, but not desirable.		0.446
Variance explained	32.51 %	19.01 %
Eigen	3.558	2.281
n=124	$\alpha = 0.860$	$\alpha = 0.685$
K.M.O. index = 0,848; Bartlett's test of sphericity: $\chi^2=518,841$, df=66, p<0,0001		

Two significant factors were extracted which, by their structure, clearly correspond to the cynical and cynical perception of politics. All the statements are significantly saturated by these factors, while the only one from the cynical scale displays significant saturation with the other factor as well. Also, we have obtained alternative oblique rotations to test the possibility of more simple factorial structure if we allow correlation between these two factors. Results obtained by these analyses didn't suggest better solutions. With the assumption that cynicism is generally bottom-up criticism and cynicism top-bottom criticism, it seems that statement no 9 may be expressing both critical opinions. It has been excluded from further analysis. Besides, internal consistency coefficients remained at an equally high level as in the previous testing. In relation to the scales previously used in American and Dutch studies (Schyns, Nuus, & Dekker, 2004) – the

internal consistency coefficients with 8 or more items revolve around the value 0.6, and with an increased number of items reach value of 0.81, (Schyns & Koop, 2007b) – our instruments appear to be more reliable and more economic. There results corroborate our first hypothesis.

Furthermore, some studies show the increase of cynical opinion along with a decreased confidence in institutions of the democratic system (ibid, Weakliem & Borch, 2006), and with similar phenomena such as decreased political participation and alienation from politics (Finitfer, 1970; Capella & Jamieson, 1997), which becomes an even more important issue in the context of global democratic crisis (Stavrakakis, 2011).

Our scales make a clear distinction between the kynical and cynical modes of thinking, which have, according to our second hypothesis and its sub-hypotheses different effects on political thinking and behaviour. This raises the question of the nature of their relationship with these previously established correlates of political cynicism. For this purpose we have conducted correlation analyses between these two types of thought and the following measures:

- attitudes towards most prominent political and social institutions,
- composite measures of political activity in the last year period,
- intention to participate in the following elections,
- personal importance of political involvement and power,
- frequency of news watching and comments on political events in the press and watching TV news shows.

The results are displayed in the following table:

Table 4. Correlations between political kynicism and cynicism and attitudes towards institutions, political activity, and alienation from politics

Variables	Political Kynicism	Political Cynicism
<i>Attitude towards:</i>		
The President of the Republic	-0.122	-0.071
The Parliament	-0.480**	0.036
The Government	-0.487**	0.061
The Army	-0.107	0.079
The Police	-0.203**	0.124
The Judiciary	-0.157†	0.025
Public administration	-0.034	-0.007
Political parties	-0.407**	-0.035
Unions	-0.149†	-0.119
The media	-0.076	-0.028

Christian churches (regardless of denomination)	-0.076	0.025
NGOs	-0.103	-0.107
Political activity	-0.377**	-0.022
Intention to participate in the next elections	-0.277**	-0.028
Personal importance of political engagement	-0.307**	0.072
Personal importance of gaining power	-0.221**	0.280**
Following news and comments on politics in the press	-0.310**	0.034
Watching TV news	-0.146†	-0.045

† significant at $p < 0.10$, * significant at $p < 0.05$; ** significant at $p < 0.01$.

While for cynicism it is clear only that it is linked to the importance of gaining power, other results show that for all three dimensions – relationship towards political institutions, political participation, and alienation from politics – political cynicism is actually their strong correlative, i.e. that form of political criticism which talks from the position of those who as citizens have a whole range of expectations from the bearers of power, clearly identifying abuse and irresponsibility. This form of criticism, along with the non-existence and non-familiarity with the mechanism of influence on political representatives can contribute to distancing from politics as such. It is still not clear to what extent this is the result of political inexperience, weak political education, and in particular, youthful idealism disillusioned by the actual functioning of the Croatian political system in the studied group of young people. With regard to this, the relationship of cynicism and the fundamental support for democracy (Easton, 1965.) should be further examined with respect to the estimate of actual political achievements of the system, i.e. whether this is merely an instance of alienation from the existing political class and leadership and/or their politics or from the entire political system (Milbrath & Goel, 1977). This is exactly what will be analysed at the level of the entire population of Croatian citizens.

d) Implementation of the scale in the post-electoral study of citizens 2012.

The scales of political cynicism and cynicism were used in the framework of post-electoral study of voting behaviour, conducted through the survey by the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb.

Reduced versions of both scales were created for the purpose of a more economical data-gathering. The choice of statements for the reduced versions was based on three principles:

- maintain as wide a range of attitude subjects as possible,
- the metric characteristics of the statements contained in the scales should be as good as possible,

- the structure of previously obtained factors and their loadings should not be significantly altered.

Finally, four statements were kept for each scale. Their metric characteristics acquired on the youth in Zagreb and national sample of Croatian citizens are shown below.

Table 5. Factor structure of the scales of political kynicism and cynicism of youth in Zagreb and Croatian citizens

Statements	Youth in Zagreb (n=124)		National sample (n=1002)		Reduced factor structure	
	P. KYNICIS M	P. CYNICIS M	P. KYNICISM	P. CYNICIS M	P. KYNICIS M	P. CYNICIS M
1. Politicians look only to their own interests.	0.814		0.730		0.761	
2. Democracy is merely a mask by which the rich keep the others obedient.	0.847		0.762		0.782	
3. The Parliament is merely a show for the people, all decisions are made elsewhere.	0.713		0.752		0.764	
4. Crime lies not far from politics.	0.708		0.768		0.781	
5. The quality of democracy does not matter that much, people are sheep who need a shepherd anyway.		0.630	0.621	0.413	Excluded	
6. Propaganda is to democracy what violence is to dictatorship.		0.652	0.616	0.391	Excluded	
7. The problem lies not in the shortage of workplaces and the crisis, but in the general laziness of the people.		0.743		0.829		0.871
8. Laws are written so that weak people would stick to them.		0.549		0.774		0.775
Variance explained	32.81%	22.28	39.14 %	21.10 %	41.23 %	24.19 %
Eigen	2.625	1.783	3.131	1.684	2.474	1.451
α	0.804	0.679	0.788	0.687	0.788	0.575
	K.M.O. index =0.783 Bartlett's test of sphericity: $\chi^2=248,881$, df=28, p<0.0001		K.M.O. index = 0.849; Bartlett's test of sphericity: $\chi^2=2421,104$, df=28, p<0.0001		K.M.O. index = 0.755; Bartlett's test of sphericity: $\chi^2=1484,835$, df=15, p<0.0001	

The obtained results on national sample of citizens differ in part from the first hypothesis on cynicism and cynicism as completely separated forms of political thought since statements 5 and 6 are significantly saturated with both factors. Besides, oblique rotations didn't produce simpler factors. Finally, stable and simple factor structure is produced only by the exclusion of problematic statements.

With the assumption that the double-barrelled statements are unambiguous as regards the type of criticism they express (bottom-up and vice versa) and the ruling out of the possibility of bias in favour of cynicism as a consequence of the order of statements (which would then transfer to the estimate of cynical statements), reasons for such a result may be multiple and require the establishing of additional hypotheses. We have, therefore, assumed the following:

- Political cynicism and cynicism may partly merge due to the increase of political experience, in particular of the negative kind. For this reason there should be no saturation of controversial statements with both factors or the observed overlapping should be lesser at younger respondents, whereas with the increase in age this merging of two attitudes should be more pronounced and visible in the structure of factorial saturation.
- Political cynicism and cynicism are more clearly differentiated in more educated subjects due to their better familiarity with the functioning of politics. Therefore, a better knowledge of politics and familiarity with one's own role in it enables them to express a more focussed and nuanced criticism from different subjective standpoints.

Factor analyses and comparisons of the obtained factor structures by means of congruency coefficients (Fulgosi, 1988) were conducted for the purpose of testing additional hypotheses, and afterwards the significance of the differences between factor saturations of two statements significantly saturated with both factors was tested. Analyses were conducted on the following groups:

- according to age: 18 – 30, 31 – 50, 51 and above.
- according to education: with or without finished elementary education; craftsmen, qualified workers, three year vocational high school; four year vocational high school, grammar school; college, bachelor degree, master's degree, PhD.

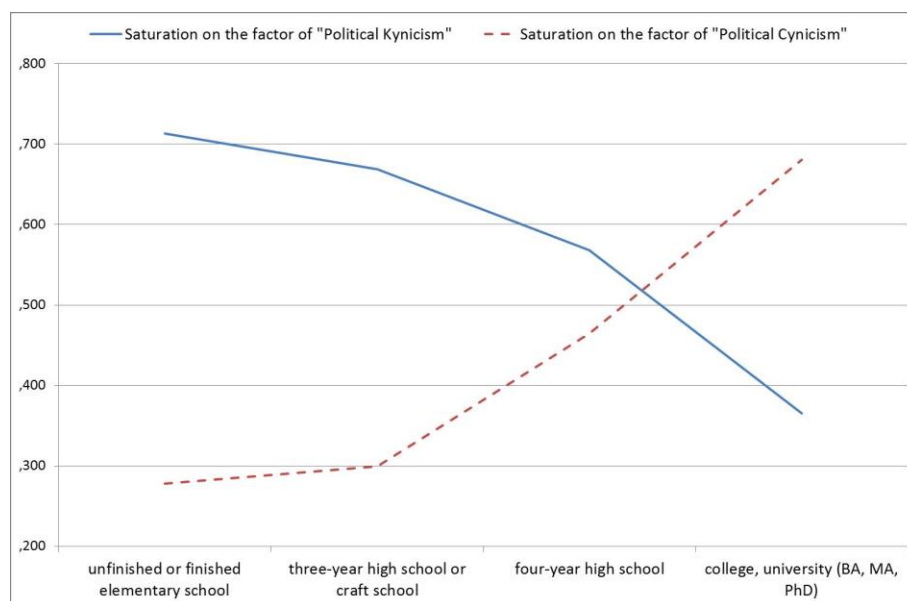
Based on age groups, congruency coefficient between factorial structures is 0.99 and the differences among factorial saturations of each of the analysed statements are not

statistically significant. Although the tendencies of increasing the statements' saturation with cynicism and decreasing the saturation with cynicism in the function of age are visible, the t-ratios for statement no 5 range from -1.917 to 1.541, while in the case of statement no 6 they range from -1.583 to 1.432, which falls below the borderline value of 1.96 for the significance level of 5%.

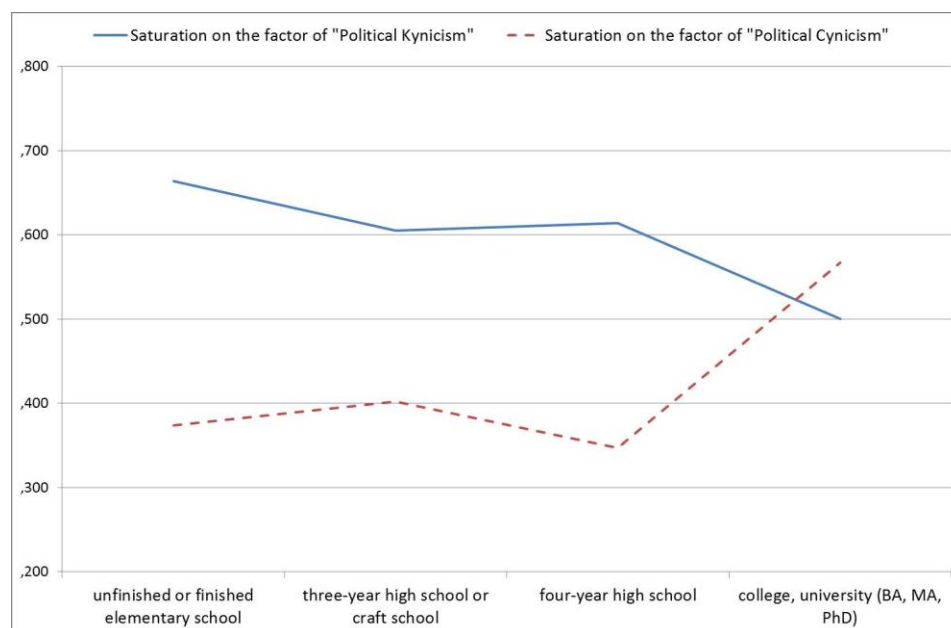
However, with respect to education, clear and statistically significant differences confirm our second additional hypothesis. In the case of statement no 5 the differences in saturations between the groups with and without elementary education, and between the groups of professional craftsmen, college education or three year vocational school were not significant. Among all the other groups the differences are statistically significant at 1% and the t-ratios range from -5.137 to 5.257. In the case of statement no 6 a similar pattern of differences is present, i.e they range from -3.096 to 2.587. The congruency coefficients between the factors for different educational groups move in the range between 0.92 and 0.99. Therefore, with a higher level of education factor saturations of the controversial statements grow significantly in favour of cynicism and at the same time significantly decrease with respect to kynicism, a fact which is visible in the following two images:

Moreover, such results are compatible with Sloterdijk's assumptions that educational institutions as „agents of enlightenment“ (92) are actually responsible for „sharpening“ of cynical thought which, according to him, occurs in a clash of „*grand theory*, ..., *sublimity*, ..., *the show of order...*“ (286) and the educational process as „*parody of the idea of progress*“ (92).

In further studies the quality of the statements should certainly be improved and their order should alternate, instead of presenting them as blocks of homogeneous statements. However, the problem analysed can for the time being be solved in two ways: by using the factor scores including double-barrelled items, with the assumption that we are taking into account exactly that part of the valid variance of the multiply saturated statements which refers to the respective factors of cynicism and cynicism.

**Figure 1.**

Changes in factor saturations with increased level of education in the case of statement „5: The quality of democracy does not matter that much, people are sheep who need a shepherd anyway“

**Figure 2.**

Changes in factor saturations with increased level of education in the case of statement „6: Propaganda is to democracy what violence is to dictatorship“

The second way is to exclude double-barrelled statements from the factor structure and its respective scores. We have, therefore, applied both ways to see if their results will differ significantly. To test the second hypothesis, in the subsequent procedure we have analysed their relationship with measures of diffuse and specific support to democracy, belief in institutions, political alienation and political participation. The results shown in the following table clearly indicate almost the same results regarding the way of measurement of kynicism and cynicism. Further analyses show the same tendency, which is not surprising because correlation between two versions of political cynicism is 0.978 and of political kynicism is 0.980, respectively.

Table 6. Correlations of political kynicism and cynicism with support to democracy, trust in institutions, political participation in the elections, and alienation from politics.

Variables	Political kynicism	Political kynicism: reduced solution	Political cynicism	Political cynicism: reduced solution
Diffuse support of democracy	-0.176**	-0.166**	-0.066*	-0.055†
Specific support of democracy	-0.190**	-0.195**	-0.027	-0.035
<i>Trust in:</i>				
The President of the Republic	-0.097**	-0.115**	-0.000	-0.021
The Parliament	-0.277**	-0.290**	0.037	0.019
The Government	-0.291**	-0.295**	0.007	-0.001
The Army	-0.068*	-0.083*	0.016	-0.001
The Police	-0.096**	-0.114**	0.007	-0.015
The Judiciary	-0.225**	-0.247**	0.090**	0.064*
Public administration	-0.195**	-0.209**	0.073*	0.057†
Political parties	-0.244**	-0.263**	0.061	0.038
The unions	-0.176**	-0.186**	0.063	0.051
The media	-0.085**	-0.091**	0.091**	0.081*
The Church	-0.064*	-0.065*	0.039	0.038
NGOs	-0.092**	-0.097**	-0.016	-0.022
Political participation in the elections (previous and intended)	-0.072*	-0.076*	-0.016	-0.021
Political alienation	0.184**	0.183**	0.069*	0.070*

† significant at $p < 0.08$, * significant at $p < 0.05$, ** significant at $p < 0.01$.

According to the majority of results, it appears that political cynicism is that aspect of the cynical reason which is, to a more significant extent than political cynicism, connected to negative effects to: support to the political system, confidence in institutions, a feeling of alienation from politics and, to a lesser extent, on conventional political participation. It is a kind of thinking which most studies so far designated as cynicism and our results mostly overlap with them (e.g. Vreese, 2005; Schyns & Koop, 2007a, 2007b; Pattyn et al., 2012). However, unlike these studies, cynicism in Croatia expresses not only discontent with the existing performance of the democratic system, but is also to a significant extent negatively linked with the fundamental (diffuse) support of democracy, more so than cynicism. Such results partly falsify our second hypothesis, particularly sub-hypothesis 2b.

How to explain this? Although this link between cynicism and diffuse support of democracy is not strong, it certainly points to the problem of functioning of the political system, the main protagonists of which not only produce the „dirty linen“ – for which they deserve criticism and bear political, or even criminal, liability – but it also influences on the reduced support for democracy as such. Such a result should be perceived as a warning because it represents a potential for establishing a „diluted democracy“, i.e. a distancing from democracy with its own blessing (Beck, 2001; p. 137) or for making room for openly antidemocratic thought and behaviour which is dominated by authoritarianism and hate speech.

If we analyse Croatian political reality in the last twenty years from the aspect of disillusionment in a smooth and promising functioning of democracy, the distortion of its rules, an ever increasing performative trend of serious stiffness, and the disappearance of the potential of political satire from the public scene or its marginalisation can be clearly seen. This is particularly expressed through the disappearance of critical media, i.e. the political weekly magazines *Danas*, *Feral Tribune* etc., the transformation of the remaining ones into showcases of trendiness and legitimators of the *status quo*, as well as the appearance of new ones permeated by intellectual shallowness. This brings out not only the issue of the possibility of articulation of a „joyful“ form of cynicism as a vent for “blowing of the steam”, but also of the part of the „political drive“ which serves the purpose of the system's self-renovation. Recent studies (e.g. Rijkoff, 2008) attempt to differentiate various forms of cynicism from cynicism on the basis of their emotional characteristics, primarily the existence of hope. Our suggestion of further differentiation of types of cynicism follows the same path, but is different from this attempt due to a more sophisticated and separate measurement of cynicism and cynicism.

Kynicism usually incorporates a life-affirming attitude and vitality, and cheeky, but responsible criticism, in particular the criticism of the bearers of social power. This "Croatian case" raises further important questions unanticipated by Sloterdijk. The main question is: to what extent can the „corrosive“ political processes discourage kynical attitude and turn it into a kind of informed helplessness? We can assume that the basic formula of kynicism can be doubled under this kind of influence. In the case of those who resist the negative influence the basic formula: „They know what „those above“ are doing and they denounce it and deride it (in a more or less loud manner)“ is still valid. However, in case of the disillusioned kynics, the basic thought and behaviour changes into „they know what „those above“ are doing and think there is nothing they can do about it“. As a consequence, they criticise less and gradually retreat from political participation remaining on the margins, bitter and disappointed, but they do not transform the basic structure of enlightened consciousness (Sorgner, 2003). However, we assume that they do retain at least a little hope in positive transformation and that they can occasionally re-activate themselves, support positive political changes and take part in them. We could also call them „hibernating“ kynics. Certainly, a further transformation of the mind towards cynicism is possible. This includes the acceptance and adherence to the rules of the „dirty reality“, double standards of the „real life“ and participation in their affirmation by their behaviour, to which, for the purpose of climbing up the social ladder and/or socialization, an instrumental function may be added, as well as a stronger affiliation with institutions which significantly deviate from the rules of law or insufficiently and selectively apply them. In that situation psychological dissonance is unpleasant, but bearable.

If these assumptions were true, we could then differentiate between those kynics who, despite everything, still treasure hope and have confidence in political protagonists and those who become disillusioned and retreat, while cynics could be differentiated according to a greater or lesser than average confidence in the institutions perceived as particularly problematic in the general population.

We have, therefore, first, determined which subjects from the kynical group with a result above the whole sample's arithmetical mean fall into the first and fourth quartile according to overall confidence in the institutions in general. The results in the following table clearly show the expected difference between these two extreme groups. Above average kynics with a low level of trust in the institutions support to a considerably lower degree the democratic system as such, show less voter turnout and feel a stronger political alienation, whereas this connection is lacking in the case of kynics who retain trust and political activity.

Table 7. Correlations between cynicism of a low and high trust in institutions with support to democracy, political participation in the elections and alienation from politics^ψ

Variables	Above than average cynicism and low trust in the institutions (n _{valid} =108)	Above than average cynicism and high trust in the institutions (n _{valid} =114)
Diffuse support for democracy	-0.237**	-0.116
Specific support for democracy	-0.019	-0.082
Political participation in the elections (previous and intended)	-0.177†	0.061
Political alienation	0.292**	0.114

† significant at p<0.10, * significant at p<0.05, ** significant at p<0.01.

^ψ Both ways of measurement of cynicism and cynicism produced the same results. For the matter of simplicity this one and further analyses show results obtained on the first way.

But what about political cynicism? It appears that such mode of thinking supports to a slight extent some institutions, the functioning of which in Croatia is extremely dubious, such as the judiciary, the media and the country's teeming administrative apparatus, among others. At the same time – but only slightly – cynicism is connected with political alienation and weaker diffuse support of democracy. It appears not to be connected with other aspects of political thought, i.e. in its political profile it appears to be almost „invisible“. Could it be that this profile reflects its integrated asociality in the existing order and transformation of citizens into mere spectators (Chaloupka, 1999).

If we analyse cynical thinking in the same manner we did the kynical one with respect to the expressed general confidence in the institutions, only apparently paradoxically those with stronger confidence display weaker political activity and stronger alienation.

Table 8. Correlations between cynicism of low and high confidence in institutions with support to democracy, political participation in the elections and alienation from politics

Variables	Above than average cynicism and low trust in the institutions (n _{valid} =117)	Above than average cynicism and high trust in the institutions (n _{valid} =118)
Diffuse support for democracy	- 0.075	-0.020
Specific support for democracy	0.063	-0,068
Political participation in the elections (previous and intended)	- 0.038	-0.217*
Political alienation	0.134	0.160†

† significant at p<0.09, * significant at p<0.05.

However, such a result is in line with our hypothesis about the cynical thinking which with an increased acceptance of the „ruthless ways in which the world functions“ resolves the dissonance partly by political inactivation and partly by alienation, justifying in this way the impossibility of changing the world, which results in the self-fulfilment of the previously mentioned prophecy. Certainly, these results should be additionally tested.

However, since in this study kynicism and cynicism were analysed as separate and mutually distinct ways of political thinking, an additional question arises: can the subjects – who manifest them to different extents – be differentiated according to their political profile, i.e. what is the political synergy of a combination of different levels of political kynicism and cynicism?

For this purpose, we have divided the subjects into 4 groups according to whether their results were above or below the arithmetical means of the respective results of political cynicism and kynicism and conducted simple variance analyses with respect to the previously analysed indicators of basic forms of political thought and behavior.

Table 9. Diffuse and specific support to democracy in subjects with differently expressed kynicism and cynicism

kynicism X cynicism	Diffuse support to democracy				Specific support to democracy	
	N	Subsamples for $\alpha = 0.10$			Subsamples for $\alpha = 0.10$	
		1	2	3	1	2
KC	196	4.016			2.328	
Kc	220	4.063	4.063		2.433	
kC	233		4.424	4.424		2.887
Kc	236			4.808		3.023
Stat. significance:		0.993	0.144	0.105	0.866	0.745
F-ratio	F=11.466; df =3.882; p<0.0001				F=15.182; df =3. 882; p<0.0001	

KC – both high scores, Kc – high only kynicism, kC – high only cynicism, kc – both low scores;

The range of scores for diffuse support for democracy is from 2 – 8, whereas in the case of specific support it is from 1 – 5

Table 10. Political participation in the elections and alienation from politics in subjects with differently expressed kynicism and cynicism

Political participation			Political alienation		
kynicism X cynicism	N	Subsamples for $\alpha = 0.10$	NN	Subsamples for $\alpha = 0.10$	
		1		1	2
KC	188	7.218	186		7.160
Kc	210	7.244	211	6.703	6.703
kC	218	7.417	227	6.409	
Kc	224	7.357	222	6.031	
Stat. significance:		0.343		0.135	0.463
F-ratio	F=1.466; df =3. 837; p>0.22		F=5.411; df =3. 843; p<0.001		

KC – both high scores, Kc – high only kynicism, kC - high only cynicism, kc – both low scores;

The range of scores for political participation is from 4 – 8, whereas in the case of alienation it is from 3 – 14

It appears that a combination of a strongly manifested kynicism and cynicism has the most adverse effect on the basic support and participation in the democratic system. That means that those who have a tendency towards both kinds of thought of the cynical reason are more critical not only of the system's existing „achievements“, but in principle, against democracy and that they feel as if their participation is of no importance. However, absolute numbers and the absence of significant differences in regard to the frequency of political participation indicate that the effect of critical thought and dissatisfaction on political demobilisation at the level of behaviour is not that strong. Certainly, as a disclaimer we should warn that the statements in surveys usually overestimate actual participation in the elections. In this attitude, kynical-cynical citizens are closely followed by kynics, particularly in regard to criticism of the actual functioning of democracy in Croatia.

Further question is can we discern wider political potentials of kynicism and cynicism? We have considered this question in the following exploratory analysis. It is worrying that the group prone to both attitudes also has a more pronounced authoritarianism (F=6,614; df =3, 882; p<0,0001) and a tendency to interpret political processes in terms of actions of internal and external enemies (F=47,457; df =3, 882; p<0,0001). This is true especially for those who also have a huge confidence in the institutions (tendency towards authoritarianism: F=4,205; df =9,842; p<0,0001; interpreting processes in terms of enemies actions: F=15,603; df =9, 843; p<0,0001). Their positive aspect is a somewhat higher tendency for improving the citizens' living standard (F=2,801; df =3, 878; p<0,039), to regional development and decentralization of Croatia (F=2,732; df =3, 845; p<0,043), tendency to improvement of the position of women

($F=5,308$; $df = 3, 877$; $p < 0,001$) and the young ($F=4,040$; $df = 3, 880$; $p < 0,007$) as well as, addressing environmental issues ($F=3,353$; $df = 3,878$; $p < 0,019$). Such results clearly indicate their higher sensitivity to some of the crucial problems of the Croatian society, but they place less confidence for their solution within the liberal-democratic system, and more in strong personalities, their determination ($F=10,597$; $df = 3, 856$; $p < 0,0001$) and strict discipline of the young ($F=5,523$; $df = 3, 869$; $p < 0,001$); with a great caution, or even fear, when expressing their personal opinion ($F=7,464$; $df = 3, 868$; $p < 0,0001$).

When among the analysed groups we compare the political opinion of only those who are characterised by cynicism or kynicism alone, kynics express a significantly stronger effort against social pathology (crime, corruption, addiction, unemployment, etc.) ($t=3,370$; $df=365$; $p < 0,001$), effort for protection of the deprived and endangered groups ($t=4,254$; $df=365$; $p < 0,0001$), securing human rights and freedoms ($t=2,475$; $df=365$; $p < 0,014$), social justice and security for all groups of citizens ($t=4,639$; $df=365$; $p < 0,0001$). They support the opposition's criticism of the ruling class ($t=-2,926$; $df=365$; $p < 0,004$) and expect an efficient welfare state as opposed to neoliberalism ($t=-7,122$; $df=399$; $p < 0,0001$). In this respect, the assumption of the „integrated asociality“ of cynics is clearly confirmed since for them (as has been established by all these indicators) improvement of life in the political community is significantly less important.

Conclusion

This paper is an initial research with the purpose to operationalise and implement the scales of two forms of political thought – cynicism and kynicism – in accordance with the philosophical tradition from which we have extrapolated them. The author of this approach, the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk, takes a clear stand in favour of kynicism, regarding the desirability of these two forms of cynical reason, considering its political potential to be beneficial to the democratic system, in particular for the development of the culture of freedom of speech (gre. *parrhēsia*) and civic courage which is closely associated with it. However, he is pessimistic with respect to the prospects of kynicism in the historical perspective. He thinks that it is less and less present in the technocratic global order, and that the world is dominated by its opposition – cynicism – as a hypocritical, split and enlightened false consciousness, resistant to criticism due to its ominous reflexivity, thanks to which it well knows what it does wrong, but continues to do it in order not to endanger its apparently self-sufficient, but insecure and miserable position in its proverbially unfortunate life.

This study clearly demonstrates the presence of both kinds of thinking, and a more unambiguous and more positive political potential of cynicism as a logical response to a series of irregularities, abuses, long-term negligence and disorganization in the management of the state and the society. Therefore, cynicism, due to its stronger orientation to the realisation of political ideals and greater social sensitivity with respect to cynicism, reacts in a more negative manner to a whole series of dysfunctional institutions and the political system as a whole. The fact that such dissatisfaction is partly generalised to the level of support for democracy is a cause for extreme concern, and something that prudent political elites should keep in mind.

As our study suggests, political cynicism and cynicism are relatively separated thought patterns, with cynicism displaying characteristics of integrated asociality and political narrow-mindedness, but when both are present in the same person there is a particularly negative potential which expresses itself in authoritarianism and political paranoia, i.e. a stronger departure from the framework of democratic thinking. How this amalgam is formed and how cynicism and cynicism contribute to it and the conditions in which they develop is a subject for further research.

Ethical approval: “All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.”

Informed consent: “Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.”

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APPENDIX

In order to conduct the analysis shown in this text several composite variables from original ones were constructed:

- Diffuse support for democracy is a composite variable created as a linear combination of two variables:

Question 33. *Democracy sometimes performs poorly. Some feel that we need strong leaders who will fix the situation. Others feel that democracy is the solution even when the situation is hard. What do you think?*

Possible answers were: 1 – We need strong leaders; 2 – Don't know, can't make an estimate; 3 – Democracy is always best;

Question 45.2. *This country needs a few courageous and determined men who the people can trust and not laws and political programs.*

Possible answers ranged from 1 - I strongly disagree to 5 – I strongly agree; answers on this question were recoded in the opposite direction while composing the new variable.

- Specific support for democracy was measured with:

Question 34. *Generally, how satisfied are you with the way democracy functions in Croatia?*

Possible answers ranged from 1 – very dissatisfied to 5 – very satisfied

- Political participation in elections (past and intended) is a composite variable created as a linear combination of four variables:

Question 14. *Did you vote in the last Croatian parliamentary elections on December 4th 2011?*

Question 40. *Did you vote in the Croatian parliamentary elections in 2007?*

Question 42. *Did you vote in the Croatian presidential elections in December 2009?*

Question 23. *How are you going to vote in the referendum on Croatian accession in the European Union (EU)?*

All four variables were recoded into a binary form, so that value 1 refers to lack of participation, and value 2 to participation in the respective elections.

- Political alienation is a composite of three variables:

Question 2. *Are you interested in the current elections?* Answers ranged from 1 – Very interested to 4 – I am indifferent, not interested in elections

Question 5. *Some people say that it doesn't matter who is in the government. Others say that it does matter. Using the scale on this card, where ONE means that it does not matter who is in the*

government, and FIVE means that it is very important who is in the government, what would you choose?

Question 6. Some people say that for whom the voters vote has no impact on events in Croatia. Other say that for whom the voters vote has a large impact on events in Croatia. Using the scale on this card, where ONE means that voting has no impact on events in the country, and FIVE means that voting has a large impact on events in the country, what would you choose?

Answers on question 5 and 6 were recorded in the opposite direction while composing the new variable.