

Politics is a Dirty Game!: A Case Study of Political Cynicism in Turkey

Nigar Degirmenci (Ph.D)
Pamukkale University
Email: ndegirmenci@pau.edu.tr

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Abstract

Why do people often hate politics? Are politicians just selfish, unethical? Is the political system malfunctioning? Are the media structurally focused on bad news about politics? Or are people at large just too lazy or disinterested to participate in politics and make it work, and is being a cynic and doing nothing but criticize an easier way of political involvement? Briefly, there are no simple yes or no answers to these questions. Actually, the yes's or no's often depend on multiple explanatory variables e.g demographic and cultural ones. All of those questions are connected to each other and if there is any cynicism, each of them has a relatively strong role in explaining it. But what is cynicism? We will start by discovering the term. Later, in this paper we will try to understand political cynicism in Turkey. When there is something wrong with politics, politicians or the political system, there is also a media-induced snowball effect which might trigger bigger problems, not just for the specific troubled element itself but also with respect to others. In the 21st century, it has been argued that democracy itself has been dealing with a kind of crisis. Pardo finds the initiator problem in the public itself. He claims that the public at large has a rather pessimistic and negative view of the fundamental political institutions and agents of the democratic system and also that people are unpredictable, following emotions and very often voting for populist candidates; in advanced democracies there is practically no debate about ideologies and so on (Pardo, 2007:15,16). Those problems could be described in different ways and examined under different theories e.g. depolitization, political cynicism, personalization of politics. Yet we are still not sure about what the motives of individuals are for acting in those ways, and the question still remains: Who is to blame for this poor image? In this paper we aim to investigate those questions via analysing of data collections which derived from The World Values Work Code Book; from the PhD Thesis of Degirmenci and from a survey conducted by Degirmenci.

What is Cynicism?

“Cynicism is intellectual dandyism” by George Meredith

In terms of etymology, the term ‘cynic’ rooted to the Greek word *kynikos* "a follower of Antisthenes," and this term *Kynikos* developed from *canine* meaning “dog” and *Kynon*, *Kynos* meaning "dog-like,"¹ Antisthenes (a pupil of Socrates) founded the line of thought around 450 B.C. It claimed the irrationality of Greek social norms since they only imprisoned citizens. The followers of Cynicism rejected norms in the field of hygiene, family, wealth and society; and politicians were viewed as crooked and power-mad persons. Later, Cynic also gained the meaning of "sneering sarcastic person" from 1590s onwards. (Etymology Dictionary; Cynic; Schynset al., 2003, 2004) According to Sayre, the Cynics regarded “following nature” as a good; believing that information about “life according to nature” could be observed by studying lower animals (Sayre, 1945:115). Although the ethical teachings of Cynicism were developed by Antisthenes, the first reference to “the dog” was *Diogenes of Sinope*. (Ingalls, 1962:281)² Considering social norms and life styles in Ancient Greece, the followers of Diogenes and their life style were seen as “dog-like”. Sayre claims that the words “Cynic” or “Cynicism” appears twice in the fifty-one “Letters of Diogenes L.”; in the 16th Letter of Crates (an independent philosopher) it is stated that “the philosophy is called *Cynic*” and “a person practicing it is called *a dog*”. According to Sayre, the name seems to have been suggested by the manner of life of the Cynics (Sayre, 1945:116).³ According to Foucault, in the Cynic tradition, a natural life was supposed to eliminate all of the dependencies introduced by culture, society, civilization, opinion, and so on. For example Diogenes gives a precise description of three faulty modes of life linked to the royal character. Those three are; devoted to wealth; to physical pleasure, and to glory and political power.(Foucault, 1983) According to Dudley, in modern times the movement most akin to Cynicism is Anarchism. (Dudley, 1937)

The concept of cynicism, specifically political cynicism has been empowered by the Public Choice theorists. Almost two centuries ago, Bentham (1748–1832) who did apply the analytical method of public choice to discuss the proper arrangement of representative democracy, especially as it concerns rent seeking, said that ‘Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to determine what we shall do’ (Schwartz, 2007: 62, 63). By those words, he means in short that individuals avoid pains and look for pleasure. In this respect, when we ask why individuals think that politics and politicians are dirty, the answer should be related to Bentham’s claim about “pleasure” and “pain”. Indeed, later the public choice theorists⁴ claimed that individuals tend to try to maximize their

¹ *Kynosarge* "Grey Dog," name of the gymnasium outside ancient Athens (to be used by those who were not pure Athenians) (Etymology Dictionary.)

² Dudley explains the main actors and their roles in terms of building Cynicism as follows; The orthodox account of Cynicism regards Antisthenes as the founder of the sect. This is due to the influence of *Diogenes Laertius*, who says that Antisthenes 'learned his hardihood from Socrates, and inaugurated the Cynic way of life. His pupil was *Diogenes of Sinope*, Crates was a pupil of *Diogenes*. Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, was a pupil of *Crates*. When Diogenes of Sinope arrived at Athens (just after B.C.340) he was already a devotee of the ascetic life. *Diogenes of Sinope* (different person than *Diogenes Laertius*) was born in Sinop (B.C. 412, North Anatolia, Ionian colony on the Black Sea) and died in Corinth (B.C.323, 78 kilometres southwest of Athens). He rejected the social norms and tried to live like a dog, and slept on the roads in order to be part of nature. (Dudley, 1937:1,4)

³ Dudley concludes that there are four reasons why the Cynics were called; First because of their behaviour that was in a way like that of dogs, eat and make love in public, go barefoot, sleep in tubs and at crossroads etc.; The second reason is that the dog is a shameless animal, and they make a cult out of shamelessness, and The third reason is that the dog is a good guard, and they guard the tenets of their philosophy.; The fourth reason is that the dog is a discriminating animal which can distinguish between its friends and enemies. So do they recognize as friends those who are receptive and positive about their philosophy, while those unfitted and negative are driven away, like dogs, by barking at them (Dudley, 1937:5).

⁴ *Public Choice Theory*: A variant of rational choice theory developed in the US in the 1960s as a response to the influential tradition of Welfare State economics. (Hay, 2007) For example, one of the Public Choice theorists Anthony Downs claims that a

interests; political parties their acquired votes, bureaucrats their budgets, interest groups their rents rather than accomplish their public duties for some public good.

Political Cynicism

More recent conception of cynic has been developed by Sloterdijk. He explains cynics as following;

Cynicism is enlightened false consciousness. It is that modernized, unhappy consciousness, on which enlightenment has laboured both successfully and unsuccessfully. It has learned its lessons in enlightenment, but it has not, and probably was not able to, put them into practice. Well-off and miserable at the same time, this consciousness no longer feels affected by any critique of ideology; its falseness is already reflexively buffered, (Sloterdijk, 1988:5)

According to Zizek, we still live in an ideological society still, but we are just fooling ourselves with cynicism. Thus, Zizek rewrite the formula of Sloterdijk as, ““They know very well what they are doing, but still, they are doing it” to “they know that in their activity they are following in illusion, but still they are doing it.” (Myers, 2003:67) For Zizek, the paradox that it is easier to imagine end of the world than a change of it, attests to the work of the ideology. On the contrary we may give a example of “the Occupy Movement”, Thus we may see the difference between effective activism and cynicism;

“Political opposition” – (Activism + Hope) = Political Cynicism -> supports the hegemonic ideology indirectly -> Neoliberalism -> more privatization of public sectors (what Public choice theorists demand)

Agger et al. claim that those who are contemptuous of people in general, the personally cynical, tend to be politically cynical as well, whereas those who are personally trusting tend to be politically trusting (Agger *et al.* 1961:490). It is claimed that the seeds of doubt are present from an early age and develop dramatically in the elementary-school years. (Mills & Kell, 2005:390).

When there is a stronger scepticism we start to talk about cynicism and when it is toward political issues, it is called political cynicism. All of those are closely related to each other and affect each other’s intensity. Here we will discover political cynicism in Turkey and its backgrounds; examine this topic from the angles of distrust, media malaise theory and personalization of politics, and compare our assumptions and findings with the results of other studies. We will investigate the concept using the main results of three different studies/data sets:

1. The World Values Work Code Book (Author: Jaime Díez Medrano: 2005);
2. The data related to the 2007 General Elections derived from the survey and media analysis that were parts of the Ph.D. thesis of Degirmenci, in 2010; (Degirmenci, 2010);
3. The data related to the 2011 General Elections based on a survey conducted by Degirmenci in 2011. This study does not deal with individual variables –such as demographic ones-, instead aims to understand in which situations we may or do face political cynicism and why.

Schyn and Nuus summarize the studies of the concept of political cynicism by splitting them in a group of studies

- who define the concept as part of a more general concept of alienation;
- and another one as related to normlessness;

politician is motivated to fulfil the political function because of his/her desire to earn income, not by any desire to do good to others. Similarly, every agent with a specific task within a system built on the division of labour carries out his/her social function primarily as a means of attaining private ends: the enjoyment of income, prestige, or power. He claims that; “Each political party is a team of men/women who seek office solely in order to enjoy the income, prestige, and power that go with running the governing apparatus (in Foucault’s terminology the dispositive) Every agent whether an individual, a party or a private coalition behaves rationally at all times; that is, it proceeds toward its goals with a minimal use of scarce resources and undertakes only those actions for which marginal return exceeds marginal cost.” (Downs, 1957:135,137)

- more linked to scepticism and distrust. (Schyns et al., 2004:2)

Then, they offer us a definition of the term as “an individual’s attitude, consisting of a deep-rooted conviction of the inherent evilness of politicians, political institutions, and/or the political system as a whole” (Schyns and all, 2004:3). Here we will start by the alienation and continue with scepticism and distrust tradition.

In order to understand and describe social cynisim in Turkey, we summarized relevant data of the World Values Research Project in 2005, and concluded as follows (Hanitzsch, 2009);

Table 1: “The most people take advantage of you”

V. 47 The most people take advantage of you (p.215)								
N	No ans.	Would take adv.		←	→	Would be fair		
1346	172 13,1%	123 9,4%	201 15,2%	132 10,0%	100 13,9%	100 12,9%	119 9,9%	98 7,4%

In the table above, we can clearly see that individuals in Turkey tend to think that most people take advantage of them. Those numbers in the middle of the table above are likely to express more of a sceptical view than a cynical attitude. Nevertheless approximately 40% of all individuals have a negative stand which could also be a sign of social cynicism, which could then be a leading reason for political cynicism. Pattyn *et al.* focused on the term of cynicism through its social and political aspects. By doing so, they explained the difference between those as; whereas social cynics question the motives of nearly all human beings, political cynics’ attitudes are restricted to politicians. (Pattyn et al. 2011:2) In other words, political cynicism is directly related to the meaning of politics for people Even though there are still - relatively – high levels of voting rates in Turkey, that does not guarantee the level of democracy and autonomous political participation. Moreover, sometimes none-voting can be seen as a way of participation; in cases where it is representing a particular political position. However, one of the circle of political cynicism is political alienation and we can understand this from an individual’s being interested in politics or not.

Table 2: “Interested in Politics”

V95. How interested would you say you are in politics? (page 334)				
	'Very interested'	'Somewhat interested'	'Not very interested'	'Not at all interested'
Interested in politics	1	2	3	4
N=1346	114 8,5%	404 30,1%	378 26,1%	448 33,4%

Those numbers and rates show that the majority of individuals in Turkey tend to be not very interested or not at all interested in politics which could be a result of political cynicism as well as other demographic variables such as job, education, gender and age. In terms of that, we could conclude here that there might be a possibility of political cynicism which may lead to a lack of interest in politics.

In social and political life, as Fieschi et al. point out, lack of trust leads to fear of being taken advantage of or instrumentalised—and ultimately to an unwillingness to take any risks whatsoever. Eventually this leads to a declining spiral of engagement with that particular individual or group of individuals and, finally to withdrawal and, in the worst case, alienation. (Fieschi & Heywood, 2004:293). In terms of political

cynicism, trust in the instrumentals of democracies such as political parties and parliament is very vital. The survey has some findings related to that issue as follows;

Table 3: Confidence in the Government- Parties – Parliament

V 138, 139, 140 Confidences in the Government- Political Parties- Parliament? (pages 445, 447, 449)				
	'A great deal'	'Quite a lot'	'Not very much'	'None at all'
Confidence in	1	2	3	4
N=1348- Government	360 27,6 %	469 36,0 %	284 21,8%	190 14,5%
N=1348- Pol. Parties	88 6,8 %	355 27,6%	519 40,2%	327 25,4%
N=1348- Parliament	289 22,7%	495 38,6%	306 24%	186 14,6%

Those three institutions in the table above are basic elements of a democracy, and trust in those legitimizes the political system in a country. In this respect, first of all we need to express the difference between being a cynic and being sceptical. Fieshi et al., explain the difference between those concepts in the following way; “As cynics we expect to be disappointed, we hold few hopes that our engagement will be rewarded (...).the healthy sceptic is more tolerant of the imperfections of the democratic system and therefore more ready to abide by its face-value rules and to accept its inevitable shortcomings (Fieschi & Heywood, 2004: 294). As Yoo claims, those two concepts are quite opposite in many respects, but although scepticism might well be a causal factor in generating cynicism, it is not a necessary condition of it. Scepticism characterizes primarily our attitudes towards beliefs concerning matters of fact. Cynicism, on the other hand, seems directed towards situations where matters of value are an issue. (Yoo, 1985:58) Therefore, scepticism is a result of low distrust, cynicism on the other hand, is a result of high distrust in political institutions.

The table above indicates that the majority of individuals have trust in the government (63,6%), and individuals have least trust in political parties –this also explains why political parties’ roles in democracies have been declining. 25,4% of the individuals can be considered politically cynic towards political parties, and 40% of them are sceptical. 14% of the individuals can be regarded as politically more cynical than those who are politically cynic towards to political parties. Thus, we can say that in Turkey, there is relatively healthy scepticism –more of it towards government would be even better- and there is probably a sort of political cynicism towards political parties which may be a serious problem in the manner of representation of different ideas, and so for democracy in Turkey. Newton and Norris explain the importance of the threat as follows;

An erosion of confidence in the major institutions of society, especially those of representative democracy, is a far more serious threat to democracy than a loss of trust in other citizens or politicians. Political leaders come and go with swings of the electoral pendulum, (...) However, institutions are large, impersonal, and broadly based, and the public’s estimation of them is less immediately affected by particular news items or specific events. Thus, loss of confidence in institutions may well be a better indicator of public disaffection with the modern world because they are the basic pillars of society. If they begin to crumble, then there is, indeed, cause for concern (Newton & Norris, 2000:2).

One of the major types of institutions is political parties. They are connections between people and the parliament, and provide inputs for the system to keep itself healthy and in good shape. The problem with political parties is that competing parties are often indistinguishable from one another, known as the 'Tweedledee and Tweedledum' syndrome⁵ (Hill, 2000:37). And this "no other option" situation is supported by D'hont's system in Turkey. As a result of the system, those political parties failing to receive at least 10% of nationwide votes (the threshold in the general election) cannot be represented in the Turkish Parliament. This system forces electors to choose between 1-3 parties which have the most likely chance to get into the next parliament, and the third one is usually weaker. However as Pardo et al. explains,

(...) in this global economy, neither economic nor political power, is in the remit of the nation-state. The real power lies somewhere else – in the offices where the governing board of the big multinational firms meet, in the large financial centres and institutions, in the governments of the big powers and so on. This power is globally pervasive, so governments have little authority to solve their own problems, and, consequently, the electorate become disillusioned and lose confidence both in the government and in democracy *per se*. (Pardo et al., 2007:31)

There is another thing about political parties which makes them look no longer "good for the people"; it requires a high level of social and economic capital to be eligible to participate in political parties. Moreover the political culture in Turkey is injured in that most politicians will look for ways to preserve or optimize the (social, human and financial) capital they invested by becoming a "professional politician" has no other job but is a part of a rents sharing system. This is something cynical for people who are excluded from the circle but they find it cynical because they are not in it, not because it is wrong, even though it IS wrong.

Table 4: Party Membership

V28, Party Membership (page 148)	'Not a member'	'Inactive member'	'Active member'
	0	1	2
	%	%	%
1346 (n)	1274 1779,6%	40 55,8%	32 44,2%

The table above indicates that the overwhelming majority of individuals does not opt for membership of a political party. Of course we do not claim that the only reason is political cynicism or lack of trust, but considering the earlier table we do claim that trust in political parties issues is more or less related to non-membership. On the other hand, undermining participatory citizenship, cynicism becomes both an ideological weapon and a symptom of the cultural and institutional forces. (Giroux, 2000: 506)

⁵ This syndrome refers to a situation common to simple (two-party) bipartisanship characterized by a certain level of political convergence of policies and mutual interest in preserving a self duopoly. Segen's Medical Dictionary 2011, retrieved from The Free Dictionary by Farlex, Link: <http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com>, 12 Feb 2012.

Table 5: The Best Regime

V 148. Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections / Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country/ Having army rule/ Having democratic party system; (pages 489)				
	'Very good'	'Fairly good'	'Fairly Bad'	'Very bad'
	1	2	3	4
N=1346 –Strong leader	251 23,3 %	399 35,5%	231 20,6%	230 20,6%
N=1346 –Experts	259 22,9%	527 46,7%	237 21,9%	95 8,4%
N=1346 –Army	109 9,9%	254 23,9%	429 38,8%	304 27,5%
N=1346 –Democ. Party S.	703 58,5%	416 34,6%	59 4,9%	24 2%

The table above shows us that an above-average level of expected trust is no good either. Here in the question one should notice that “...a leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections makes decision according to what he think is the best for country” emphasizes something that goes against the basic rules of democratic life. Yet some individuals are willing to accept it. However, the problem with those kind of concepts is that these leaders will be human after all and sooner or later lose track of (even their own) reality with all negative long-term consequences for the political culture, economics and society at large.

As Agger et al. define political cynicism as the extent to which people hold politicians and politics in disrepute, the extent to which these words symbolize something negative rather than something positive.

Political Cynicism and Media, Media Malaise Theory

The news media generally take centre stage in both popular and scholarly explanations of public disengagement from politics. (Vreese and Matthijs, 2008:285) Political cynicism is directly related to media malaise which claims that the combination of bad news, attack journalism and negative politics tends to create a pervasive sense of cynicism, distrust and suspicion of modern politics and politicians (Newton:1999, 578) Likewise Pinkleton & Austin’s study findings reinforces the view that the media can play a positive or negative role in the democratic process, depending on how citizens use and perceive them.160).On the other hand, according to Cappella and Jamieson’s research’s outcome political cynics are also media cynics who believe that journalists distort the political process. (Cappella & Jamieson, 1996: 84) According to Vreese and Matthijs by framing politics largely in strategic terms, zooming in on the tactical rationale and self-serving motives behind politicians’ actions and words, the news media have been implicated in cultivating a “spiral of cynicism” that fuels public discontent and eventually leads to individuals’ disengagement from politics. (Vreese and Matthijs, 2008: 286) Pinkleton and Austin claim that disgust with media coverage may distance voters from the process if they believe their efforts to use the media to gain useful information about government or political actors will go unrewarded (Pinkleton & Austin, 2002:158) In brief, there are different perspectives on the media’s influence on political cynicism. In order to understand media malaise effects one should focus on the individual’s primary sources for political information. In this part of the study we will use the data derived from the Ph.D. thesis by Degirmenci.

Table 6: The Main Sources for Retrieving Political Information of the Subjects

The Source	N	Perc.
TV	266	89,9%
Press	257	86,8%
Internet	212	71,6%
Social Environment	205	69,3%
Radio	149	50,3%
Others	76	25,7%

Hereby it is obvious that a large majority of subjects in our study prefer to use media channels –dominantly TV and Press - in order to derive their political information. Nevertheless social environment, such as family and friends, school, should be considered as secondary sources. When looking at those media channels, how important a source are they? Is there any significant difference between Press and TV as source for political information? To answer those questions we also asked how often they follow those channels and what is the priority of political news –on the press or TV- for them?

Table 7: Media as a Source for Political Information and Political News' Priority

Press Usage	Frequency	% in Press usage	% in total	
Everyday	142	48,0	48,0	
3-4 times in a week	109	36,8	84,8	
Only weekends	38	12,8	97,6	
A couple of times in a week	6	2,0	99,7	
Never	1	,3	100,0	
Political News priority (in all other)	Frequency	% in Press usage	% in total	
Never	7	2,4	2,4	
Frankly	37	12,5	14,9	
Sometimes	70	23,6	38,5	
Very often	94	31,8	70,3	
Always	88	29,7	100,0	
Political columnists priority (in all other)	Frequency	% in Press usage	% in total	
Never	46	15,5	15,5	
Frankly	63	21,3	36,8	
Sometimes	99	33,4	70,3	
Very often	55	18,6	88,9	
Always	33	11,1	100,0	
TV Usage	Frequency	% in Tv usage	% in total	
Never	17	5,7	5,7	
Less than 2 hours	137	46,3	52,0	
2-4 hours	110	37,2	89,2	
4-6 hours	28	9,5	98,6	
More than 6 hours	4	1,4	100,0	
News Priority on the Tv (in all other options)	Frequency	% in Tv usage	% in Priority	% in Cum. Total
1 st choice	90	30,4	67,7	67,7
2 nd choice	35	11,8	26,3	94,0
3 rd choice	7	2,4	5,3	99,2
4 th choice	1	,3	,8	100,0
Total	133	44,9	100,0	
Not in top 4 Choices	148	50,0		
Does not watch TV	15	5,1		
Total	296	100,0		

The table above indicates that the majority of the subjects reads newspapers at least several times a week, also again the majority of those give priority to the political news. Although when it comes to the political columnists they are less interested (which is important because this group is interested in politics and follows particular journalists). On the other hand, for half of the subjects who follow TV programs, news programs are not in their top 4 choices. Between TV users, the rates of the subjects who give priority to the news are only 30,4 %. The rest are retrieving their political information from TV randomly or accidentally (depends on how much often they bring political news on the screen). Thus we can consider TV as more likely to be an entertainment tool than a source for deriving structured political information.

Table 8: the Subjects' Opinion about Media vs. Their Usage of TV/Press

TV usage frequency OR Press Usage frequency Score (0 the least 4 the most)	Opinion about Media Likert Average -2 the most negative +2 the most positive		Opinion about Media case number		Standard Dev.	
	Due to TV usage	Due to Press usage	Due to TV usage	Due to Press usage	Due to TV usage	Due to Press Usage
0	-1,06	,00	17	1	2,076	.
1	-,37	-,50	137	6	2,015	1,049
2	,06	-,13	110	38	1,819	1,614
3	,18	-,06	28	109	1,945	2,036
4	1,25	-,27	4	142	1,500	2,017
Total / Average	-,18	-,18	296	296	1,954	1,954

The table above shows that the least usage of TV leads the more negative opinions about media (-1,06 and -0,37), however the increasing usage of TV leads the more positive opinions about media (0,06, 0,18 and 1,25). This results points out that in the case of TV it reaches to the audience more often and repeats itself and its discourses make itself more trustable. On the other hand, there are no strong differences between the usage of newspapers at any level. But the important point here is that the subjects who have the most usage of press are more sceptical (-0,27) in terms of trust in media than those who have the most usage of TV (+1,25). Yet, the press users can not be defined as "cynical" because their Likert scores for media opinion are not far negative; the scores are more likely to be close to zero, between cynicism and trust (and the std dev is too high). This shows the difference between followers of TV and the ones of Press. However it's not enough to be a proof for media malaise theory which claims that the media are the responsible for political cynicism.

In order to find proof for that we followed Kenneth et al.'s approach and investigated the relationship between media usage and political knowledge. The table below is established by comparing averages of the scores for political knowledge of subjects (0 the least- 4 the most).

Table 9: The Usage of TV/ Press v.s. Political Knowledge

TV usage OR Press Usage Likert Score (0 the least- 4 the most)	Political Knowledge Degree Arith. Ave.		Political Knowledge Case number		Standard dev.	
	Usage of TV	Usage of Press	Usage of TV	Usage of Press	Usage of TV	Usage of Press
0	1,94	,00	17	1	1,088	.
1	1,88	1,50	137	6	,870	,837
2	1,78	1,79	110	38	,871	,843
3	1,71	1,74	28	109	1,117	,897
4	2,00	1,94	4	142	,816	,916
Total	1,83	1,83	296	296	,905	,905

One can see from the table above that there is no significant difference between the largest usage of TV and the least usage of it in terms of political knowledge degree. There is something we need to take account: subjects who have the lowest TV usage and who are also the ones with the largest press usage. In terms of that, there is a positive relationship between the usage of press and the degree of political knowledge of the subjects. On the other hand, increases of the usage of TV (more than 2 hours) come along with a lesser degree of political knowledge. Thus we can tell that newspapers are better politically informative tools and this finding of the study fits with Kenneth's finding; "The more general television people watch, the less they know about politics, ". (Newton:1999)

In this part of the study we will use the findings from World Values Research related to the individuals' trust in media in Turkey. We summarized the related findings as following;

Table 10: Confidence in Press and TV

V.133,134 Confidence in the Press -TV? (pages 435, 437)				
	'A great deal'	'Quite a lot'	'Not very much'	'None at all'
Confidence in	1	2	3	4
N=1348- press	68 5,2 %	341 26,1 %	538 41,1%	360 27,5%
N=1348- TV	75 5,7 %	365 27,9 %	548 41,7%	325 24,8%

As we can observe from the table above individuals tend to not have much trust in media, and in terms of the difference between TV and Press, individuals seem to trust in TV more than in press even though there is no significant difference .However Sartori claims that TV has created *homo videns* (Sartori, 2004), and thus those *homo videns* individuals' abstract thought ability has weakened by the time and nowadays in order to have a decision for example about a political issue, they need to see it. Nevertheless tabloid newspapers have tried to compete with visualising capacity of television but it is no longer enough for *homo videns*. So if someone who needs regular political information may prefer to follow press it may also explain why they are more distrustful about the press and cynical concerning both media and politics. Homo Videns prefers to believe in what he sees. On the other hand it is claimed that educated people may develop a deeper understanding of the nuances of the political process, providing them with the tools to see beyond immediate

political coverage. This lends support to the view that scholars need to consider the role of healthy scepticism apart from cynicism in the political process. (Pinkleton & Austin, 2002:159).

These results also conclude a mutual relationship between political knowledge and media usage i.e. the more political knowledge this will translate into increased usage of press, and the less usage of TV, and vice versa. Likewise Kenneth claims, those results show us that there is evidence of media manipulation but there are no clear results indicating that political cynicism is caused by media malaise. Vreese and Matthijs demonstrated that exposure to news aroused political cynicism relative to issue-based news; positive interactions between political knowledge and strategic press and publicity news exposure, so that more knowledgeable individuals were showing higher cynicism levels than those with less knowledge. (Vreese and Matthijs, 2008: 299)

In the light of Kenneth's finding we asked more detailed questions in terms of media malaise and also media manipulation. We asked people their opinion about media and calculated a Likert score of each (-2 the most negative, +2 the most positive) and compared these results with their opinion about the media effect over their political choices.

Table 11: The Opinions about Media vs. The effect of media over political judgements

The effect of media over political judgements	The Average of the Qs.31-34 Likert scores	Questions.31-34 Counts	S.31-34 Likert Std. Dev.
I do not know	-,77	26	1,608
Not at all	-,56	99	2,031
A little	,07	116	1,763
Effective	,16	38	1,952
Very Effective	,53	17	2,695
Total	-,18	296	1,954

The table above indicates that the more negative opinions about media come along with a larger denial of a media effect on their political judgements. The subjects who answer "I do not know", evaluate media in a more cynical way (-0,71), which may also mean they "sense" it but do not want to face with it. Moreover, those who accept the media effect over their political judgements also evaluate media in a more positive way. This means that individuals either welcome media effect over their political judgement with their positive evaluations on media or deny media effect over their political judgement with their negative evaluations of it. Thus, media cynical individuals tend to believe that their political judgements are established free from media effects, so they also must believe that –if there are any- their politically cynical ideas cannot be build by media malaise. But this is only "how they think", it is not a permanent evidence for what it is in reality. Again people may not want to face their own realities.

On the other hand Newton points out that even though the modern mass media have an immense effect on politics, the nature of these effects is controversial (Newton:1999, 577) which means media malaise could be the result of political cynicism instead of its reason. This problem brings the old question: the chicken or the egg, what comes first? This question was asked earlier by Cappella et al., in 1997. They did not answer the question but instead they claimed that it is impossible to know which came first — the conflict-driven sound-bite-oriented discourse of politicians or the conflict-saturated strategy-oriented structure of press coverage. They went further and labelled this mutually reinforcing process "a spiral of cynicism" (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997 9, 10). Indeed the survey which was applied by the World's Journalists' Organization found out that the most powerful influences (Min -Max 5) over their job were described as Censorship (3,77); and Media Laws (3,76); Government (3,47), Politicians' (3,39) (Check Appendix A.) Another result

from the same survey shows the relative levels of journalists' trust in different groups in Turkey. According to the results, journalists in Turkey trust politicians the least (1,66), then Government (1,72) and then political parties (1,88), meanwhile they trust the military (3,23), judiciary (2,88), media (2,53) and the parliament (2,43) most. This is pretty obvious a kind of political cynicism toward political persons. Journalists who feel they are under more political pressure in their work are more cynical about politicians. Cynicism is higher when spokespersons and communication specialists inhibit journalists in their work and when journalists believe politicians see media attention primarily as an end in itself rather than a side effect of their political function (Dalen, Albæk, & Vreese, 2011: 159). We can see approval of the political system although one of the *sine que non* elements of democracies, political parties are not trustable enough for the journalists in Turkey in 2009. (Check Appendix B.) In this respect media and politics as well as media cynicism and political cynicism are interacted and cannot be thought of or examined in a separate way. In sum those findings are coherent with Kenneth' study in that he claims that television pulls in different directions, according to its content: television news seems to inform, and mobilize; general television has a weak and patchy association with malaise (Kenneth:1999) Also the survey in 2007 indicates that individuals who have media cynicism tend to believe they are autonomous in their derivation of political judgements even though their primary political sources are media channels. But none of those can be taken as proof for media malaise theory's validity.

Political Cynicism and Personalization of Politics, Media

"Inside every cynical person, there is a disappointed idealist." By George Carlin

According to Vreese et al., the publicity strategy frame depicts politicians as calculated and deceitful users or, worse, manipulators of the media to their advantage, i.e behind-the-scenes manoeuvres and motives as cynical, calculating, or dishonest, not just *vis-à-vis* the media but also, more important, toward the public (Vreese and Matthijs, 2008: 299). When news media become preoccupied with politicians' political and publicity strategies, they may indeed breed political cynicism among those exposed to it. (Vreese and Matthijs, 2008: 301)

Table 12: Too Much Trust

V78. Greater respect for authority that might take place in the near future, if it were to happen, whether you think it would be a good thing, a bad thing, or don't you mind? (page 286)			
	'Good'	'Don't mind'	'Bad'
Authority R.	1	2	3
1346 (N)	708 55,4	471 36,9	98 7,7

As we can observe from the table above, the World Value Project findings indicate that only a relatively small number of individuals finds the greater authority a kind of threat. "Greater respect for the authority" means less democratic participation in the decision making process and half of the individuals find it acceptable as something good. This result shows us the maturity of democracy in Turkey. Individuals are still in need of a Weberian Charismatic Authority and let him deal with "the problems." This much trust is more threatening than cynical. This also points out the probable acceptance degree of personalization of politics in Turkey. On the other hand this could be also result of "the understanding of politics as something dirty" and a greater authority could be regarded as a "safer". According to Agger et al., political participation is an independent variable affecting political cynicism, or the two may be interacting and

reinforcing with each other in a causal sense (Agger et al. 1961:499, 500). In this respect, the individual's submissive approach to the hypothetical question may be caused by political cynicism along with apathy. On the other hand, as Higgins points out the realm of the public is often used to resolve problems and disputes associated with the private, and the private is routinely presented as the source of sincerity. (Higgins, 2008:6) This sincerity which belongs to the private allows individuals to evaluate politicians based on their personal choices, character, looking etc in public. This link between public and private has been used as a political marketing tool for the last 4-5 decades. For this reason, one of the most used images in contemporary political campaigns is politicians with their family, in casual clothes (in jeans or sportswear), as a symbol of "being sincere". Thus, political broadcasts have increasingly become focused on the 'character' of leaders, rather than the public policies they would seek to promote. (Fieschi & Heywood, 2004:299).

On the other hand, this is only one side of the medal. On the other side of it, there is a deal breaker for the majority of the public: Insincerity. Not only economic and political scandals but also sex scandals are raising the important question; Is this politician trustable still? Does he deserve to be in politics? Is he still capable of representing the public? People are usually judgemental especially when they are in safe waters while others are dealing with hard conditions no matter if it is in their hands or not.

In this part of the study, we will use the data which we derived from the survey on a smaller group in 2011, right before the General Elections, right after the occurrence of a series of political sex scandals related to MHP (the second opposition party) board members during that time. We asked the subjects this question and got answers as shown on the following bar:

Q: How do you evaluate using scandals as a political material?

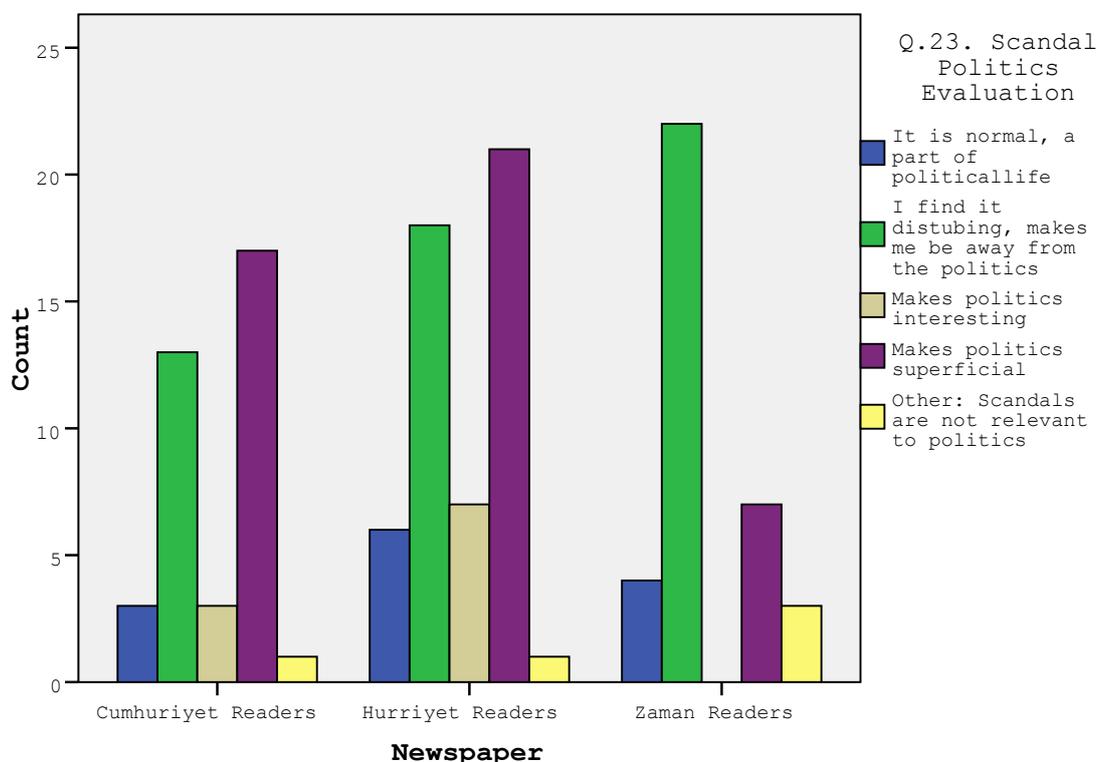


Chart 1: Answers to "How do you evaluate using the (sex) scandals as a political tool (as in criticism topic)"

The bar chart above was established using results for the readers of 3 different newspaper's (Cumhuriyet; The Left Wing, Hurriyet: The Mainstream, Zaman: The Right Wing) The chart indicates that most subjects think that using scandals as political tool (as scandal politics) is disturbing for them and makes them to shun

away from politics (the green bar). Secondly, many of the subjects think scandal politics makes politics superficial (the left and the mainstream newspaper readers, the purple bar). On the other hand, not many of them from each newspaper group find it normal as a part of political life. Another interesting thing is that only less than 10 subjects of the mainstream newspaper reader groups admits that scandal politics is making politics interesting. In the right wing newspaper reader group, there is no one who thinks or admits that.

At this point, Cappella and Jamieson ask the main question; If leaders are motivated solely or even primarily by self-interest and if an inherent conflict exists between their self-interest and the public good, then press reports of self-interested political action are not cynical but realistic, and the rising public lack of confidence in its leaders and institutions is a repudiation of Pollyannaism (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997:19,20) In this respect, we can not blame for media because they report the scandals but we may blame them for their continuous reporting of those again and again, retrieving old scandal cases even when it is not directly related.

On the other hand Fraser believes that if political cynicism is caused by political actors, it would be of little value to speak of political cynicism as a distinct phenomenon; it would properly be viewed as merely a special case of personal cynicism (Fraser, 1971:349).. After four decades, political parties' functions have been declined; political actors became more effective and powerful. Even though the effect of the political cynicism towards them can be limited for a little time, its butterfly effects could be bigger than expected, and a catalyst for other kinds of political cynicism.

"A Cynic; That man is Socrates gone mad", by Plato

The Conclusion

In this paper we aimed to describe political cynicism, and its appearance in Turkey. First of all, political cynicism in Turkey is more guided towards political parties than any other instrumentals of democracy. This result is directly related to several things, first, to the declining role of political parties in contemporary democracies; second, to limited choices in terms of being represented; three, to lack of alternative policies; four, to the image of political parties which seems to be like some kind of fighting club for sharing socio-economic rent.

We did not find any evidence for media effect causing political cynicism. Rather we believe that media could have an increasing role on cynicism of people who were already sensitive to that to start with. Being disregarded by the political system and its tools (the parliament, the election system) can make someone dissatisfied and even lineated, and then media can cause political cynicism in this case. But media should not be seen the responsible actor for this. Anyhow media's main role should be that of a "watch-dog" and to be sceptical about motives of political actors, report and make the public know if anything is not in line with democratic and ethical traditions, against the common interest etc. Media should not be blamed for reporting bad news if the news is no good, but could be criticized for reporting time and again without a sense but popularity and circulation/rating purposes. At the end, it is a political culture problem and when the culture is not politically ethical, or democratic enough we cannot expect a "clean and tidy" news' about politics, we cannot expect perfect politicians, parliaments, governments. They are all just other reflections of the political culture in which people live and create, change it. In this way, stated differently, if there is anyone to blame, people should look in the mirror.

Political cynicism towards to political leaders is given relatively less importance, it is even not seen as a real threat for a democracy in the literature, But we believe that they are all connected. If one institution is "infected", it is hard to keep others safe. And considering we have been living in personalization of politics, the infected persons in politics are more dangerous than decades ago.

Finally, we need to discriminate between scepticism and cynicism. The first one is necessary for a democratic system, and even too much trust is not healthy even though it is of help in legitimizing it. Scepticism lets people think about politics, keeps them being interested in it, and does not blind voters which leads to a dynamic and healthy democracy. On the other hand, we do believe that up to a certain degree it is acceptable to have politically cynical people from the left to the right to exert some influence; since it can add value to the political spectrum and its level of pluralism.

“I reject the cynical view that politics is a dirty business.” by Richard M. Nixon

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Appendix A- Worlds of Journalisms" Project ⁶

Influences on news work – external influences

Question: Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 5 how influential each of the following is in your day-to-day job. 5 means it is extremely influential, 4 means very influential, 3 means somewhat influential, 2 means little influential, and 1 means not influential at all.

	N		Australia	Austria	Brazil	Bulgaria	Chile	China	Egypt	Germany	Indonesia	Israel	Mexico	Romania	Russia	Spain	Switzerland	Turkey	Uganda	United States	Total
Friends, acquaintances, family	1781	Mean	2.34	1.96	1.87	2.07	2.14	2.49	2.06	1.77	2.10	2.00	1.78	1.68	1.81	1.68	2.16	1.66	2.43	2.18	2.01
		SD	1.11	.98	1.00	1.00	.95	.93	1.37	.84	1.08	.96	.89	.91	1.02	.97	.91	1.02	.97	1.17	1.12
Colleagues in other media	1780	Mean	2.74	2.10	1.96	1.90	2.14	2.82	2.20	2.11	2.22	2.37	1.98	1.90	1.98	1.71	2.00	1.63	2.59	2.54	2.16
		SD	1.05	.96	.96	.96	.95	.92	1.28	.90	1.11	1.07	.88	.99	.95	.86	.83	.90	1.07	1.17	1.17
Readers, listeners or viewers	1776	Mean	3.53	2.88	3.60	3.11	3.51	3.43	2.99	2.78	3.31	3.02	3.61	3.21	3.10	3.00	2.97	2.60	3.96	3.57	3.23
		SD	1.19	1.13	1.02	1.12	.98	.99	1.42	1.05	.94	1.21	1.11	.99	.86	1.22	1.03	1.31	1.02	1.14	1.15
Competing news organizations	1774	Mean	3.21	2.72	2.95	2.58	3.00	3.32	2.74	2.75	3.08	2.88	2.59	2.68	2.68	2.72	2.84	2.28	3.62	3.30	2.89
		SD	1.03	1.03	1.13	1.14	1.11	1.08	1.40	1.10	.93	1.21	1.22	1.11	.93	1.08	1.05	1.30	1.19	1.03	1.16
Censorship	1751	Mean	2.31	1.00	1.58	1.73	2.98	3.98	3.09	1.15	2.10	2.80	2.10	1.88	2.98	1.81	1.52	3.77	3.33	1.66	2.31
		SD	1.12	.00	.99	.98	1.29	1.06	1.44	.46	1.08	1.47	1.18	1.15	1.18	1.08	.90	1.17	1.12	1.10	1.38
Government officials	1764	Mean	2.15	1.81	1.89	1.83	2.36	3.56	2.80	1.38	2.12	1.44	1.94	1.66	2.51	1.92	1.78	3.49	3.15	1.81	2.19
		SD	.99	.85	1.07	1.04	1.17	1.01	1.30	.63	1.00	.80	1.03	1.06	1.18	1.06	.80	1.32	1.15	1.11	1.22
Politicians	1752	Mean	2.33	1.76	1.81	1.83	2.85	3.29	2.38	1.45	1.97	1.55	1.81	1.80	2.23	2.22	1.78	3.37	2.70	1.68	2.14
		SD	1.05	.84	1.03	.98	1.24	1.18	1.27	.63	.90	.80	.99	1.06	1.03	1.13	.80	1.31	1.13	1.00	1.16
Business people	1762	Mean	2.27	1.70	1.88	2.17	3.11	2.18	2.00	1.53	1.90	1.51	1.70	1.86	2.03	2.02	1.78	2.99	3.07	1.81	2.08
		SD	1.03	.79	1.05	1.07	1.06	1.05	1.23	.73	.84	.74	.89	1.02	.93	1.02	.80	1.33	1.14	1.04	1.10
Public relations	1754	Mean	2.55	2.15	1.93	2.42	2.49	1.92	2.11	1.97	1.92	2.13	2.45	2.04	2.29	2.24	2.04	2.35	3.36	2.27	2.26
		SD	1.07	.99	1.01	1.05	1.01	.96	1.37	.88	.99	.99	1.21	.96	1.01	1.12	.74	1.04	1.01	1.06	1.08
Media laws	1763	Mean	3.42	2.85	2.94	2.88	2.43	3.44	3.60	2.59	3.28	3.54	2.94	2.67	3.23	2.69	2.83	3.76	3.99	3.02	3.12
		SD	1.05	1.13	1.19	1.26	.98	1.14	1.34	1.18	.74	1.31	1.21	1.30	1.03	1.32	1.17	1.14	1.04	1.33	1.24
Professional conventions	1767	Mean	3.79	3.84	4.04	3.38	2.58	3.63	3.56	3.93	3.68	4.18	3.70	3.02	3.47	3.70	3.61	3.11	4.16	4.17	3.65
		SD	.88	.98	1.13	1.17	1.05	1.03	1.33	1.04	.91	1.04	1.16	1.24	.92	1.19	1.08	1.27	.90	.90	1.15
News sources	1762	Mean	3.83	3.87	3.97	3.31	3.54	3.89	3.98	3.73	2.81	3.81	3.71	3.51	3.13	3.84	3.62	2.91	4.01	3.77	3.62
		SD	1.00	1.03	1.08	1.15	1.01	.89	1.38	1.07	1.03	1.18	1.11	1.13	1.17	1.11	1.07	1.23	1.07	1.14	1.16
Journalism unions	1761	Mean	2.11	1.37	1.89	1.69	2.20	2.22	2.28	1.42	2.89	1.75	2.05	1.77	1.67	2.31	1.75	2.12	3.03	1.88	2.02
		SD	1.04	.68	.99	.91	1.11	1.10	1.43	.62	.83	1.09	1.03	.96	.84	1.15	.87	.96	1.14	1.07	1.09
Sensibilities	1757	Mean	3.47	2.31	3.48	2.87	2.91	3.16	2.81	2.29	3.42	2.81	2.83	2.94	2.12	3.06	2.75	3.41	3.70	3.37	2.98
		SD	1.04	1.00	1.08	1.18	.93	1.03	1.40	1.05	.80	1.22	1.13	1.18	.82	1.16	1.16	1.19	.93	1.01	1.16
Religious leaders	1740	Mean	1.76	1.36	1.66	1.39	2.39	2.13	2.73	1.33	2.94	1.41	1.61	1.45	2.06	1.73	1.42	2.19	2.66	1.67	1.88
		SD	.89	.70	.88	.73	.98	1.20	1.45	.62	.70	.77	.86	.73	.95	.96	.59	1.13	1.12	.89	1.04
Advertisers	1734	Mean	1.78	1.65	2.06	2.27	3.19	2.43	2.14	1.74	2.27	1.54	2.14	1.95	2.22	2.22	1.74	2.71	3.37	1.69	2.17
		SD	.91	.90	1.27	1.21	1.15	1.14	1.43	.93	.96	1.00	1.29	1.17	1.13	1.30	.88	1.36	1.21	1.04	1.23
Media watch organizations	1610	Mean	2.29	1.60	2.07	1.71	2.43	2.55	2.06	1.34	3.00	1.97	1.98	1.85	1.94	1.73	-	2.29	3.09	1.72	2.09
		SD	1.11	.96	1.04	.86	1.08	1.19	1.28	.67	.97	1.20	1.03	.97	1.10	.93	-	1.23	1.13	.87	1.14

⁶ Thomas Hanitzsch, Worlds of Journalisms" Project, Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research University of Zurich, www.worldsofjournalisms.org, For further information please check:: The Handbook of Journalism Studies, Ek. Wahl-Jorgensen and T. Hanitzsch, Routledge, 2009.

Appendix B- Personally trust index (Hanitzsch, 2009)

Question: Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 5 how much you personally trust each of the following institutions. 5 means you have complete trust, and 1 means you do not trust an institution at all.

	N		Australia	Austria	Brazil	Bulgaria	Chile	China	Egypt	Germany	Indonesia	Israel	Mexico	Romania	Russia	Spain	Switzerland	Turkey	Uganda	United States	Total
Parliament	1769	Mean	3.06	3.46	2.20	2.33	3.00	3.69	2.81	3.55	2.46	2.88	2.19	2.07	2.35	3.41	3.46	2.43	.88	2.82	2.83
		SD	.83	.76	.84	.94	1.00	.80	1.21	.77	.73	.82	.92	1.06	.81	.82	.81	1.16	.08	.79	1.04
Government	1763	Mean	3.02	2.65	2.73	2.54	3.03	3.97	2.76	3.35	2.68	2.73	2.58	2.23	2.55	3.25	3.61	1.72	.53	2.46	2.80
		SD	.92	.76	.84	1.05	1.01	.80	1.28	.77	.74	1.01	1.10	1.04	.94	.87	.76	.96	.11	1.08	1.07
The judiciary/the courts	1774	Mean	3.55	4.05	2.80	2.06	2.82	3.18	4.08	3.86	2.19	3.47	2.25	2.52	2.29	3.18	3.96	2.88	.44	3.57	3.12
		SD	.91	.81	.92	1.08	1.06	.79	.93	.77	.72	1.03	1.17	1.07	.90	1.08	.82	1.11	.13	.83	1.16
Police	1768	Mean	2.99	3.31	2.28	2.22	3.76	2.83	2.89	3.68	2.24	2.79	1.56	2.41	2.13	3.31	3.52	2.38	.35	3.24	2.77
		SD	.81	.76	.89	1.14	.86	.83	1.27	.74	.67	.90	.91	.89	.97	.91	.90	1.13	.15	.86	1.10
Politicians in general	1765	Mean	2.42	2.57	1.98	2.04	2.13	3.01	2.65	2.47	1.77	2.20	1.83	1.71	2.34	2.28	2.62	1.66	.77	2.41	2.21
		SD	.91	.66	.74	1.07	.85	.91	1.22	.69	.80	.96	1.01	.98	1.06	.94	.78	.87	.95	.91	.98
Political parties	1764	Mean	2.36	2.30	1.96	2.04	2.00	3.38	2.18	2.43	1.78	2.24	1.78	1.83	2.10	2.04	2.56	1.88	.32	2.28	2.19
		SD	.98	.73	.79	1.10	.94	.94	1.07	.72	.80	1.00	1.04	.99	1.03	1.01	.73	.90	.08	.97	1.00
The military	1641	Mean	3.11	3.20	2.95	2.80	3.35	3.72	-	3.17	2.61	3.49	3.04	2.95	2.45	3.08	2.59	3.24	.71	3.14	3.03
		SD	.99	1.05	.79	1.10	.91	1.02	-	.94	.79	.84	1.21	1.04	1.00	.98	1.05	1.31	.18	.95	1.06
Religious leaders	1734	Mean	2.76	2.49	2.39	2.24	3.15	2.35	3.65	2.44	3.32	2.44	1.96	2.83	2.88	1.90	2.11	1.94	.65	2.91	2.64
		SD	1.04	1.06	1.01	1.34	.99	1.09	1.08	1.10	.96	1.15	1.04	1.30	.94	1.11	1.11	1.03	.00	1.06	1.20
Big corporations	1743	Mean	2.41	2.38	2.96	2.78	2.49	2.71	3.12	2.28	2.03	2.61	2.43	2.70	2.88	2.20	2.58	1.98	.13	2.42	2.56
		SD	.97	.96	.89	1.09	.90	.96	1.14	.82	.90	.93	1.13	.90	1.07	.90	.88	1.06	.93	.98	1.02
Charitable or voluntary organizations	1759	Mean	3.68	3.81	3.17	2.85	3.14	3.15	3.34	3.62	2.62	3.42	3.27	3.10	3.05	3.24	3.46	3.23	.20	3.57	3.28
		SD	.82	.73	.88	.99	.91	1.01	1.19	.67	.82	.84	.85	.93	.95	.86	.75	1.06	.05	.77	.95
United Nations	1730	Mean	3.43	3.38	3.55	3.10	3.47	3.63	2.10	3.48	2.90	2.93	3.50	3.26	3.15	3.06	3.25	2.43	.89	3.04	3.20
		SD	.82	.82	.82	.82	.82	.82	.82	.82	.82	.82	.82	.82	.82	.82	.82	.82	.82	.82	.82
The news media	1763	Mean	3.09	3.33	3.31	3.03	3.48	3.28	3.40	3.53	3.44	3.16	3.07	3.19	2.70	3.02	3.37	2.53	.83	3.36	3.23
		SD	.83	.80	.81	.80	.81	.74	.95	.66	.77	.82	.93	.94	.89	.80	.74	1.14	.89	.87	.89