

# Synthesis and styrene copolymerization of bromo, chloro, and fluoro ring-substituted 2-methoxyethyl phenylcyanoacrylates

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## Abstract

Novel halogen ring-substituted 2-methoxyethyl phenylcyanoacrylates,  $R\text{PhCH}=\text{C}(\text{CN})\text{CO}_2\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_3$  (where R is 2-bromo, 3-bromo, 4-bromo, 2-chloro, 3-chloro, 4-chloro, 2-fluoro, 3-fluoro, 4-fluoro, 2-trifluoromethyl, 3-trifluoromethyl, 4-trifluoromethyl) were prepared and copolymerized with styrene. The acrylates were synthesized by the piperidine catalyzed Knoevenagel condensation of ring-substituted benzaldehydes and 2-methoxyethyl cyanoacetate, and characterized by CHN analysis, IR,  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR. All the acrylates were copolymerized with styrene in solution with radical

initiation (ABCN) at 70°C. The compositions of the copolymers were calculated from nitrogen analysis.

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## 1. Introduction

Fluoro ring-substituted ethyl phenylcyanoacrylates (EPCA) were reported in synthesis and characterization of a crown-shaped 36-molybdate cluster related to catalysis of Knoevenagel condensation [1]; in preparation of bicyclic pyridine derivatives as fatty acid binding protein inhibitors [2]; in use of amine-functional polysiloxanes as efficient polymeric organocatalyst for amino catalysis in multicomponent Gewald reaction,  $\alpha$ -allylic alkylation of aldehydes, and Knoevenagel condensation [3]; in synthesis and application of polystyrene-supported NADH model [4]; in preparation of heterocyclic compounds as xanthine oxidase inhibitors [5]; in total synthesis and study of analgesic activity of 6-fluoroindan-1-carboxylic acid [6]; in design, synthesis and application of polysiloxane-supported NADH model [7]; in investigation into the oxidation mechanism of Hantzsch 1,4-dihydropyridines by ethyl  $\alpha$ -cyanocinnamates and benzylidenemalononitriles [8]; in stereoselective synthesis of trans-4,5-substituted 1,4,5,6-tetrahydropyridine-2-(olates)thiolates [9]; in studies stereochemistry of interaction of pyridinium ylides with  $\alpha,\beta$ -unsaturated nitriles [10]; in synthesis of condensed 2-amino-4H-pyrans and characterization molecular structure of 2-amino-7,7-dimethyl-4-(3-fluorophenyl)-5-oxo-3-(ethoxycarbonyl)-5,6,7,8-tetrahydro-4H-benzo[b]pyran [11]; in studies of neuroleptic activity and dopamine-uptake inhibition in 1-piperazino-3-

phenylindans [12]; in preparation, studies of properties, and reactions of conjugated heteroenoid compounds and related compounds [13]; in studies of polarographic half-wave potentials and ultraviolet absorption spectra of conjugated heteroenoid compounds [14], and their equilibrium reactions with butanol [15]. 4-(Trifluoromethyl) ring-substituted EPCA was involved in C(sp<sup>3</sup>)-H functionalizations of light hydrocarbons using decatungstate photocatalysis in flow [16]; in conjugate hydrocyanation of  $\alpha$ -cyanoacrylates using potassium hexacyanoferrate(II) as cyanating reagent [17]; in catalysis with a core-shell-satellite structured Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>S-NH<sub>2</sub> nanocomposite of multistep cascade reaction sequences [18], and in construction of heterocycles via 1,4-dipolar cycloaddition of quinoline-DMAD zwitterion with various dipolarophiles [19].

In this work we have prepared halogen ring-substituted 2-methoxyethyl phenylcyanoacrylates, RPhCH=C(CN)CO<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>OCH<sub>3</sub>, where R is 2-bromo, 3-bromo, 4-bromo, 2-chloro, 3-chloro, 4-chloro, 2-fluoro, 3-fluoro, 4-fluoro, 2-trifluoromethyl, 3-trifluoromethyl, 4-trifluoromethyl, and explored the feasibility of their copolymerization with styrene. To the best of our knowledge there have been no reports on either synthesis of these compounds, nor their copolymerization with styrene [20].

## 2. Experimental

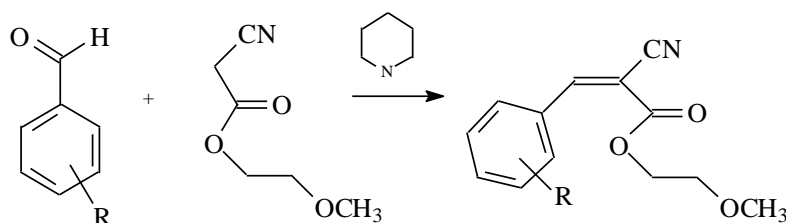
2-Bromo, 3-bromo, 4-bromo, 2-chloro, 3-chloro, 4-chloro, 2-fluoro, 3-fluoro, 4-fluoro, 2-trifluoromethyl, 3-trifluoromethyl, 4-trifluoromethyl-substituted benzaldehydes, 2-methoxyethyl cyanoacetate ( $\geq 98.0\%$ ), piperidine (99%), styrene ( $\geq 99\%$ ), 1,1'-

azobis(cyclohexanecarbonitrile) (98%), (ABCN), and toluene (98%) supplied from Sigma-Aldrich Co., were used as received. Instrumentation is reported in [21].

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1. Synthesis and characterization of 2-methoxyethyl phenylcyanoacrylates

All MEPA compounds were synthesized by Knoevenagel condensation [22] of appropriate benzaldehydes with 2-methoxyethyl cyanoacetate, catalyzed by base, piperidine (Scheme 1).



Scheme 1. Synthesis of 2-methoxyethyl phenylcyanoacrylates, where R is 2-bromo, 3-bromo, 4-bromo, 2-chloro, 3-chloro, 4-chloro, 2-fluoro, 3-fluoro, 4-fluoro, 2-trifluoromethyl, 3-trifluoromethyl, 4-trifluoromethyl.

The preparation procedure was essentially the same for all the MEPA compounds. In a typical synthesis, equimolar amounts of 2-methoxyethyl cyanoacetate and an appropriate benzaldehyde were mixed in equimolar ratio in a 20 mL vial. A few drops of piperidine were added with stirring. The product of the reaction was isolated by filtration and purified by crystallization from 2-propanol. The condensation reaction proceeded smoothly, yielding products, which were purified by conventional techniques. The compounds were characterized by IR,  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectroscopies. No stereochemical analysis of the

novel alkoxy ring-substituted MEPA was performed since no stereoisomers (*E* or/and *Z*) of known configuration were available.

### **3.1.1. 2-Methoxyethyl 2-bromophenylcyanoacrylate**

Yield: 82%; mp 56°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR: δ 8.3 (s, 1H, CH=), 8.2-7.4 (m, 4H, Ph), 4.5 (t, 2H, OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.7 (t, 2H, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.4 (s, 3H, OCH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR: δ 163 (C=O), 154 (HC=), 136, 132, 129, 128, 127, 115 (Ph), 116 (CN), 106 (C=), 74 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 64 (OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 59 (OCH<sub>3</sub>); IR: (cm<sup>-1</sup>) 2992 (m, C-H), 2228 (m, CN), 1734 (s, C=O), 1585 (s, C=C), 1263 (s, C-O-CH<sub>3</sub>), 708 (s, C-H out of plane). Anal. calcd. for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>12</sub>BrNO<sub>3</sub>: C, 50.34; H, 3.90; N, 4.52; Found: C, 48.14; H, 3.86; N, 4.54.

### **3.1.2. 2-Methoxyethyl 3-bromophenylcyanoacrylate**

Yield: 95%; mp 56.2°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR: δ 8.2 (s, 1H, CH=), 8.1-7.3 (m, 4H, Ph), 4.5 (t, 2H, OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.7 (t, 2H, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.4 (s, 3H, OCH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR: δ 162 (C=O), 153 (HC=), 132, 131, 130 (Ph), 116 (CN), 100 (C=), 64 (OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 59 (OCH<sub>3</sub>); IR: (cm<sup>-1</sup>) 2982 (m, C-H), 2224 (m, CN), 1747 (s, C=O), 1609 (s, C=C), 1257 (s, C-O-CH<sub>3</sub>), 781, 677 (s, C-H out of plane). Anal. calcd. for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>12</sub>BrNO<sub>3</sub>: C, 50.34; H, 3.90; N, 4.52; Found: C, 48.03; H, 3.63; N, 4.57.

### **3.1.3. 2-Methoxyethyl 4-bromophenylcyanoacrylate**

Yield 73%; mp 42.4°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR δ 8.2 (s, 1H, CH=), 7.9-6.9 (m, 4H, Ph), 4.8 (t, 2H, OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.7 (t, 2H, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.4 (s, 3H, OCH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR: δ 162 (C=O), 154 (HC=), 132, 131, 130 (Ph), 115 (CN), 103 (C=), 70 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 66 (OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 59 (OCH<sub>3</sub>); IR: (cm<sup>-1</sup>)

<sup>1</sup>H NMR δ 2928 (m, C-H), 2220 (m, CN), 1732 (s, C=O), 1603 (s, C=C), 1257 (s, C-O-CH<sub>3</sub>), 791 (s, C-H out of plane). Anal. calcd. for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>12</sub>BrNO<sub>3</sub>: C, 50.34; H, 3.90; N, 4.52; Found: C, 48.09; H, 3.77; N, 4.19.

#### **3.1.4. 2-Methoxyethyl 2-chlorophenylcyanoacrylate**

Yield 82%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR δ 8.2 (s, 1H, CH=), 7.9-7.3 (m, 4H, Ph), 4.3 (t, 2H, OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.7 (t, 2H, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.4 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>O); <sup>13</sup>C NMR δ 164 (C=O), 155 (HC=), 134, 133, 130, 129 (Ph), 115 (CN), 106 (C=), 70 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 66 (OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 59 (OCH<sub>3</sub>); IR (cm<sup>-1</sup>): 2884 (m, C-H), 2226 (m, CN), 1732 (s, C=O), 1609 (s, C=C), 1203 (s, C-O-CH<sub>3</sub>), 862, 750 (s, C-H out of plane). Anal. Calcd. for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>12</sub>ClNO<sub>3</sub>: C, 58.77; H, 4.55; N, 5.27; Found: C, 54.77; H, 4.64; N, 5.17.

#### **3.1.5. 2-Methoxyethyl 3-chlorophenylphenylcyanoacrylate**

Yield 72%; mp 58.1°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR δ 8.2 (s, 1H, CH=), 7.9-7.3 (m, 4H, Ph), 4.8 (t, 2H, OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.7 (t, 2H, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.4 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>O); <sup>13</sup>C NMR δ 162 (C=O), 153 (HC=), 137, 135, 134, 130, 129 (Ph), 115 (CN), 105 (C=), 70 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 66 (OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 59 (OCH<sub>3</sub>); IR (cm<sup>-1</sup>): 2945 (m, C-H), 2226 (m, CN), 1717 (s, C=O), 1609 (s, C=C), 1271 (s, C-O-CH<sub>3</sub>), 851, 787 (s, C-H out of plane). Anal. Calcd. for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>12</sub>ClNO<sub>3</sub>: C, 58.77; H, 4.55; N, 5.27; Found: C, 55.63; H, 4.51; N, 5.40.

#### **3.1.6. 2-Methoxyethyl 4-chlorophenoxyphenylcyanoacrylate**

Yield 87%; mp 86.9°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR δ 8.2 (s, 1H, CH=), 8.1-7.3 (m, 4H, Ph), 4.8 (t, 2H, OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.7 (t, 2H, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.4 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>O); <sup>13</sup>C NMR δ 162 (C=O), 154 (HC=), 140, 132, 131, 130, 129 (Ph), 115 (CN), 103 (C=), 70 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 66 (OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 59

(OCH<sub>3</sub>); IR (cm<sup>-1</sup>): 2899 (m, C-H), 2222 (m, CN), 1724 (s, C=O), 1612 (s, C=C), 1290 (s, C-O-CH<sub>3</sub>), 829, 760 (s, C-H out of plane). Anal. Calcd. for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>12</sub>ClNO<sub>3</sub>: C, 58.77; H, 4.55; N, 5.27; Found: C, 56.06; H, 4.63; N, 5.60.

### **3.1.7. 2-Methoxyethyl 2-fluorophenylcyanoacrylate**

Yield 84%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR δ 8.6 (s, 1H, CH=), 8.4-7.0 (m, 4H, Ph), 4.5 (t, 2H, OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.7 (t, 2H, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.4 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>O); <sup>13</sup>C NMR δ 163 (C=O), 154 (HC=), 146, 135, 129, 125, 120 (Ph), 117 (CN), 105 (C=), 70 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 65 (OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 59 (OCH<sub>3</sub>); IR (cm<sup>-1</sup>): 2934 (m, C-H), 2228 (m, CN), 1742 (s, C=O), 1610 (s, C=C), 1236 (s, C-O-CH<sub>3</sub>), 804 (s, C-H out of plane). Anal. Calcd. for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>12</sub>FNO<sub>3</sub>: C, 62.65; H, 4.85; N, 5.62; Found: C, 63.42; H, 4.61; N, 5.49.

### **3.1.8. 2-Methoxyethyl 3-fluorophenylcyanoacrylates**

Yield 78%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR δ 8.2 (s, 1H, CH=), 7.8-7.0 (m, 4H, Ph), 4.5 (t, 2H, OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.7 (t, 2H, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.4 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>O); <sup>13</sup>C NMR δ 163 (C=O), 153 (HC=), 133, 132, 127, 122, 120, 117 (Ph), 116 (CN), 104 (C=), 70 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 65 (OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 59 (OCH<sub>3</sub>); IR (cm<sup>-1</sup>): 2935 (m, C-H), 2224 (m, CN), 1734 (s, C=O), 1614 (s, C=C), 1227 (s, C-O-CH<sub>3</sub>), 872, 762 (s, C-H out of plane). Anal. Calcd. for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>12</sub>FNO<sub>3</sub>: C, 62.65; H, 4.85; N, 5.62; Found: C, 58.15; H, 4.75; N, 5.55.

### **3.1.9. 2-Methoxyethyl 4-fluorophenylcyanoacrylate**

Yield 77%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR δ 8.2 (s, 1H, CH=), 8.1-7.1 (m, 4H, Ph), 4.5 (t, 2H, OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.7 (t, 2H, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.5 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>O); <sup>13</sup>C NMR δ 164 (C=O), 154 (HC=), 133, 129, 116 (Ph), 115 (CN), 102 (C=), 70 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 65 (OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 62 (OCH<sub>3</sub>); IR (cm<sup>-1</sup>): 2966 (m,

C-H), 2224 (m, CN), 1720 (s, C=O), 1597 (s, C=C), 1240 (s, C-O-CH<sub>3</sub>), 841 (s, C-H out of plane). Anal. Calcd. for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>12</sub>FNO<sub>3</sub>: C, 62.65; H, 4.85; N, 5.62; Found: C, 60.33; H, 4.96; N, 5.85.

### **3.1.10. 2-Methoxyethyl 2-trifluoromethylphenylcyanoacrylates**

Yield 91%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR δ 8.1 (s, 1H, CH=), 7.9-7.6 (m, 4H, Ph), 4.3 (t, 2H, OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.6 (t, 2H, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.4 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>O); <sup>13</sup>C NMR δ 164 (C=O), 152 (HC=), 133, 132, 131, 126 (Ph), 114 (CN), 125 (CF<sub>3</sub>), 120 (C=), 70 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 64 (OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 59 (OCH<sub>3</sub>); IR (cm<sup>-1</sup>): 2935 (m, C-H), 2231 (m, CN), 1749 (s, C=O), 1601 (s, C=C), 1296 (s, C-O-CH<sub>3</sub>), 819, 771 (s, C-H out of plane). Anal. Calcd. for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>12</sub>F<sub>3</sub>NO<sub>3</sub>: C, 56.19; H, 4.04; N, 4.68; Found: C, 52.98; H, 4.42; N, 4.44.

### **3.1.11. 2-Methoxyethyl 3-trifluoromethylphenylcyanoacrylates**

Yield 81%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR δ 8.3 (s, 1H, CH=), 8.2-7.5 (m, 4H, Ph), 4.5 (t, 2H, OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.7 (t, 2H, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.4 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>O); <sup>13</sup>C NMR δ 163 (C=O), 153 (HC=), 137, 133, 132, 124 (Ph), 125 (CF<sub>3</sub>), 116 (CN), 105 (C=), 69 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 64 (OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 59 (OCH<sub>3</sub>); IR (cm<sup>-1</sup>): 2914 (m, C-H), 2235 (m, CN), 1718 (s, C=O), 1609 (s, C=C), 1227 (s, C-O-CH<sub>3</sub>), 866, 806, 762 (s, C-H out of plane). Anal. Calcd. for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>12</sub>F<sub>3</sub>NO<sub>3</sub>: C, 56.19; H, 4.04; N, 4.68; Found: C, 52.98; H, 4.42; N, 4.44.

### **3.1.12. 2-Methoxyethyl 4-trifluoromethylphenylcyanoacrylates**

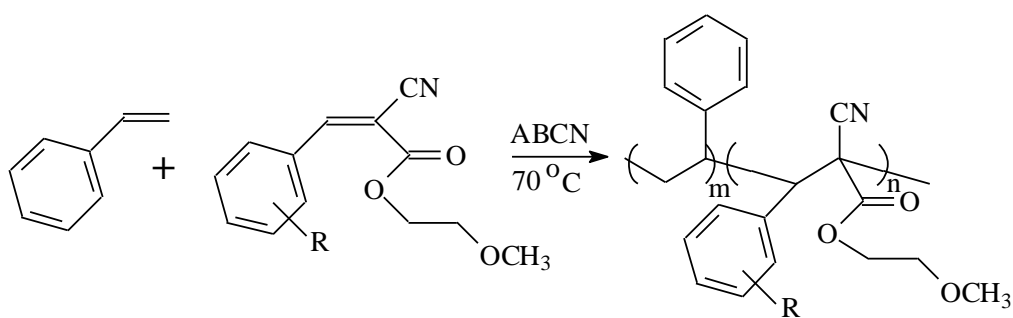
Yield 74%; mp 78.6°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR δ 8.3 (s, 1H, CH=), 8.2-7.7 (m, 4H, Ph), 4.5 (t, 2H, OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.7 (t, 2H, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.5 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>O); <sup>13</sup>C NMR δ 162 (C=O), 153 (HC=), 134, 133, 131 (Ph), 126 (CF<sub>3</sub>), 115 (CN), 106 (C=), 70 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 66 (OCOCH<sub>2</sub>), 59



(OCH<sub>3</sub>); IR (cm<sup>-1</sup>): 2955 (m, C-H), 2228 (m, CN), 1726 (s, C=O), 1616 (s, C=C), 1121 (s, C-O-CH<sub>3</sub>), 849, 764, 608 (s, C-H out of plane). Anal. Calcd. for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>12</sub>F<sub>3</sub>NO<sub>3</sub>: C, 56.19; H, 4.04; N, 4.68; Found: C, 51.29; H, 3.86; N, 4.84.

### 3.2. Synthesis and characterization of styrene – MEPA copolymers

Copolymers of the ST and the MEPA compounds, P(ST-co-MEPA) were prepared in 25-mL glass screw cap vials at ST/MEPA = 3 (mol) the monomer feed using 0.12 mol/L of ABCN at an overall monomer concentration 2.44 mol/L in 10 mL of toluene. The copolymerization was conducted at 70°C. After a predetermined time, the mixture was cooled to room temperature, and precipitated dropwise in methanol. The composition of the copolymers was determined based on the nitrogen content (cyano group in MEPA monomers). The novel synthesized MEPA compounds copolymerized readily with ST under free-radical conditions (Scheme 2) forming white flaky precipitates when their solutions were poured into methanol. The conversion of the copolymers was kept between 10 and 20% to minimize compositional drift (Table 1).



**Scheme 2.** Copolymerization of ST and halogen ring-substituted 2-methoxyethyl phenylcyanoacrylates, RPhCH = C(CN)CO<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>OCH<sub>3</sub>, where R is 2-bromo, 3-bromo,

4-bromo, 2-chloro, 3-chloro, 4-chloro, 2-fluoro, 3-fluoro, 4-fluoro, 2-trifluoromethyl, 3-trifluoromethyl, 4-trifluoromethyl.

**Table 1.** Copolymerization of Styrene and 2-Methoxyethyl phenylcyanoacrylates.

| R                 | Yield <sup>a</sup><br>(wt%) | N<br>(wt%) | ST in<br>copol.<br>(mol%) | MEPA in<br>copol.<br>(mol%) |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2-Bromo           | 11.2                        | 2.32       | 73.8                      | 26.2                        |
| 3-Bromo           | 14.3                        | 2.51       | 70.4                      | 29.6                        |
| 4-Bromo           | 12.3                        | 2.36       | 73.1                      | 26.9                        |
| 2-Chloro          | 16.7                        | 2.56       | 73.0                      | 27.0                        |
| 3-Chloro          | 15.2                        | 2.64       | 71.8                      | 28.2                        |
| 4-Chloro          | 12.3                        | 2.55       | 73.2                      | 26.8                        |
| 2-Fluoro          | 14.4                        | 2.63       | 73.1                      | 26.9                        |
| 3-Fluoro          | 12.9                        | 2.64       | 73.0                      | 27.0                        |
| 4-Fluoro          | 14.5                        | 2.58       | 73.8                      | 26.2                        |
| 2-Trifluoromethyl | 12.6                        | 1.75       | 82.8                      | 17.2                        |
| 3-Trifluoromethyl | 13.5                        | 2.12       | 77.7                      | 22.3                        |
| 4-Trifluoromethyl | 14.4                        | 2.25       | 75.7                      | 24.3                        |

Nitrogen elemental analysis showed that between 17.2 and 29.6 mol% of MEPA is present in the copolymers prepared at ST/MEPA = 3 (mol), which is indicative of relatively high reactivity of the MEPA monomers towards ST radical which is typical of halogen ring-substituted phenylcyanoacrylates. Since MEPA monomers do not homopolymerize, the most likely structure of the copolymers would be isolated MEPA monomer units alternating with short ST sequences (Scheme 2).

The copolymers prepared in the present work are all soluble in ethyl acetate, THF, DMF and CHCl<sub>3</sub> and insoluble in methanol, ethyl ether, and petroleum ether.

## 4 Conclusions

Novel halogen ring-substituted 2-methoxyethyl phenylcyanoacrylates,

$R\text{PhCH}=\text{C}(\text{CN})\text{CO}_2\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_3$  (where R is 2-bromo, 3-bromo, 4-bromo, 2-chloro, 3-chloro, 4-chloro, 2-fluoro, 3-fluoro, 4-fluoro, 2-trifluoromethyl, 3-trifluoromethyl, 4-trifluoromethyl) were prepared and copolymerized with styrene.

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