

Participation - the missing component of the Romanian environmental NGOs

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Introduction

Participation in environmental organizations constitutes a specific pro-environmental behavior which characteristic pattern is, in accordance with the typology of Stern (2000), that takes part in the public sphere. Based on environmental citizenship approaches, participation in environmental non-governmental organization (ENGOS) reflects the civic engagement, respectively the pro-environmental attitudes, dispositions and behaviors of the citizens in relation to environmental issues, politics and decisions (Dobson & Bell, 2005; MacGregor et al., 2005). The importance of these arenas of participation is accentuated also in connection with the effective environmental governance (Jordan et al, 2005; Najam et al, 2004) – a multilevel and diffuse space in which decisions and solutions concerning environmental problems are the result of interaction between institutional agents (e.g. government) and civic associations (e.g. ENGOS), the latter serving in fact as echoes for the *vox populi*, in accordance with the essence of participatory democracy.

Civic participation and volunteering of the Romanian citizens constituted the subjects of various research (e.g., Bădescu & Sum, 2005; Bădescu et al., 2004; Voicu, 2005; Voicu & Basina, 2005; Voicu & Voicu, 2003), which however were not specifically directed towards the case of participation in environmental organizations, but rather analyzed a generally taken civic activism and thus predictors of individual-level ENGO-participation have not been analyzed. In fact, even on the European level are relatively sporadic those research which explore the sociological profile of the members of these associations (in this sense, see Dalton, 1994, 2005; Frank et al., 2000; Gillham, 2008; Rohrschneider, 1990; Torgler et al., 2008), and are more popular the macro-social, institutional approaches which investigate the emergence and role of ENGOS in various decision-making processes (e.g., Botcheva, 1996; Carmin, 2008; Dalton, 2005).

The present paper tries to fill to some extent the gap regarding Romania and provides a brief analysis related to the civic pillars of pro-environmental behaviors in case of this country.

In the first part of the paper some descriptive statistics is presented in order to compare the case of ENGO membership in Romania to other European countries' (those included in the *European Values Survey*), after which some possible causes of the Romanian situation will be discussed. Then, in the third part, I use data from the *European Values Survey* (EVS) 1999¹ (data covering 33 European countries, inclusive Romania) and *European Values Survey/Public Opinion Barometer* (EVS/POB) autumn 2005² for Romania in order to investigate the profile of participants in environmental NGOs. Both the questionnaires of the 1999 and the 2005 wave of the EVS included items related towards citizens' participation in environmental protection organizations. On the one hand, respondents were asked to indicate if they are members of such associations and, on the other hand, to indicate if they have a passive or active (performing unpaid, voluntary activity) status in these organizations – which constitutes the two dependent variables of the present study. As far as participation in environmental organizations – as we will see in the following – with some exceptions constitutes a less popular behavior throughout Europe, being even lesser popular in Romania, I dropped the initial idea to investigate the profile of the Romanian respondents through a regression analysis, instead of which compared the mean score of some core-variables among participants and non-participants, and realized the regression analysis only on the level of the whole EVS 1999 sample. The purpose of the analysis was not to test hypotheses, but to explore the phenomenon of participation and to make considerations concerning the possible sources of ENGO participation in Romania which could be used in future research as working hypotheses.

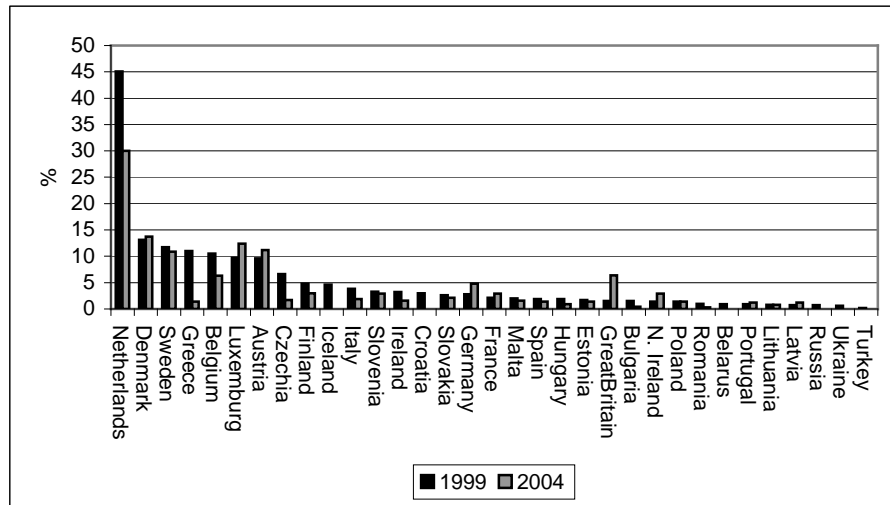
Participation in environmental non-governmental organizations in Romania and Europe. A snapshot

According to the EVS/POB data, in 2005 only a very low percent of the Romanians were members of environmental organizations, that is 0.5% was inactive member and 0.2% active member, while in 1999 (EVS data), 1% of the Romanian respondents declared ENGO-membership. The average percent of membership in Europe (the countries of the EVS 1999) was 5%, with the highest participation rate occurring in the Netherlands (45%). According to Special Eurobarometer 62.2 on social capital, undertaken in 2004, 4% of the Europeans were members of environmental organizations, the highest percent occurring, again, in the Netherlands (30%). Based on the above data, except some countries, there are no clear

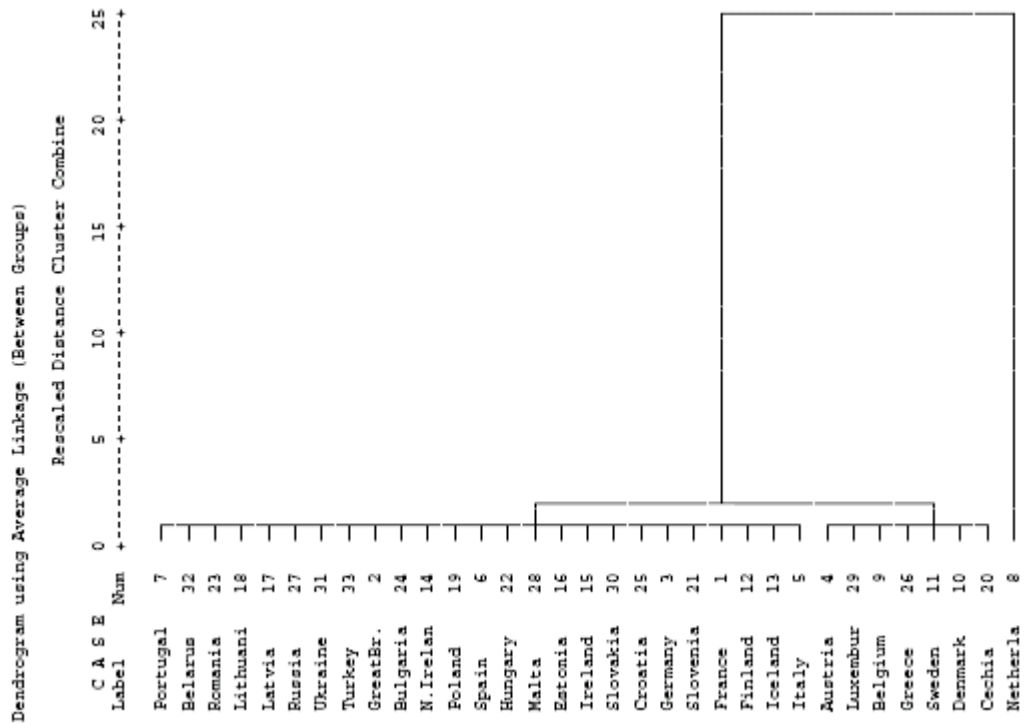
¹ The database can be accessed free of charge for scientific purpose from the website of the *Central Archive for Empirical Social Research*, <http://zacat.gesis.org/webview/index.jsp>

² In 2005 the EVS field study for Romania was realized through the Open Society Foundation's autumn Public Opinion Barometer. The database can be accessed free of charge for scientific purpose from the website of the Open Society Foundation: www.fsd.ro

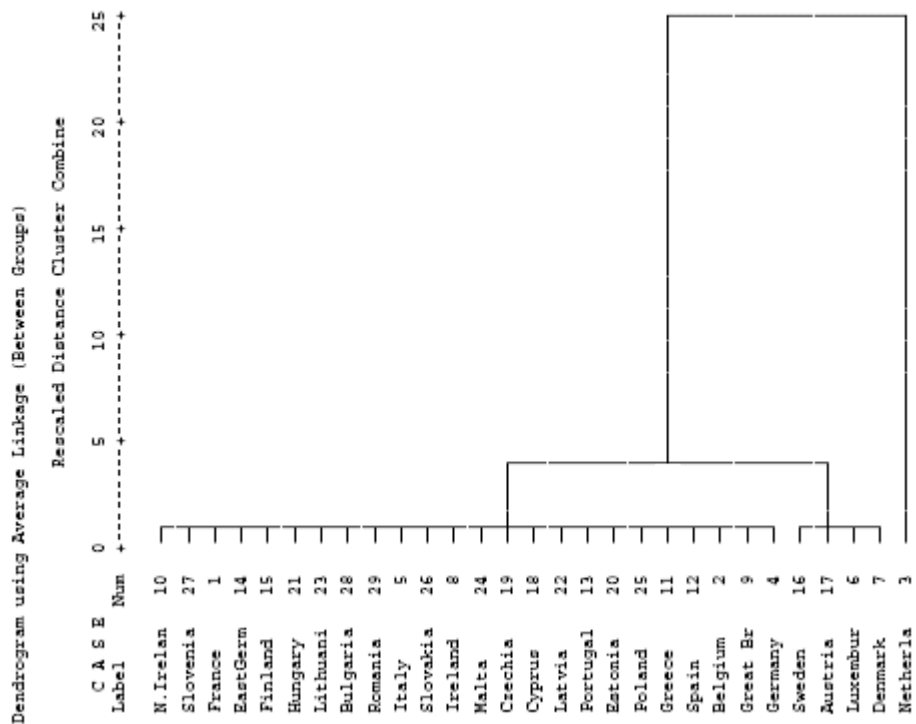
differences compared to the 1999 EVS data, and the five years old patterns are still specific (Graph 1).



Graph 1. Membership in environmental organizations (% of respondents) in Europe
 Source of data: EVS 1999 for 1999, Special Eurobarometer 62.2 for 2004



Graph 2. Groups of countries based on their passive membership rate in environmental organizations in 1999
 Source of data: EVS 1999



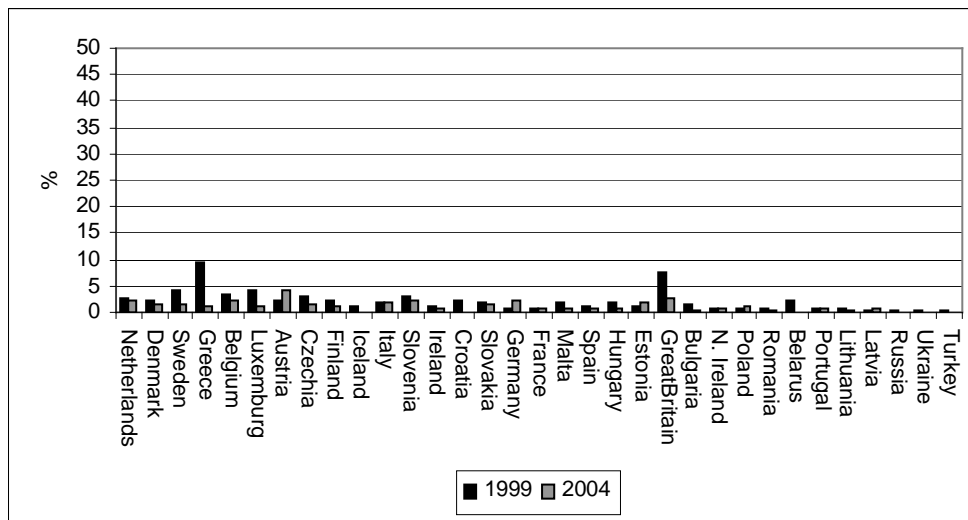
Graph 3. Groups of countries based on their passive membership rate in environmental organizations in 2004

Source of data: Special Eurobarometer 62.2

In both years with the help of cluster analysis (Graph 2 and 3) one can distinguish between two major groups of countries (plus the Netherlands): one group with higher membership rates composed of Scandinavian (e.g. Sweden, Denmark) and some Western European (e.g. Austria, Luxemburg, Belgium) countries, usually known for their more vigorous formal-associative social capital (Pichler & Wallace, 2007), and a second group comprising countries with lower membership and with much diverse regional background, at the end of this group being situated countries with a much uniform (especially in 1999) regional background, usually Eastern European, with very low levels of ENGO-involvement.

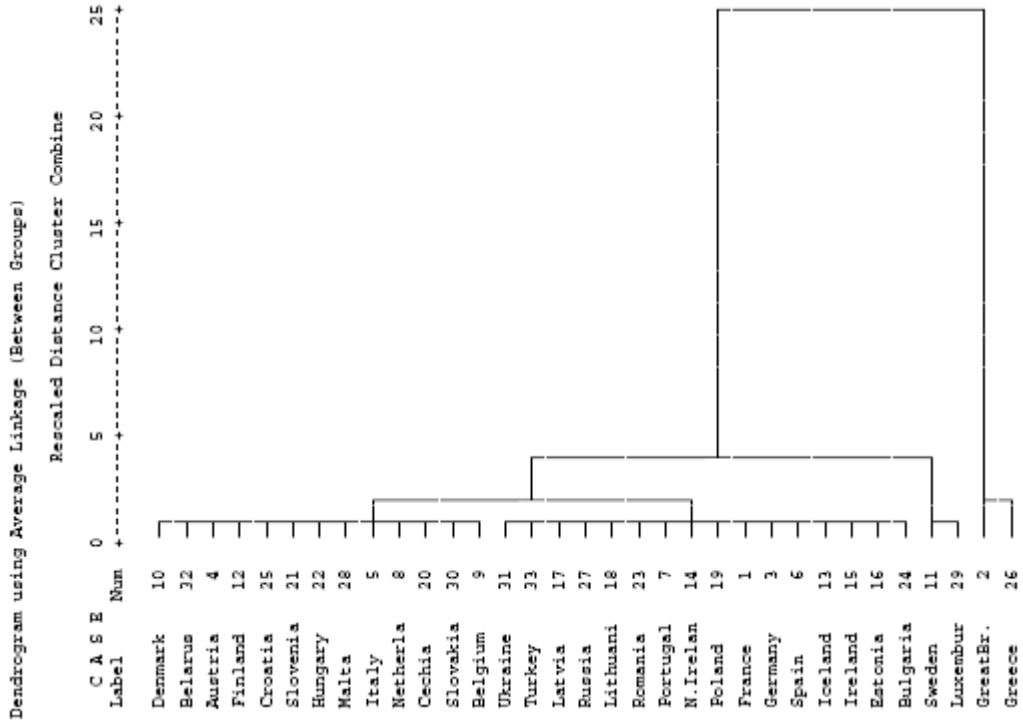
Concerning active membership in environmental organizations, i.e. volunteering, in 1999 the European average was 2%, which means that active involvement in environmental organizations is a much rare phenomenon, at least compared to volunteering in other types of organizations (e.g. sport, cultural, etc.). Patterns of active participation in environmental organizations didn't change, however is striking that even in countries with higher membership rates, active involvement in ENGOs is a less frequent practice, the European average percent being 2% in 1999 and 1.4% in 2004, i.e. less than a half of the passive members. In Romania, in

1999, only 0.6%, in 2005, 0.2% declared he/she had volunteered in environmental organizations (Graph 4).

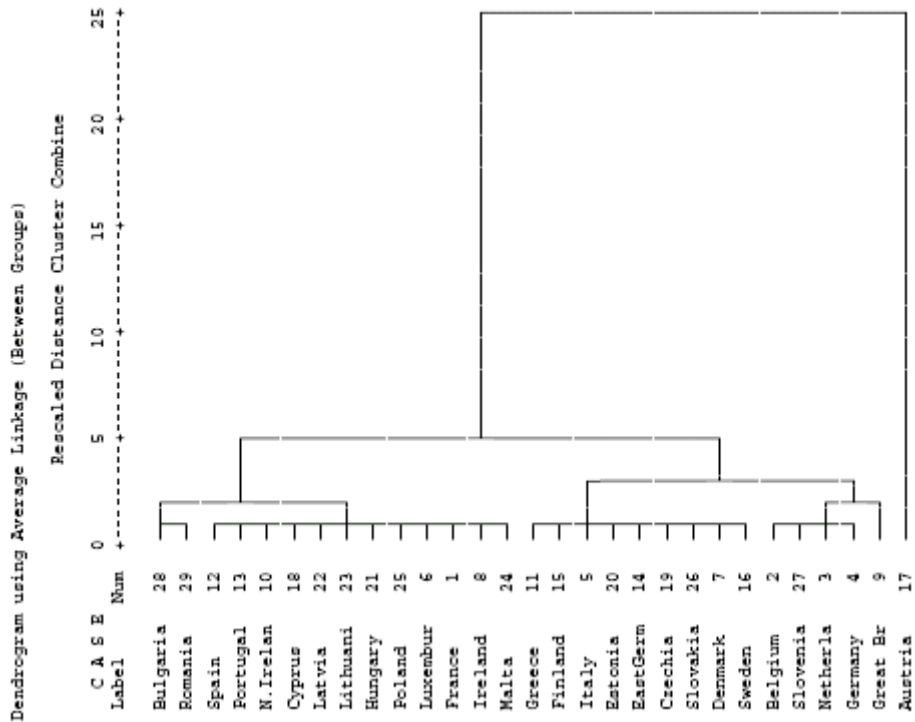


Graph 4. Volunteering in environmental organizations (% of respondents in Europe)
 Source of data: EVS 1999 for 1999, Special Eurobarometer 62.2 for 2004

In this case as well there are some inter-country discrepancies: citizens from Scandinavia and those from some Western European countries are certainly somewhat more active than others, however as seen from Graphs 5 and 6, groups are rather different than similar in terms of regional composition, but again, citizens from the Eastern (e.g. Bulgaria and Romania in 2004) and Southern European countries are the less inactive participants. Thus, the picture of environmental volunteering fits quite well that of the generally taken volunteering: in both years, nearly a half of the Scandinavian citizens perform some acts of volunteering, the least inactive being the citizens of Eastern Europe. Taken all types of associations together, in 1999 15.7% of the Romanians were volunteering, while the percent lowers to 10% in 2004, respectively 9% in 2005 (EVS/POB 2005) the country thus being among the European laggards in this sense.



Graph 5. Groups of countries based on their active involvement in environmental organizations in 1999
Source of data: EVS 1999



Graph 6. Groups of countries based on their active involvement in environmental organizations in 2004
Source of data: Special Eurobarometer 62.2

Possible reasons of the low participation. A brief discussion

It is obvious, that the prerequisite of participation is the existence of ENGOs, their sufficiently open character and diverse agendas. Frank et al. (2000), Dalton (1994), etc. reported correlations between the number of environmental organizations within a certain country and the macroeconomic, political and cultural characteristics of the society, and stated that such organizations are more numerous in industrialized countries, with vigorous economies and stable democracies, where technology allows people to stay connected to the flux of information. In the case of the post-communist countries, democratization is a decisive factor as far as civic associations, including ENGOs became more numerous after the regime change. During the communist regime, these associations were less numerous (in Romania nearly nonexistent) and diverse and thus offered poor chance to participate. Dalton (2005) however didn't find a continuous rising tendency in participation rate over the post-communist period: while ENGO-participation had raised in the first years of the '90s, it declined towards the end of the '90s, the author's explanation being that right after the regime change civic activism had exploded, but later volatilized. The situation is very similar to the 'democratization as a hinder' hypothesis of Pickvance (1999): once repression is eliminated, participation does not appear anymore as a challenge.

I think that considerations regarding the declining tendency in ENGO-participation is fully true in the case of those countries where environmental organizations had a crucial role in the regime change. It is well known that in some East-Central European countries, movements initiated by environmental organizations (e.g. the Danube Circle in Hungary) represented an indirect form of protest against the communist regime (Botcheva, 1996; Fischer, 1993; Lee & Norris, 2000) and served as arenas of participation also for citizens who were rather anti-communist than environmentalist. However, this was not the case of Romania. Here, contrary to other countries from the region, the authoritarian regime was totally inclement regarding alternative associations (others than those directly subordinated to the communist party). As a consequence, Romania lacked the organizational legacy in terms of environmental organizations (except some organizations founded in the pre-communist period which were however dismissed by the regime). Regime change, albeit occurred through mass mobilization (revolution), can not be linked to some concrete civic organizations, contrary to the case of Poland or Hungary for instance, in any case not to ENGOs. This situation allows me to suppose that regarding Romania a much proper explanation is the combination between the 'democratization helps' and 'democratization hinders' hypotheses of Pickvance (1999): in Romania structures for ENGO-participation (associations) literally were founded and

diversified during the post-communist period³ (democratization helps), but this evolution process was not necessarily followed by the rising tendency of membership. In fact, it is assumed that among the main objectives of the Romanian civil society (lobbying, education, etc.) participation and mass mobilization constitute the weakest aspects, accentuated by ENGO-representatives as well: nearly half percent of them considers that their organization had never cooperated or only occasionally cooperated with the general public, while 15% do not have idea about the quality of citizens-ENGOS relationship (Cosmeanu, 2008⁴).

This failure may be explained through two major causes, however interdependent: the problems around which associations were constituted did not represent a challenging stake for a public concerned mostly by materialist issues, respectively associations were not successful in public mobilization (weak financial, infrastructure, and human capital, lack of PR skills, etc.), i.e. the linkage between the less popular environmental agenda and other more popular themes (Botcheva, 1996). Based on some interviews with Romanian ENGO leaders, in-the-field observations and survey data (Cosmeanu, 2008), makes sense also to suppose that the failure in issue linkage goes hand in hand with the failure of ENGOS to collaborate, to build coalitions. As an illustration: lack of cooperation is ranked as the second missing resource (after the money-factor) by ENGO-representatives, however nearly 60% of them oppose the idea or do not show any opinion regarding the necessity of creating a national ENGO-coalition (Cosmeanu, 2008). The reverse experience shows that the most successful environmental campaign taking place in Romania, in terms of volunteering and mass mobilization (not necessary in terms of membership), was in the case of the Save Rosia Montana campaign⁵, and its success is certainly due to the dense linkage and coalition between various national and international ENGOS (cf. umbrella effect – CSDF, 2005) which thus helped not only for the echoing of the problem towards a much larger public, but brought also a number of resources

³ According to a survey based on East-Central European ENGOS, covering countries like Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia (Carmin et al., 2008), 16% of these organizations were founded before the regime change, the corresponding percent being 6% in the case of Romania (Cosmeanu, 2008), however, important to mention, that in the case of Romania the majority of these organizations date before the communist period. The rest of the Romanian ENGOS were founded as follows: 24% (1990-1994), 21% (1995-1999), 28% (2000-2008) – see Cosmeanu (2008). We have however contradictory numbers in terms of how many ENGOS are in Romania: ONGBit (<http://ro-gateway.ro/node/185810/ongsearch>) based on data collected between 1996-2006, signals 960 organizations which have environmental agendas as well. The NGO Directory (<http://www.rec.org/REC/Databases/NGODirectory/NGOFind.html>) has 120 Romanian environmental organizations, while the database of the Romanian Environmental Ministry (http://www.mmediu.ro/ong/lista_ong.htm) counts 170 organizations. Cosmeanu (2008) counted more than a hundred of active ENGOS, finally resulting in a reliable sample of 70 organizations, half of them located in the Transylvanian region.

⁴ The author of a survey of Romanian ENGOS (sample 70 ENGOS).

⁵ The *Rosia Montana Gold Corporation* intends to put in practice a gold and silver mine project in Rosia Montana village; the project implies the use of cyanide and relocation of local people (details at www.gabrielresourcesc.com and, in contrast, at www.rosiamontana.org)

which helped to sustain the campaign (financial and human resource, skills, experience), some national ENGO-representatives considering that the case was a “real school for learning how to communicate, how to contact partners, how to speak to politicians”.

Except a few other cases when organizations succeeded in coalition building⁶, seems that competition for limited resources (e.g. financial) determined the bureaucratization⁷ of Romanian environmental organizations: in order to survive and materialize some projects, associations need financial resources which can not be covered through membership fees; as a consequence organizations turned towards other sources of financing (e.g. external donors, Romanian public funds, etc.) and thus competition for limited resources determined the isolation of the ENGOs, they perceiving each other rather as potential concurrent than possible partner. As a consequence, one can explain the low level of participation through structural constraints (CSDF, 2005): the permanent financial problems of empty associations (in terms of membership) raised serious problems regarding the surviving as far as during the transition more and more external donors leaved the country, associations being constrained to professionalism in terms of project writing and fund-raising, and remained only small energies for attracting members⁸. After all, the tendency towards professionalism do not constitute a bad practice, albeit might be dangerous, as far as finally, in lack of participation, environmental organizations can loose their legitimacy (see Tarrow & Petrova, 2006), respectively citizens will finally remain without the advantages of participation (civic socialization, political learning, advocacy, deliberation, trust etc.) – see Fung (2003), Howard, (2003), Carmin (2008), etc. In this sense, even further coalition-buildings based on relational-transactional activism between organizations (Tarrow & Petrova, 2006) would only partly reconsider the 'weak' status (Howard, 2003) of civil organizations and the optimal situation would be a bi-directional evolution, where bridges between organizations create larger arenas for participation.

Who are the members of environmental organizations and who are volunteering in them? A comparative approach

Variables of the analyses

Based on the data from the two waves of the EVS, in the followings the profile of passive and active members will be investigated alongside socio-demographic (age, gender, education,

⁶ Characteristic usually of local and regional level initiatives.

⁷ Understood in shrink towards offices.

⁸ Romanian ENGOs in average have 76 active members and 1.41 employed members (Cosmeanu, 2008) which is lesser than the CEE-average, where are 81 active members and 5 employees (Carmin et al., 2008). Based on such numbers is however questionable their professionalism. It is probable more correct to assume a tendency in this direction rather than a well established practice.

income, ethnicity, religion, place of residence), axiological (postmaterialism vs. materialism), political-ideological (left-right self placement, autonomy vs. fatalism), social capital (interpersonal trust, trust in governmental and non-governmental institutions, frequency of socialization) and environmental attitude variables.

Among the socio-demographical variables, age constitutes an important factor, related to which Gillham (2008) based on the approach of McAdam (1986) accentuates the role of biographical availability, understood as the lack of those constraints (full time job, family) which may hinder participation, thus members and volunteers should be younger. On the other hand, the cohort effect gives explanations from the perspective of the Inglehartian approach: people born after the second world war, who socialized in the context of the welfare state are more susceptible towards participation as far as they are more critical towards the *status quo*. Based on this rationale, authors like Dalton (1994), Dunlap & Mertig (2001), etc. shown negative correlation between age and participation. Gender is a variable with mixed effects on participation. Gillham (2008) for instance didn't find any concluding effect of this variable, while other scholars signaled results in accordance with the feminist ethic, that is women socialized as care givers are more participative in organizations with protection (e.g. environmental protection) agendas (Dunlap & Mertig, 2001). Education is a much clearer variable, analyses constantly reported the positive influence of it on participation. Gillham (2008) states that besides the income, education is the strongest predictor of ENGO-participation. The explanation might be that education determines the enlightenment (Gelissen, 2007) of the citizens in terms of ecological problems. On the other hand, the effect of education might be mediated through the income, that is more educated people usually earn more and thus are better resource-mobilizers, not necessary in terms of donation, but in terms of free time for participation (they do not need a second job).

Postmaterialist value orientation and its effects on the participation were documented in numerous analyses (e.g. Inglehart, 1990; Dalton, 2005; Gillham, 2008), postmaterialist value orientation being one of the most important and significant predictor of participation in ENGOs⁹. Political and ideological orientation and individualist vs. egalitarianist orientation and their influence on participation in environmental organizations were less investigated until now. Looking at this effect in the case of ENGO participation, Gillham (2008) on the basis of the

⁹ If you had to choose, which of the following things you say is most important? And which would be the next most important? A) *Maintaining order in the nation*; B) *Giving people more say in important government decisions*; C) *Fight rising prices*; D) *Protecting freedom of speech*. Variants A and C correspond to materialist value orientations (after the re-coding having the value of 0), while B and D correspond to postmaterialist values (after the re-coding having the value of 1). As a consequence, a respondent may be postmaterialist (score=2), mixed (score =1) or materialist (score =0).

1986 Eurobarometer data talked about the de-politicization of this form of activism. Based on the fact that the two axiological orientation variables – the preference for equality vs. preference for freedom¹⁰ - are usually rooted in specific political self-placement (Comsa, 2007), I expect to have a similar effect with political self-positioning. More than this, if we note that participation in ENGOs is a specific pro-environmental behavior, one may expect that participation to be motivated by the same factors as other specific environmental attitudes or behaviors, so it makes sense to expect that participation in these organizations to be more frequent among people who place themselves towards the left part of the political spectrum, who believe that they can make a difference¹¹ (i.e. are less fatalist) and are more egalitarians.

A separate and specific group of variables is that of social capital of the respondents. The inclusion of them into the analysis seemed taken for granted, based on the interdependence between the bonding and bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000) as well as on the basis of the virtuous cycle of social capital (Putnam 1993; Pichler and Wallace, 2007). The implicit idea of both approaches is that the development of any form of social capital can help the formation of an other form of social capital (e.g. trust help participation, participation helps the frequency of socialization, etc.). I use the following independent variables as measures of social capital: trust in governmental institutions (factor score), interpersonal trust (dichotomous variable, 1=we can trust the majority of the people, 0=it is better to be careful), protest potential as a measure of the mobilization of the social capital (factor score), frequency of socialization (with friends, colleagues, respectively in religious groups, clubs and associations)¹².

As far as the dependent variables are specific environmental behaviors, I incorporated among the independent variables also those variables through which the EVS measures citizens' environmental attitudes: the disposition towards financial contributions for pollution prevention, respectively the preference for governmental action without financial burdens on the individual level¹³. I assumed that individuals who are dedicated to environmental problems

¹⁰ Response variants to these items: 1. *I find that both freedom and equality are important. But if I were to choose one or the other, I would consider personal freedom more important, that is, everyone can live in freedom and develop without hindrance*; 2. *Certainly both freedom and equality are important. But if I were to choose one or the other, I would consider equality more important, that is, that nobody is underprivileged and that social class differences are not so strong.* (Preference for freedom got the score of 0, while preference for equality the score of 1).

¹¹ *Some people feel they have completely free choice and control over their lives, and other people feel that what they do has no real effect on what happens to them. How much freedom of choice and control do you have over the way your life turns out* (1=none at all, 10=a great deal).

¹² Response variants were re-coded as follows: never=1; sometimes a year =2; once or twice a month=3; every week=4.

¹³ Items are the followings: 1. *I would give part of my income if I were certain that the money would be used to prevent environmental pollution*; 2. *I would agree to an increase in taxes if the extra money is used to prevent environmental pollution*; 3. *The government has to reduce environmental pollution but it should not cost me any money.*

are more willing to financially contribute, so in the case of the first two items reverse-coded the response variants, a higher agreement indicating higher willingness for sacrifice. In the case of the last item the situation is different, here the greater is the agreement the greater is the willingness towards the exteriorization of the costs of pollution prevention, meaning that individuals would like to have a clean environment but do not want to financially contribute for the achievement of this goal. Following this rationale, response variants were again reverse coded, from 4 = strongly agree, to 1= strongly disagree). As a consequence in the analysis two variables will be used, one measuring the positive disposition towards pollution prevention calculated as a factor score on the basis of the first two items, respectively an other, measuring the negative disposition towards pollution prevention in terms of preference for exclusive government-level actions.

Analyses

In 2005 there are 9 passive members in environmental NGOs in Romania, while 3 persons declared active membership. Among the passive members, five are men, four women, seven have Romanian nationality, while two are Hungarians, three of them are from villages, three from middle sized towns and three from cities. Among the three volunteers, two are Romanians, and one person is Hungarian, every three persons are men, two of them from villages and one from a town. In 1999, there are twelve passive members, all are of Romanian nationality from urban settings and only one of them is a woman. The seven volunteers are Romanian men from urban settings. The rest of the descriptive statistics is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Passive and active participants of ENGOS in Romania in 2005 (EVS/POB 2005) and 1999 (EVS 1999). Descriptive statistics

Key-variables	Year/ type of membership	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Age	2005 – passive	9	25.00	64.00	45.11	15.120
	2005 – active	3	30.00	55.00	38.33	14.434
	1999 – passive	12	21.00	71.00	42.54	16.334
	1999 – active	7	43.00	71.00	55.86	11.72
Education	2005 – passive	9	3.00	14.00	9.56	4.419
	2005 – active	3	9.00	11.00	9.67	1.155
	1999 – passive	12	2.00	8.00	5.92	1.975
	1999 – active	7	2.00	8.00	5.43	2.149
Income	2005 – passive	9	1.00	10.00	4.55	2.833
	2005 – active	3	1.00	4.00	2.00	1.732
	1999 – passive	10	3.00	10.00	7.40	2.67
	1999 – active	6	3.00	10.00	7.50	3.016
Postmaterialism	2005 – passive	9	0.00	2.00	0.44	0.726
	2005 – active	3	0.00	1.00	0.67	0.577
	1999 – passive	11	0.00	2.00	0.91	0.539
	1999 – active	7	0.00	1.00	0.86	0.378
Left vs. right	2005 – passive	9	3.00	8.00	6.00	1.789
	2005 – active	2	6.00	9.00	7.50	2.121

	1999 – passive	7	1.00	9.00	5.14	3.078
	1999 – active	4	1.00	9.00	5.75	3.403
Equality vs. freedom	2005 – passive	9	0.00	1.00	0.22	0.441
	2005 – active	3	0.00	1.00	0.67	0.577
	1999 – passive	12	0.00	1.00	0.42	0.515
	1999 – active	7	0.00	1.00	0.28	0.488
Autonomy vs. fatalism	2005 – passive	9	6.00	10.00	7.78	1.148
	2005 – active	3	7.00	8.00	7.33	0.577
	1999 – passive	12	1.00	10.00	7.59	3.370
	1999 – active	7	3.00	10.00	7.43	3.258
Positive disposition of pollution prevention	2005 – passive	8	-0.71	1.36	0.33	0.731
	2005 – active	2	0.85	1.36	1.11	0.361
	1999 – passive	10	-1.53	1.59	-0.07	1.001
	1999 – active	5	-1.53	0.55	-0.28	0.871
Negative disposition of pollution prevention	2005 – passive	8	1.00	4.00	2.75	1.030
	2005 – active	2	4.00	4.00	4.00	0.000
	1999 – passive	11	2.00	4.00	3.36	0.809
	1999 – active	5	2.00	4.00	3.28	0.951
Protest potential	2005 – passive	8	-0.23	2.61	0.46	0.951
	2005 – active	2	-0.23	-0.23	0.23	0.000
	1999 – passive	12	-0.83	2.10	0.25	1.090
	1999 – active	7	-0.83	2.10	0.01	1.095
Institutional trust	2005 – passive	9	0.94	3.22	0.47	1.297
	2005 – active	3	-0.51	3.23	0.75	2.143
	1999 – passive	11	-1.13	2.19	-0.94	0.951
	1999 – active	6	-1.13	2.19	0.08	1.235
Interpersonal trust	2005 – passive	8	0.00	1.00	0.11	0.333
	2005 – active	3	0.00	1.00	0.33	0.577
	1999 – passive	12	0.00	1.00	0.83	0.288
	1999 – active	7	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.000

Description of variables: *age* – continuous; *education* – ordinal; *income* – deciles; *postmaterialism* – classical Inglehartian item (0=materialism, 1=mixed, 2=postmaterialism); *left vs. right* – self-positioning on the continuous left-right scale (1= left, 10= right); *equality vs. freedom* – preference for one of them, dummy: 1=equality, 0=freedom; *autonomy vs. fatalism* – self-positioning on the scale (1=fatalism, 10=autonomy); *positive disposition of pollution prevention* – factor score; *negative disposition of pollution prevention* – scale; *protest potential* – factor score; *institutional trust* – factor score; *interpersonal trust* – factor score.

Source of data: EVS/POB 2005, EVS 1999

Description of the variables indicate that participants have very similar profiles in both years: are middle aged, with relatively higher levels of education, with average incomes. Have materialist towards mixed value orientations and position themselves at the center of the left-right scale in 1999, respectively somewhat towards the right in 2005; re not clearly egalitarians and believe they can make a difference; in both years, they have a relatively low protest potential and modest trust in institutions and people. In both years, participants show negative dispositions towards pollution prevention, that is they favor the exclusive role of the government, without individual level costs. Follows, that the profile of the Romanian participants is atypical, at least compared to the findings from the international literature: are not components of the new class, are not postmaterialist and due to their low levels of institutional and interpersonal trust probably they did not became participants through the virtuous cycle of social capital. The sole variables which are in accordance with previous data is the higher trust in the fact that individuals have the potential to influence their life (autonomy) –

both being previously mentioned as favoring factors of participations (e.g, van Oorschot, 2006). The comparison between the mean-scores of some key-variables (postmaterialism, trust, environmental dispositions, protest potential) of ENGO-participation shows no statistical significant difference in the case of members and non-members. As a consequence, Romanian participants are not only a few but alongside the examined variables they can not be distinguished from the non-participants, alongside the examined variables (Table 2 and 3).

Table 2. The mean-scores of some key-variables between the members and non-members of ENGOs in Romania (EVS/POB 2005)

Variables	Members	Non-members	t	Significance
Postmaterialism	0.50	0.55	-0.326	p>0.1
Positive disposition of pollution prevention	0.04	-0.01	1.542	p>0.1
Negative disposition of pollution prevention	3.09	3.35	-1.055	p>0.1
Interpersonal trust	0.17	0.20	-0.311	p>0.1
Institutional trust	-0.03	0.01	-0.131	p>0.1
Protest potential	0.27	-0.01	-1.084	p>0.1

Note: Due to insignificant differences between passive and active members, they form a single category.
Source of data: EVS/POB2005

Table 3. The mean-scores of some key-variables between the members and non-members of ENGOs in Romania (EVS 1999)

Variables	Members	Non-members	t	Significance
Postmaterialism	0.91	0.80	0.516	p>0.1
Positive disposition of pollution prevention	-0.07	0.29	1.114	p>0.1
Negative disposition of pollution prevention	3.36	3.02	1.114	p>0.1
Interpersonal trust	0.08	0.11	-0.295	p>0.1
Institutional trust	-0.09	0.04	-0.520	p>0.1
Protest potential	0.25	0.33	-0.289	p>0.1

Note: Due to insignificant differences between passive and active members, they form a single category.
Source of data: EVS 1999

Tabel 4. Passive participation in ENGOs in Europe – logistic regression (EVS 1999)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	b	Exp (B)	b	Exp (B)	b	Exp (B)	b	Exp (B)	b	Exp (B)
Age	0.154***	1.166								
Gender (male)	-0.091	0.913								
Education	0.086***	1.090							0.234*	1.264
Income	0.144***	1.155								
Religion	0.295***	0.744								
Type of residence	0.045***	1.046								
Value orientation: mixed postmaterialist	0.871***	2.389								
	1.294***	3.646								
Left vs. right			-0.033	0.968						
Equality vs. freedom			0.100	1.105						
Autonomy vs. fatalism			0.010	1.010						
Interpersonal trust					0.591***	1.805				
Institutional trust					0.049	1.050			0.339*	1.481
Frequency of socialization: friends					0.020	1.020				
colleagues					0.025	1.026			0.286*	1.331
religious organizations					-0.058	0.094				
clubs, associations					0.295***	1.343				
Protest potential					-0.520	0.595				
Positive disposition of pollution prevention							0.503***	1.653	0.523*	1.686
Negative disposition of pollution prevention							-0.537	0.585	0.367*	1.443
Constant	-5.272***	0.005	-2.197***	0.111	-3.803***	0.022	-1,519***	0.216	-5.683***	0.004
χ^2	691.123***		0.832		574.985***		973.703***		23.562***	
Nagelkerke R ²	0.068		0.002		0.084		0.079		0.093	

***p<0,001; *p<0,05

Description of variables: *age*– continuous; *gender* – dummy (0=female, 1=male); *education* – ordinal; *income* –deciles; *religion* – protestant=reference; *type of locality*– ordinal (village through city); *postmaterialism* – nominal; *left vs. right* – self-positioning on the left-right scale; *equality vs. freedom* – dummy (1=equality, 0=freedom); *autonomy vs. fatalism* – self-positioning on the fatalism-autonomy scale; *interpersonal trust* – dummy (0=you can not trust people; 1=you can trust the majority of them); institutional trust – factor score; frequency of socialization – ordinal (never=1, few times a year=2; once or twice a month=2; every week =4); *protest potential* – factor score; *positive disposition of pollution prevention* – factor score; *negative disposition of pollution prevention* – ordinal.

Source of data: EVS 1999

Tabel 5. Active participation in ENGOs in Europe – logistic regression (EVS 1999)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	b	Exp (B)	b	Exp (B)	b	Exp (B)	b	Exp (B)	b	Exp (B)
Age	-0.059	0.942								
Gender (male)	0.181*	1.199							-0.595*	0.551
Education	0.162***	1.176							0.260*	1.294
Income	0.077***	1.080							-0.125*	0.883
Religion	0.170+	1.185								
Type of residence	-0.020	0.980								
Value orientation: mixed	0.515***	1.674								
postmaterialist	0.761***	2.140								
Left vs. right			-0.080	0.923						
Equality vs. freedom			-0.096	0.909						
Autonomy vs. fatalism			0.052	1.053						
Interpersonal trust					0.169+	1.184				
Institutional trust					-0.066	0.936				
Frequency of socialization: friends					0.022	1.022				
colleagues					0.207***	1.230				
religious organizations					0.049	1.050				
clubs, associations					0.355***	1.426			0.242+	1.274
Protest potential					-0.359	0.699				
Positive disposition of pollution prevention							0.587***	1.799	0.657**	1.928
Negative disposition of pollution prevention							-0.219***	0.803	0.525**	1.685
Constant	-5.466	0.004	-2.199	0.111	-5.255	0.005	-3.270	0.038	-5.324	0.005
χ^2	176.390***		3.025		200.772***		251.369***		28.749***	
Nagelkerke R ²	0.034		0.006		0.056		0.038		0.120	

***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.05; +p<0.1

Description of variables – see Table 4

In the above tables through logistic regression the profiles of passive and active members was investigated based on the EVS 1999 sample. In a first step (Model 1), the role of postmaterialism was analyzed while controlling the social and demographical variables. In the second step (Model 2) the singular effect of political orientation was analyzed, after which that of social capital variables (Model 3), respectively environmental attitudes' (Model 4). In the last step all independent variables were introduced and then eliminated through Backward Wald. The program eliminated in 15 (passive membership), respectively 14 (volunteering) steps those variables which had no significant effect, Model 5 thus presenting only the results from these last steps (Table 4 and 5).

The last models of the two regression analysis explain similar percents of the variance: 12% in the case of passive participation and 9,3% in the case of volunteering. Another common aspect is that variables from the second model, that is political and axiological orientations, do not have significant effects on the dependent variables. Similar results were found by Gillham (2008) and Torgler et al (2008) as well, which means that political ideology is not a definite predictor of ENGO-participation. The first model of the analysis in both of the cases signals that postmaterialist value-orientation has the most pronounced effect, while socio-demographic variables have different effects on the dependent variables. For instance, in the case of the age variable seems that as a person becomes older the probability of passive participation raises, while the probability of volunteering lowers. An alternative analysis which is not presented here and where age was introduced as a categorical variable shown also that the highest odds ratios of participation occur in the case of the two oldest age groups, that is 55-65 and older than 65, results corresponding to those presented previously by Torgler et al (2008) on the basis of the same dataset. However, the last two models, in which age does not represent anymore a significant predictor variable, indicate, in accordance with Gillham (2008), that ENGO-participation constitutes a trans-generational behavior, which is not motivated by the age of the respondent, but by his/hers enlightenment in terms of consciousness about ecological problems. Thus, the perspective of the new class (Dunlap & Mertig, 2001) appears as a pertinent explanation: participation is dependent on education and not necessary on higher incomes.

The third model investigated the role of some variables associated with social capital. Based on their effect is relevant the role exercised by the virtuous cycle of social capital, whether formal or informal. ENGO-participants are people with higher levels of interpersonal trust who participate more frequently in other associations as well, albeit do not have high protest potential. This last aspect can be explained through the positive effect of the associations regarding the political representations of the issues around which they are formed,

participants showing lower motivations concerning individual mobilization in terms of protest (cf. Fung, 2003). It is however interesting that in the last model, frequency of socialization with colleagues and institutional trust are the predictors with significant effects – which means that ENGO-participation has certainly a double source, that is formal and informal social capital.

The two variables of environmental attitudes, namely the positive and negative disposition towards pollution prevention show a somewhat expectable effect: those who are active participants favor the positive disposition, however in the last model both preferences have significant effects on the dependent variable. A possible explanation is that after all ENGO-participation constitutes a way in which citizens may overtake some less expensive duties of environmental protection, others than financial sacrifice, so that financial type environmental free-riderism is reconcilable with ecological activism. Taking the problem closer to the Romanian case, evidence suggest that the source of civic ecological participation should not be looked for only among specific environmental attitudes, but also among social capital variables or, differently put, we should not be surprised if in the future, in spite of a rising eco-consciousness, Romanian citizens to remain equally non-participative, a possible reason in this case being their eroded formal social capital in terms of institutional trust.

Conclusions

Findings indicate that ENGO-participation constitutes a very unpopular behavior among the Romanian public but this type of pro-environmental behavior is quite un-frequent within the whole European space, except some countries from the North-Western part of the continent. Romanians' ENGO-inactivism should be understood at the crossroad of their eroded social capital and slow resonance of ecological problems in the context of economical insecurity of the transition period, respectively the incapacity of ENGOs to efficiently cooperate in order to create more accessible arenas for participation.

European level analysis suggest that both classical (education, income, postmaterialism, social capital) and specific variables (environmental attitudes) have their determining role. Should be mentioned that once socio-demographical and axiological variables are controlled both the positive attitude towards financial sacrifice for pollution prevention and both environmental free-riderism have positive influence on the participation. A possible explanation might be the fact that the source of these specific behavior are not only specific environmental attitude variables but also other crucial factors, like social capital, after all, ENGO-activism represents a specific type of civic activism.

It is difficult to show a future tendency regarding ENGO-participation in Romania. The extrapolation of the above results suggest however that this behavior has two particular sources: ecological enlightenment (the role of education and postmaterialism) and vigorous social capital. As a consequence, makes sense to assume that higher rates of participation are expectable only at the moment when citizens show higher eco-consciousness and higher levels of trust, especially in institutions and organizations. Of course, this evolution comes somewhat spontaneously in connection to further social change, however aspects are appealing towards the NGOs, both in terms of information spreading about ecological issues and both in terms of their involvement in creating open and attractive arenas for participation.

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