

The Changing Status of Protest Participation

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Abstract

One of the main evolutions entailed by the fall of the communist regimes in Central and South-Eastern Europe is the raise of a functional civil society aimed at influencing and holding the new political leadership accountable. The focus of this paper is on the citizen participation as a mean of interaction with the political system, and especially on the changing boundary between conventional and unconventional participation and on providing arguments in favour of separating the protest participation from the classical unconventional typology. I use two theoretical approaches, one comparative analysis of the various definitions and typologies of citizen participation and a second following the social changes theories that influenced the criteria of distinguishing between the participation forms: the social and cognitive mobilization processes, the postmodernization and postmaterialism theories and the mobilization strategies of social actors. My analysis is exploring the main characteristics of citizen participation in Romania as reflected in the types of associations and organizations the citizens adhere to, the activities they chose to develop within these social groups, the effective implication of the citizens in solving various problems and the perceived sense of efficacy attached to several ways of influencing the political system. The data source is the "Civil Society Development on the Black Sea: Social Involvement in the Republic of Moldova and Romania" project developed as part of the Black and Caspian Sea Collaborative Research Program. The main findings of my research support the separation of protest participation forms from the unconventional ways of participation and highlight the citizen participation changes drawn by the latest social change processes.

Key words: citizen participation, conventional participation, unconventional participation, protest politics

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Introduction

The main evolutions entailed by the fall of the communist regimes in Central and South-Eastern Europe are not only the economic and political transition processes, but also the raise of a functional civil society aimed at influencing and holding the new political leadership accountable. The political regimes have opened themselves to the influence of the citizens by recognising and guaranteeing their civil and political rights. To what extent are those rights used and/or abused by the citizens and what kind of actions do they perform in order to better interact with the political system are the research questions that my paper emerged from. The *specific focus* is on the **changing boundary between conventional and unconventional participation** and on **providing arguments** in favour of separating the protest participation from the classical unconventional typology. The unconventional forms of participation have recently evolved from public meetings and strikes towards extreme forms of participation such as terrorism and guerrilla warfare. These evolutions along with legal framework changes and social processes have made the revision of citizen participation typologies necessary.

The *first theoretical approach* I am using is a comparative analysis of the various definitions and typologies of citizen participation as they come forth in the works of Campbell et al. (1980), Verba and Nie (1972), Topf (1995), Conway (1991), Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) and Dalton (1998). The *second theoretical approach* follows the social change theories upon which the criteria of distinguishing between the participation forms are based: the social and cognitive mobilization processes, the postmodernization and postmaterialism theories and the mobilization strategies of social actors reflected in the works of Dalton, Flanagan and Beck (1984), Inglehart (1990), Dalton (1998) and Rosenstone and Hansen (1993). My *analysis* is exploring the main characteristics of citizen participation in Romania as reflected in the types of associations and organizations the citizens adhere to, the activities they chose to develop within these social groups, the effective implication of

the citizens in solving various problems and the perceived sense of efficacy attached to several ways of influencing the political system.⁶²

Citizen Participation and the Civil Society

The essence of the Athens government was the belief that power belongs to the people and each citizen has the duty to exercise this power by getting involved in the public life. The decision of becoming socially and politically active is most of the times a volunteer decision and is connected with the individual's right to choose.

The public sphere that the citizens are activating in is the civil society, defined as "the arena where self-organized groups, movements and individuals, relatively autonomous from the state attempt to create associations and organizations in order to promote their interests." (Linz and Stepan 1996: 7) The right of the people to participate appears as a necessity in the defined context of the civil society, but its practical reflection is the result of a three steps process identified by de Tocqueville (1969:190). The first step is the recognition by the society and its leaders of the citizens' right to participate. The second step is the legal granting of the right to associate and freely express the various interests and the will of the people. The final step is the entrance of the associations into the political sphere, but the accomplishment of this stage is conditioned by the individuals' will of participating and by their sense of efficacy.

The latest evolutions in Central and South-Eastern Europe are accompanied by the extended belief that the common people are more relevant from the political point of view. The new global political culture (?) was to be a participatory one, as Almond and Verba (1996: 34) were calling it. The important feature of this new political culture was not only the citizen implication in politics, but also their opinions and beliefs regarding what is to be done to solve problems of the regime change and transition processes. Keeping the traditional obedient relationship between the state and its

⁶² The *data source* is the "Civil Society Development on the Black Sea: Social Involvement in the Republic of Moldova and Romania" project developed as part of the Black and Caspian Sea Collaborative Research Program.

citizens would not produce real citizens and would not help the newly emerged democracies to become functional.

“...social democracy consists of making the workers in factories, the students in schools and universities, the members of interest associations, the supporters of political parties, the clients of professionals, the patients in hospitals, the users of parks, the children of families, etc., ad infinitum, into citizens – actors with equal rights and obligations to decide what actions these institutions should take..” (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986: 12)

Definitions of Citizen Participation

Any attempt of rigorously defining what exactly is citizen participation and what particular actions should be considered in each category is a subjective one, limited both by the knowledge and information access of each author and by his/her beliefs. This section discusses various definitions of citizen participation elaborated to be used for specific scientific goals from a comparative perspective. The first dilemma that needs to be clarified is whether we should use the term “**political participation**” or “**citizen participation**”. The present paper is exploring a range of forms of participation that are more or less explicitly connected with politics and have different goals that are not only political, but also social, cultural, national or issue oriented. The connection with the state authorities or the political system is not sufficient to characterise the citizens’ implication as being a political one, so in my paper I will further use the term “*citizen participation*” to address any form of citizen implication in the public life.

The first analysed definition is the opening phrase of Dalton’s “Citizen Politics in Western Democracies”:

“This is a book about people – as citizens, voters, protesters, campaign workers, community activists, party members and political spectators. They are the driving force of the political process. [...] The success of democracy is largely measured by the publics’ participation in the process and the responsiveness of the system to the popular demands.” (Dalton 1998: 1)

Even if it is not meant to be a definition, there can be identified here several forms of citizen participation, some of them with political connotations (voting, protesting, campaign activity and party activism), some of them not explicitly connected with politics (community activity). I have to emphasize the use of “publics’ participation” without attaching to it the attribute “political”. The same generalized view is encompassed in Sartori’s definition of citizen implication:

*“Properly and meaningfully understood, participation is **taking part in person**, and **self-activated**, willed taking part. That is, participation is not a mere ‘being part of’ (a mere being involved in some occurrence) and even less an involuntary ‘made-to-be part of’. Participation is **self-motion**.”* (Sartori 1999:120)

Sartori labels as citizen participation the complete implication of someone in the public life that cannot be limited to the physical presence of the individual. Being part of the owner association because you are the owner of your apartment does not make you an active and participative citizen. There are encompassed in Sartori’s definition the psychological and motivational components that can be identified in Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995: 3, 39): *“A citizen must want to be active. Participation is a voluntary activity and, thus, involves choice. The focus is on activity, on the concern with doing politics rather than with being attentive to politics.”* A more explicit definition of participation is the one that deals with the political implications of citizen activism:

“Political participation provides the mechanism by which citizens can communicate information about their interests, preferences and needs and generate pressure to respond”; “political participation is the activity that is intended to or has the consequence of affecting, either directly or indirectly, the government actions”. (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995: 1, 9)

The above-cited definitions emphasize two dimensions of citizen participation that make it more political than the simple implication. The first dimension is the communication between citizens and the political system and/or the governmental authorities; the second one is the expected result of the participatory act, the response of the public authorities reflected in their decisions. Another definition that underlines the political

participation finality and the information exchange between citizens and the political system is given by Topf (1995a: 29):

“At the core of the notion of pluralist democracy was the idea that through political participation, especially in elections, the individuals and groups who comprise a modern society must be able to express their choices for differing public policies, and thereby their differing visions of the good society.”

The expected answer of the political system and the finalization component of the participatory act can also be found in the definition of Verba and Nie (1972: 2), accepted in the same form in Bădescu (2001: 223-4): *“Political participation refers to those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take.”* An extended definition of citizen participation was given by Margaret Conway (1991: 3-4):

“The term political participation is being used here to mean those activities of citizens that attempt to influence the structure of government, the selection of government authorities, or the policies of government. These activities may be supportive of the existing policies, authorities, or structure, or they may seek to change any or all of these. This definition emphasizes active involvement that is instrumental or goal oriented. Political participation also includes passive kinds of involvement, such as attending ceremonial or supportive activities, or paying attention to what is happening in the government or politics.”

This definition brings forth a newly comprehension of the term political participation reflected in the intended message of the participatory act: support, challenge or change. The last part of this definition contradicts the previous definitions by including among the participatory forms the passive assistance and/or inforamatory actions of the public. The synthesized definition of citizen participation as I will further on referred to in this paper is the following one: ***citizen participation is the volunteer unpaid activity, aimed at directly or indirectly influencing the selection of representatives (both from the legal point of view - at the local, regional and/or national level and informal representation forms) and the decisions they take, at generating pressure in order to obtain a preferred outcome, and at formulating and promoting the activities, interests and decisions of the***

individual and/or the group the individuals adhere to (regardless of the adherence criteria).

When I talk about “influencing the system” I mean influencing the system both before and after adopting and implementing a certain policy. The “adherence criteria” refer to ethnic, religious, social criteria or common passion sharing and also to any kind of sharing that brings an individual close to a particular social group. The “reaction of the system” refers to both acceptance of the advanced proposals from the public and rejection of those proposals. The passive forms of participation such as paying attention to the evolutions of the political life and being informed will not be considered as forms of participation, but rather as civic attitudes that may influence the citizens’ decision of becoming politically active.

Types of Citizen Participation

The criteria upon which the following typology is based upon can be drawn from the above stated definition and they are the implication type (volunteer or compulsory) and the compliance with the legal and institutional frame of a given state (conventional and unconventional). The only compulsory form of participation in a democratic state may be compulsory voting. This kind of voting system is implemented in those states that consider that citizens have the obligation of using the right of electing their representatives, but it exists in a limited number of states and in many cases it is weakly enforced.⁶³

The first typology analyzed is the one used by Verba and Nie (1972: 3). It is necessary to mention that their concern lies with the forms of implication accepted by the political system recognized as legal and legitimate. The authors identify only four main ways of participating: voting, campaign activity, communal activity and contacting representatives. Campaign activity refers to working for a candidate or a political party, attending

⁶³ For a brief inventory of the states that practice compulsory voting and the degree of implementation see Gratchew, Maria. 2001. *Compulsory Voting – Voter Turnout from 1945 to date: A Global Report on Political Participation*.
http://www.idea.int/voterturnout/Compulsory_Voting.htm.

electoral meetings, money contributions and the attempt of influencing the others how to vote. The communal activity is a type of activity that involves the individual or group work for solving community problems.

The study of Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) has more generous boundaries and has an extended classification of participation forms. The first distinction is between the volunteer and the compulsory participation ways and the investigated form is the volunteer one. The authors try to distinguish between the political and non-political implication, but any volunteer non-political activity interferes at a certain point of its development with the political sphere and the distinction becomes diffuse, and the acquired skills and abilities are transferred in the political actions undertaken by citizens. (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995: 40)

The distinction between various forms of participation is based upon five criteria: the necessary resources (time, money, skills and combination between the three), the effects/results of the participatory act, the necessary work to accomplish the proposed goal, the possibility of multiplication of the participatory act and the necessary degree of cooperation with the others. (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995: 45-7) The last distinction of the three authors regards the conventional and unconventional forms of participation, accepting the conventional forms identified by Verba and Nie (1972) and emphasizing the evolution in time and in space of the unconventional ways of participation. The generic categories previously discussed are accepted and used by different scholars that focused on citizen participation. What brings new the typology used by Topf (1995b: 54) are the inner distinctions that he emphasizes within the more general categories. Thus, voting and contacting the authorities are separated according to the administrative level of the representatives that are to be elected (general voting/contacting, local voting/contacting, European voting/contacting), while Conway (1991: 4) considers seeking elective office as a form of electoral participation. Among the campaign activity Topf includes the clerical work and also the canvasses and rally attendance. The group activity varies with the organization criteria: formal group, informal group and issue group.

Russel J. Dalton elaborated the most comprehensive typology based upon five modes of participation: voting, campaign activity, communal activity,

contacting officials on personal matters and protest. Campaign activity encompasses belonging to a club or political organization, working for a candidate or a party, attending meetings, giving money, wear a button or have a bumper sticker and persuading others how to vote. (Dalton 1998: 42) Communal activity refers to working with group to solve community problems and contacting officials. The unconventional ways of participation identified by Dalton (1998: 64) are: signing petitions, lawful demonstrations, boycotts, unofficial strikes, rent strikes, unlawful demonstrations, occupations, damage, violence, sabotage, guerrilla warfare, hijacking, assassination, bombing, revolutions, kidnapping, war.

The linking feature of all the typologies here presented is the distinction between conventional and unconventional participation, even if the categories that each author subscribes to the main types may vary considerably. The differences within the conventional forms of citizen participation are not much controversial, while the unconventional participation forms are subject to debates. Shouldn't it be a boundary inside the unconventional category that makes a difference between a lawful strike and taking hostages? Where does protest end and where does unconventionality begin? Why is there a notable time and space evolution within the unconventional ways of participation, while the conventional ones are still the same?

The Changing Status of Protest Participation

The differences in defining the unconventional politics originate in a complex social change that has been taking place gradually along with the modernization and extended development. The previously known forms of communal organization are replaced by the voluntary activity in associations and organizations formed on various criteria. The volunteer forms of association are thus becoming more flexible and spontaneous in organization and less institutionalized. (Dalton 1998: 7) Publics' loyalties are no longer disputed only between political parties and labor unions as traditional forms of association, but between increasingly complex and competing social networks. Deep changes can be also seen in the relationship between the state and its citizens as it is perceived by the political system among which goals is now a greater public participation in

both economic and political decision making. The new citizen participation style is challenging and elite directed. A short overview of how are defined the conventional and unconventional forms of participation will highlight the differentiated evolution of the two.

The conventional forms of participation are defined as being those methods *“normally associated with the democratic politics”* (Dalton 1998: 35) or *“those activities that are accepted as appropriate by the dominant political culture”* (Conway 1991: 4). The unconventional forms of participation are *“other forms of political participation that are not accepted as appropriate by the dominant political culture, even though they may be legal”*; *“unconventional political behaviour can be viewed as a continuum, ranging from participating in peaceful protest marches to engaging in terrorist violence or civil war”* Conway (1991: 5).

Protest politics has been placed inside the unconventional type of participation because of its *“unconventional”* character. There are several arguments that pledge for detaching protest politics of unconventional politics that stream from complex social change processes: the legal argument, the change of motivation and social categories of protestors and the change of the expected results of the protest participation.

The first argument for separating the protest politics from the unconventional political participation is the evolution of the legislation in the democratic states. The democratic regimes provide within their legal framework various rights for their citizens. Citizens have the legal right to petition, to strike, to protest, and to march within certain limits, of course, but at the time and place they choose to and according to laws promoted, accepted and adopted by the social order of the society they live in. Since it is not illegal anymore to petition, to strike, to march, and to protest these participation forms should now stand in line with the ways *“normally associated with the democratic politics”* (Dalton 1998: 35) We cannot propose them to be considered conventional ways of participation until they do not reach the status that Conway called participation forms *“accepted as appropriate by the dominant political culture”* (Conway 1991: 4) but we cannot place them anymore next to the extreme ways of unconventional participation completely illegitimate.

The second argument that pleads for the separation of protest politics from the unconventional ways is the change of the motivation and the social categories that appeal to protest ways of participation. Bădescu (2001: 229) highlights the increasing frequency of the protest participation ways in consolidated democracies. As far as the motivation of such an implication is concerned, a time evolution can be followed, ranging from the protests of the disadvantaged, frustrated and exploited categories of public to the protests of the middle class and of the politically sophisticated citizens. (Dalton 1998: 60) The nowadays protestors are not anymore those that were denied the access to conventional politics, but those sophisticated and active citizens that seek rapid results for specific problems. The emergence of such groups as environmentalists or hobby-based developed an infrastructure for continuous protest, opening the way to a permanent change within the style of citizen participation. (Dalton 1998: 63).

The third supporting argument for the proposed thesis is the change of the status of protest participation itself, materialized in the change of the expected results of such ways of implication. The elite-challenging ways of participation are not anymore directed towards overthrowing of the given political regime and/or of the installed political order of a given society. The protesters are now beneficiaries of these characteristics of the contemporary state and protest participation *"has become less unconventional; it is a continuation of conventional political participation by others means."* (Dalton 1998: 63) The trend is towards a fusion of the conventional and unconventional ways of participation thus extending the repertory of the citizen political action that is not a menace to the established political regime. The conclusions are clear: *"Revolutionary fever has been replaced by reformism."* (Dalton 1998: 61); *"It is now safe to conclude that legal forms of direct action such as boycotts, citizen initiatives and demonstrations have become a standard part of the citizen repertory of political behavior in modern pluralist democracies."* (Kaase and Newton 1995: 50). These changes in the goals, ways and participants of the protest politics, along with the legal status of such ways of implication need to be considered in the light of the latest evolutions of the unconventional political participation.

Fig. 1: Volunteer Citizen Participation Typology

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--|
| Conventional | <i>Electoral</i> | Voting Campaign activity Money contributions Work for a political party/candidate Attending political rallies Political organizations membership Contacting officials |
| | <i>Non-electoral</i> | Volunteer associations Rights advocacy groups Free time spending associations Church related/religious associations Communal activity Parents associations Solving community problems groups |
| Protest | | Lawful strikes Lawful marches/protests Lawful demonstrations/public meetings Signing petitions Boycotts |
| Unconventional | <i>Common</i> | Unlawful strikes Unlawful marches/protests Unlawful demonstrations/public meetings Road blocking Buildings occupying |
| | <i>Extreme</i> | Physical violence Bombing Assassinations Guerrilla warfare Hostage taking Hijacking Terrorism |

While “protest is seen as simply another political resource for mobilizing public opinion and influencing political leaders” Dalton (1998: 61), the unconventional

actions are now terrorism, hostages taking, hijacking, bombing or guerrilla warfare. The consequences of such actions are far from what a strike, march or protest action could ever produce, even though these forms of participation are elite directed and elite challenging. Expressing directly the wishes, problems and desires, the participatory public is just requiring that the legal rights provided for the citizens by the open democratic regimes to be respected by the elected representatives of the same public we are now talking about. Following the above stated arguments, the typology of citizen participation as it will be further on considered in this paper is illustrated in (Fig. 1.)

Social Change Theories: Cognitive Mobilization

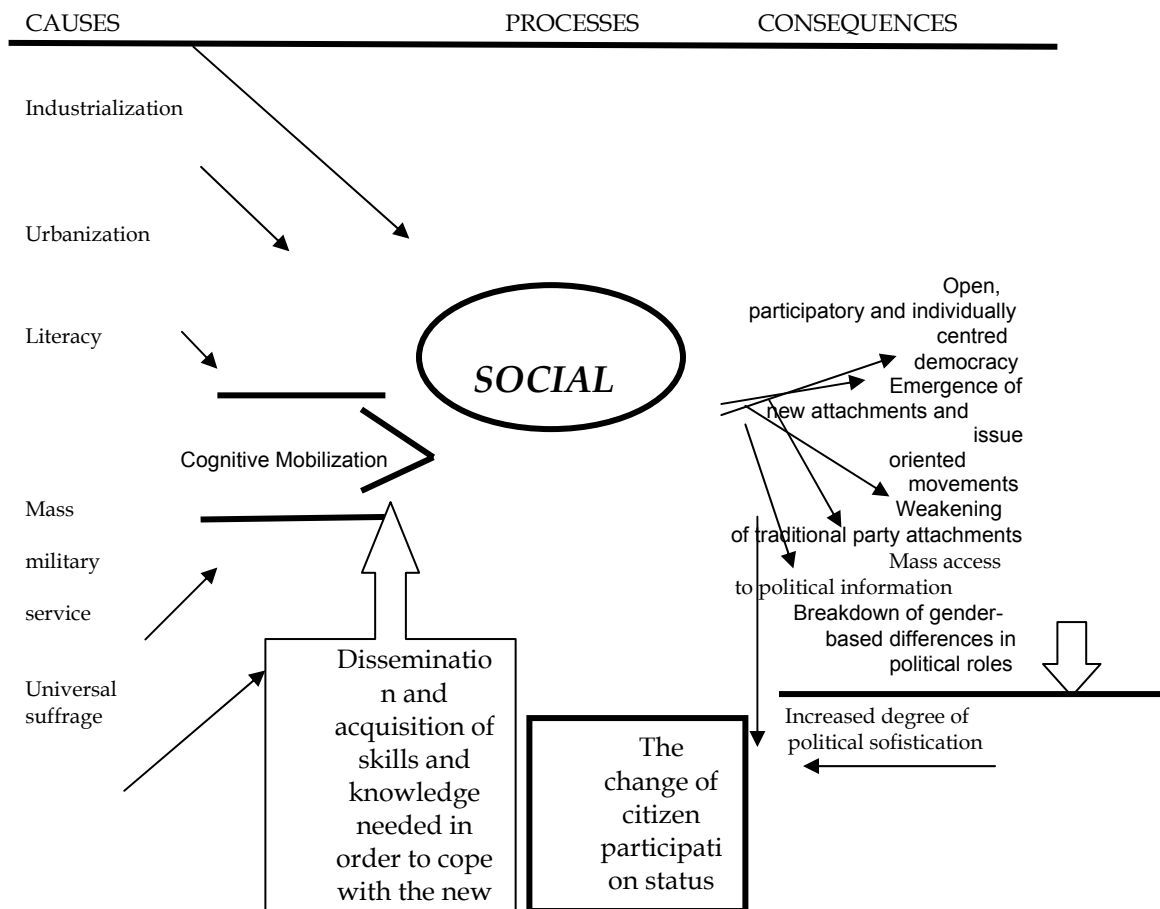
Cognitive mobilization is part of a larger change process namely the social mobilization process. Social mobilization consists of transforming the large public from isolated and alienated masses into organized and participative citizens, able to express specific interests, desires and goals and to exert pressure for receiving the response of the political system. People are *“uprooted from physical and intellectual isolation and from old traditions, occupations and places of residence.”* (Inglehart 1990: 337) These changes are the result of processes enhanced by modernization, such as urbanization, industrialization, mass military service, literacy and expanded access to information through mass media and enfranchisement. Far from being completed, the social mobilization process is now developing the stage called *cognitive mobilization*:

“Cognitive mobilization means that citizen posses the level of political skills and resources necessary to become self sufficient in politics. Instead of depending on elites and reference groups (external mobilization), citizens are now better able to deal with the complexities of politics and make their own political decision.” (Dalton 1998: 18)

The above-mentioned process, widely subscribed to what its called modernization, entailed several changes in the life styles and expectations. Industrialization was followed by changes in the context of the workplace and the residential neighborhoods, thus entailing the decline of rural areas, urbanization drawn a clear distinctive line between the workplace and the

home/family environment. The consequences of such changes were “a greater diversity of occupations and interests along with the expanded range of career opportunities and more geographic and social mobility.” (Dalton, Flanagan and Beck 1984: 6) .

Fig. 2. The Cognitive Mobilization Process



Source: Nicolescu C. 2002. *Citizen Participation in Romania – Implication of the Economic Factors*. Unpublished BA Thesis. Cluj-Napoca: Babes-Bolyai University.

Along with the extension of mass media penetration and increased access to political information, the western societies became more and more

politicized, thus redefining the citizens' relationship with the political system and the informational flow:

"When citizens are allowed to define politics in terms of their own interests, a surprising level of political sophistication appears." (Dalton 1998: 28)

"With these trends came changes in the forms of organization and interaction – communal forms of organization were replaced by voluntary associations, which, in turn, became less institutionalized and more spontaneous in organization." (Dalton, Flanagan and Beck 1984: 6)

The causes of the cognitive mobilization process, along with the changes entailed by this process and the consequences for the citizen - political system relationship and their reflection into the style of citizen participation are synthesized in (Fig. 2.)

All the changes and transformations above-mentioned are reflected in the new style of citizen participation. The cognitive mobilized public is shaping its actions according to their newly acquired goals, individual values, ideology and political skills. (Inglehart 1990: 392) The public shows increased propensity to political discussions and to engaging in a broad repertoire of elite directed political actions, namely what I earlier labeled protest participation forms. The influences of the discussed social change process are admitted to determine significant changes in citizen participation options: *"Increasing cognitive mobilization and politicization may combine to produce selective engagement in different modes of political action."* (Kaase and Newton 1995:143)

Social Change Theories: Postmodernization and Postmaterialism

Ronald Inglehart (1988, 1990, 1997) was the one who studied what he called *"the silent revolution"*: a change in western publics' value preferences from physical security and economic well-being towards non-material needs, such as self-expression and individual fulfillment. *"The term postmodern asserts that culture shapes human experience almost entirely, unlimited by any external reality."* (Inglehart 1997: 12) The change is from economic efficiency, bureaucratic authority and scientific rationality, that characterized the modern society, towards individual autonomy, diversity and self-

expression, the more human features of the postmodern societies. The mechanism of this movement from modernization to postmodernization is described as it follows:

“Within the last few decades, a major deflection in the direction of change has occurred that might be called the ‘Postmodern shift’. Its origins are rooted in the economic miracles that occurred first in Western Europe and North America, and later in East Asia and now in Southeast Asia. Coupled with the safety net of the modern welfare state, this has produced unprecedentedly high levels of economic security, giving rise to a cultural feedback that is having a major impact on both economic and political systems of advanced industrial societies. [...] Postmodernization de-emphasizes all kinds of authority, whether religious or secular, allowing much wider range for individual autonomy in the pursuit of individual subjective well-being.” (Inglehart 1999: 238)

The component of postmodernism that has major behavioral and attitudinal consequences are the Postmaterialist values. Individuals who adhered to Postmaterialist values have radically changed their way of interacting with the political system and their ways of acting in the social and/or political life of their community, all reflected in the increased protest and unconventional citizen participation. (Inglehart 1990: 310) The three supporting arguments of this thesis are presented in the (Fig. 3):

Fig. 3. Arguments supporting the increased Postmaterialist participation in protest and unconventional ways

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- 1) *Postmaterialists feel relatively secure about immediate physiological needs and their derivatives and have a greater amount of psychic energy to invest in more remote concerns. This may lead to involvement in a wide variety of activities, among which politics is one possibility.*

 - (2) *As a recently emerging minority, whose highest priorities tend to be slighted, Postmaterialists are apt to be relatively disaffected with the established social order.*

 - (3) *The disruption and property damage that may result from unconventional political action may seem less negative to Postmaterialists since they threaten things to which Postmaterialists give a lower priority than Materialists do.*

Source: Inglehart (1990: 310)

The consequences of such societal transformations can be identified in the support for the democratic regimes and the erosion of traditional authorities, accompanied by the rising citizen potential of getting involved in the public life. The new relationship between citizens and the political system is shaped by the publics, who are “less amenable to doing as they are told and more adept of telling their governments what to do.” (Inglehart 1999: 251) Postmodernization and Postmaterialism theories can be used for explaining the new style of citizen participation and the redefined relationship between citizens and the political system.

Social Change Theories: Mobilization Strategies

Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) prove that studying the mobilization strategies we can identify those individuals/groups whom participate and the exact moments of their implication. (1993: 5, 8) The novelty of approach of the two authors consists in investigating the role of the mobilization agents in selecting the groups that will be mobilized and in selecting the precise moments of their implication. Citizen participation thus becomes a strategic resource used selectively by political/social actors to reach their goals. (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993: 25)

Mobilization strategies are studied from two different perspectives: first, the types of mobilization (direct or indirect), and second, the strategic choices of mobilization agents (targeting mobilization and timing mobilization), because “political leaders do not mobilize everybody, and they do not try to mobilize all of the time.” (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993: 30)

The direct mobilization refers to those situations in which mobilization actors create the very opportunities for citizens to participate through diffusing information and facilitating the access to participatory resources, thus subsidizing the costs of the participatory act that might otherwise prevent many from getting involved. (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993: 27) The indirect mobilization refers to those situations in which mobilization actors use existing social networks of various types in order to mobilize the citizens for getting involved in a participatory act, thus selecting the specific groups which would be made aware of a particular opportunity to get involved. While the direct mobilization was a way of subsidizing the costs of participation for the citizens, the indirect mobilization is a way of reducing

the costs for the mobilization actors through their access to social networks that facilitate and expand contacts.

For the two strategic options of the mobilization agents to be successful there are several conditions that must obtain and several criteria that the agents take into consideration when making decisions. The conditions and criteria have been identified assuming that any mobilizing agent while initiating a mobilization action wants “to get the most effective number of people involved with the least amount of effort.” (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993: 30) Another implicit assumptions are that the targeted groups are ready to follow their leaders in whatever action they propose at a certain time, that the issues animating the mobilizing actions are of extensive interest and that there are no other major concerns at the chosen time that might massively distract people from the selected goal of mobilization. There has to be also a consequential effect on political outcomes in order for people to be mobilized. Figures 4 and 5 depict the various criteria, predictions and perspectives of the strategic options of the mobilization agents in their social and/or political actions.

Fig. 4. Criteria and predictions of the targeting mobilization strategies

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|--|
| Criteria | Politicians, parties and other activists are most likely to mobilize | | |
| | People they already know | People who are centrally positioned in social networks ⁶⁴ | People who are likely to respond by participating |
| Predictors | People who are employed especially in large: | | |
| | associations/ organizations/ groups | are more likely to be mobilized and/or to respond than | People who are not employed |
| | Leaders of organizations, business and local governments | | People who do not belong to any type of organization |
| | The wealthy, the educated and the partisan | | The poor, the uneducated and the uncommitted |

Source: Rosenstone and Hansen (1993: 31-3)

⁶⁴ Direct mobilization is thus turned into indirect mobilization.

The mobilizing strategies and choices of various mobilization actors influence a lot who, when and how participates in public life. A very simple example of how such influences exert is looking at political parties versus labor unions. While the former call people to vote or work for their candidates (conventional forms of participation), the later often call to public meetings, marches, protests and strikes (protest participation forms). The analysis of the existing mobilization actors and their choices and strategies may enlighten the previously shadowed motivations of citizen participation.

Fig. 5. Predictions of timing mobilization strategies

| Predictions | |
|--|---|
| People participate more in politics when | Salient issues top the agenda |
| | Other concerns do not demand their attention |
| | Important decisions are pending |
| | Outcomes hang the balance |
| | Issues come before legislatures than when they come before bureaucracies and courts |

Source: Rosenstone and Hansen (1993: 34-6)

Citizen Participation in Romania – an Overview

The aim of this overview is to find empirical evidence to support the three advanced arguments that argue for the delimitation between protest participation and unconventional participation.⁶⁵ The analysis will be conducted following the three supporting arguments previously presented, namely the legislative argument, the change of the motivation and the social categories that appeal to protest ways of participation, and the change of the expected results of such ways of implication. The available data is not extremely appropriate to provide empirical support for the last two arguments, but the proposed overlook of the state of field of citizen

⁶⁵ I am aware that Romania is not the perfect example to empirically support such a thesis because of almost inexistent ways of unconventional participation, especially the extreme ways as outlined in Table 1.

participation in Romania will show that the types of actions people often do and the types of associations they enroll in do place at the same level the conventional and protest participation of citizens. The supporting evidence for my assertion is the perceived efficacy of different participation forms.

As far as the legislative argument is concerned, a simple analysis of the Romanian Constitution from 1991 is enough to support the affirmation that several protest participation forms are no longer illegal and outside the social order accepted within a given country once they are stated in the fundamental law of the state. The Constitution of Romania is not the single Constitution providing those rights to the citizens. Such rights have become usual, natural and absolutely necessary to be stated in order to talk about a democratic regime.

The available data allowed me to take a look at the types of actions that people who got involved in any kind of activity chose to do. The figures are showed in (Fig. 6.) It can be easily observed that the main types of activities that the Romanian public got engaged in were conventional forms of participation. The higher percent of involvement was the donating money activity (20 percent) – the note should not be ignored, followed by contacting officials (10.8 percent). The implication in protest forms of participation is smaller than the one in conventional ways of participation, the higher implication is in public marches/demonstrations (5.8 percent) and signing petitions (5.6 percent). The mean implication in conventional forms of participation is of 4.81 percent, while the mean of protest implications is of 4.37 percent. If we take out from the conventional mean calculations the donated money percent (due to the provided explanation in the note below the table) the mean implication in conventional forms becomes lower than the protest one: 3.55 percent. The mean comparison shows that protest participation forms are almost the same used by the citizens as the conventional ones, even though the absolute figures at the first glance seemed different. If we look at the main types of activities that people develop within the associations and organization they get involved in we notice that the higher membership figure is the one in the labor unions. As I mentioned before this type of associations are mobilizing their members most of the time to take part in protest participation forms such as protests, marches and public meetings/demonstrations. But the immediately following type of association from the membership point of view is the political party

implication, which, as previously mentioned, mobilizes people towards conventional ways of participation.

Fig. 6. Citizen participation in Romania

| | Did you do any of the following activities during the last 12 month? | Yes | No |
|--|--|--------|--------|
| CONVENTIONAL PARTICIPATION | Contacted a politician | 3.80% | 96.20% |
| | Contacted an NGO, association/organization | 4.00% | 96.00% |
| | Contacted a local/regional/national clerk | 10.80% | 89.20% |
| | Worked in a political party | 2.10% | 97.90% |
| | Worked in a politically active organization | 1.50% | 98.50% |
| | Worked in another type of association | 4.80% | 95.50% |
| | Exposed symbols/bedges with political meaning | 2.10% | 97.90% |
| | Donated money * | 20.00% | 80.00% |
| | Fundraising activities | 2.80% | 97.20% |
| | Contacted or appeared in the media | 3.00% | 97.00% |
| | Addressed to the judiciary | 4.10% | 95.90% |
| | Participated in a political meeting | 3.60% | 96.40% |
| Used the internet for any of the above activities ** | 0.80% | 33.10% | |
| PROTEST PARTICIPATION | Signed a petition | 5.60% | 94.40% |
| | Participated at a public demonstration/march | 5.80% | 94.20% |
| | Participated in a strike | 5.20% | 94.80% |
| | Boycotted some products | 2.10% | 97.90% |
| | Bought certain products for political, ecological or ethical reasons | 3.00% | 97.00% |
| UNCERTAIN PARTICIPATION | Participated in illegal protest activities | 1.00% | 99.00% |
| | Abteined from voting as a form of protest ** | 1.70% | 32.10% |
| | Another activity | 2.60% | 97.40% |

Notes: * The question was not connected in any way with the civic participation, so a positive answer could have been given both by a person whom donated money in an electoral campaign and by a person whom was giving money to the beggar at the corner of the street.

** The difference to 100 percent was non-answers.

Some of the following types of associations may have as joining criteria not only the civic activism, but also personal necessity and individual problem solving facilities that might be acquired by attending the named associations. I am referring especially to the owners' associations⁶⁶, parents associations, farmers/agriculture associations, professional associations, pensioners associations and so on.

The perceived efficacy of the participatory acts is the measure that best supports the arguments of detaching protest implication from unconventional participation and bringing it closer to the conventional ways of activism. As Fig 8 below shows, 80.4 percent of the citizens considered the classical and the most widespread participation form – voting – as the most efficient way of influencing the political system. The immediately following figures are those of other conventional ways of implication, namely volunteer activities (55.2 percent), and work for a political party (54.3 percent). The protest ways of implication are credited with lower percentages, but the differences are not as big as those between protest and unconventional ways. The mean perceived efficacy of conventional implication is of 60.1 percent, while the mean perceived efficacy of protest ways of implication is of 42.03 percent. The illegal protest actions were considered inefficient by 60 percent of the questioned subjects. The inefficacy decreases steadily from the unconventional to protest and finally to the conventional forms of participation considered.

⁶⁶ The owners' associations have another distinctive feature worth mentioning: the people might be part of such associations not by their free will and desire to participate, but because they have a certain property.

Fig. 7. Types of associations/organizations and type of activities developed by their members in Romania⁶⁷

| | Member | Takes part in activities | Donated money | Volunteer work | Has friends in association |
|--|---------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Labour union | 71 | 48 | 24 | 25 | 51 |
| Political party | 50 | 32 | 24 | 15 | 29 |
| Owner's associations | 49 | 28 | 18 | 22 | 26 |
| Church/religious associations | 27 | 21 | 17 | 14 | 21 |
| Parents associations | 20 | 14 | 9 | 10 | 16 |
| Open space activities | 16 | 14 | 7 | 6 | 15 |
| Farmers/agriculture associations | 16 | 14 | 4 | 12 | 12 |
| Pensioners associations | 15 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 10 |
| Charrrity/social assistance associations | 14 | 14 | 8 | 10 | 10 |
| Youth clubs | 10 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Professional organizations | 10 | 10 | 1 | 6 | 10 |

Note: The entries are individuals that may be involved in various associations, that is why there are not percentages presented but absolute figures.

Fig. 8: Perceived efficacy of participatory acts in Romania

| How efficient do you think it is to... | Low efficiency | Somehow efficient | Efficient |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| ...vote in elections | 8.30% | 11.30% | 80.40% |
| ...volunteer in a NGO, association and/or organization | 25.70% | 19.10% | 55.20% |
| ...work in a political party | 24.90% | 20.80% | 54.30% |
| ...apeal to mass-media | 29.30% | 20.10% | 50.50% |
| ...boycott some products | 42.70% | 13.50% | 43.80% |
| ...personally contact politicians | 37.40% | 21.40% | 41.20% |
| ...participate in public meetings | 30.90% | 19.10% | 41.10% |
| ...participate in illegal protest actions | 60.00% | 7.90% | 32.10% |

⁶⁷ A complete version of this table is presented in Annex 2.

Conclusions

The aim of my paper was to analyze in the light of the latest evolutions in the legal framework of newly established democratic regimes and social change processes the classical typology of citizen participation in an attempt to provide arguments both theoretical and empirical in favor of separating the protest forms of participation from the unconventional ones. The main theories supporting such an attempt were the social change processes that reshaped many of the modern societies once initiated the Postmodernization shift. Theories such as Postmodernization and Postmaterialism, considered along with the social and cognitive mobilization processes and the evolution of the unconventional participation forms towards extreme forms such as guerilla warfare, assassinations and terrorism acquire increased explanatory power for the newly emerged styles of citizen-political system relationship. The theoretical and empirical evidence provided here support the proposed distinction between protest and unconventional citizen participation because of changes undertaken in the legislation of democratic states (legal provision of the right to protest, march, strike and so on), and because of the citizen approach to protest ways of acting (main types of activities and associations attended and perceived efficacy of the three ways on implication in public life). This paper is just an attempt of theoretical rethinking the typology of citizen participation, supported by a small and somehow fitted empirical evidence. The changing status of protest participation is not a settled question for social scientists, further in depth comparative research being required from now on.

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Annex 1. Types of associations/organizations and type of activities developed by their members in Romania

| | Member | Activities participant | Donated money | Volunteer work | Has friend in association |
|--|--------|------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Labour union | 71 | 48 | 24 | 25 | 51 |
| Political party | 50 | 32 | 24 | 15 | 29 |
| Owner's associations | 49 | 28 | 18 | 22 | 26 |
| Church/religious associations | 27 | 21 | 17 | 14 | 21 |
| Parents associations | 20 | 14 | 9 | 10 | 16 |
| Sports clubs/open space activities | 16 | 14 | 7 | 6 | 15 |
| Farmers/agriculture associations | 16 | 14 | 4 | 12 | 12 |
| Pensioners associations | 15 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 10 |
| Charity/social assistance associations | 14 | 14 | 8 | 10 | 10 |
| Youth clubs | 10 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Professional organizations | 10 | 10 | 1 | 6 | 10 |
| Cultural, musical, dance societies | 8 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 7 |
| Military, veterans and army related associations | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 |
| Women associations | 7 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Handicapped associations | 6 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| Hobby clubs and associations | 6 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Ecological clubs | 5 | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Animal rights protection associations | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Business associations | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Another NGOs, associations/organizations | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Human rights protection associations | 3 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 |
| Medical/dependency help | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Automobiles associations | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Selected/access restricted clubs | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Consumer organizations | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 |
| Immigrants associations | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Investments clubs | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 |
| Total* | 366 | 256 | 146 | 166 | 254 |

Note: The entries are individuals that may be involved in various associations, that is why there are not percentages presented but absolute figures.