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## Interplays Between Environmentalism And Polluting Industries

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*The seriousness of environmental processes such as climate change, biodiversity loss or resources depletion becomes obvious through studies that require advanced expertise. Due to these characteristic environmental issues remained for a long time beyond public perception, but also beyond the economic cycle. Once some of the ecological unbalances were embodied in acute events with direct health impact, environmental issues entered the political agenda at different levels. The finding of solutions for environmental problems depends also on the capacity of the society to create intervention means that allow the expression of ecological unbalances in forms that are perceivable for both population, and economic systems.*

**Keywords:** *polluting industries, environmentalism, sustainable development, stakeholder management*

Polluting industries are considered responsible for numerous ecological unbalances that significantly contribute to global environmental problems, but also to local ecological crises. For a long while, the economic dimension and the geopolitical interests were the most important considering for the substantiation of decisions in this sector. Today environmental exigencies came in to shape for oil industry too, by the intermediation of nongovernmental organizations and of governmental environmental policies.

**1. Industry relevant forms of environmental exigencies.** It is relevant to clarify the necessity to identify the factors that express environmental exigencies. This need is determined by the fact that ecological changes, respectively ecological effects, do not influence directly the decisions because ecological effects do not generate economical consequences or do not affect costs. For instance, if an enterprise impacts on environment by waste water discharge, the finding that the neighborhood area is polluted will not lead to the decision that will reduce the contamination level of waste waters, respectively that will modify the technological process toward a reduction of pollutants' amount.

In the literature this external effect that does not influence the activity of the enterprise is called externality. Another formula is that externalities occurs then the activity of an enterprise does not depend exclusively on the factors that can be controlled by it, but also on other factors that are not comprised in the sphere of its decisional activity.

The existence of environmental externalities could be explained departing from the economical theory, respectively how prices measure the social value of goods. There are many cases then the price system does not fulfill the functions assigned to it by the perfect competition theory and then private costs and advantages are different from social costs and advantages. In these situations the consumption or production decision of an economic agent influences the satisfaction or profit level of other agents and the market mechanisms fail to evaluate these influences and to gratify or punish such influences. Externalities make inappropriate the guidance of price system toward socially optimal decisions and therefore generate various forms of inefficiency in the organization of production and consumption activities [1].

The worsening of environmental externalities, respectively the increased number of persons

and enterprises that are affected, and also the increase in the seriousness of the effects pushed the environmental issues on the public agenda, triggering governmental and non-governmental organizations implication in a concerted effort of reducing environmental externalities.

The last decades witnessed both the aggravation of environmental problems and the increasing of environmental awareness. Consequently actions toward prevention and mitigation recorded a powerful diversification. Meanwhile along with the advancement of social development, common problems approach, including environmental protection, passed from the central initiative of governmental authorities, which are representative according to the democratic principle, to the initiative of civic society, which has a voluntary pattern and is based on implication and awareness.

Government performs environmental protection through formulating a specific policy, designing the tools needed for its implementation, and controlling the process of enforcement. Civic society performs environmental protection through a variety of forms, but the most common is the concerted action of nongovernmental organizations. The tools to be used are different. Thus, government could enforce new standards and rules as long as it could provide a solid enough argument that demonstrates their contribution to the common objective. Nongovernmental organizations express a common conviction of a certain part of the population and pursue the solution of the problem. In order to formulate any kind of conviction it is necessary to be aware of the existence of certain facts.

**2. Activism – a coherent social reaction to common problems.** Contemporary society is confronted with more and more numerous and more and more complex problems. Such diversity is expressed in the diversification of actions that address these problems. The whole range of actions that envisage finding solutions for common problems is defined as activism. Solutions are considered changes that will eliminate the problem or will allow the avoidance of its effect.

Activism is featured by forms of manifestation, the role to be played in order to reach the solution to the problem, the level of social involvement, the level of institutionalization, and the nature of the problems.

The forms of activism are much diversified. Among the most commons, there are open letters, campaigns, boycotts, marches, strikes, and blogs. The role to be played by an activist could be the agent of change, rebel, reformer, and citizen (box 1).

#### **Box 1** Activist roles

The *agent of change* has the role of facilitating the process of the creation of a new social order and of a political consensus through favoring of positive alternatives toward a paradigm change. In order to fulfill this role, the activist needs to obtain public support. Therefore such activists are expected to be involved in education, awareness rising and to be as objective as possible.

*Rebels* pursue the promotion of democracy and the inclusion of problems on social agenda. In fact, rebels envisage preventing or delaying a project or an event. They are highly effective, although such role could be used only as part of a wider strategy.

The *reformer* pursues official recognition of its objectives by their inclusion in governmental policies. As methods to perform this role there are used commission audiences, lobbying, trials, political campaigns, and referendums.

The *citizen* guards the social values of the democracy: non-violence, justice, freedom, and life veneration. The ones who choose this role will try to demonstrate that power yielder do not respect the social values mentioned above.

Source: [2]

Activism could be performed by an individual or by a group who share the same values or is sensitive to the same problems. Although individual activism is still practiced, it proved to be

too weak, especially in terms of legitimating. Thus, in case that an individual notices a problem that is relevant for the community, it will be difficult to demonstrate this relevance, since there is only one person who notices it. On the other hand, a wider social involvement could be tracked back to an individual in many cases.

The institutionalization could divide activism in ad-hoc associations, based on common interest in a certain situations, and in institutionalized forms of activism that pursue their objectives in a coherent manner and evolve along with the transformation of the addressed problems.

According to the nature of the problems to be addressed, activism could be divided in various categories. Activism in the field of environmental protection is also called environmentalism. Nongovernmental organizations are the most common forms to express activism in a coherent and effective manner. Although they are present for more than two centuries a proper scientific approach was performed only lately. Based on the available information, nongovernmental organizations have as characteristics the followings [3]:

- to be established formally, meaning that the organization has to prove a certain organizational and institutional capacity, expressed in regular meetings, internal rules, procedures;
- to be private, meaning that it has to be separated institutionally from the public administration. This not exclude the use of governmental funds;
- to respect the principle of profit non-distribution. The organization could obtain profit, but this will not be distributed to its members or directors. Instead it will be used in order to pursue the organizations declared objectives;
- to be autonomous, meaning that the activity of the organization will not be subordinated to any public or private institution;
- to be voluntary, in terms that the organization has to promote voluntary actions and to use volunteers;
- to be non-missionary in sense that do not practice proselytism.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are considered the representatives of the third sector in an approach that divides organizations according to their ownership in public and private organizations. Other studies nominate them as intermediate organizations, given their position among the private and public ones.

NGOs address various public problems and their field of action became very diverse. After the First World War social assistance was the main activity addressed by volunteers in a coherent manner and it was based especially on the implication of women for providing medical services and fund raising. With the evolution and increased complexity of the social life, and also the availability of volunteer labor, NGOs diversified their activities envisaging a wide range of issues, such as fundamental research, artistic activities, education, and more recently environmental protection.

**3. Strategies, activities, achievements, and evolution of ENGOs.** Environmental protection proved to be a prolific field for the development of NGOs. This could be explained by several reasons. Thus, environmental problems are beyond individual observations, and therefore they cannot be expressed without specific expertise. The NGOs could provide the institutional support for a valid monitoring and/or research for the demonstration of causal relations. Further, environmental policy tools have important drawbacks that allow major pollutants to escape legal or fiscal measures. The NGOs could shed light on such situations and speed up corporate changes. Last, but not least, important governmental and intergovernmental funds became available for different environmental priorities. Environmental NGOs (ENGOs) could provide the expertise needed for efficient and effective use of these funds. In addition, the fund raising performed by NGOs could be also very helpful especially for problems that

require continuous and substantial funding, which cannot be provided within the short inter-electoral phases.

According to [4], the strategies adopted by ENGOs could be grouped in three categories:

- governmental policy assistance – actions are projected and performed in order to influence policy making at governmental level. It could be regarded as an acceleration of the information flow for a better reflection of realities;
- information manager – environmental information is obtained through monitoring or is organized for a better understanding of environmental processes, targeting a wider public participation in decision making;
- behavior example – initiation and deployment of environmental protection campaigns, targeting both solution of certain problems, but also awareness rising and education (waste elimination, afforestation, housing).

Such strategies are transformed in a set of objectives that underpins the activities of ENGOs. Table 1 present examples of objectives sets for two ENGOs: Salvati Delta (Save the Delta) and Terra Mileniul III (Terra Millennium III).

**Table 1.** ENGOs objectives

<b>Save the Delta</b>	<b>Terra Millennium III</b>
Promoting environment friendly public policies through advocacy	Promoting citizens, especially youth, participation in decision making and environmental problems solving
Promoting an environmentally responsible public attitude	Collaborating with similar foreign organizations in social, educational, and environmental projects
Protecting the Delta and the Danube through concrete activities	Collaboration with local and/or regional public authorities toward the protection of natural ecosystems
Development of corporate environmentally responsible attitude	Encouraging technological transfer and research
Monitoring of activities with environmental impact	Promoting legislation and legal proposals for environmental protection and connected fields
Education and information of Romanian public	Education of children and youth
Promoting community development projects	Preventing the negative environmental and social impact of public or private projects
Mediation among stakeholders in the Danube Delta	Promoting local, regional, and global environmental protection programs
Development of an integrated corporate social responsibility activity as main means for fund rising	
Development of environmental expertise within the organization	
Strengthening the organization's position on the Romanian NGOs market	

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives, ENGOs could perform a wide range of activities. A list of them is provided in box 2.

**Box 2.** Activities performed by Save the Danube

- Collaboration with other ENGOs
- Salvation of the natural ecosystems of the Danube Delta, preservation of the area, and its inclusion in the international tourism circuits
- Initiation and participation in public debates within publications and TV broadcasts
- Awareness rising and encouragement of public for the participation in salvation and ecological restoration programs in the Danube Delta
- Supporting the modernization of obsolete industrial, agricultural or other types of installations that pollute the Danube Delta

- Popularization of Danube Delta protection and restoration ideas and concepts
- Attraction of financial resources for the development of protection programs in the Danube Delta
- Editing of brochures, leaflets, revues, and other publication materials
- Encouragement and supporting of independent research focused on the protection of the Danube Delta
- Granting of scholarships and funding of research projects and documentation stages
- Organization of workshops, seminars and scientific conferences
- Initiation and development of domestic and international programs
- Collaboration with public authorities from Romania and with international institutions

Today there are a large number of ENGOs that deploy activities worldwide. Among the most prominent ones it could be mentioned Greenpeace, organization that pursued several companies to change their behavior according to criteria that go beyond economical rationality. Recent examples of such achievements are the followings [5]:

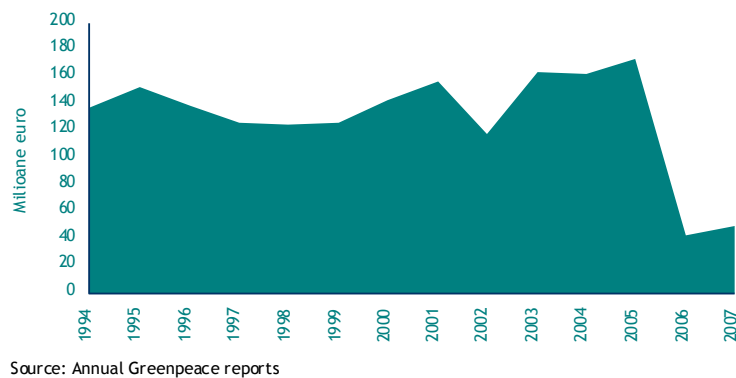
- *McDonald's* drops the use of chicken which is feeding on soybean cropped in Amazonia. Departing from the establishment of the causal link between soybean cropping and deforestation in Amazonia the organization launched the Report Eating up the Amazon. This report revealed how McDonald's and other organizations contribute to deforestation;
- *Hewlett Packard* initiated a plan to decrease the use of highly toxic chemical compounds. We note the fact that the way of presenting this information is aimed to build a favorable/unfavorable image for companies of that industry;
- *Implementing a conservative regime for western Canadian forests* – after a long struggle in a campaign that took more than ten years it was accomplished an agreement among governmental authorities, local authorities, logging companies and other stakeholders that bound the exploitation and secure the habitat conservation.

**Table 2.** Evolution of ENGOs members' number in USA

Organization		Number of members (thousands)				
Name	Year of establishment	1960	1970	1980	1990	1998
Sierra Club	1892	15	113	181	630	555
National Audubon Society	1905	32	148	400	600	575
National Parks and Conservation Association	1919	15	45	31	100	500
Wilderness Society	1935	10	54	45	350	350
National Wildlife Federation	1936	-	540	818	997	4 000
Environmental Defense	1967	-	11	46	200	300
Natural Resource Defense Council	1970	-	-	40	150	400
<b>Total</b>		<b>72</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>1 561</b>	<b>3 027</b>	<b>6 680</b>

Source: [6]

The role to be played by ENGOs could be considered as increasing since indicators that measure this contribution (number of members, incomes) record an upward trend. Thus, the number of members in the most important ENGOs in USA increased almost 100 times in three decades, from around 72 thousands in 1960 to almost 7 million in 1998 (table 2).



**Fig.1.** Evolution of Greenpeace total incomes (million euro)

Greenpeace, one of the largest and most active ENGO, has a high and increasing level of incomes within 1994-2005 (fig.1). Increases in incomes are not so spectacular as the evolution of members and after 2005 an important reduction is also noticeable. These patterns could be explained by the careful approach to fund rising, meaning that the organization struggle to maintain its independence. In fact, this intention is clearly stated in the annual report.

The increase in the size of environmental organizations as both number of members and amount of funds managed represents for companies an argument strong enough to consider in decision making this criteria – the eENGOS’ opinion against certain decision. However, it is not clear in that extent can be made a distinction among companies that take in consideration the possible intervention of ENGOS and those that do not take that in account. In cases than ecological consequences are less obvious the role of ENGOS is more important.

Another observation that could be useful is related to the moment in which ENGOS come to action. Generally, ENGOS intervention could be interpreted as reactive. The convincing power is based mainly on real ecological consequences that are presented in such a way those consumers or companies could identify the chain of causes and the place occupied by them in it.

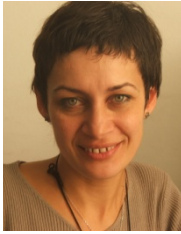
## Conclusions

Environmental exigencies could be defined as a set of requirements to be addressed by an enterprise in order to reduce the ecological effects of its activity. Obviously, there is a generic conceptual level for approaching this issue, but from a managerial perspective it is necessary that the need of environmental protection to be expressed in concrete requirements to be addressed by certain decisions. Therefore, environmental exigencies are represented by factors that influence the enterprise to take decisions toward the reduction of ecological effects, or, in other words, to improve its environmental (ecological) performance.

Environmental exigencies are transformed in industry relevant factors by governmental policies and environmentalism or environmental activism. These forms of expression are not discrete. Environmentalism could target to achieve its objectives by influencing the governmental policy making. This observation would allow considering that environmental policy is for a certain extent an expression of environmentalism.

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