

**PhD Thesis Abstract**  
**Doctoral School of Earth Sciences**

**Nongovernmental organizations in the Southern Transdanubian  
region, with special regard to areal and regional development**

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Nowadays we can overtake huge distances both in time and place due to the development of technique, technology and economy. We are living in a **globalized, accelerated** world, where non-governmental organizations and underarm establishing social formations represent **different value systems**. At the end of the 1980s, beginning of the 1990s due to the changed legal and political conditions, economic and social transformations, the nongovernmental sector was able to resuscitate. Under the two decades after the transformation the organizations went through **quality and quantity development**, however they are still searching their role and place. The most important reason of the establishing of the nongovernmental sector is that there are new social needs which cannot be gratified with the state or the market. As the state was confined, there were claim and need for these social organizations to widen their functions.

Since the transformation in Hungary citizens as communities have the right to play a role in forming the functions concerning their region. Social organizations have several characteristics which **justifies their place in regional development**. Nongovernmental organizations **connect** the state sector, market and the members of the society; they have the **ability for lobbying**, have **free capacity** and have important relationships which make them irreplaceable in administering local matters and development. The aim to form a liveable environment is the cooperation between the social performers, which is **supported also by the European Union**. Publicity, partnership, resource coordination, programming and subsidiarity principles helps involving the organizations to solve the problems of regions. The accession to the Union and the latest modification of the law of regional development, especially the stimulating of establishing civil forums mean both challenge and new possibilities for nongovernmental organizations.

Nearly two third of the organizations works in **settlement level**, representing the interest of denizens, these communities can be cooperative partners of governments in managing with local social problems, providing governmental assignments, improving the level of services. Settlements are the stage of representing the iterests. Interests of the state, governments, different local organizations and contractors meet in the aims of regional development. (LÁSZLÓ M. – KŐSZEGFALVI GY. 2007).

**My personal attachment to this topic** is connected to my thesis. The thesis was about local society of my home town, Mohács. There I got in touch with leaders and members of civil organizations, and I was enchanted by their localpatriotism and commitment. My thesis work for the National Conference of Scientific Students' Associations was made with the support of "Development of human resources in the civil sector" in a similar topic. My current studies at University of Pécs Doctoral Programme in Eath Sciences started in 2003 raiseed my interest on the significance of egional aspects on social processes. As a student of the Doctoral School I got important help in the course of examining the life of local societies in Tolna, Baranya, Somogy County, Pécs, Szekszárd, Kaposvár, Dombóvár, Mohács, Siklós towns. My research and dissertation were supported by the scholarship of Magyar Zoltán Foundation for Higher Education.

### **Aim of the thesis**

At the time of the research of the non-governmental sector of the Southern Transdanubian region we examined the **role** of the organisations in the life of the local society and on the levels of regional development. By means of the analyses we tried to give an overall picture about the **features and status** of the organizations with the help of the demonstration of the

nongovernmental organizational structure. Besides the **structural and functional work** of the social organizations in the areal units the other aim of the research was to discover the role, possibilities, the social impregnation and relationship with the members of the organizations. Relationships with **local governments, participants of regional development** on different levels were treated specially. Besides the discovering of relationships we tried for examining from both the point of the institutions of civil and regional development. **The aim of the examinations** was to strengthen the society, supporting the role of organizations in the society and facilitating the partnership between governments and nongovernmental organizations. In our opinion social and economic development is conceivable only if the three sectors can think together, and social organizations have a role in decision-making processes in cases concerning local society.

**The justification of our research** is explained by the fact that similar basic studies, general surveys which analyses the non-governmental sector in spite of regionality **were not made** in the Southern Transdanubian region. Spatiality exists in numerous segments of the society, especially in different systems of activity organizing and in their network. Changes after 1990 set regional problems, crisis phenomena and processes of regional dividing of renewal into focus (NEMES NAGY J. 1998). After the transformation place dimension was revalued in everyday and political aspect (CSÁSZÁR Zs. 2002). Researches concerning knowledges about Hungarian nongovernmental organizations are characterized by organizational and functional examinations, no analysis of regions are made. These are important because Hungarian nonprofit sector is characterized by **strong regional differences and diversification**. Until the 1990s diversification of the East and West could be observed, but in the latter years it was formed by the social and economic power of the given region (BARTAL A. M. 2005).

**The assumptions regarding this topic are:**

- **The historical traditions, the variegation of the nation and culture, such as the geological and economical status are reflected** in the civil society of the region.
- The relationship of the governments, regional development agencies and nongovernmental sector is characterized with distrust in the field of regional development and public service.
- Governments and development agencies consider this cooperation **formal**; they are the legitim authority in their perception. Partnership does not exist, cooperation means only listening to the nongovernmental organizations.
- In spite of these, we suppose that **development can be caught out in the system of relations**. Non-governmental organizations can be found in the region, which are adequate partners of the participants of regional development in professional, infrastructural and economical aspects.

### **Structure of the thesis**

The dissertation can be distributed into **three parts**.

- In the first unit the theoretical background of the non-governmental organizations are summarized. Firstly the basic definitions regarded to the sectors and their theories are clarified, such as theories from different areas explaining the development of the sectors, the definition of social capital needed for the establishing and successful functioning of non-governmental organizations. Then the legal regulation of the organizations is reviewed

focusing on the aspects of regional development. After these the alignment of non-governmental organizations are lined finishing with a short international overview.

- In the second unit, we examine the role of non-governmental organizations in the Trans-Danubian region, based on empirical studies, and the relation of the organizations with the regional development is also analyzed.
- The third unit is about the results, conclusions and utilization of the thesis, the monitoring of the hypothesis and we also set out further researches.

## **Research methods**

Several methods were applied arisen from the topic of the dissertation. The basis of the research comes from the civil and non-governmental organizations of the region; informal organizations are not the part of this research. In the course of the overview of defining the sector, the specialty of the civil society, social capital and the main characteristics of the regional development we relied on the analysis of national and international literature. In the course of the research primarily **empirical methods** were used. **Half-structured and aimed interviews** were made with the leaders of the chosen organizations (40 people), with the rapporteurs of the examined towns and areas (4 people) and with the mayors (12 people), employees of the offices in micro-regions (8 people), and professionals of regional development (5 people) in all of the research areas. Besides the interviews the method of **questionnaires** were used secondly (samples concerned 636 NGOs, 39 regional governments and 539 inhabitants), thirdly we used the **analysis of** documents (organizational and functional regulation, reports of public utility, agreements of cooperation, the articles of association) and **statistical data** (data by surveys of KSH, T-STAR data).

## **Summary of the results**

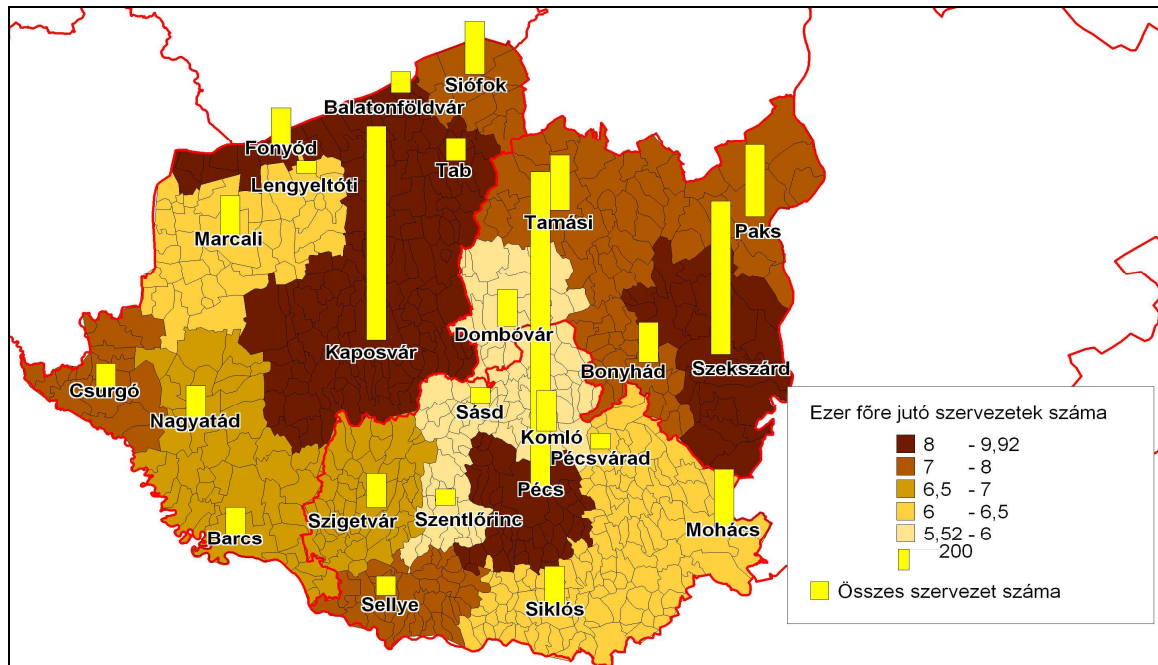
In the course of reconnaissance such nongovernmental sector stood out in the Southern Transdanubian region, which **has the characteristics of the Hungarian nation**, and those living in the region. Two thoughts can typify the examined sector: **doubtfulness and paternalism**. The organizations try to find their role in social, economic and often wrongly in political life. Unfortunately nongovernmental organizations of the region **depend** on state sector (from governments) in financial and professional aspects. At the same time we can emphasise settlements, civil initiations which can be patterns in front of the whole sector. Suppliedness of the examined region with nongovernmental organizations is significant. Baranya and Somogy countieas possessed **appreciable number** of nonprofit sectors from the beginning of the 1990s; Tolna County – a bit later – joined them from this point in the past years. The Southern Transdanubian region is characterized with strong tendency towards self organization, the rate of underarm organizations is high. The reason is the cultural and social variegation of the region and historical traditions. The number of micro-regions is high which comes from the regional structure, nongovernmental organizations dealing with regional development can be found in almost all of them.

### **Trials in course of the dissertation showed the undermentioned results:**

Comprehensive reviewing of literature relevant from the point of our topic summarises and underlies the role of nonprofit sector in the life of regions, shows the role of service, and community forming and legitimates its existence in the process of regional development.

From the aspect of nonprofit organizations Rechnitzer (1998) calls **the region activizatoring**, where organizations can only build on strong community traditions because of the poor social basis and low economic potential.

Figure 1: Number and consistence of micro-region organizations in the Southern Transdanubian region, 2006 (Number of organizations per 1000 people)



Edited by Gábor Pirisi (Source: KSH, 2006)

- The research unambiguously justifies that providedness with NGOs is affected by the **distance from Balaton**, where as a result of the economy stimulant effect of the “Hungarian sea” there is a higher number of nongovernmental organizations in Somogy County and in the micro regions at the coast of Balaton. Farther the state of economic development is less determining, **the place in the network of settlements** become more significant. Shire-towns and those settlements prominent in the region with their historical, social and cultural traditions possess significant local society and active communities. Social embeddedness of civil organizations is strong in cases of small and middle towns with more functions and those villages with 1500-2000 denizens belong to agglomerations or shire-towns. It is shown by the low fluctuation, solidity of social bonds which support undertaking roles in the field of regional development. In spite of being supplied with nongovernmental organizations, there is an inner periphery in the region which can be explained with the lack of regional centers, disadvantageous economic structures of the region and scarcity of resources. The nonprofit sector of the region is **strongly centralized in spite of income**. Significant difference can be seen between the regional appearances of organizational resources. Human resources and income is characterized by strong concentration. A kind of **settlement declension** can be seen. The organizations of shire-towns have two third parts of the income of the sectors, have eligible background in professional and infrastructural aspect, they are competing and their enforcement of interests is considerable. The incomes of villages are underrepresented. Information reaches them slowly; their infrastructural background is poor, they are competing rarely and have no employees.

- The **functional structure** of the organizations is dissolved evenly among the counties, and it does not affect the development of the counties. The functional structure of the region **not differs** from the national one, more than the half of the organizations operates in four areas: free time-hobby, culture, education and sport.

**Table 1:** Percentile content of non-governmental organizations according to functional groups in the Southern Transdanubian region and Hungary, 2006

Functional group	Trans-Danubean region	Hungary
Culture	11,2	11,0
Religion	1,4	2,5
Sport	13,2	12,4
Free time, hobby	19,4	16,5
Education	12,3	14,1
Research	1,1	2,1
Health	3,8	4,7
Social care	7,4	8,8
Civil protection, fire-service	1,6	1,5
Environmental protection	2,1	2,4
Areal development	8,2	6,0
Economic development	2,5	2,2
Protection of rights	2,0	1,4
Public safety protection	3,7	3,3
Multifunctional granting, nonprofit alliances	1,1	1,3
International relationships	1,1	1,5
Professional, economic advocacy	7,1	7,4
Policy	0,6	0,9
Others	no data	no data
Total	100,0	100,0

Source: KSH, Non-governmental organizations in Hungary, 2009

The expected regional characteristics cannot be seen. Culture, health, social care and research are not exceeded from the other functions. The reason of this can be explained in several ways. The national sector fulfil these assignments, there are no lack in people In the area of services, or these are those areas where the functioning of the organizations is hard, the role of the state is extremely strong, there is a need for significant financial and intellectual basis for maintaining. Cultural variegation hardly reflects back in regional level, however local characteristics can be seen in nonprofit functional structure of micro regions. **The number of organizations in the field of regional development and public safety is high** in the region. The high number of regional developing organizations comes from the network of regions, kind of small villages are typical in the examined region, and if there are civil initiations in these small villages, their area is regional development. The work of these organizations is more colorful in shire-towns than in small settlements because of the higher number of organizations and more articulated society.

## **Non-governmental organisations and governments**

Members of local society forming associations were interested in guarding the values of their home, the quality of their environment since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Regional development activities of local social organizations have **serious past** which was the most determining under the era of dualism. At the time of the transformation roles of civil organizations were reevaluated, governments with limited possibilities needed help in material and volunteer work. **Relationship** between governments and non-governmental organizations **slightly changed** in the past two decades, despite that they have the same aim and their activities are nearly the same. The role of organizations on the field of regional development is to operate clubs, present the past of the settlement, making brochures, organizing social events. Communal services are the role of governmental organizations. The form of organizations concerning regional development depends on the size of the settlements; villages have associations, foundations, public benefit organizations are typical in towns.

The number of regional development institutions is excellent therefore governmental activities are provided rarely. Delivering activities **depends on the size of the settlements**. Governments of those settlements supporting civils have strategy, civil rapporturs, and judge their relationship right. They support organizations; therefore they think that the organizations are not appropriate in some cases because of professional, financial and infrastructural reasons. The other part of the governments thinks that civils have no place on this field as they have no eligible social basis. Cooperation between governments and nongovernmental organizations does not exist practically. Governments do not consider local organizations prepared for managing work. Without governmental support their existence would be ambiguous. Unfortunately there are negative samples where governments recalled the work from the organization as the activities were uncontrollable.

Governments have the possibility to involve social organizations into decision-making processes concerning public cases, however it happens rarely. A part of the governments give the opportunity for deliverance, but this relationship spreads no further. Organizations concerning regional development are in a better situation as they are able to demonstrate their opinions in front of committees.

**Partnership does not exist** in the level of regional development, nongovernmental organizations and governments are **not equal partners. Organizations do not cooperate; they have no lobbying power because of disorganization.** The basis of the cooperation of the two sectors is to get to know and accept the other. Civil organizations have to know governmental procedures. Governments have to recognize the possibility of socialization and unique managing of the civils.

## **Non governmental organisations, regional development**

Legal assumptions are given in the field of regional development for nongovernmental organizations. In spite of this the expected social activity cannot be perceived. Organizations are still **local**, not concentrated on processes beyond the borders of the settlements therefore their role in regional development is low or does not exist. They do **not possess regional and micro regional knowledge**, and they think that solving problems beyond the settlements is not their work. There are traditions of cooperation in county level, however potential cooperation possibilities decreased in the latter years.



- Nongovernmental organizations have **no considerable work in the level of regional development**, except a few organizations we cannot perceive anything. Organizations working on regional development have no ability to prove their interest as there is no cooperation between them, and there is no social basis for being legitim. There was no substantive work. Organizations of shire-towns are more active on civil forums, especially at Pécs and Kaposvár. According to their function these organization sare working in the fiels of regional development and environment protection. The council of **regional** development rigidly sticks to the laws; their aim for being liberal is low. Representatives of registrated organizations are invited to the seats, they gain a hearing. In case of innovative plans the can be involved in the process of planning, however they are not treated as equal partners, their ideas are not conceived.

- **Possibilities** of non-governmental organisations **were better in county level**. Councils of regional development in the counties tried to cooperate with nongovernmental organizations from the middle of the 1990s. Baranya and Somogy counties had civil strategy before the birth of legal conditions; they marked those areas where they asked for support from cilvil organizations. Civil rapporteurs are working in all three counties; there are Civil Service Centers which have good relationship with governments. There was one mutual tender in these three counties. The best opportunity for the effective existence of cooperation is in Baranya County, organizations participate effectively in the work of the regional development council of the county. A **circle was formed** whiyh has good relationship with the government; however others can get into it with difficulty. The opinion of regional development councils is that the measuring of civils depends on the activity of the leaders of the organizations. It exists in a few cases, the council conciliates with these organizations before decision-making, and the organizations have the rights to offer an opinion and to consult. Agreements about cooperations do not exist in the counties. In summary we can say that cooperation is blocked in county level by the uncertain future, gradual vacancy of activitieas and cooperation fields.

- The level of micro-regions seems to be the best cooperation field between development institutions and nongovernmental organizations. Therefore **unconcern is the greatest** here, from both organizations. This is the most incomprehensible spatial category for the civils. Civil forums were established in almost al the micro-regions, however they do not work. Offices of micro-regions tried to recruit organizations; however it was unsuccessful. In all cases like this the senter of the micro-region is a town rich in functions where leaders of the organizations have serious relationships concerning regional development and have great role of historical and cultural traditions. Cooperation extend only for the rights in all cases, there is no common competing.

- Nongovernmental organizations have **unfilled roles** regarding regional development, such as participation in **professional planning**, working out **project samples**, **measuring efficiency** of development plans, **feedback**.

### Monitoring of the hypothesis

- According to our **justified** presumptions historical traditions of the region, variegation of their nation and culture are **reflected** in the organizations of the civil society, therefore it can be seen in the level of micro-regions.

- Our second assumptions were also justified by our researches. The relationship of the two sectors is characterized by distrust as they do not know or understand each other. There is no practical cooperation, there is no respect for the work of the other organization, advantages of possible cooperation is not recognized. Communities are unorganized; they do not converge towards the other, and have no adequate social basis.
- **In spite of these** we can say that **development of the relationship can be seen**, however it depends on the size of settlements. A nongovernmental organization was found which has more determining role in the life of the local community, and becomes more and more known in the area of regional development.

### **The usefulness of the dissertation, further orientation of the research**

- Results of the dissertation **can be built in** to the status exploration of planning documents and development programmes functioning on different levels of regional development.
- They reveal the current situation; show the importance of the cooperation, barriers and mistakes of these two sectors. They give a basis for initiating conversions between nongovernmental organizations and also between institutions of regional development.
- Results **give feedback** to law-makers about the efficiency of professional legal decisions made so far.
- Results and observations of the dissertation may suggest **further research orientations** to researchers and professionals working in the fields of regional development.

The **continuation of this research** work is important in several aspects:

- further research direction can be the analysis of nongovernmental sector in a **wider** area, with other regions;
- statistics regarding to the sectors ignore aspects of regions, areas, accordingly further empirical studies are needed especially in micro-regional level, focusing more on the life of civil organizations in **small towns and villages**;
- in our opinion **mapping, processing and publication of well functioning partner relationships** in the area of regional development which can support the approach of the two sectors. These can be national or international samples.

## **1. A disszertáció alapjául szolgáló publikációk**

### **1.1. Published literature related to PhD topic**

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