



**Ph.D. Programme in Management and
Business Administration**

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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The adaptibility of the Swedish models of new regionalism in Hungary

Ph.D. dissertation

Supervisor:

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Department of Geography

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1. Methodology

1.1. Analysis of national and international literature

During the analysis of relevant literature I was focusing on that to have a wide range of international literature involved. In order to achieve it longer and shorter study trips, conference participations could assist in that.

1.2. Study trips, interviews

Moreover direct experiences of personal interviews and study trips in the analyzed regions and questionnaire analysis was the basis of multi-input analysis.

1.3. Defining hypotheses

Based on the experiences of the literature analysis and direct contacts the following hypotheses were defined:

Hypothesis 1: In the new space of the European Union such polycentric system is created, in which the core areas and the peripheries are not converging to each other, but more converging to their own development trends.

Hypothesis 2: A regional administration concept should exist, which major aim is not to converge regions, but to have a successful regional development.

1.4. Statistical data analysis

In order to determine the major groups of Central and Eastern European regions, and their independence and dependence to their central government, based on the statistical data of the regions of 10 Central and Eastern European countries a cluster and a crosstab analysis was conducted.

2. Research results

2.1. *The analysis of new regionalism*

The administrative units created for a longer state arm, as classical old regions are only responsible for executing state decisions and to control them later. In this way they could support the centralised government. From the perspective of public administration regionalism, the European regional policies in the 60s and 70s were assisted in that. The regions were accepted on the level of declaration, but in fact through the redistribution of national and European funds they became more dependant contrary to the originally proposed decentralization and subsidiarity. To conclude the **old regionalism based on Keating** (who indirectly defined the new regionalism for the first time in his book *Regions in the European Community*, London, 1985) **could be described by the following factors: the technical needs of the modern state; general supporting packages; cultural demands; demand for autonomy of historical nations.**

Based on this paradox and past, **Gren (1999) believe that** the new regionalism could not be handled as an ethnic revolution of social movement against the state. It is more a question of the logic of transferring decision making rights, which is more a natural process, than a radical reform. Therefore the **new regionalism is an answer for the environmental challenges, which entitle the regional level with a higher level of independence against the state, as it reflects better the citizen's interests.**

The establishment of the new regionalism could be described by 5 main features (Gren 1999): **the globalization; regional management and lobby role; the supranational forces; the creation of regional identity; the creation of interregional and cross-border networks.** As a result he explains the growth of regional lobby power, the need for autonomy, and furthermore he is analyzing the para-diplomatic role of regions, which is over the boundaries of decentralization.

2.2. The analysis of the practice of new regionalism adaptability in Sweden

The regional processes in Sweden based on its unitary state form are similar to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore the experiences on the decentralization process from state-led governance could be useful for the regionalization process of Hungary.

The national taxation system of Sweden, and the lan(county)-system could provided such a financial background for the establishment of the regional institutional system, which is quite unique in unitary state form countries.

It has facilitated **the erosion on national power**, which put in a favourable position the national level. The independent local and regional taxation had a well-operating system, which was substituted by a national regional redistributonal system, created a good financial basis for the county level.

Based on the pilot project sin regionalization, the shifting of taxation from county to regional level was a crucial element, and ensured the same conditions for operation in a regional system, than in a county system.

Although one of the major challenges at the county-regional system of Kalmar was that the financial resources were not shifted from the county to the region, the region was responsible only for the strategic guidelines. As a result they need to have regular consultations with the county government, to have the necessary financial resources for regional development.

The launch of the pilot projects were based on the **supranational structural policies**. The structural funds of the European Union needed the concentration of the county institutions, although at the beginning it was ensured by the creation of development agencies on NUTS2 level. For a long period there were no further steps only the statistical regions. Buti t was a first initial step towards the need to have more activities on a regional level.

Some Swedish regions were put a lot of energy on that to have an effective part in European decision making process. As a result some regions were especially focusing on their **para-diplomatic activities**, and in this framework they established their representation offices in Brussels together with the private interest groups.

In this representation activities in a paradox way not those Swedish regions from the north were the leaders which were the main beneficiaries of the structural funds. South-Sweden regions were more active in developing European economic relations and the potential in European markets. In Skane the development of transport connctions, in West-Sweden the effective regional image and an optimal size creation in population and geographic area was a

major goal in order to be present effectively in Europe. That has led to the demand for a regional reform and their own regional development.

Which was a crucial and historical element in Skane is the common identity basis of the merging counties. The county system in the historical region was not working properly. The **regional identity** was a basis during the regional reforms, and many regional political parties were established. The unification was largely based on these efforts, although they were sometimes more extreme than it was necessary. The common regional identity was a key for success after establishing the regional government.

But there were not such historical root in West Sweden, and as a result the economic rationalization of institutions was hindered on many fields – especially in the health care.

In Skane the **cross border activities** are especially active. The Öresund region, as a border region between Sweden and Denmark had a crucial role in the creation of Skane region.

There is an importance for the physical infrastructure development in this border area. The bridge between Copenhagen and Malmö unified this border area. This was such an investment which emerged common economic development, joint traffic system and labour market in the border region of the two neighbouring countries.

Using the cross-border experience in the Öresund region gave the opportunity that SKane could become not just a border region but an independent Swedish region. It was necessary that the state gave opportunity not only for merging counties, but regional development competences and connecting financial resources were transferred from the state to the new regional administration.

2.2. Regional administration modell based on the results of Swedish regionalism

Based on the Hypothesis 2 of the dissertation: „A regional administration modell should exist, which major aim is not to converge regions, but to have a succesful regional development.”. The regional administration modell is based on the regional processes of the Swedish unitary state, in the theory of new regionalism.

Many questions arise from the Swedish modell and its experiences. Although the evidences that the partnership based county-region modell was the most acceptable for the stakeholders among the pilot projects (see the new regional pilot projects after 2002). But today we can experience that county merger system will be the future modell because of the effectivitiy of regional health care systems.

One of the most crucial economic basis of this is that in the regionalized structures of Skane and West Sweden many savings were realized in the regional health care system. One further element reasoning the shift in modell is putting forward the issue of competetiveness.

The regional administration modell based on the Swedish modell is the following: „such a region, which has an elected board, have a large geographical spread, optimal in size for regional service infrastructures, has a fiscal autonomy through having regional tax income and prepared for allocating EU funds.”

2.3. Statistical data analysis for the Central and Eastern European Countries

Based on the Hypothesis 1: „In the new space of the European Union such polycentric system is created, in which the core areas and the peripheries are not converging to each other, but more converging to their own development trends.”.

Two main results of the statistical data analysis should be highlighted. The cluster analysis revealed that there are such clusters in the regions of the 10 Central and Eastern European countries which are on a different development path. The „Globally important capital”, the „European capital”, the „Dead East” and the „Classical CEEC region” are well characterized regional groups in Central and Eastern Europe. It validates our hypothesis, that the many times homogenously handled Central and Estern Europe has more levels of development.

The Crosstab analysis shows perfectly that the central government has a crucial role in the development of a region. It would be necessary to strengthen the independence of the regional institutions from the central government and to use the endegonous resources of regions instead of the national redistribution policies.

The more independent regional institutions and the connecting financial resources would make possible the individualization of development paths, but it would arise the question, whether this scheme would increase the regional imbalances.

3. Conclusion

The dissertation aimed which are the possibilities to adapt the new regionalism in practice on the basis of regional administration modell, the Swedish experiences.

As an important element it was focusing on the heterogeneity of Central and Eastern Europe which need separate development paths of regions. As a major condition the elimination of the dependence from central government would be necessary jointly with the tasks and financial resources.

Furthermore it is necessary for the regions to have an identity which distinguish them on the stage of European regions.

This analysis, building on that knowledge base, which was accumulated in Sweden during the regional pilot projects, also shows an administration modell selection method, although that is not the main goal of the dissertation. The main basis of the regional pilots is the highest respect of local interests. Although the final solution, which has been reached after almost 10 years, will need the support of state will and power, but this political decision will be done on such a defendable experience, which could make successful the whole Swedish regionalization process.

Through the analysis of political decisions it was aimed to present the political decision process of reforms although the new regionalism is more about regional management, economic efficiency, and competitiveness. Until this political compromise could not be reached any of the forerunning regional administration modell could not have a chance to put into practice.

The analysis of the Swedish regional pilot projects was about the implementation of new regionalism factors and on the restructuring of the national distribution policy to an endogenous regional development. It is a good example for all the countries of Central and Eastern European countries how to move from regionalization to regionalism. Similar to the example giving country of Sweden all of them try to open up the redistribution oriented policy as a result of supranational effects. This openness is characterized by para-diplomacy and cross-border activities. The regions of open borders are facing new challenges and new institutional capacities are necessary. The redistribution oriented institutional capacity should be complemented by a staff with diplomatic, investment and management skills, who could be able to direct regional institutions with a higher level of autonomy.

Hungary is a good example of Central and Eastern Europe, which are the lagging and successful elements in this process, and which determine the adaptability of this regional administration model.

1. Analyzing the adaptability the lack of independence of financial resources is a crucial problem of the structure. Without the creation of taxation basis it is hard to imagine to build a region on the principles of new regionalism. The financial dependence is a feature of national regional administration, it does not allow the identity creation, the para-diplomatic activities, the independent **global role**.
2. The institutional capacities for **supranational policies** are created. This developed structure is more a threat than an advantage for a more developed regional institution, based on new regionalism paradigm. It is not possible to be satisfied with the current regional setting able to allocate structural funds, but it is important to follow on the route of regional institution building.
3. The establishment of European **lobby power** is improving. The further development of institutional capacity and the use in all the Hungarian regions could be a vital element in regional interest representation towards the central government and the European institutions. Through representation offices in Brussels it is necessary to use Western European experiences. Furthermore it is vital to have a coordination between regions, central government and Committee of the Regions members to have a synergy between regional interest representation organs.
4. It is hard to find historical basis for **identity creation**. Therefore it is necessary to have such identity creating events and marketing campaigns involving social actors, which could strengthen the regional consciousness. For that it is necessary to implement such management methods, which could help the acceptance of the merely 10 years old regional level by modern PR, marketing and brand-image tools.
5. In case of **cross-border activities** it should be accepted that the inside and outside borders of the EU are opened, and the services should be available. To reach that it is necessary to have strong cross-border institutions, and for supporting project

initiatives the legal institutions of multi-level governance should be established. Based on the experiences of euroregions the legal institutions of European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation should be established, in order to serve local needs. In this respect the border regions should take a high responsibility to facilitate the creation of such EGTC institutions. Using their management experience they can assist in the proper creation of these new instruments taking in consideration spatial structure of the participating countries.

That regional administrative model, which was defined on the experiences of the Swedish model, is not used in Central and Eastern Europe and in Hungary. Further steps are needed to have the basis for an endogenous regional development. Many useful experiences were gathered in the last years, and especially in the adaptation process of supranational policies the regional structure had real success. But it should be avoided not to put light for other factors in the shadow of the successful structural funding institution building.

Without a clear financial perspective, international role and identity of regions we can not really talk about a regional level. The implementation of the planning and statistical regions and the regional agencies responsible for structural fund allocation does not give automatically the acceptance of regional level in the society. It has other conditions, and as a major basis an elected regional level is necessary as the pilot projects presented in Sweden. In this way the citizens could more easily approve the new regional level.

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