

## MOTIVE FORCES IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF DUNAÚJVÁROS

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Contemporaneously (in parallel) with the development of the town, the cultural institutional system in its proportioned and arranged form functioning even at present was established. It is characteristic for the development of the cultural life of the town that the socialist art policy set the objective to make the valuable works public property to the wider circles of society. According to the estimation of the era at that time, the diversity of the cultural life was primarily up to the artists, specialists of public education and the leaders of the art policy resident in the town instead of the cooperation of town dwellers. The Dunaújváros College having been self-dependent since 2000 as the spiritual centre of the region exercises both direct and indirect influence on the cultural life of the town. The 4500 students and the 250 teachers and employees of the College are the potential users of the cultural institutions of the town at any time. A number of civil organizations are active in Dunaújváros. One of the key issues for the efficient operation of organizations is the degree of their readiness to cooperate and capability of enforcing their interests.*

Keywords: efficiency, civil sphere, region, institutional system.

### **INTRODUCTION**

When Dunaújváros was raised to the rank of town it was an artificially developed settlement without traditions and local establishers. Under the effect of the socialist economics and industrial policy at the time the town was founded, the development of economic and social conditions was heavily dependent on the part played by the state. According to the socialist power policy, the so-called socialist-type urbanization, state ownership as well as the state control of spatial processes determined the emerging difficulties. The research activity of *Szirmai* revealed a number of social problems in Dunaújváros (e.g. deviant phenomena, crime, extremely high proportion of divorce, difficulties in adapting of residents of various social- and economic situation, problems of socialization, value crisis) (*Szirmai*, 1988).

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The work was based on three main research methods: (1) overview of the professional literature and statistical data, (2) questionnaire survey based on representative samples and (3) structured deep interviews. The summarizing documents characterizing the operation of the cultural institutional system and describing its theoretical bases, that can be considered starting points of the study are: relevant documents and records of Municipality of Dunaújváros (2008),

cultural concepts, reports, accounts. Following the study of the associated professional literature (town history documents, documents of age as well as papers on institutional history) the survey using questionnaires based on representative samples took place (2006, 2009). The data were processed by using the instruments of describing statistics.

During the survey, a complex questionnaire was used, the main issues of which are summarized in the list as follows:

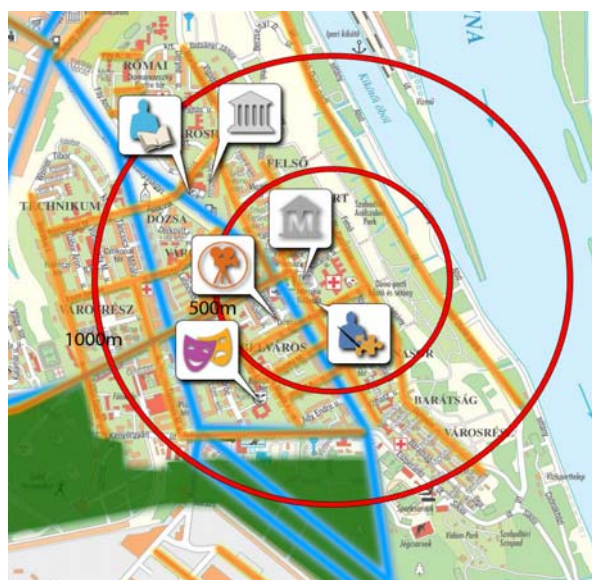
- relation between cultural-, educational-, leisure time activities:
- (frequency of visiting cultural institutions),
- need for education (sites, events): Cultural function of Dunaújváros
- *general estimation of cultural institutions (role, rank):* examining elements of the cultural institutional system: József Attila Library, Educational Centre for Workers, Bartók Intimate Theatre and House of Arts, Dózsa Cinema Centre, Institution of Contemporary Arts, Intercisa Museum.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The cultural institutions of Dunaújváros are gatherers and forwarders of values and information, sites to create and mediate works of art, places of education, entertainment and forming of social life. Their geographic location is excellent; they are within 20 to 30 minutes walk from any point of Dunaújváros. The accurate locations of the individual cultural institutions are shown in (Figure 1).

Figure 1

### Geographic location of the cultural institutions in Dunaújváros



Source: Based on map of Dunaújváros

The maintenance and preservation of the functional ability of the institutional system is of vital importance; in fact, the termination or decline of any of the institutions would result in a need difficult to be replaced. Basically, the elements of the institutional system function properly and in a self-dependent way. Following the economic conversion, a significant re-arrangement took place even in the cultural sector: it is the economy that became the main principle of arrangement. The operation became a multi-sector one.

From the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century onward, the function of institutions has become more and more difficult, their frequentation reduced, which can also be supported numerically. In spite of the negative trend in the changes of external circumstances, they take the user needs into consideration as far as possible. This results in changes in profile as the case may be.

On launching education associated with the field of philosophy, Dunaújváros College established a stronger contact with the cultural institutions of both the town and the region. The students in the communication and culture organization faculty shall fulfil a professional practice of sixty hours a year to be performed in the town museum, theatre, cinema or cultural centre. Following the practice, a number of students selected the presentation of the activity of a cultural institution as their theses.

The self-organized groups of students strive to find leisure time programs to exercise dance, music, photography and cinematic art. These self-organized groups often make appearances on events of both the College and the town, thereby colouring the cultural programs arranged in the town. Organized jointly with the DF Cultural Centre, Bartók Intimate Theatre and House of Arts as well as Dózsa Cinema Centre, the Students' Local Authority promotes attendance at cinema- and theatre performances. In order to motivate the students, preferential entrance fees are ensured. In addition, a number of exhibitions, concerts and various evenings offer relaxation to the students, teachers and residents. The College cooperates in their arrangement or makes place available to them.

Based on a survey given to students of Dunaújváros College, it can be stated that from among the elements of the cultural institutional system, the majority of students interviewed visited the Dózsa Cinema Centre and the concerts with monthly regularity in 2007. Several students explained verbally that they prefer the festivals and sport events (*Figure 2*).

Examining the cultural practices of students based on the surveys performed in the years 2008 and 2009, it can be seen that the scope of examination shall be widened. The survey covered the examination of practices to visit entertainment sites preferred by the students and sporting events.

*Figure 3* and *4* presents the cultural practice of the students of Dunaújváros College as a function of the average frequency of using the individual institutions.

During the indicated time interval, the order of rank in the popularity of cultural possibilities remained unchanged. It is the pleasure grounds that seem to be the most popular ones; the students visit them approximately three times a month as an average. Those interviewed stated that they make use of cinema services two times a month on average. The frequency of visiting libraries reduced in 2009 (from 2.23 down to 1.94).

Figure 2

Examination of the frequency of cultural practice relating to the students of Dunaújváros College in 2007

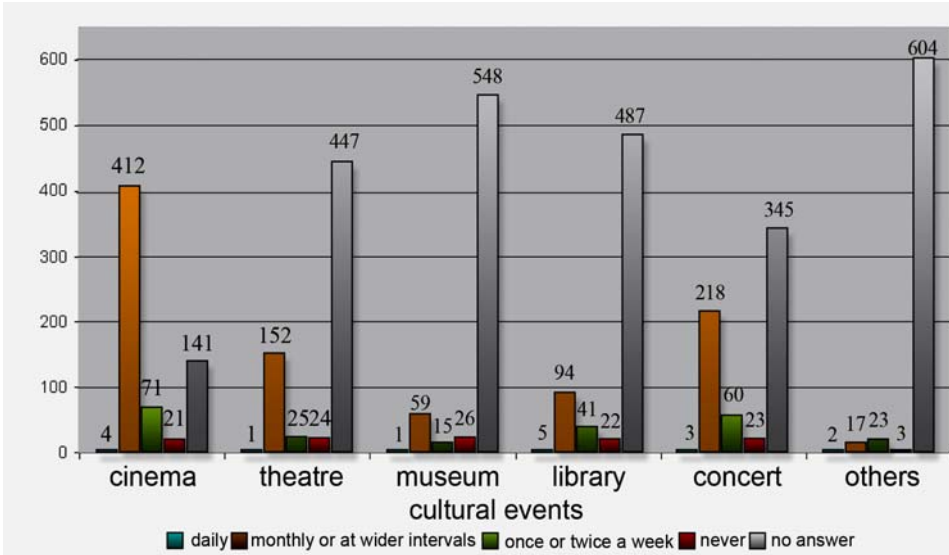


Figure 3

Examination of the frequency of cultural practice relating to the students of Dunaújváros College in 2008

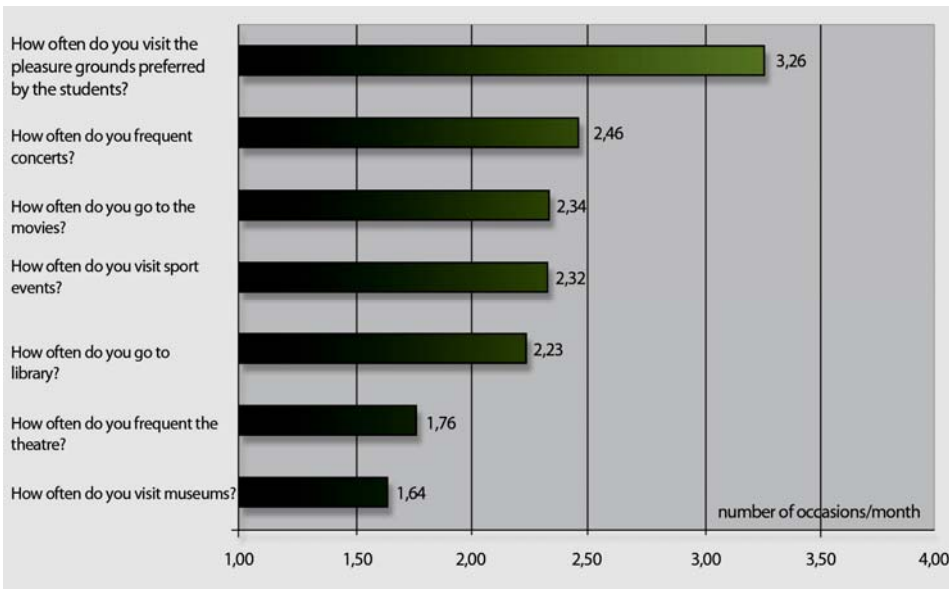
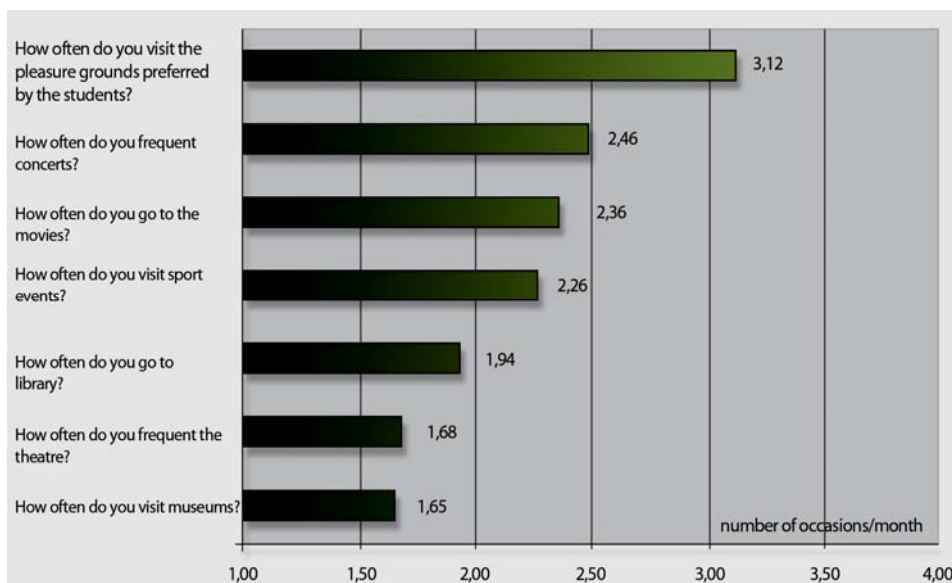


Figure 4

Examination of the frequency of cultural practice relating to the students of Dunaújváros College in 2009



The results of survey show that the students are mostly interested in the pleasure grounds, various concerts, the cinema and the sporting events. A negative tendency prevails in respect of the frequency of going to libraries and the theatre. These trends can probably be justified by the characteristics of age and socialization.

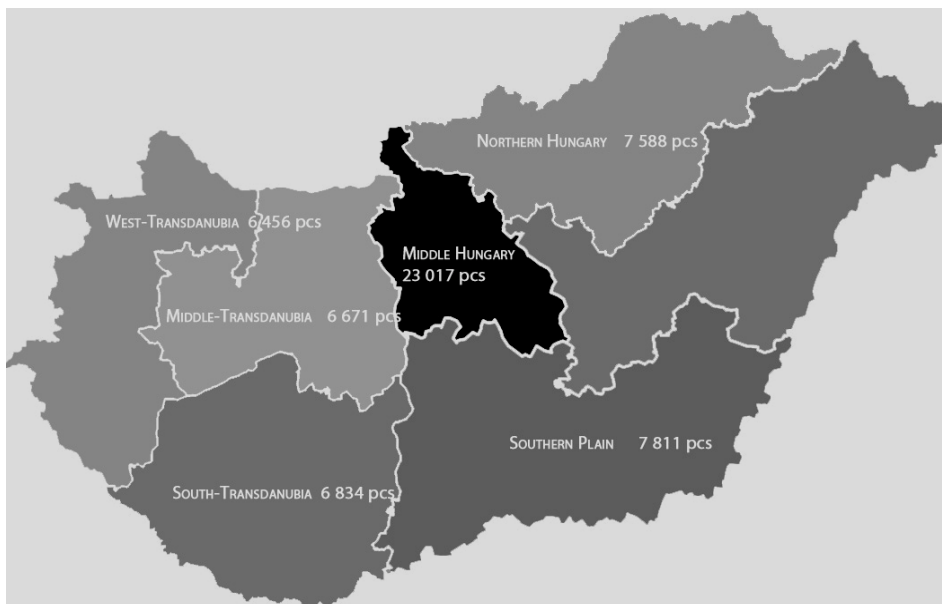
The subject of the study is a young settlement; therefore, it can be stated that there are few civil organizations having a long history. Following the change in regime, the number of new organizations suddenly increased, while this trend fell back after 1995. These processes are in accordance with national trends. In respect of their legal status, the distribution of organizations active in the town is in conformity with national trends; that is, the preponderance of the association form is dominant, with the foundation as the second most popular form (Bakos *et al.*, 2007).

From the theoretical and conceptual approach to civil society, non-governmental bodies and the nonprofit sector, the social resource called “civilians” or “nonprofit sphere” or “third sector” in Hungary becomes visible. The civilian nonprofit sector represents those organizations and self-organizations that perform spontaneous social activity and the operation of which is driven by neither the obtainable profit nor the performance of state public duties, instead, a spontaneous social activity representing some public needs.

At a national level, the examination shows that a large number of nonprofit organizations are active (Figure 5).

Figure 5

**Regional distribution of the number of nonprofit organizations in Hungary in 2009**



Source: Based on KSH data

With regard to regional distribution, three fundamental trends can be observed:

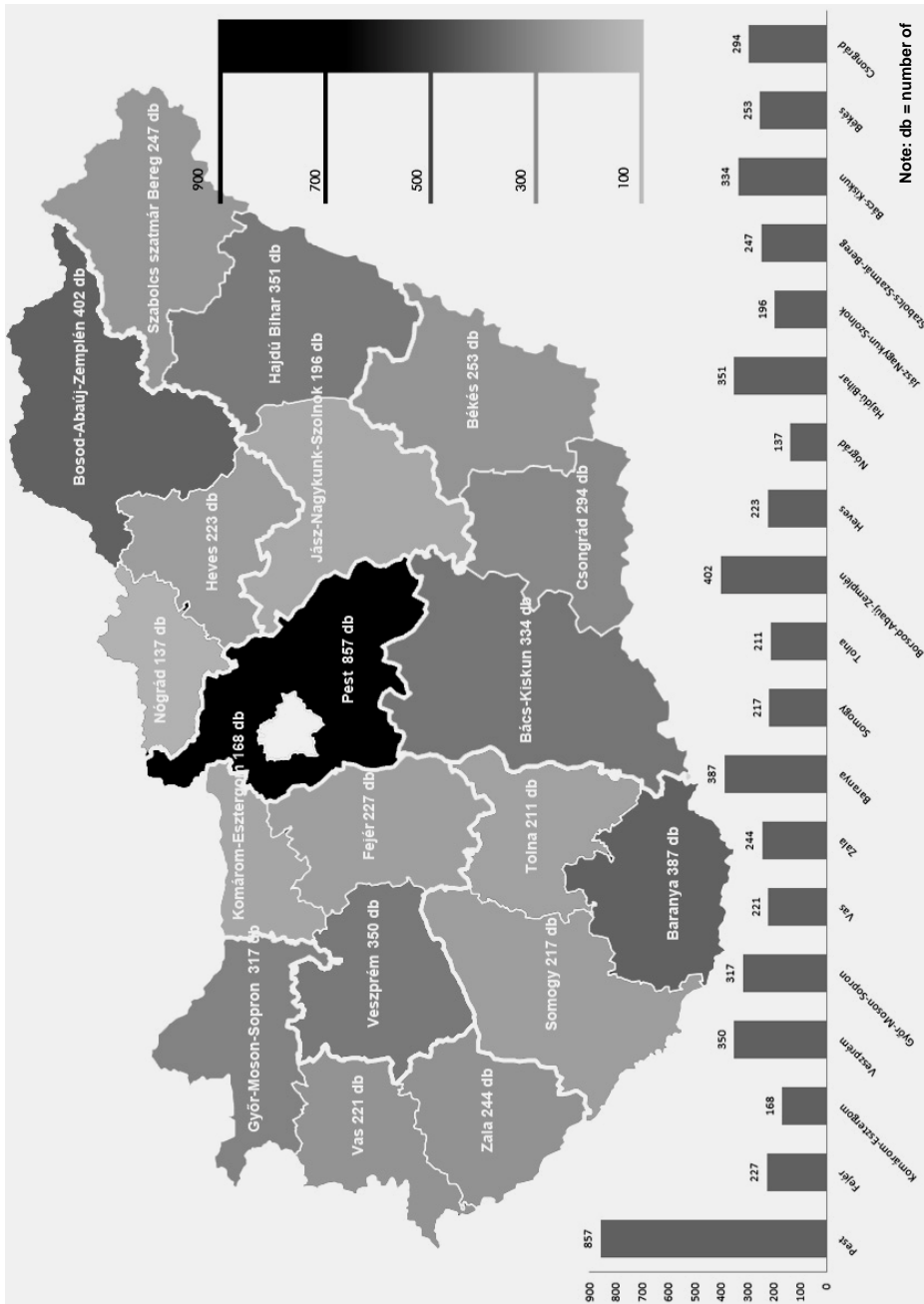
1. It is the Middle-Hungarian region that is the richest one with regard to civil organizations, where 23017 organizations were registered according to the data recorded by the KSH (Hungarian Central Statistical Office) in 2009.
2. In the Transdanubian regions, the number of those representing the “third sector” is 6653 as an average.
3. In the regions of the Plain and Northern-Hungary, the number of registered nonprofit organizations exceeds that in the Transdanubian regions by 1.2% on average.

Regarding classification according to the fields of activity, there are four important fields (culture/public education; leisure time/hobby; sport; teaching/education) also examined by KSH in relation to the operation of nonprofit organizations. The number of civil organizations engaged in cultural values and public education shows a heterogeneous picture by county (*Figure 6*).

It can be shown that the highest value is represented by Pest County. Considering the other counties, it can be stated that Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county is the strongest one with respect to civil organizations engaged in culture, while Nógrád County is the weakest one. Considering the number of organizations active in the field of cultural life, Fejér County (with 296 cultural civil organizations) is below the national average.

Figure 6

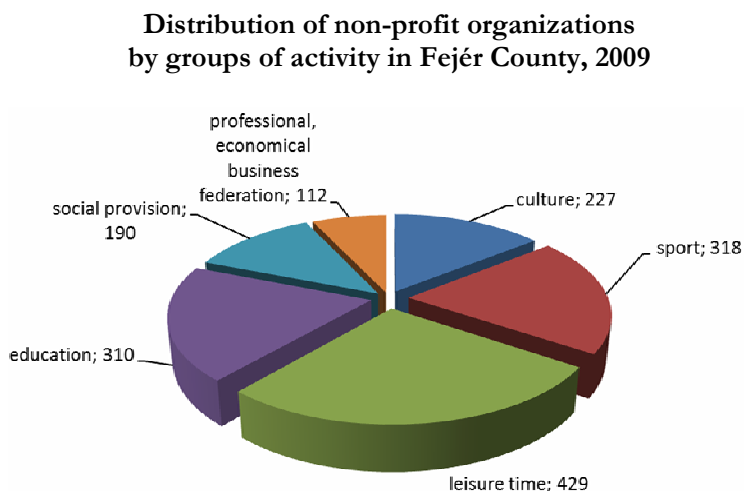
Distribution of the civil organizations performing cultural activity by county in 2009



Source: Based on KSH data

Considering the classification according to the fields of activity, it can be shown that in Fejér county the number of civil organizations active in the field of leisure time activity is the largest one (Figure 7).

Figure 7



Source: Based on KSH data

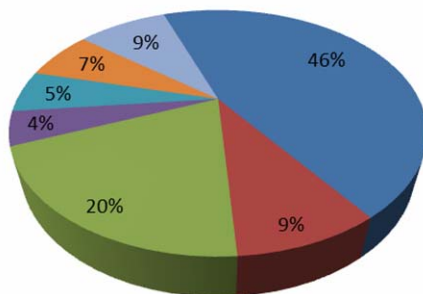
The three most popular fields represented by the nonprofit sector are: leisure time, sport and education. The weakest activity appears in relation to the social provision and the professional and economical business federations.

Civil organizations are active in the territory of Dunaújváros in a large number (Figure 8).

Figure 8

**Thematic classification of civil organizations active in Dunaújváros**

■ cultural      ■ youth      ■ health care      ■ economy  
 ■ administration      ■ education      ■ social



Source: Based on KSH data



One of the key issues for the efficient operation of organizations is their readiness to cooperate and capability of enforcing their interests. The Interests Conciliatory Board of Dunaújváros Civil Organizations established in 2004 makes effort to unite the participants of the nonprofit sphere and to promote the enforcement of their interests. On the homepage of Dunaújváros Town of County Right, 185 civil organizations are recorded. Few scientifically founded authentic data are available on the role of organizations registered and their realistic social tasks.

In the classification according to fields of activity, four important fields can be separated that formulate the expectancies of the society as against the civil organizations (i.e. culture/public education, leisure time/hobby, sport, teaching/education). At a regional level, activity in the field of culture is typical. In the region, mostly organizations that are members of some national network are active. It is essential to emphasize the peculiarities in the numerical strength of nonprofit organizations; it is organizations of less than 50 members that fulfill the needs. The existing six organizations with number of members over 1000 that are members of some national or regional network represent strength in respect to the population of the town. Based on the results, it can be stated that the civil organizations of Dunaújváros function actively. A number of them operate with the help of volunteers. The target group and field of activity of several organizations are complex. As a general rule, the services offered by the organizations are accessible to everybody; the arrangement of events and programs is mostly typical. The local authority- and tender supports represent the most important resources for income to the civil sphere.

A trend perceptible even in the case of Dunaújváros during the last years is that the operation and maintainability of the civil sphere meet with a number of obstacles. The trend that the extent of state supports is reduced appears as a negative factor; thus, the nonprofit sector has no choice but to enter into competition instead of cooperation in order to acquire resources. The situation is contradictory; in fact, according to the results of research, there would rather be a need to join forces; at the same time, however, the competitive situation creates obstacles to efficient cooperation (*Bakos et al., 2007*).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Facts can confirm that, even in respect to the operation of its cultural life, the town is a “man-made” one. At present, the economic and social conditions of Dunaújváros have a negative influence on the development of the cultural life considering from the side of both the sponsors (narrowing resources) and users (due to the lack of diversity of programs and financial difficulties).

The statement that the negative trend in the extent of cultural consumption practice is typical can be justified. The trend of changes in visiting practice also moves in a negative direction. Among the reasons, both economic and social ones can equally be found.

In the financing of culture, the state participates in a differentiated way. The fundamental conditions for strengthening the sector are the confidence,

transparency and the continuous development of the institutional system. The form and quality of the part the state plays have influence on these factors. The most important actors taking part in the financing of culture are the state, market actors and the non-profit sector. As a summary, it can be formulated that the efficiency of civil organizations could be promoted by the purpose oriented formulation of strategy and inclusion of resources to an appropriate extent.

The possibilities implied in the third sector become visible to the decision makers. One of the examples for the accomplishment of cooperation in case of Dunaújváros is the HÍD (translated as BRIDGE) Association; in addition, the Civil House in Dunaújváros is also an organization representing the interests of the civil organizations. The fundamental element of development can be realized by changing the attitude of the society.

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