



New borders old mechanisms.  
**Dilemmas of the rescaling of the Hungarian  
public administration**

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# PÉCS – 2010 CULTURAL CAPITAL OF EUROPE





# Aims of the presentation

Investigating territorial reforms (mostly in Hungary)  
from different aspects:

- Internal and external driving forces
- Processes
- Institutional models
- Results in Hungary
- Lessons for us





# Theoretical backgrounds

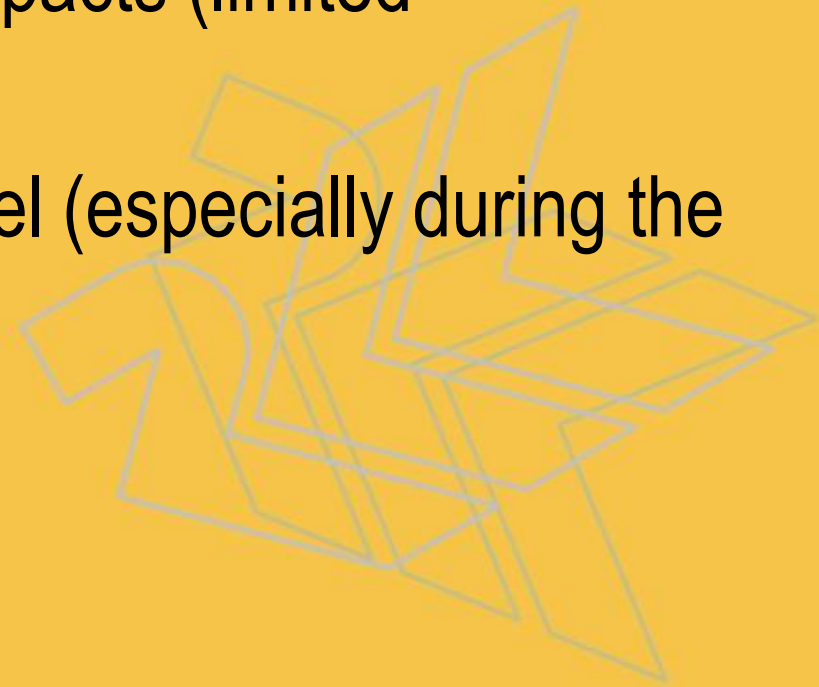
- Rescaling- changes both in the content and the scale (Gualini, 2006 EPS)
- Jumping of power among levels and actors (Swyngedouw, 2000 E&P)
- Europeanisation, conditionalism (Hughes, Sasse and Gordon 2004)
- New regionalism (Keating)+ social capital (Putnam)





# General historical context in CEE (path dependency)

- Traditions of „statism” and centralization
- Predominance of external impacts (limited sovereignty)
- Weak basic-strong meso level (especially during the Soviet-regime)





# Motivations for rescaling

## Inner motivations

- Model change= structural change (from integrated basic → to fragmented one, from strong meso → to weak one)- **political values**
- Functional inefficiencies (in quality and costs) → integrational elements (financing, associations)- **NPM**

## External motivations

- EU standards (Charter of Local governments, good governance)
- EU cohesion policy- NUTS





# Changing and multiple reform aims

Consolidating the public administration and services (**internal-top down**):

- By forced/pressured association
- By asymmetric competences and finances
- By expanding deconcentration

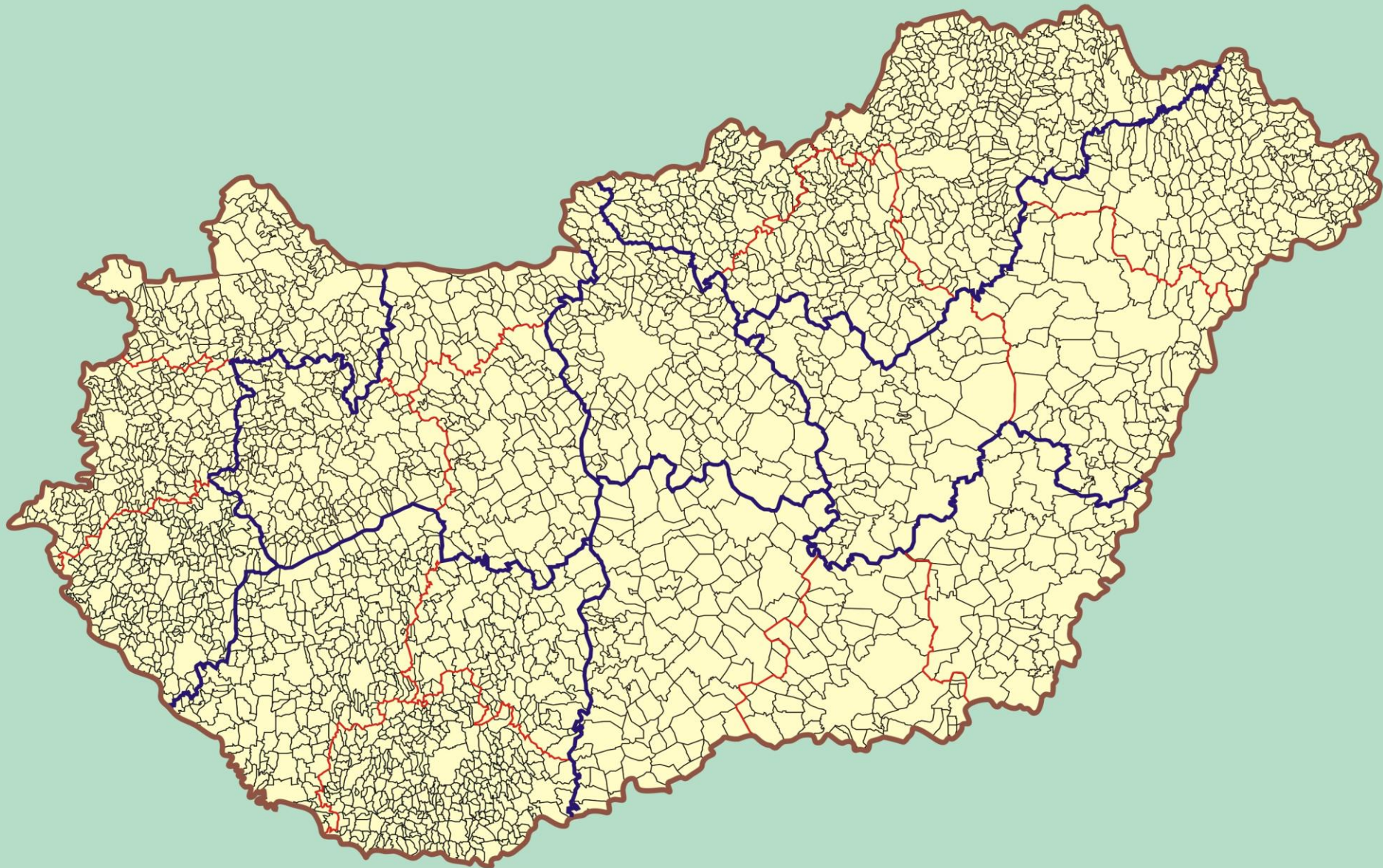
Adapting to the European cohesion policy (**external-top down**)

- NUTS division-regionalisation
- Development institutions-partnership



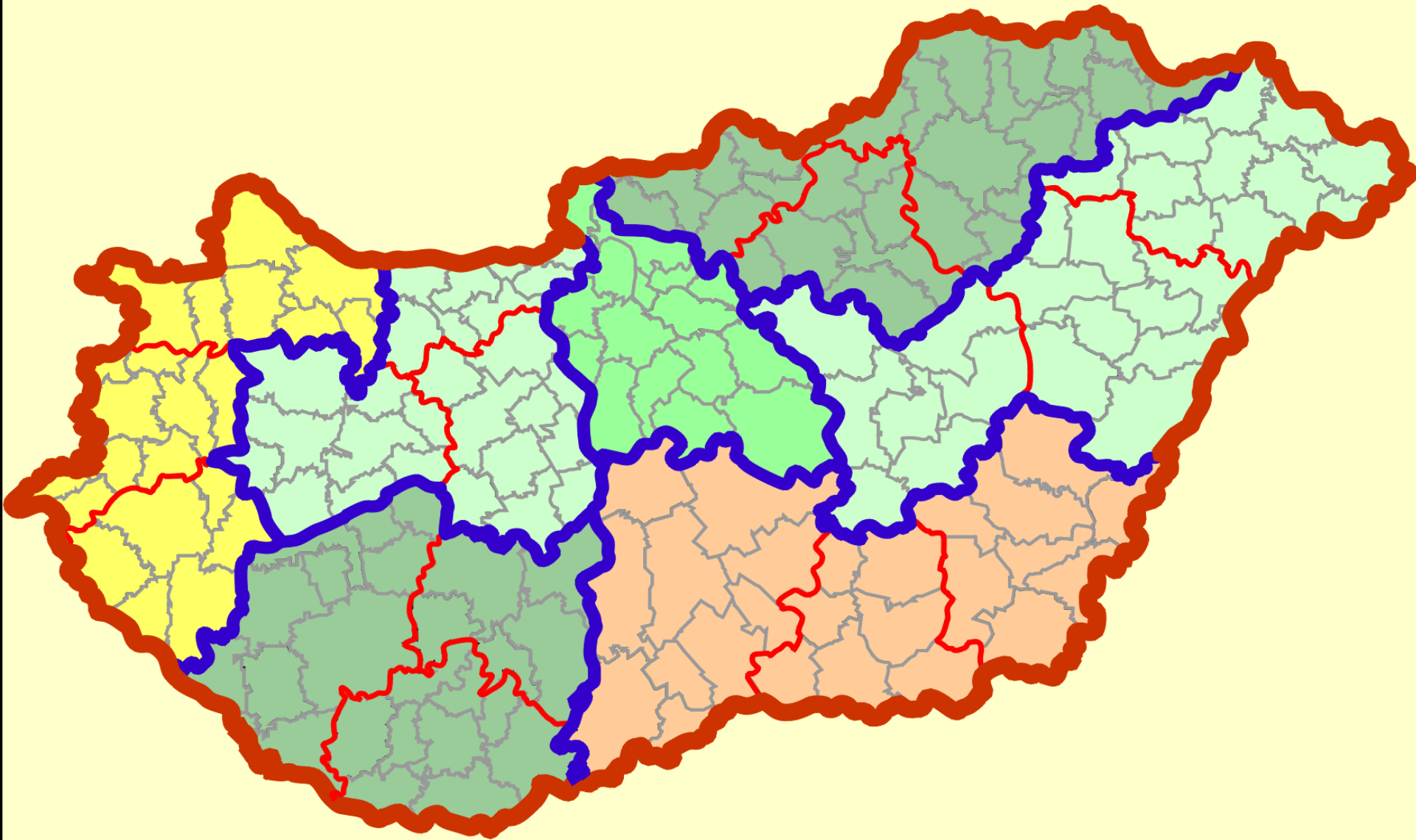


# Municipal and territorial units





# The NUTS units





# Geographical options

Basic-	3200	municipalities
Micro-regions	138 → 174 (recently), NUTS 4	Municipal association
Counties	19+capital. NUTS 3	Self-government+ state administration.
Macro regions	7 (since 1998), NUTS 2	Development institutions. +state administration (2006).
NUTS 1 regions	3	-



# Jumping of power among levels and sectors

The rescaling led to shift of power up/ourwards

Micro-region-building  
from basic → micro region

Municipalities

attracted/pushed into  
associations  
geographically designated  
and financed by the  
centre → growing distance,  
conflicts between cities  
and villages (belonging to  
the weaker)

Macro-region building  
from counties → region

1. „Partners”

delegated to regional development  
councils → elite networks

2. County state administration  
integrated into regional scale  
units



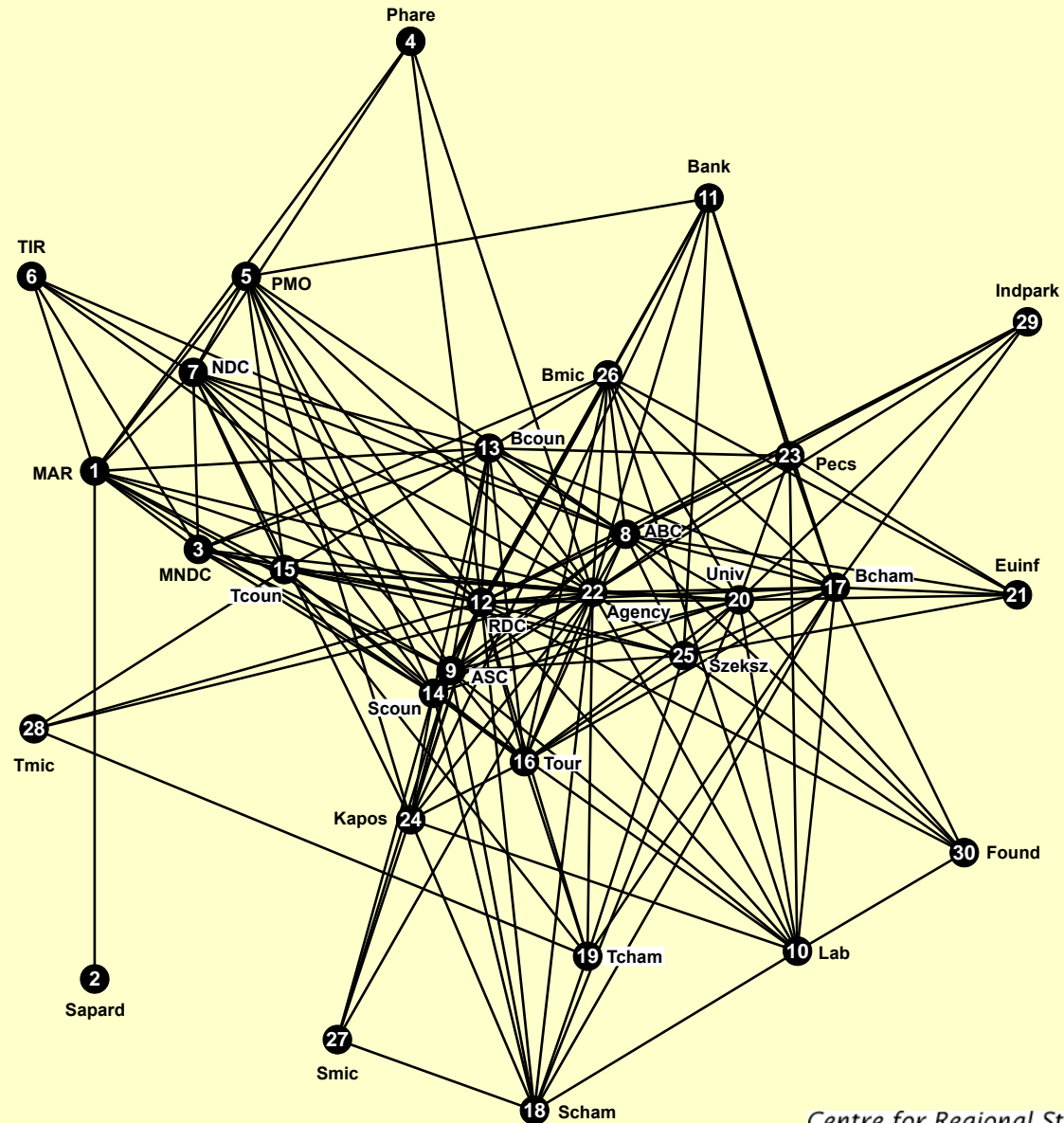


# Rescaling led to emptying of democratic institutions

Micro region	County	Macro region
Is not „level” yet	Is it level still	Unsure future
Interest group of mayors in order to absorb extra subsidies	Continuous lost in competences and resources	Corporative logic, narrow elite circles, „partners”
Citizens have no access	Weakening legitimacy	Expanding influence of the centre (deconcentration)
Inner conflicts, uneven chances for the members	No contact both with up and down	Missing publicity



# Networks in South Transdanubia (2003, SNA)



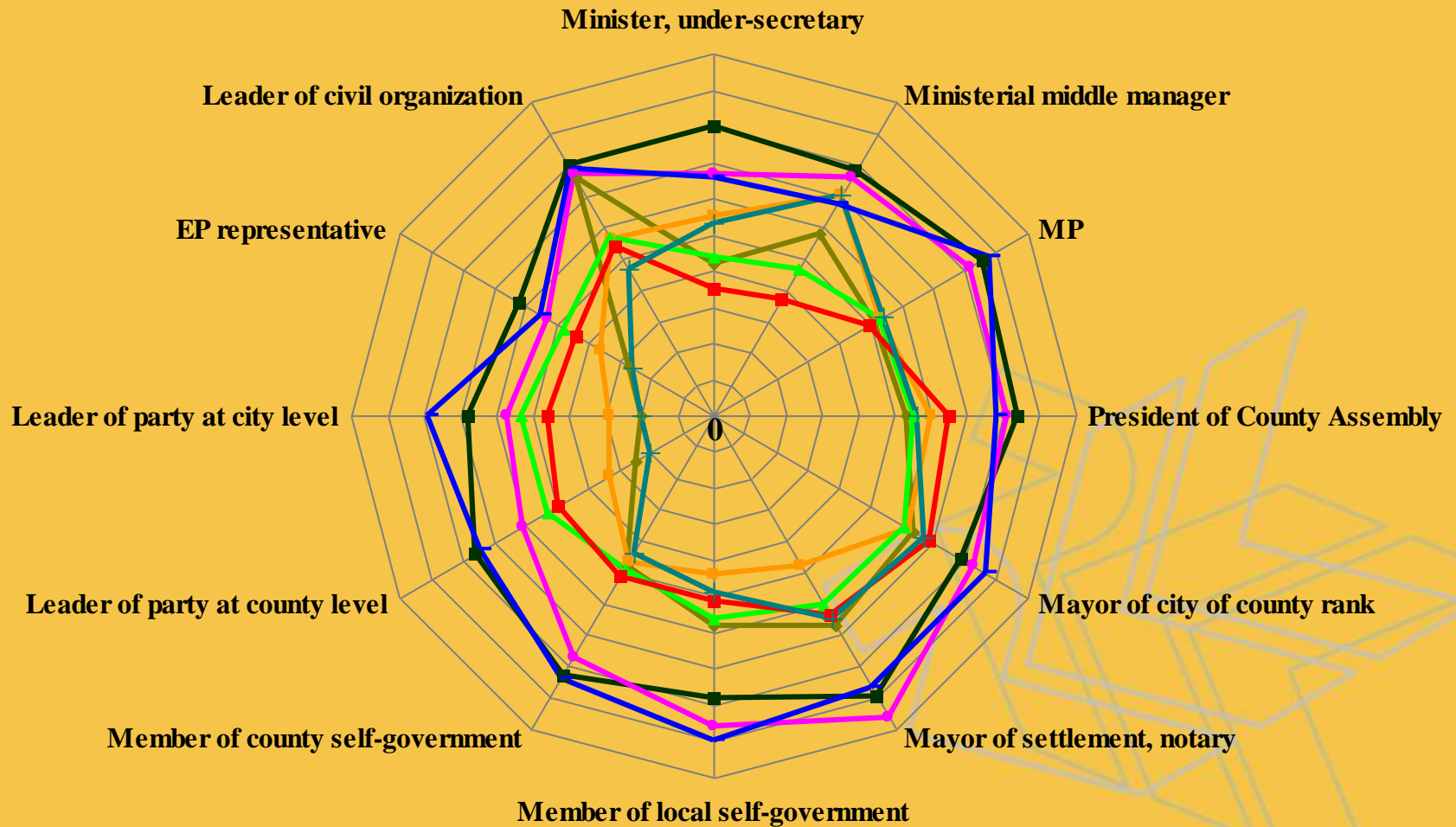


# Personal networks in the region, 2008

## Strength of connections (by activity area)

(index: 0 – weak, 100 – strong)

MTA Regionális Kutatások Központja

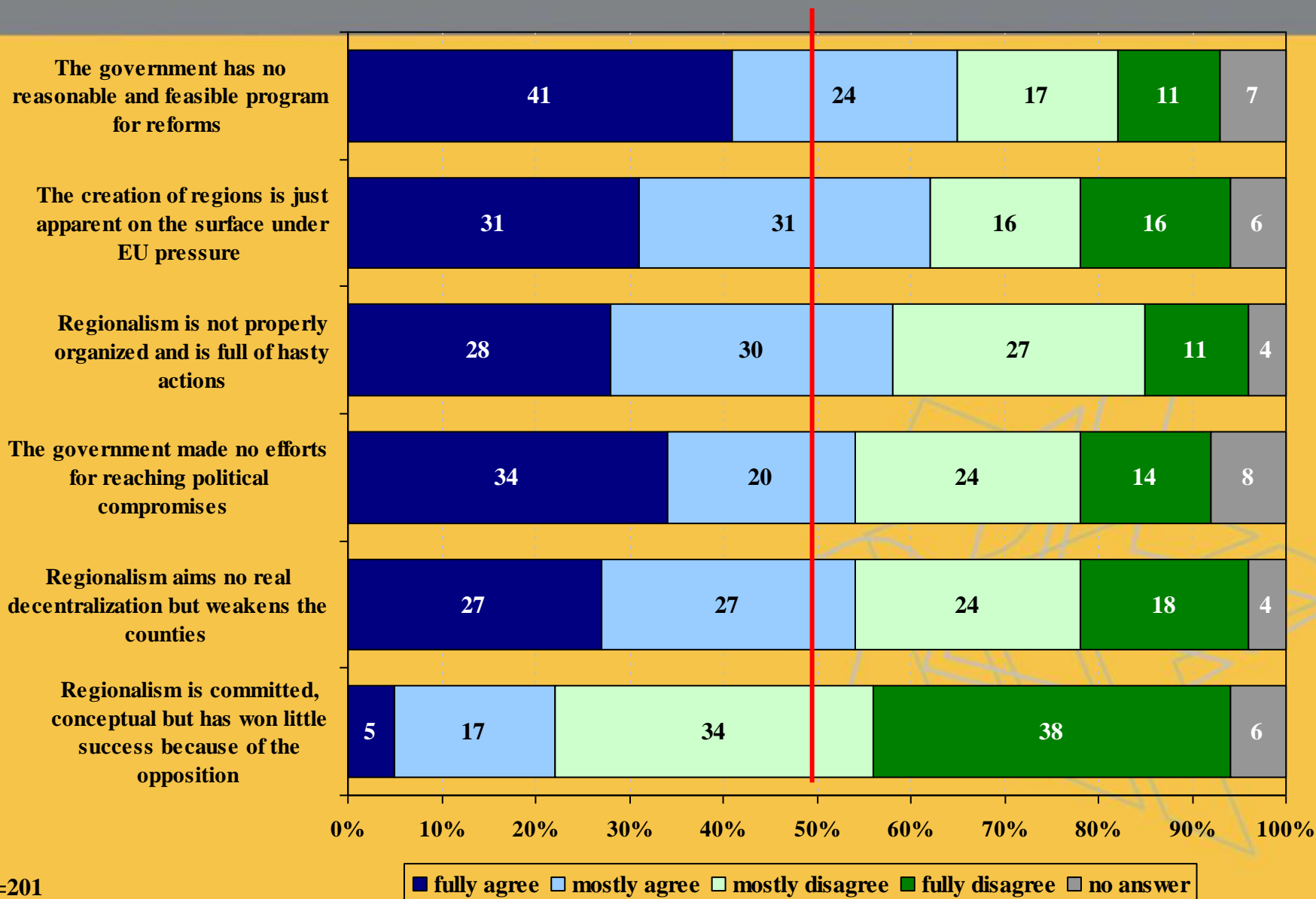


- civil organization
- manager in higher education
- firm, enterprise
- media manager
- politician
- regional development
- administrative organ
- self-government politician

# Judgement of governmental approach to regional reform

## Do you agree or disagree with these statements? (%)

MTA Regionális Kutatások Központja



N=201

## The Bigger is the More effective?

- Who counts? (local governments are in crisis)
  - For what? Development policy (NUTS) ≠ general public policy and services
  - Too much levels costly at least
  - What about other values like democracy, social capital, transparency?
- 



# Rescaling and Europeanisation

- Is there „European” standard?
- The scale or the capacity/performance is important?
- Does scale mean anything without institutional frame and content (failure of European charter of regional governments)?
- Is the convergence or divergence in governance a geographical issue?



# European „standards”

Country	Subnational administrative units				Lower-intermediate level			NUTS division		Municipalities
	N	Name	Status*	Size (thousand)	N	Name	Status*	NUTS 2	NUTS 3	
Austria	9	Bundesländer	Member state	912				9	35	2381 Gemeinden
Belgium	3	Régions	Member state	3468	10	provinces	Self-government	10	43	589 Communes
Bulgaria	28	Oblast	Deconcentrated organ	259				6	28	264 municipalities 3850 mayoralities
Cyprus	6	Districts	Deconcentrated organ	132					–	614 municipalities
Czech Republic	14	Kraje	Self-government	730				8	14	77 okresy 6249 obec
Denmark	5	Regioner	Self-government	1097					15	98 municipalities
Estonia	15	Mmaakonnad	Self-government	87					5	227 municipalities
Finland	6	Laanit	Deconcentrated	874	20	maakunnat	Association	5	20	82 Seutukunnat 446 Kunnat
France	26	Regions + DOM	Self-government	2464	100	departments	Self-government	26	100	36378 municipalities
Germany	16	Länder	Member state	5148	429	Kreise	Self-government	41	439	13176 Gemeinden
Greece	13	Periferies	Deconcentrated	825	52	nomoi	Self-government	13	51	1034 Dimoi
Hungary	20	Megyéék+Bp	Self-government	497				7	20	3145 municipalities
Ireland	8	Regional authority regions	Deconcentrated	520	26	counties	Self-government	2	8	3440 Wards
Italy	20	Regioni	Self-government	2907	110	provincia	Self-government	21	103	8100 Comuni
Latvia	33	Rajoni	Deconcentrated	88					6	536 pagasti
Lithuania	10	Apskritis	Deconcentrated	357					10	60 Savivaldybe 515 Seniūnijos
Luxembourg	3	Districts	Deconcentrated	162	13	cantons	Deconcentrated		–	13 Cantons 118 communes
Malta	6	Distretti	Deconcentrated	67					2	68 Kunsilli
Netherlands	12	Provincies	Self-government	1387				12	40	489 Gemeenten
Poland	16	Województwa	Self-government	2406	379	powiaty	Self-government	16	45	2478 Gminy
Portugal	7	Regiões	Deconcentrated	534				7	30	308 municipalities 4261 civil parishes
Romania	42	Județe	Self-government	530				8	42	3136 comune
Slovakia	8	Kraje	Self-government	682				4	8	79 okresy 2928 obec
Slovenia	58	Upravne enote	Deconcentrated	35					12	193 obcine 6000 naselja
Spain	19	Comunidades	Self-government	2131	50	Provincias	Self-government	19	50	8108 municipios
Sweden	21	Län	Self-government	431				2	21	290 Kommuner
United Kingdom	37	Counties	Self-government	1647				37	133	318 Communes 10679 Wards
<b>Average</b>				<b>1065</b>						

Status: Where we stated the local governmental/elected status it could be also parallelly deconcentrated unit as well. Sometimes the number consists the capital as well.

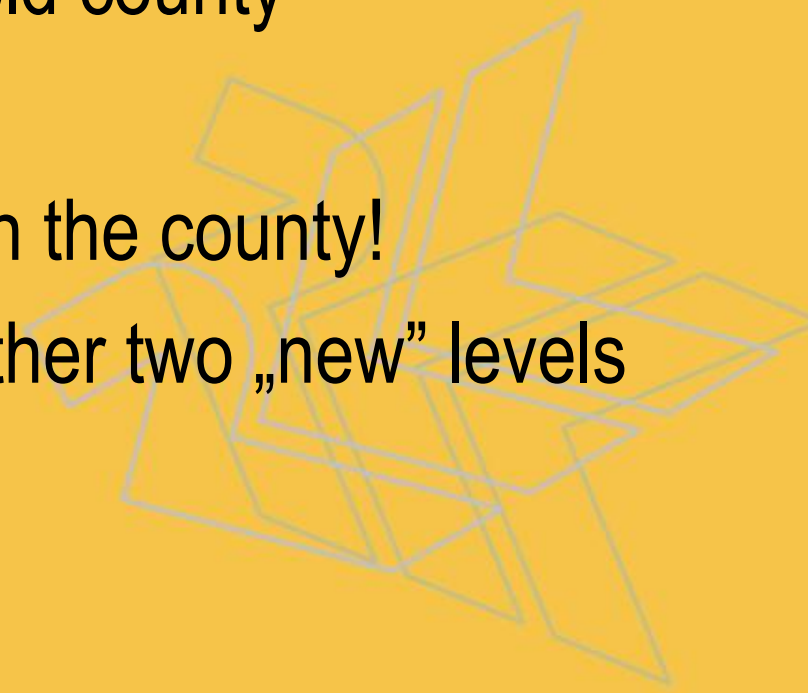


New government is going to

- back-scaling, based on the old county

but

- strengthening the state within the county!
- how to harmonize with the other two „new“ levels





# Lessons

- Drawing the map easier than devolving the power
- „Experiments” of rescaling could threaten the real decentralisation
- Not rescaling first, there are other options for fitting (jungle of practices, institutions)
- Regionalisation is rather increasing the importance of (small or large) regions than jumping of the power up
- Europe of what kind of regions, which future? (R&F Studies, 2008)

