

THE THIRD SECTOR AND THE NEW DEVELOPMENT PARADIGMS

Valentin FILIP^{a*}

^{a)} Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration,
Cluj-Napoca, Romania and Program Director, Civitas Foundation for Civil
Society, Cluj-Napoca Branch

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Abstract: NGOs, as economic actors, are now passing a stage that could change their role in development for the long term. Developing NGOs are not only making peace with the market but are using its mechanisms to better tackle challenges such as poverty, inequality, democratic participation and bottom-up empowerment. Development projects are more sensible to the market needs and evolution while economic sustainability of their results is now a prerequisite. Furthermore, efficiency and accountability are criteria that appear in the majority of funding entities calls for projects, all of this putting a pressure on NGOs for changing their practices, their staff competences and their strategies. This evolution, perceived from the perspective of development economics theories, is contributing the confirmation of the “market solutions” approach, given by the neoliberal theories. However it is important to say that NGOs are making a selection of some large areas that can become a “refined” neoliberalism.

Key words: development economics; NGOs; market mechanisms; alternatives to development

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* Corresponding author. E-mail address: valentin@civitas.ro.

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