



International Retirement Migration to Hungary: Seeking to Reaffirm Ontological Security?

Ágnes Eröss¹ · Dóra Gábrriel² · Monika Mária Váradi² · Julianna Kohut-Ferki³ · Krisztina Németh² · Bálint Koós² · Patrik Tátrai³ · Katalin Kovály^{3,4}

Received: 22 March 2026 / Accepted: 3 July 2026
© The Author(s) 2026

Abstract

This paper is based on 27 semi-structured interviews conducted in multiple locations in peripheral municipalities in Hungary between March 2022 and April 2024 with older adults who had migrated to Hungary either from Western Europe or from Ukraine. The research employs the theoretical framework of international retirement migration (IRM) while broadening the geographical scope of related research. Our contribution explores the multiple motivations and strategies of older migrants from the East and West. The research presents new data on a topic that has been overlooked in post-socialist countries such as Hungary and explores the peculiarities of narratives among older adult migrants. Our data draws on the understanding of geographical arbitrage described by Hayes (2014), whereby individuals exploit global inequalities to mitigate financial insecurity or improve their circumstances in retirement. The paper seeks to link the concept of ontological security with the IRM literature. It argues that, given the perceived status loss resulting from the neoliberal transformation of the state and geopolitical conflicts, migration can be interpreted as a strategy employed by older adults to reaffirm ontological security. Notably, a desire for security (with an altered meaning) emerged as a narrative strategy in both groups, partly to conceal the economic reasons for migration. Western European older migrants list ideological reasons for moving to Hungary, which they describe as secure and traditional. Migrants from Ukraine—overwhelmingly ethnic Hungarians—also emphasise their sense of belonging to the motherland.

Keywords International retirement migration · Ontological security · Geoarbitrage · Hungary · Ukraine · Family strategy

Extended author information available on the last page of the article

Published online: 18 July 2026

Springer

Introduction

While the Hungarian neoliberal authoritarian government¹ strongly rejected the reception of refugees and immigrants on a discursive level (Melegh et al., 2021) and employed a hate campaign from 2015 onwards to generate and maintain a moral panic centred on the threat of migration (Gerő & Sik, 2020), it also developed a migration policy whereby labour migrants of selected nationalities were encouraged to enter the country through temporary work agencies (Danaj & Meszmann, 2024). However, the government also explicitly supported the immigration of older adults from Western Europe at the narrative level (though not through actual policy), grounded in a conservative Christian ideology. The immigration of ethnic kin from the diaspora is regarded as a natural process, facilitated since 2011 by simplified naturalisation.

Migrants from Western Europe began appearing in the national press at the start of our research (2022). In some instances, they were described as wealthy pensioners from Western European countries who were purchasing cheap rural properties and “buying up” Somogy and Zala counties in the Transdanubia region (telex.hu, 2024). In 2022, the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, welcomed these “Western refugees”, assuring them that Hungary would gladly receive them (hvg.hu, 2022). Meanwhile, demographic processes in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, Hungary’s easternmost county, have been a topic of national media attention for over a decade. The region is a destination for migrants from Ukraine, mainly for the Hungarian minority living in Transcarpathia, Western Ukraine. The media covered news about property owners who provide fictitious residence addresses, and Ukrainian nationals who “exploit” the Hungarian pension system (hvg.hu, 2017). The phenomenon of “phantom voters”—a sharp increase in the local voting population just before parliamentary elections—has also stirred controversy (atlatszo.hu, 2022).

After recognising that no thorough social scientific research in Hungary has explored these migration processes, we decided to examine why these two peripheral regions, Somogy and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg Counties in Hungary, have become attractive destinations for (pre)retirement migrants arriving from Western Europe (hereafter “Western migrants” from Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK) or Ukraine (hereafter “Eastern migrants”), respectively. The novelty of the research lies not only in Hungary being an uncommon IRM destination, but also in the fact that these migrants chose to relocate to peripheral settlements where, in addition to a lack of services, access to health care is scarce—factors typically considered influential in choosing IRM destinations. Therefore, we assumed that these places offer other attractions.

The relocation of older Western European immigrants is consistent with the global neoliberal economic transformation (Hayes, 2014). While Hayes mainly analysed North–South migrations, similar dynamics can be observed in West–East migrations as well, closely related to the relative status loss of those involved (Benson & O’Reilly,

¹ The manuscript was submitted in March 2026, one month before the parliamentary elections in Hungary, which marked the end of Viktor Orbán’s 16-year period in power.

2016; Hayes, 2015). International retirement migration may be a viable response to neoliberal austerity, social vulnerability, and perceived status loss in the home country. While the IRM literature stems from, and often centres around, the relocation of older adults from Western European countries targeting cheaper countries, research points out that migration in the reverse direction also takes place, namely older individuals from post-socialist countries migrate to Western and Northern Europe (Lulle, 2021). In this paper, we aim to contribute to this literature by presenting the situation of Hungary, a Central European country, as a target country within IRM processes.

While older migrants from both the East and West have made their way into media discussions, their settlement has often been surrounded by local gossip and negative rumors. Consequently, the aim of our research was to explore in greater depth the motivations behind the settlement decisions of older migrants and the factors influencing their choice of residence. Despite the obvious and numerous differences between the two groups (socio-economic status, different border regimes, and entitlements to the social system and services), we intended to investigate similar or comparable motivations and strategies, especially narrative strategies, which we could trace in both sets of interviews. We posed four main research questions based on our interviews: (1) What motivations can be identified among Western and Eastern older adult migrants who have chosen Hungary as a destination; (2) What factors make Hungary and the particular settlement or municipality where they live attractive to them; (3) Can we trace comparable elements/similarities in the narrations among Western and Eastern migrants; and (4) How does the comparative analysis of Eastern and Western older adult migrants who settle in Hungary enrich the international literature on IRM?

We argue that Western and Eastern retired migrants experience an ontological security crisis as a result of their deteriorating social position in their country of origin (due to neoliberal transformation or war and its consequences), which leads them to migrate. Migration is thus framed as a response to this crisis, an attempt to regain control, agency, and a social position. However, for both groups, a desire to improve their economic situation is a major motivation for migration; in their narratives about identifying a location for migration, the emphasis is placed on the role of values in shaping that choice (Xiang & Nyíri, 2022), in our understanding, partly to conceal the underlying economic motivation.

The article first provides a brief overview of the theories and concepts on which our analysis is based. Following the section on methodology and the dataset, and a clarification of the context of IRM in Hungary, the analysis is divided into two main sections: one explores narratives about perceived security threats in the place of origin, followed by narratives about how migrants perceive security in Hungary.

Theoretical Framework and Concepts

In recent years, research evidence has highlighted the diversifying nature and rapidly changing landscape of international retirement migration (IRM) (King et al., 2021). Traditionally preferred destinations are becoming increasingly unaffordable for older adults, new geographical frontiers are emerging (Iorio, 2020; King et al.,

2021; Toyota, 2022; Koós et al., 2025), and spatial polarisation within countries is also evident (Salvati & Benassi, 2021). Not only geographies, but the range of social groups involved in this type of migration is also widening (King et al., 2021). Lifestyle migration is a theoretical and conceptual framework introduced to a wider audience by Benson and O'Reilly (2009), who described lifestyle migrants as relatively affluent individuals seeking a better way of life, driven by individual considerations and a desire for self-fulfilment. This approach has been criticised by scholars who have pointed out the vague nature of the term “relatively affluent” and argued that labour migration is not very different from lifestyle migration (Huete et al., 2013). Recent research suggests that IRM is no longer the privilege of relatively affluent individuals seeking a better life; rather, a new social group within IRM has emerged with a lower social position and smaller pensions (Botterill, 2017; Iorio, 2020).

In the IRM literature, the idea that migration is a coping strategy for older adults has gained ground in recent years (Botterill, 2017; de Jong, 2022). Research evidence from Bulgaria indicates that the primary reason for relocation among Italian retirees is financial constraints in their country of origin (Iorio, 2020), a pattern similar to that observed among Japanese retirees in Thailand (Toyota, 2022). Other empirical studies also examine the choices of retired migrants, who are assumed to have fewer resources in their countries of origin, who move to Thailand (Sunanta & Jaisuekun, 2022). While lifestyle considerations still play a role in the relocation of older adults, a desire to escape economic constraints by moving to a lower-cost country is an important factor in reducing economic instability (Repetti et al., 2018).

The emerging presence of countries in the peripheries and semi-peripheries is backed by the concept of geographic arbitrage (Hayes, 2014). This is a critical concept that reflects on global inequalities, historical context, and social structures, and represents an applied framework within IRM studies (Hayes, 2014, 2015). The term refers to individuals or families taking advantage of lower-cost locations that offer arbitrage opportunities due to ongoing inequalities. Price differentials can be exploited across markets; for example, small pensions can be offset by lower housing costs, and everyday expenses can be reduced by retirees migrating to a lower-cost country (Iorio, 2020).

The growing number of pensioners from wider social strata who migrate primarily for economic reasons is a consequence of the neoliberal transformation of the state, which is manifested in the erosion of democratic institutions and in authoritarian and market-based governance (Schmidtke, 2024). Bruff (2014) argues that the state is not only withdrawing from providing public services but is also being reconfigured in an authoritarian manner, manifesting as a weakened social contract and a decline in democratic participation. When public institutions are under strong government control, the state may mobilise a discourse with nationalist elements, framing itself as a protector of “national interests” against external threats, such as the EU, liberal elites, or foreign influences (Lendvai-Bainton & Szelewa, 2021). Migration policies and discourses reflect the broader transformation of the state. However, migration can be part of a middle-class nation-building project, integrating selected migrants into the economic system while excluding irregular migrants (Schmidtke, 2024).

Welfare chauvinism refers to the exclusionary practice of restricting the distribution of social benefits to non-native residents or a minority group of a country (Lugosi,

2018). Pensioners in society are often perceived as more deserving than immigrants, which may be explained by the assumed level of reciprocity within the relevant social group (Naumann et al., 2024). Welfare chauvinist attitudes have been discussed in the literature in the context of Eastern European migrant care workers (Melegh et al., 2018), welfare benefits (Feischmidt & Szombati, 2017), and pension benefits (Naumann et al., 2024).

There is a growing academic interest in the link between migration and ontological security. Ontological security refers to a fundamental human need for a sense of order and predictability constituted by well-known and familiar circumstances—a “protective cocoon” (Giddens, 1991, p. 40) in social, affective, material sense—and by the constant reaffirmation of others who “recognize [one’s] behaviour as appropriate or reasonable” (Giddens, 1991, p. 191). When individuals experience threats to their physical safety, disruptions to their familiar surroundings, or face unsettling reactions or constraints, their sense of ontological security becomes destabilised, generating anxiety. In order to overcome or reduce anxiety and regain control, individuals develop coping strategies, which are rituals of day-to-day life that help counter ontological insecurity. In the migration context, performing good citizenship or adopting particular social behaviours can be considered among such coping strategies (Nicolson, 2023).

Broader structural factors such as geopolitical changes, war, political shifts, or crises can undermine ontological security, prompting people to migrate, including return migration (Lados et al., 2023), as a means of restoring the feeling of stability. On the other hand, migrants’ struggle to regain ontological security is realised in a world where mobility is regulated and constrained by migration regimes and conditioned by structural inequalities and power asymmetries. Migrants thus navigate between “homing”, understood as a process when individuals “mov[e] towards a state, condition, or feeling of home, given their potential and disposition to do so, in light of their resources and of the external structure of opportunities” (Boccagni, 2022, p. 593). In a recent article, Leko proposed the “*migrant struggle for ontological security*” (italics in the original) as a migrant-centred holistic approach that recognises homing (Boccagni, 2022) and everyday bordering (Yuval-Davis et al., 2018) as “co-constitutive, each shaping the other in a continuous dialogue” (Leko, 2025, p. 16). As argued, this synthetic approach allows for bringing the migrant to the centre of analysis and “bridging the micro-politics of everyday experiences, with the macro-structures that govern mobility” (Leko, 2025, p. 16). We found this holistic approach particularly relevant to our cases, especially its emphasis on the dialectical relationship between homing and everyday bordering.

In the article, we understand security as a “state of being” characterised by the guarantee that certain goods will be accessible to the individual in the foreseeable future (Herington, 2015), thereby underscoring its temporality and changing nature.

Hungary as a Target Country

A recent article discusses how Hungary has become a new destination for older migrants over the past two decades, particularly from Germany (Koós et al., 2025). While in 2011 there were only 22,000 foreign citizens aged 60 and over living in

Hungary, the 2022 census estimated 38,000, representing nearly 1.5% of the older population. In 2020, nearly 20% of migrants were aged 60 or older (Koós et al., 2025). This proportion is even greater in rural areas. The most popular destinations for older Germans are not the capital or tourist destinations but rather rural areas, also known as inner peripheries, primarily in the counties of Somogy and Zala. Results indicate that older Germans tend to avoid localities with a young age structure (primarily suburban settlements) and settlements with a larger Roma minority. The high unemployment rate and unfavourable socioeconomic indicators of the villages chosen by German retirees are accompanied by low real estate prices, which may be one reason for their decision to move there.

International migration to Hungary is mostly ethnic migration (Gödri, 2010), i.e., the largest group of people arriving in Hungary, regardless of age, is the predominantly Hungarian population from neighbouring countries (Romania, Ukraine, Serbia, and Slovakia). Although the overall weight of ethnic migration within the broader context of international migration among older adults has generally decreased in recent decades (Koós et al., 2025), the migration flow from Transcarpathian Hungarian seniors to Hungary has increased sharply. The number of older adult individuals (aged 60 and over) born in Ukraine but residing in Hungary tripled between the 2001 and 2022 censuses, rising from 6098 to 18,201. According to the 2022 Hungarian census, 88% of individuals aged 60 and over born in Ukraine and residing in Hungary were Hungarian citizens. Particularly striking is the rise in both their numbers and concentration in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, especially in the region near the Ukrainian-Hungarian border. This area is one of the country's peripheries, with a long history of massive emigration among the working-age population. While Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg has a negative internal migration balance, statistical data indicate that in its border area—which generally lacks the socioeconomic conditions that typically attract immigrants—the population has either stagnated or significantly increased in recent decades. This trend can largely be attributed to the influx of Transcarpathians, notably older adults (Koós et al., 2025).

Methodology, Dataset, and Description of the Field

The research was carried out between December 2021 and November 2025 by a research consortium consisting of researchers with diverse disciplinary backgrounds. The research had a quantitative part, which provided the background and contributed to the design of the qualitative part, including the selection of research sites. The qualitative research was conducted by two groups: one working in Somogy County (Transdanubia), the other in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, at the Hungarian-Ukrainian border zone. The two main phases of fieldwork were conducted independently; however, the interview guides were developed jointly to enhance the comparability of the data. In the Hungarian-Ukrainian border zone, we conducted six rounds of fieldwork between 2022 and 2024, and in Somogy, four rounds. The two research groups were in regular contact, and each year they discussed the preliminary findings, exchanged experiences, and revisited the hypothesis in a consortium workshop. The selection of interviewees was consistent across the two groups:

in addition to retirees aged 65 or over, we included individuals of pre-retirement age (50–64) (Stockdale & MacLeod, 2013) who are already preparing for retirement. In addition to older adult migrants, we also interviewed local stakeholders and other village residents.

Based on census data, we selected villages in Somogy County as preliminary fieldwork sites, where we conducted interviews with mayors, residents, and older migrants to examine the social and economic conditions of these communities. In the next step, we selected three villages (each with a population of 200–700) for sociological fieldwork, where we worked between 2022 and 2024. These villages are 20–30 km from tourist destinations and are considered to be inner peripheries. In total, 25 semi-structured interviews were conducted with people without a migration background, including mayors, service providers, office workers, and local residents. Thirty-three semi-structured interviews were conducted with Western European older migrants (German, Dutch, Austrian, Belgian, British, and French citizens); however, in this paper, we use only 18 interviews from the analysis conducted with German, Dutch, French, and British citizens above 50, who arrived in Hungary after 2011 (see Table 1). The majority of the interviewees from Somogy County were married, and their former occupations were mainly in the social sector, healthcare, education, and the service industry. Their previous occupations suggests that they had a relatively lower social status in their country of origin, supported also by the interviews. The interviews with German citizens were conducted in German, while the rest with migrants were conducted in English. The interviews were conducted in the interviewees' homes and lasted from one to three hours.

In the case of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, we followed a similar strategy: based on census data, we identified the municipalities with the largest increase in the number of older adult residents from Ukraine. After exploratory fieldwork in March and June 2022, we conducted a total of four rounds of fieldwork in the selected settlements between 2022 and 2024. In this paper, we use only 9 of the 27 semi-structured interviews recorded with older migrants; we conducted these with individuals or couples who migrated after 2011 and were older than 50. Nearly half of the interviewees were widows; the rest were married. Two of the couples lived in two households, one partner in Hungary, the other in Ukraine. They typically used to work in the public sector (health care, education), which placed them in the relatively lower, lower-middle strata of the society in their country of origin. Some of the interviewees were born or lived in ethnically mixed marriages, and one interview was conducted in Ukrainian as requested by the respondent. Two researchers had Transcarpathian origins, which generally facilitated access and helped build trust with participants. This was particularly important given the media attention and politicisation of pension claims among Transcarpathian Hungarians, which made recruiting older adults who had migrated to Hungary after 2011 especially difficult.

The sample included more female respondents, reflecting men's shorter life expectancy. After examining gender differences, no significant variations were found in narratives regarding migration motivations, destination choice, or the perception of threats, indicating that gender was not a determining factor in how participants narrated their experiences. Married couples' accounts generally corroborated one another. All participants were confirmed to have full cognitive

capacity, and only individuals able to provide informed consent were included, in line with ethical research guidelines.

The interview guide covered three main thematic areas: the reasons and circumstances of migration, the selection of the destination, and life after migration in the villages. The data analysis was based on an inductive method (Altheide, 1987). During the analysis, we identified patterns and topics that emerged from both pools of interviews. The data were coded using thematic analysis. While acknowledging the embeddedness of these topics in the contexts of individual lives and migration decisions, we identified certain anxieties that manifested in both study groups. We found that these emerging empirical topics were related to aspects of ontological security: disrupted day-to-day routines, the perceived change in the environment, and the lack of affirmation from the environment, which is essential for maintaining self-identity. We subsequently grouped these threats under the category of “perceived threats in the homeland”. The interviews were conducted until thematic saturation was reached, when no substantially new themes emerged from the data.

Throughout the research, we constantly reflected on our position as researchers. At the initial stage of the research, it was essential to introduce ourselves to the mayor and explain the purpose of our visit. Only after this visit did we started interacting with local residents. A further consideration is related to the age difference between researchers and participants. The age difference between the researchers (mainly aged between 30 and 45) and the interlocutors did not emerge as a topic or problem, as both long-term inhabitants and newcomers were willing to share their experiences. Additionally, the ethnic background of certain researchers contributed positively to the research: in one group, a member had a German (Swabian) background, while in another, two members had Transcarpathian origins. These circumstances enhanced the interviewees’ openness.

In accordance with ethical standards and GDPR regulations, all interviewees were informed of the project’s aim, and the use, storage and the publication of research data. Informed consent was either obtained in writing or orally (audio-recorded). To minimise the chance of identification, names and places of residence are also anonymised.

Perceived Threats in the Homeland

Based on the interviews, we could identify four topics that the interlocutors perceived as threats to their ontological security. We distinguished the following: (1) Discontent with the State in the country of origin; (2) Anxiety about migration and refugees; (3) The Russo-Ukrainian war; and (4) Financial insecurity, i.e., fear of impoverishment and deteriorating living circumstances. We argue that the topic of insecurity appears in the narratives of both groups; at the same time, we do not imply that the personal experiences, circumstances of relocation, and the threats presented by Eastern and Western older migrants are analogous.

Discontent with the State

Many of the Western migrants voiced the opinion that one can no longer think freely in the country of origin, where opinions other than the mainstream one are silenced. On the one hand, the perception of a restricted freedom of opinion was connected to pro-government media outlets and manipulated news. On the other hand, claims of indoctrination by the State emerged in connection with public issues and affairs, such as education, the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated “unnecessary” restrictions, and LGBTQ-related issues.

I see a lot of lying, manipulation, and forcing opinions on people that are determined by the state. You can no longer think freely, you can no longer say what you think! Otherwise, you are immediately backed into a corner. (S18)

These perceptions were constantly contrasted with the political climate of Hungary, which was depicted as an ideal and safe environment for conservative thinkers. Therefore, the relocation of these migrants to Hungary can be understood as a form of seeking refuge, where they do not face severe restrictions on their personal views.

Indoctrination of the state has become very massive and stronger in Germany in recent years, especially since Corona [the coronavirus pandemic]. We see that in other countries, in Hungary, this is less the case, here there is more freedom. (S12)

Dissatisfaction with the state of Ukraine was prevalent among Eastern migrants. The lack of trust in the country's leaders, including accusations that they are criminals, was mentioned several times. Some respondents claimed that, as members of the Hungarian ethnic minority, they experience increasing pressure from the state, which, since 2014, has gradually narrowed the legal protection of the use of minority languages and severely limited access to education in minority languages (Csernicskó & Kontra, 2022). The intensification of nationalising policies in Ukraine creates a feeling of insecurity among some of the respondents, members of the ethnic minority community, while they perceive the legal shrinking of minority education as a threat to the future of their grandchildren.

Well, this [the Ukrainian government] is not a government. This is, well, I'm putting it harshly now, a band of robbers. A gang of robbers. Since they have been in power, (...) the life of the Hungarians has become more and more bitter and worse. (B14)

Thus, for some of the resettled interviewees, their displacement to Hungary is also framed as a family strategy to secure the education of their grandchildren in the Hungarian language. The interlocutors of this (pre)-retirement generation had the opportunity to enrol their children in Hungarian minority kindergartens and primary and secondary schools in Ukraine after 1991. However, since 2014, they have observed a tightening legal framework, raising concerns about the availability of minority education and the future of minority rights:

Importantly, many expressed anxiety about the future, stating that independent of how the war will end, the hostilities will not cease:

So, what will be the relationship between people even after the war (...) I'm simply afraid... so I ... I don't like politicians; I don't like journalists... who set people against each other. (B26)

Anxiety Caused by Migration and Refugees

Closely connected to governmental policies, migration and refugee policies were also mentioned by Western migrants as a reason for migrating to Hungary. The presence of non-European, non-Christian migrants in Germany or the Netherlands is linked to threats to cultural integrity and physical safety in the narratives of older migrants. While many of them admitted they did not follow Hungarian politics on a daily basis, older adults who employed this narrative strategy were aware that migration and asylum policies in Hungary are less welcoming than in Germany. The narratives contain some comparisons between the country of origin and the host country, highlighting the benefits of the latter.

I think, for Dutch people, it's very nice to know that there are no Muslims here. In Holland, there are too many. It's really, Holland is becoming a Muslim country, it's not good. But when my husband and I went to Hungary, we already knew that we didn't want to live in Holland, because we didn't like the political climate in Holland. Everything is getting crazier and crazier. (S07)

The millions of refugees who live now in Germany are beneficiaries of our social system. (S12)

This type of reasoning was absent in the interviews with the older migrants from Ukraine in relation to Hungary. Sporadically, some mentioned that the Transcarpathian Roma abuse the aid available in Hungary (mainly donations distributed by church-related or civil organisations) and questioned their right to seek asylum. Those who regularly travelled to Transcarpathia consistently noted that the war-induced migration processes have significantly transformed the demography of the region: they encountered fewer of their former neighbours and acquaintances, while Internally Displaced People (IDPs) from other parts of Ukraine had moved in. Importantly, their narratives reflected a sense of mourning over the passing of earlier times, rather than transmitting hostility.

The Russo-Ukrainian War

Perceptions of the Russo-Ukrainian war were entirely different in the two field sites. While Transcarpathia has suffered only three missile attacks, the war has been part of everyday life and significantly impacted family strategies in the last decade. Since 2014, when the war in the Donbas began, Transcarpathian interviewees began purchasing houses in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County in small villages near the state border. Before 2022, these houses served as second homes, used temporarily, for

instance, during summer vacations. As the interview excerpt illustrates, this was sometimes an investment for the future, more precisely, to protect from the insecurities that the future might bring:

We moved here in 2014 (...) when these conditions started in Ukraine, these revolutionary war conditions (...) and we decided that, if possible, we would buy a house here, so that if the family or children had to leave, we would know where to settle. (B14)

In the narratives of the German respondents, the problem of social injustice was raised several times. Their experience was that welfare benefits tend to favour refugees and immigrants over people in their home country, making them feel like victims of ongoing crises. This perception is especially applicable in relation to the Russo-Ukrainian war.

...look at our politicians! The way they're dealing with the war now. I can't understand it – we were a country at war; we started a war [Germany]. And why are they getting so involved in the war in Ukraine?! (...) Germany finances all countries, regardless of... but not our pensioners, our pensioners! (S09)

This argumentation not only reflects elements of welfare chauvinism and a sense of injustice but also reveals a broader sense of hopelessness toward the state among low-income pensioners.

Financial Insecurity and Fear of Impoverishment

The narrative of fear of impoverishment emerged among older Western European adults, closely connected to financial anxiety and the deterioration of social security in the country of origin. One German interviewee put it this way:

They [refugees in Germany] do nothing, they have seven children, get a lot of money for the children and are filthy rich. (S09).

Sometimes this narrative was present in a somewhat hidden way. The reason that respondents concealed their financial insecurity was probably the shame they felt about this sensitive topic. They instead discussed it indirectly, distancing themselves from the problem, but noted that it might affect others and could be observed on the streets.

Germany is a disaster now anyway. On the one hand, it's expensive, the taxes, here and there – it's more relaxed here [in Hungary]. There are a lot of Germans who have decided, so to speak, that we're done with Germany, we're going to Hungary. (S05)

While living in Ukraine, low pensions and continually deteriorating economic conditions led some of our informants to engage in seasonal work in Hungary or the Czech Republic to increase their income. Similar motivations for (pre)retirement migration were described in the case of Latvian migrants by Lulle (2021). Therefore, when a simplified naturalisation process was launched in Hungary in

2011, drastically simplifying the procedure of obtaining Hungarian citizenship, applying for a pension in Hungary and establishing residency became a livelihood strategy, as we will see in the next section.

Reaffirming Ontological Security in Hungary

As anticipated earlier, the narratives unfolding in the interviews suggest that there is a dialectical relationship between perceived threats and how security has been restored or regained through migration to Hungary. This section describes what made the destination feel safe for both Western and Eastern migrants.

Western and Eastern migrants perceive security in different ways. For older migrants from Western Europe, it is connected to physical safety and protected boundaries in the micro-environment. According to their narratives, compared with their country of origin, they do not have to lock their doors at home, and street CCTV surveillance provides them with a sense of safety.

Everybody can come into the garden, I don't lock it, they could take my chairs if they wanted, but no one is coming. In Holland, you can't [do that], it's gone when you wake up. (...) Here, I never close the gate, only when we're away for a few weeks. They don't take anything [here in Hungary]. No, I don't have any bad experiences here. In Holland, I didn't like going on the streets in the evening. When I went by car, I locked the doors. Here, I walk at 10 PM, and I'm not scared. It's safe out here. (S08)

Moving to Hungary brought a sense of time travel and nostalgia for some of the interviewees. Dutch older adults talked about friendly neighbours and people greeting each other on the streets, which created a sense of belonging to a community. Hungary is "just like Holland in the '60's", said one. Community as a value and community engagement as an everyday practice were mentioned. Our data confirmed the importance of values as integral to migration (Xiang & Nyíri, 2022). Similar to the Western migrants, Transcarpathian interlocutors also mentioned the physical attributes of their new residences as an advantage, which makes them feel safe:

I love being here, a quiet little town, everything you can find here, the shops, post office, bank, promenade. The lights are on, the streets are full of video cameras, you don't have to be afraid at night, you can walk at night, day, anytime. The yard is clean. Our yard is such a nice little clearing! Gas, water, electricity, we have everything! (B24)

However, our conversations with them revealed that what makes these peripheral villages attractive is their proximity to the interviewees' "old" homes: Transcarpathians tend to settle near the border crossing closest to their place of origin, which is often a location they were already familiar with prior to their move, and from which frequent commuting is easily manageable. In fact, many older

individuals from Transcarpathia commute across the border on a daily basis to tend to their gardens, look after graves in the cemetery, or take care of family members.

Well, a person is connected to the place where he was born. (...) So we didn't really intend to, we didn't even plan to go inside the country [move to Hungary], it would have been possible, but [later] we thought that we would rather stay here [in Szabolcs-Szatmár Bereg county], close, [able to move] from one home to the other, and we feel better here, we can solve things easily. We can help the children. (B14)

Thus, their migration did not mean a break with their "protective cocoon"; rather, they had extended its boundaries in their struggle for ontological security (Leko, 2025). Residing close to the border also enables them to perform translocal care work that transcends the rigid border through their movements, networks, and activities. Thus, although they had to cross a strictly securitised international border, this did not entail a drastic rupture with either their daily routines or their family ties. On the contrary, for many, resettlement in Hungary represents an extension of the space within which their daily routines are carried out and reduces their anxiety about the future of their children and grandchildren, or about their own health and care needs, as they seek to create a safe haven for the family.

While these peripheral villages enable cross-border commuting and care work, access to Hungary's higher pension is a key motivation for older adults relocating from Ukraine to Hungary:

Well, [I moved] also because the pension is bigger here compared to what we have at home. Well, that also played a part. (B08)

First of all, the pension here is higher than in Ukraine, do you understand? So, life is more relaxed here. (B44)

Ukrainian (and Russian) citizens with a registered address in Hungary who take advantage of the bilateral social policy agreement signed between Hungary and the Soviet Union in 1963 that is still in force with respect to Russia and Ukraine become entitled to a pension in Hungary that is three or four times higher than in Ukraine. If granted, this higher pension enables older adults to support younger family members (see Iorio [2018] for similar family practices). Our field experience suggests that this geoarbitrage opportunity (Hayes, 2014) is mainly utilised by those who speak Hungarian, are mobile, and/or have social capital. In order to justify their deservingness of the pension, they emphasise their Hungarianness, regard themselves as part of the Hungarian nation and as entitled to settle in Hungary and receive benefits based on their "blood" and shared cultural heritage, and frame their migration as a return to the motherland:

...The blood calls, well, how can I say that I am Hungarian after all? [Because] I feel this. I loved it [the town] very much, and then I wanted to live here. (B47)

The higher pension enhances financial security; therefore, it is an integral part of the recreation of the feeling of security for both individuals and their

multigenerational families. Buying properties in Hungary was likewise a family coping strategy: initially, these properties served as temporary residences. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian war, these second homes became permanent residences, which enable quick adaptation within a transnational social space for individuals and families, building on the material and immaterial assets they had previously accumulated. In this way, these new homes are safe places for multigenerational families.

Discussion

Hungary has recently emerged as a destination for IRM (Koós et al., 2025). The source of the inflow of (pre)retirement migrants is predominantly the ethnic Hungarian minority, which is one of the peculiarities of IRM in Hungary. However, the number and proportion of older adults arriving from Western Europe have rapidly increased over the past couple of years. In this article, we aimed to explore the (1) motivations for their migration; (2) the factors that make Hungary and the particular municipality attractive to them; (3) the similarities in the narrations of the migration and settlement choice among Western and Eastern migrants; and (4) the contribution of our case studies to the literature on IRM. We draw on the concept of ontological security, as articulated by Anthony Giddens (1991), and on its recent application in migration scholarship. We have illustrated that migrants' struggle for ontological security unfolds in a dialectical process of perceiving threats and finding security between locations and anchoring points of reflection in time and space.

Both groups of older adults we studied (Eastern migrants arriving from Ukraine and Western migrants from Germany and the Netherlands) exploit their transnational agency—conditioned by geopolitical frames—to improve their living conditions; therefore, they qualify as arbitrageurs (Hayes, 2014). However, due to macrostructural conditions, they follow different strategies: while Western migrants aim to reduce their cost of living, Eastern migrants increase their income by relocating to the neighbouring country, Hungary. These strategies are not independent of the values and ideologies that inform migration (Xiang & Nyíri, 2022). In both groups, certain values were identified on a narrative level (conservative and Christian traditions in Hungary for the Western migrants, and ethnonational sentiments in Eastern migrants) as integral to their migration stories.

In contrast, the migration of older adults from Transcarpathia, Ukraine, is an essential part of a multigenerational family strategy, a way of coping with diverse insecurities deriving from the ongoing war in Ukraine and its socioeconomic consequences, including the shrinking scope of minority rights. The close family and social ties across borders are reflected in the choice of resettlement location: many families prefer to remain near the border, in villages that lack services but allow easy daily commuting. Nevertheless, we stress that all the above-mentioned strategies are conditioned by historical peculiarities and structural constraints and reflect the uneven development among the core, periphery, and semi-periphery (Melegh et al., 2021).

The interview analysis shows that both groups of older adult migrants use security as a core narrative element when explaining their migration stories—both the lack of security in their home country and the security they found or established in Hungary. However, in the case of Western migrants, genuine concerns intersect with experiences of economic decline. Due to transformations in the economic and social conditions of their home countries, Hungary represents a viable alternative for securing material stability while also offering a comparatively predictable political environment. Hungary is the place where they can partly recover a sense of ontological security, being “stuck in time” in an idealised past of Christian, white Europe.

For Transcarpathian older migrants, Hungary appears to be a secure place, a safe haven for the entire family; thus, in their narratives, the recreation of ontological security entails ‘saving the family’ and maintaining strong family links, despite the fact that families often live apart. When granted, the higher pension available in Hungary is an additional motivation for relocation, especially as it contributes to the family budget. As the issue of their pension entitlement arose in political debates a few years ago, sparking controversy, we showed that narratives such as returning to the motherland and patriotism are used by Transcarpathian Hungarians to legitimise their entitlement to a pension in Hungary.

The analysis of the data highlights a significant difference between the two groups in relation to their decisions about migration. The migration of older adults from Western Europe is based on individual decisions and aspirations that occur at a life stage when they can act independently of their children and begin a new, desired life in another country. In contrast, the migration of older adults from Transcarpathia is part of a family strategy: they coordinate the livelihood strategies of different generations and take into account the care needs of dependents, shaping their everyday migration-related practices accordingly. Our analysis shows that, in the narratives of both migrant groups, particular values and structural factors are consistently articulated in a dialectical relationship, often based on the juxtaposition of social, economic, political, and emotional attachments/entanglements and detachments/disentanglements between the country of origin and the destination country.

Conclusions

The migration of older adults from Western Europe aligns with research that analyses IRM (King et al., 2021) primarily as lifestyle migration, whereas the migration of older Hungarians from Transcarpathia is a far more complex phenomenon, shaped by the aspirations, motivations, and dynamics that drive it. From a geopolitical perspective, the movement of Western European seniors between EU Member States is facilitated and frictionless due to the right to free movement (Torio, 2020). In the case of Transcarpathian Hungarians, ethnic minority status and the Hungarian state’s kin-state policies jointly determine the possibilities and directions of migration, while Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine shapes its dynamics.

We argue that the pursuit of (re)establishing ontological security constitutes a commonality linking the experiences of Western and Eastern international return migrants (IRMs) settling in Hungary’s peripheral regions. Among the factors

that trigger anxiety, we traced similar threats: weakened trust in the state and its institutions, inadequate welfare provisions, and economic instability, which can exacerbate insecurities and act as catalysts of migration. Nevertheless, these perceived threats to security affect the two groups in distinct ways. In the course of re-establishing a coherent sense of self, individuals selectively employ, emphasise, or obscure particular identity elements and narratives.

We believe our results enrich the IRM literature in four ways. First, they show that, in the migration decisions of older Western European individuals, political and ideological values associated with crises perceived in their home countries are becoming increasingly influential alongside material and lifestyle considerations. Second, we emphasise that the concept of geographic arbitrage (Hayes, 2014) is a valid interpretive framework for both types of migration. Structural inequalities between European countries (in terms of income and living opportunities) can be exploited through migration: by relocating, Transcarpathian older adults help increase their families' income and reduce poverty at home, while Western Europeans can avoid experienced or feared impoverishment and maintain their relatively privileged positions. Third, we have shown that IRM is a valid component of multigenerational family coping strategies in less-affluent families, which is not only financially beneficial but may also establish a safe haven for the entire family, extending the "protective cocoon" (Giddens, 1991) in both material and affective senses.

Finally, we link IRM to ontological security, providing examples of how both Transcarpathian and Western European older migrants in Hungary seek to reestablish a ruptured sense of security. We show that the pursuit of security is central, encompassing a narrative that intertwines safer living conditions, physical safety, a life free from fear, and a sense of political, ideological, and cultural belonging.

We are aware of the limitations of our research. We did not conduct research in larger towns or the capital, which would have shown an entirely different picture of older migrants' perceptions. Potential interviewees may have remained beyond our reach due to the limitations of our networking, health issues, return migration, or care-related constraints. The narratives we recorded were shaped by a specific historical context under a political regime that offered some justification and confirmation to people with a migration background that Hungary is a safe country, at least on a narrative level. The question therefore arises whether these narratives would have been different if we had met the interviewees after the 2026 elections in Hungary.

Supplementary Information The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-026-01418-6>.

Author Contributions All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation, data collection and analysis were performed by Ágnes Eross, Dóra Gábel, Monika Mária Váradi, Krisztina Németh, Bálint Koós, Julianna Kohut-Ferki, Patrik Tátrai, Katalin Kovály. The first draft of the manuscript was written by Ágnes Eross and Dóra Gábel and all authors commented on previous versions of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Funding Open access funding provided by ELTE Centre for Economic and Regional Studies. The research was supported by the project titled “(Pre)retirement migration and its potential development impacts in rural Hungary, with the support of the National Research, Development and Innovation Office, Hungary financed by the OTKA K_21 Consortial Research Program. Project ID: K138838, Consortium partner’s project ID: K139127.

Author 1’s research was supported by the FemMinImm MSCA Seal of Excellence project financed by the Autonomous Province of Bozen-Bolzano. Project Nr: I53C24000970003.

Author 8’s research was supported by the János Bolyai Research Fellowship.

Data Availability The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

Declarations

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate The research was carried out in accordance with the ethical standards of the [name of institution] and approved by the [Institute’s name here] Research Ethics Committee.

Author 2’s research was approved by the [Institute’s name here].

Competing interests The authors declare no competing interests.

Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article’s Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article’s Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

References

- Altheide, D. L. (1987). Reflections: Ethnographic content analysis. *Qualitative Sociology*, 10(1), 65–77. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00988269>
- atlatszo.hu. (2022). Retrieved from: <https://english.atlatszo.hu/2022/04/22/phantom-voters-disappeared-from-border-villages-in-the-shadow-of-the-war-in-ukraine/> Accessed: 08.11.2024
- Benson, M., & O’Reilly, K. (2009). Migration and the search for a better way of life: A critical exploration of lifestyle migration. *The Sociological Review*, 57(4), 608–625. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2009.01864.x>
- Benson, M., & O’Reilly, K. (2016). From lifestyle migration to lifestyle in migration: Categories, concepts and ways of thinking. *Migration Studies*, 4(1), 20–37. <https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnv015>
- Boccagni, P. (2022). Homing: A category for research on space appropriation and ‘home-oriented’ mobilities. *Mobilities*, 17(4), 585–601. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2022.2046977>
- Botterill, K. (2017). Discordant lifestyle mobilities in East Asia: Privilege and precarity of British retirement in Thailand: Discordant lifestyle mobilities in East Asia. *Population, Space and Place*, 23(5), Article e2011. <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2011>
- Bruff, I. (2014). The rise of authoritarian neoliberalism. *Rethinking Marxism*, 26(1), 113–129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08935696.2013.843250>
- Csernicskó, I., & Kontra, M. (2022). The linguistic human rights plight of Hungarians in Ukraine. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas & R. Phillipson (Eds.), *The handbook of linguistic human rights* (pp. 373–382). Wiley Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119753926.ch26>

- Danaj, S., & Meszmann, T. T. (2024). Weathering intermediated temporary labour mobility: Social partners in Central and Eastern Europe after EU enlargement. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, 30(1), 67–85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10242589241228712>
- de Jong, P. A. (2022). Later-life migration in the Netherlands: Propensity to move and residential mobility. *Journal of Aging and Environment*, 36(1), 16–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26892618.2020.1858384>
- Feischmidt, M., & Szombati, K. (2017). Understanding the rise of the far right from a local perspective: Structural and cultural conditions of ethnic-nationalist inclusion and racial exclusion in rural Hungary. *Identities*, 24(3), 313–331. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2016.1142445>
- Gerő, M., & Sik, E. (2020). The moral panic button: Construction and consequences. In E. M. Goździak, I. Main, & B. Suter (Eds.), *Europe and the refugee response: A crisis of values?* (pp. 39–58). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429279317-4>
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity*. Stanford University Press.
- Gödri, I. (2010). Bevándorlás és etnicitás – összefüggések nyomában [Immigration and ethnicity – exploring the connections]. In Á. Hárs & J. Tóth (Eds.), *Változó migráció – változó környezet* (pp. 87–124). MTA Etikai-nemzeti Kisebbségkutató Intézet.
- Hayes, M. (2014). ‘We gained a lot over what we would have had’: The geographic arbitrage of North American lifestyle migrants to Cuenca, Ecuador. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40(12), 1953–1971. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2014.880335>
- Hayes, M. (2015). Moving south: The economic motives and structural context of North America’s emigrants in Cuenca, Ecuador. *Mobilities*, 10(2), 267–284. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2013.858940>
- Herington, J. (2015). Philosophy: The concepts of security, fear, liberty, and the state. In P. Bourbeau (Ed.), *Security: Dialogue across disciplines* (pp. 22–44). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316227671.002>
- Huete, R., Mantecón, A., & Estévez, J. (2013). Challenges in lifestyle migration research: Reflections and findings about the Spanish crisis. *Mobilities*, 8(3), 331–348. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2013.814236>
- hvg.hu. (2017). Retrieved from: https://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20171222_Nyomoznak_az_ukranmagyar_nyugdijbiznisz_miatt Accessed: 08.11.2024
- hvg.hu. (2022). Retrieved from: https://hvg.hu/itthon/20221024_Orban_A_nyugati_menekulteket_barmikor_szivesen_latjuk Accessed: 08.11.2024
- Iorio, M. (2020). Italian retirement migration: Stories from Bulgaria. *Geoforum*, 111, 198–207. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2020.02.018>
- King, R., Cela, E., & Fokkema, T. (2021). New frontiers in international retirement migration. *Ageing and Society*, 41(6), 1205–1220. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X21000179>
- Koós, B., Tátrai, P., & Gábor, D. (2025). Factors influencing the spatial distribution of international retirement migrants settling in Hungary. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 13, 36. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-025-00455-x>
- Lados, G., Hegedűs, G., & Kovács, Z. (2023). The role of identity and ontological (in)security in return migration: An empirical perspective from Hungary. *International Migration & Integration*, 24, 445–464. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-022-00964-z>
- Leko, N. (2025). Theorising migrant lives: homing, everyday bordering and the migrant struggle for ontological security. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2025.2558072>
- Lendvai-Bainton, N., & Szelewa, D. (2021). Governing new authoritarianism: Populism, nationalism and radical welfare reforms in Hungary and Poland. *Social Policy & Administration*, 55(4), 559–572. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12642>
- Lugosi, N. V. (2018). Radical right framing of social policy in Hungary: Between nationalism and populism. *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, 34(3), 210–233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21699763.2018.1483256>
- Lulle, A. (2021). Reversing retirement frontiers in the spaces of post-socialism: Active ageing through migration for work. *Ageing & Society*, 41(6), 1308–1327. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X20001518>
- Melegh, A., Gábor, D., Gresits, G., & Hámos, D. (2018). Abandoned Hungarian workers and the political economy of care work in Austria. *Review of Sociology of the Hungarian Sociological Association*, 28(4), 61–87. <https://doi.org/10.51624/SzocSzemle.2018.4.3>

- Melegh A., Vancsó A., Mendly D., Hunyadi M. (2021). Positional insecurity and the Hungarian Migration Policy. In: Ceccorulli M., Fassi E., Lucarelli S. (eds) The EU Migration System of Governance. The European Union in International Affairs. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53997-9_7
- Naumann, E., Brinkmann, M. M., & Möhring, K. (2024). The ethnic penalty in welfare deservingness: A factorial survey experiment on welfare chauvinism in pension attitudes in Germany. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 34(2), 190–202. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09589287231222840>
- Nicolson, M. (2023). Racial microaggressions and ontological security: Exploring the narratives of young adult migrants in Glasgow, UK. *Social Inclusion*, 11(2), 37–47. <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v11i2.6266>
- Repetti, M., Phillipson, C., & Calasanti, T. (2018). Retirement migration in Europe: A choice for a better life? *Sociological Research Online*, 23(4), 780–794. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1360780418782243>
- Salvati, L., & Benassi, F. (2021). Rise (and decline) of European migrants in Greece: Exploring spatial determinants of residential mobility (1988–2017), with special focus on older ages. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 22(2), 599–613. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-020-00758-1>
- Schmidtke, O. (2024). Migration as a building bloc of middle-class nationbuilding? The growing rift between Germany's centre-right and right-wing parties. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 50(7), 1677–1695. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2024.2315350>
- Stockdale, A., & MacLeod, M. (2013). Pre-retirement age migration to remote rural areas. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 32, 80–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2013.04.009>
- Sunanta, S., & Jaisuekun, K. (2022). Care as a right and care as commodity: Positioning international retirement migration in Thailand's old age care regime. In C. Schweppe (Ed.), *Retirement migration to the Global South* (pp. 209–227). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-6999-6_10
- telex.hu. (2024). Retrieved from: <https://telex.hu/gazdasag/2024/05/18/ingatlan-zala-somogy-pest-kulfo> Accessed: 08.11.2024
- Toyota, M. (2022). Shut-in abroad: Social incapacitation among low-income male Japanese retirees in Thailand. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 66(14), 1896–1911. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642221075259>
- Xiang, B., & Nyíri, P. (2022). Migration and values. *InterSections*, 8(2), 201–206. <https://doi.org/10.17356/ieejsp.v8i2.1059>
- Yuval-Davis, N., Wemyss, G., & Cassidy, K. (2018). Everyday bordering, belonging and the reorientation of British immigration legislation. *Sociology*, 52(2), 228–244. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038517702599>

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Authors and Affiliations

**Ágnes Erőss¹ · Dóra Gábrriel² · Monika Mária Váradi² · Julianna Kohut-Ferki³ ·
Krisztina Németh² · Bálint Koós² · Patrik Tátrai³ · Katalin Kovály^{3,4}**

✉ Dóra Gábrriel
gabriel.dora@krtk.elte.hu

Ágnes Erőss
agnes.eross@unibz.it

Monika Mária Váradi
varadi.monika@krtk.elte.hu

Julianna Kohut-Ferki
ferki.julianna@csfk.org

Krisztina Németh
nemeth.krisztina@krtk.elte.hu

Bálint Koós
koos.balint@krtk.elte.hu

Patrik Tátrai
tatrai.patrik@csfk.org

Katalin Kovály
katalin.kovaly@csfk.org

¹ Faculty of Economics and Management, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Bolzano, Italy

² ELTE Centre for Economic and Regional Studies, Budapest, Hungary

³ Geographical Institute, HUN-REN RCAES, Budapest, Hungary

⁴ Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian University, Berehove, Ukraine