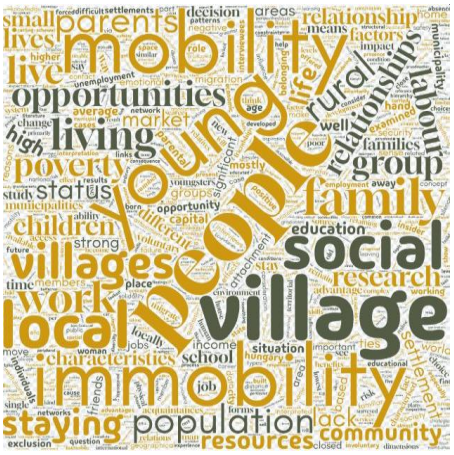
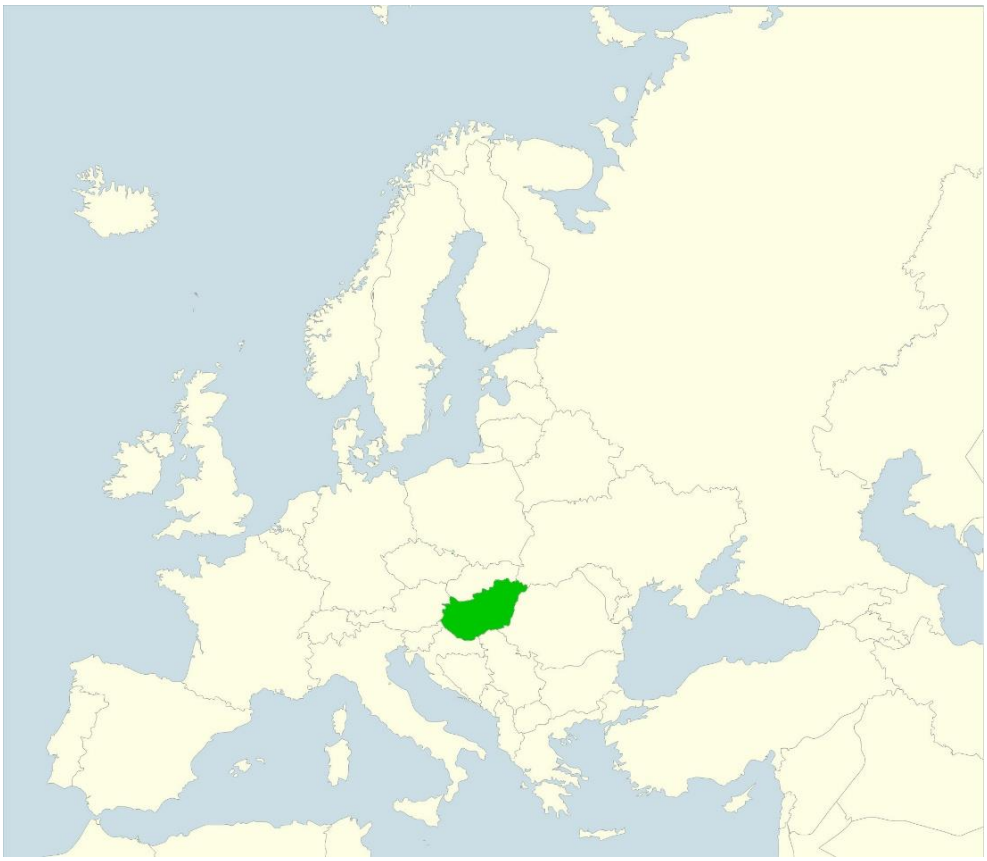
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WHY DON'T THEY LEAVE? REASONS FOR THE IMMOBILITY OF YOUNG ADULTS REMAINING IN VILLAGES IN DEPRIVED AREAS

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Abstract: The reasons for immobility in a rural space are not self-evident in previous literature and research. Through our qualitative research, we aim to contribute to explanations for staying in less-favoured rural areas, by taking into account indicators such as job and income opportunities, local ties, community characteristics and patterns of contact networks. Furthermore, we investigated the presence of immobility types (involuntary immobility; voluntary immobility; and acquiescent immobility) introduced among two social groups with different characteristics (high and low social status youth). The research is based on 104 semi-structured interviews (53 with the young and 51 with their parents) in 15 small eastern Hungarian villages with a population of less than 2,500 people. One of the key findings of the study was to identify the different explanatory factors behind the decision to stay with two types of young people. The study can serve as a tool for the development of rural population policies.

Keywords: immobility, rural area, young adults, social status, Hungary

Highlights

- Young people with high social status have the internal resources of the village labour market, which influences their decision to stay in the village.
- Young graduates who stay in the village see staying as an advantage or an opportunity, but their emotional attachment to the village is not always strong.
- One of the main reasons for the immobility of young people from low-status villages is the lack of family ties, vulnerability on the labour market and mobility opportunities.
- Low-status young people do not see staying put as a failure but as a source of security.

1. Introduction

Social or territorial, urban immobility receives much less attention than mobility in the international sociological, geographical literature. Analysing the facts of groups seeking upward or just slipping in the social hierarchy, international and local emigration or immigration are topics in a large number of publications. The issue of immobility is rather reflected in local qualitative research, but in most cases, it is only a subtopic, a supplement, and a longer chapter on born and bred villagers is really rare. Rural sciences bear a distinctive feature of having the topic frame international migration and resettlement where there is some word about rural societies with no movement among settlements over a longer period of time (Boyle, Halfacree 1998, 2014, Scott et al. 2017, Champion 1998). As Marian Villa (2019) points out, regarding population movement between towns and villages, the migration of young people is the main driving force, besides tourism, urban job leavers and the mass emergence of new life-form seekers and cottage owners. Mobility and stability among municipalities, as well as reception and rejection at a particular place have become a research topic because of each other's interactions (Milbourne, Kitchen 2014). The newly arrived, however, receive much more attention in these research papers than immobile locals. A description of the impact of moving and external values on the local society is part of migration literature, such as old and new villagers' conflicts often resulting in political consequences and the analysis of divergent development concepts (Solana-Solana 2010, Halfacree 2012, Halfacree, Rivera 2012). In this context, we can learn much about the stayer motives of immobile social groups, which are also transforming due to circumstances. Rural immobility can be recognised indirectly via research into the motivation of emigration and the consequences of immigration. These papers also consider poverty as a root cause of territorial mobility, while considering it a coercive condition for staying in place (Foulkes, Newbold 2008) and highlight the role of commuting as an underlying explanation of long-term local immobility (Brown et al. 2015).

The geographical location and size of a settlement still have a decisive influence on the income and welfare of the population living there. Since the change of regime, there has been a steady increase in the number of rural settlements where the population lives in deepening and increasing poverty due to a lack of employment opportunities and quality public services. Of Hungary's 3154 settlements, 2809 are villages. Nearly 30% of the country's population live in villages, totalling around 2.9 million people. The majority of villages (2,411 out of 2,809) have a population of less than 2,000, and more than 50% of all villages have a population of less than 1,000 (State Audit Office of Hungary 2018). Three quarters of Hungarian villages are in steady decline. The educational attainment of the population living in villages is significantly below that of the urban population. While the share of 18-year-olds with at least a school leaving certificate reaches 76% in the capital, it is only 38% in villages. The share of people with a diploma is 23% in the country, 41% in the capital and only 12% in villages (Mikrocenzus 2016). In villages with less than 1,000 inhabitants (half of Hungary's settlements), educational attainment is particularly low, with 50% of the population having only primary education and a very low proportion of graduates, 6.2% (State Audit Office of Hungary 2018).

The data show that the smaller the municipality, the higher the proportion of low-educated population (primary or vocational) and the lower the number of graduates. The geographical divide in the activity rate in Hungary is very strong, and the country also suffers from significant spatial disparities in this respect. Two thirds of the population living in villages work in a different municipality from where they live, which also means that more than 60% of people in villages are commuters. Rural populations also have lower employment rates per working-age population than urban areas or the country as a whole, due to lower economic activity and higher rates of registered unemployment (European Commission 2019).

Income inequality also varies according to the levels of the municipal hierarchy (KSH 2018). The capital city has the highest average annual gross income per capita, very significantly (almost one third) above the national average. The lowest income levels are found in villages, 13.6% below the national average. The income disadvantage of the rural population is mainly due to the lack of job opportunities available. Social inequalities are also reflected in differences in the structure of consumption. Annual per capita consumption expenditure is highest in Budapest, 32.3% above the national average. Consumption falls at the lower levels of the municipal hierarchy, with villages having the lowest levels, at only 85.6% of the national average. The internal dynamics of local society also have an impact on the persistence of inequalities among the population of declining and impoverishing villages: interactions within closed groups within village boundaries, the use of restricted language codes, the adoption of traditional moral principles, the lack of knowledge of socio-cultural models different from one's own group, almost exclusively homogeneous community experiences, the lack of diversity of cultural experiences, and one-dimensional identification with group perspectives all play a role in anchoring the social consequences of territorial-geographical-economic disadvantage. All these also have an impact on poverty indicators. The change in the proportions of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion follows the hierarchy of municipalities. According to the 2018 data of the KSH cited earlier, 25.6% of the total population in Hungary (2.5 million people) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. 19.6% of the population in the capital, 25% in cities and 32.3% in villages were at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

In the first part of our study, we presented international theories, which are the most widespread in rural sciences concerning immobility and we included the causes and context of the peripheral nature of the subject. We present in detail the methodological background of our qualitative study, the dimensions of the research and the main thematic areas that are to be analysed. In the last part of our study, we provided a summary of the results obtained, in particular through a comprehensive interpretation of family effects, relationship capital, vision, success and failure, mobility stories and their impact, labour market and income acquisition opportunities and geographical space.

In Hungary, peripheral and small village areas have become the symbol of the exclusion from mobility, which have been investigated by a number of empirical research (e.g., Feischmidt 2008; Kovács 2008; Durst 2008; Virág 2007; Czibere, Molnár 2016; Czibere, Kovách 2019). According to the usual approach of social sciences, statistical data are mostly explaining the context of geographical mobility and not of

staying locally. The attitude of sociological literature to territorial mobility interprets staying in the village, rather, as a "temporary delay," or even more as a failure (Czibere 2019). Our research, breaking up with this point of view, seeks to understand the young who remain in villages after the completion of their school career.

In 2020, qualitative research was carried out among young people in rural areas to explore why, despite the migration trends, the members of the affected age group did not move from their village and what motivating and/or coercive effects would bind them to the small villages. By examining immobility, we want to contribute to a more complex interpretation of relationship between the role of social standards, comprehensive social processes and geographical mobility.

2. Immobility in rural sciences

Immobility may be defined as continuity in an individual's place of residence over a period of time. Immobility is never absolute, as indeed all people move in their everyday lives to school, to work to the market. Thus, just as migration must be distinguished from everyday forms of movement, most often by a change in residence for a certain length of time, immobility may be distinguished by continuity in a place of residence, relative to spatial and temporal frames (Schewel 2019). This relativity is characterised by Adey (2006) in such a way that the dynamics of the interaction between mobility and immobility may actually change in an individual's or a family's life according to the changes in external structural (economic, social) conditions, life situations, and family cycles (founding a family, having a child, retirement, illness, etc.). Under the concepts of mobility and immobility, the most common descriptions regard movements / immobility of people and things in different spaces, however, these processes are not exclusively composed of the movement itself, but also of the related human intentions, strategies, abilities defined by the choices and the system of opportunities (Váradi 2020). Considering mobility / immobility a social process, Canzler, Kaufmann and Kesselring (2008) introduced two concepts, circumstances and conditions of mobility and motility / mobility (motility). In this sense, motility represents the ability of people for spatial and social mobility; the ability to access networks, the knowledge and skills needed to seize opportunities offered via technical and social networks, as well as the way people use and apply these networks, knowledge, skills (Cresswell 2010). „We are all differently abled, and how the world enables or constrains our mobility can be crucial for the living of a good life." (Abey 2017:4) Mobility is thus becoming an important indicator and source of social inequalities. Kaufmann and Widmer (2006) use the concept of mobility capital as an essential element of social inclusion, which depends on the possibilities and constraints of individuals as compared to motility. In the course of mobility- exclusion, individuals exclude from participation in mobility on the basis of their class, gender, ethnicity or age (Urry 2002). Cuervo and Cook (2018) challenged these earlier theories that mobility requires personal resources that are unavailable to the non-mobile. They argued that the decision to remain in or return to the countryside should not necessarily be interpreted as a forced choice or be associated exclusively with a lack of opportunity, especially when the decision is driven mainly by non-economic motives.

Access to mobility is also unevenly distributed in society. If mobility, movement and speed are a kind of social privilege, then immobility, staying in place, slowing down cannot be achieved for all either (Cresswell 2010), as it is not everyone's opportunity to choose forms of stopping, isolation and withdrawal along with immobility (Adey 2017). There are two reasons for immobility, as well as mobility, on the one hand, if a person prefers to stay locally and on the other hand, if he is unable to fulfil his aspirations to migrate (Carlin, Schewel 2018). According to Carling's (2002) concept, immobility can be interpreted, on the one hand, to structural comfort measures limiting the ability to migrate, and on the other hand, to the desire to remain locally. In the course of mobility, the individual seeks to migrate and has the skills to do so, while immobility assumes the lack of any of the two. It separates the concept of involuntary immobility and voluntary immobility.

Involuntary immobility includes the desire for a person, a group to migrate, but is not able to do so because of structural convenience, while voluntary immobility means that stakeholders could move because they are able to do so, but they do not seek to do so. The voluntary immigration decision is

reinforced by the article by Stockdale and colleagues (2018), the study identifies elements of elective belonging, nostalgia, and dwelling among young adult stayers. The decision to stay is not solely due to a lack of opportunities elsewhere but is an active choice driven by a sense of belonging and the perceived values and qualities of rural life, including a sense of community and a more relaxed pace of life. Schewel (2015) included a third category in this mental framework, the concept of acquiescent immobility in the case of a lack of will for mobility and the absence of ability. In doing so, Schewel wished to question the fact that there is a straight line between migration aspiration and poverty levels. Looking at people living in poverty, Carling and Schewel (2018) concluded that even though they were struggling with the greatest livelihood problems and they were aware that migration would mean a potential strategy for livelihood, they were not even thinking about leaving, the starting point did not appear in their decisions (Carlin, Schewel 2018). The plight of the greatest people in poverty is an aspiration trap, as they are unable to change their living conditions and poverty and, in the absence of opportunities, perspectives, the desire or the ability to seek for the better is not established. The absence of aspiration can be interpreted as the concept of adaptive preferences, that is to say, structural conditions do not allow for the development of mobility skills, thus stakeholders, as a kind of psychological defensive mechanism, accept their immobility, which is then not seen as a disgrace, failure, but a source of their own security (Carlin, Schewel 2018). The aspiration and ability model is a suitable instrument for determining the basic types of immobility, but does not provide a satisfactory answer to the question of why. To answer this, Schewel (2019) distinguishes between ‘retain’ and ‘repel’ factors and internal constraints, which makes the decision to support immobility and its genuine nature jointly interpretable.

The factors determining immobility are highly complex, in most cases are present at the same time (Mata-Codesal 2015; Cuerv, Wyn 2017; Pedersen, Gram 2018). The study, written by Stockdale et al. (2018) explores staying processes from multiple perspectives, including stayers' biographies, linked lives, staying as a state of flux, and attachment to rural places. The authors find that staying is influenced by various factors such as specific life events, familial and social ties, employment opportunities, and sentimental attachment to the rural place. Staying is a complex and dynamic process that involves negotiating competing influences and considerations. Among the locally retaining factors, the most crucial one from our perspective is the definition of what Fischer and his fellow authors call ‘insider advantage’ (Fischer et al. 2000). This notion covers the physical and social capital, benefits that are capable of encouraging people, families, as they may be lost during a possible migration. These benefits are closely linked to the local embedding of data subjects, which is strengthened with age, the amount of time spent locally, the network of social relationships and institutional ties. Access to local resources (well-paid job, family business, potential for farming, social value and prestige, future prospects) thus makes the decision on immobility likely (Mata-Codesal 2015).

It also means a connection dimension to basic human needs to belong somewhere, to feel at home and secure in the world around us. The ‘bordered space of belonging’ might as well be locality, landscape, the region, the nation state. Such spaces and emotional links, feelings to them, at the same time are the units which mark the borderlines and differences between inland and abroad, the village and the city, "us" and "them." Basically, home, the constructed images of the home country, the knowledge, beliefs, ties attached to them might make man indifferent to other places, the rest of the world, the possibility of migration (Silvey 2004; van der Velde 2015).

3. Methods of research

Our research was carried out in small villages with a population of less than 2,500 people. We selected young people, aged 19–25, who have completed their school career and do not plan to continue their studies. We had our research in a total of 15 municipalities in five counties of eastern Hungary. A significant part of the municipalities are villages situated in the most disadvantaged rural districts.

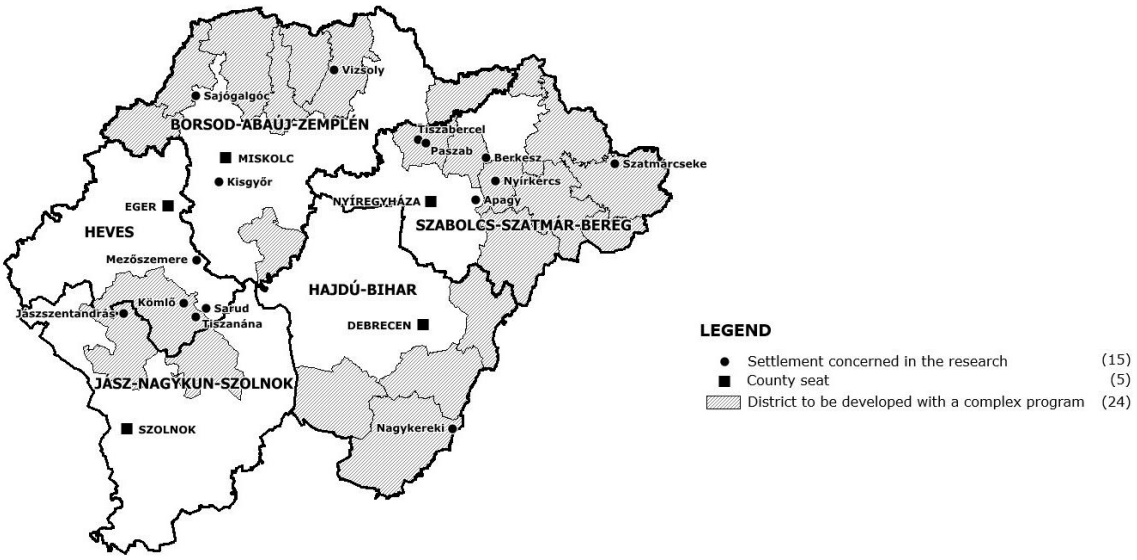


Fig 1. Locations of the research. The map was edited by: Balcsók, I.[3] (2025)

The selected villages are classified as areas to be developed under the Hungarian urban development programmes, which also marks their backwardness in economic and social terms. Young people were selected using non-probability expert and snowball sampling methods. In each village, we contacted a local key informant who knew the people living in the village, and through him or her, we reached the interviewees. 104 half-structured interviews were made with young people, 53 with the young and 51 with their parents living in the same village (during the selection of interviewees, it was a prerequisite for parents to live in the same village as the young people surveyed). Understanding parental attitudes and opinions has proved to be an important factor in the issue of young people staying in villages. Appendixes 1 and 2 contain basic demographic information on the interviewees. The research was conducted at the University of Debrecen in the framework of MTA Mobility Centre's Cooperation Programme of Excellence. During the research, we acted as coordinators and interviewers, all interviews were conducted by sociologists.

The interviews have been transcribed verbatim. Modifications were made to ensure anonymity, taking care to retain names that could be considered informative, while ensuring identifiability in all cases. The interviews were analysed using a multi-stage coding process. First, the transcripts were divided into larger dimensions. Then, within the dimensions, codes were created to explain the analysis of immobility. We dealt with both the manifest and latent content of the texts. The main dimensions of the research: the family history of the questioned youngsters, the status and prestige of the family in the village, we examined the relationship of young people, their attachments, their awareness, and their recognition in the village. We have prioritised their careers, work experience and mobility experiences, mobility stories so far. Parents have been specifically asked about mobility practices in the village population, the characteristics of labour market and labour mobility before and after the change of regime in Hungary, determining events in their family history, family relationship capital, their goals and aspirations related to their children, their education strategies. Finally, we asked both age groups the question: "All in all, why do you think you stayed in the village?"

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4. Results

4.1 Retention and dissuasive factors: Family, labour market and network effects on immobility in the lives of young people in rural areas

The examination of the family's impact on immobility demonstrated that the parent-generation (and sometimes grandparent) living in the same village had a strong retaining effect on young people (Molnár 2019). The primary condition for the usability of family relationships is spatial proximity and therefore the security of the protection system of family members living in the village could only be left with significant risk-taking. A sense of responsibility for parents, grandparents is also an important link, which, in the event of leaving the settlement, would be regarded as an ingratitude and abandonment. Scarce financial resources and mobilizable resources among young people not only make moving from the village difficult, but they also make it difficult for youngsters to move away from their parents even inside the village. Rarely do young people live in a separate household within the village, typically they live with their own families or their partner's families under the same roof even if they have already established a relationship. Their children are born here, so it is not unusual that sometimes they live with parents, siblings, but also grandparents, forming three-, or even four-generation households.

> *"I live in a household with my friend and my grandmother. My grandmother is retired... [...] I think it might be similar, or it's different in a way that we're living together with a third-generation family member, so maybe now it's more common for people to move into a completely separate apartment and live together. We moved here to help my grandmother with the household, perhaps different from the rest. " (24-year-old woman)*

These forms of coexistence are more of a compulsion, responses to scarce opportunities rather than forms of voluntary choice made by young people (and their families). In addition to providing a supportive community, serious sources of conflict are also created among cohabitant generations. As a result of forced coexistence, young people especially perceive "interference" in their lives and in the upbringing of their children. Young people without children also have a tendency to live in households with a higher number or a more different combination than usual. Dwellings with bigger floor areas and expansion, construction opportunities lead to the diversity of forms of coexistence. The role of the family in the lives of young people who have already had children is particularly significant. Parental assistance in the care of the child(ren) increases the attachment to the locality, especially for young women staying at home with their children. Regardless of the available grant and support, it can be perceived as a strong consequence among young people that such forced coexistence makes young people dissatisfied with the village rather than the family and would rather have a repulsive effect if they had the necessary resources to move away.

The study of the links between employment strategies related to **working and earning income**, occupational characters and the local bonding of young people has shown that parental and grandparental patterns have not influenced the career choices of young people, nor does the image of difficult physical work in memory histories attract or, rather repulse the new young generation to follow the work patterns of previous periods (Csoba 2019). The career choices of young people in rural areas were not determined by interest and talent but by learning opportunities available in immediate vicinity of the village.

> *"We had to think about where they were going, because since we are a big family and you know, like the bus facility, the train opportunity was very tough, so we had to see if they could go or not." (43 years old woman with eighth-grade education and 5 children, public employee.)*

As a result of the lack of parental resources (motivation and material), their children remained in a "commuter" school status, which, on the one hand, served their parents' safety needs and on the other hand, through "delayed self-reliance" handed over to their children, they developed a community – family bond more difficult to break. As a consequence, and in the absence of a broader acquaintance, relations system to be based on a more remote environment, compromises are made with opportunities offered by the local labour market, even at the price that they are employed in less prestigious working circles (lawyer as artificial nail builder, graduate as kitchen maid, etc.) than their educational attainment. School

failures, schools and professions chosen from coercion often result in learning failures, and school dropouts. This type of failure will further strengthen the compromise of scarce opportunities to maintain the safety experience offered by the village. Besides those staying there by necessity, we also meet others with a conscious choice of life.

> *"We were born here, there's the family, jobs, apartment, quiet village, we like to live here... I wouldn't go far away. I don't think I'd go any further than Pest, but if I went up to Pest, I'd be back in a week. But when we got home and there were camps, or we travelled somewhere, then in four days I said we'd rather go home. So, this is strong, it's very strong lately, because it has its perks, but for more money it's kind of like giving up life, I think."(22-year-old, furniture carpenter man.)*

In their circle, local bonding is attributable to several generations. Extensive relations, community-accepted and honourable activities (entrepreneurship, local civil status), local affiliations and personal networks provided by parents make these children have a strong local identity. It also plays an important role for young people who represent the new generation of rural services, mostly linked to family businesses, or taken over and become independent, whether in the services sector or agricultural production.

The aspects of municipal characteristics have been identified as different for settlements with significant unemployment and those characterised by values close to the national average (Kerülő 2019). Based on the importance of local labour market opportunities as a significant contributor to immobility, we have examined the labour market in municipalities in comparison with the provision of young people's educational attainment. Our results show that the higher or the more specialised school education the young people have, the more difficult it is to find a job matching their education or profession in or near their local area. Leaving the settlement is not profitable for the non-professional even as a commuter since it is not worth travelling to other municipalities for low prestige jobs if similar work can be carried out locally. We examined the sustaining influence of community work in the villages, but it seems to have lower prestige than any other temporary job, they are ashamed of it, in opposition to day work and occasional work. Contrary to our expectations, locally available community work has no major strengthening impact on immobility among young people with low education level. The lack of job opportunities for more qualified workers creates a motivation to work outside the municipality, but mainly by daily travel and commuting. This is considered as the twofold condition of, on the one hand, the distance to the village, on the other hand, the organisation and density of public transport. The availability of cities is a more important aspect than distance and if the city is easily accessible by public transport or by car, then even a job that is 30 km away does not constitute an obstacle, nor does it give cause for relocation. If this is not the case, the distance of 30 km may already be a factor of great influence in the consideration of the move. In the case of a distance of 20 km near the county seat, the opportunities offered by the city and the village might be enjoyed together, services provided by the town are easily accessible, giving young people the opportunity to remain in the village.

In this situation, immobility is facilitated by the existence of adequate employment opportunities, not exclusively by the proximity of the village to the town. However, immobility is not supported by the historic past of villages, the ties of young people are not affected by traditional values.

> *"I'd leave, I can't live here, I'd go to Nyíregyháza or Pest, or Transdanubia, but you can't sell the house here, as it has no value. It might have been the biggest reason we settled down here and it would be hard to move or sell this house. If it could have been sold at a reasonable price, then my family would probably also have departed. "(59-year-old woman, graduated from high school)*

By contrast, ties are definitely affected by real estate prices, unsellable apartments at market prices and by unaffordable housing in the distance because of market prices. All of this is blocking young people from areas with better jobs and from the desired scale of payments.

The network system of young rural, immobile young people consists of strong relationships, mostly formed by family members and relatives (Huszti 2019). This comes, among other things, from the fact that the majority of young single people and those in a long-term relationship also live with their parents under the same roof. Their weak ties (distant acquaintances) involve mainly former classmates, fellow groupmates, and a significant part of their group of friends developed in the local educational institutions. At the same time, in contrast to expectations, their broader, social web is limited, acquaintances from their workplace or the neighbourhood or any further are non-existent or decisive. Their mobility intentions are not affected by the impact of acquaintances who live outside the village or abroad, a positive example of "successful geographic mobility" of acquaintances does not constitute a motivational resource to abandon their settlement. The young people in question typically live in a homogenous relationship with a significant predominance of confidential and emotional ties and their attachments are built on closed, microsocial solidarity with their resources being secured by a narrow circle, whose limitations they adapted to.

> *"Well, how shall I say, you this, now staying here, some of the friends are here, my family, too and now it's easier than later when I have to go." – 19-year-old boy.*

There is a lack of network systems enabling interaction with other social environments, members of social groups in their environment and in their own lives, the consequence of which is the status of intra-group contact densities, outward-closing, inwards-conformity.

We also examined the reasons for staying locally through ***family mobility stories***. Besides recognisable causes, such as poverty or risk aversion, other hidden factors have also been interpreted as influencing immobility, such as lack of capacity for development due to limited or no education, lack of material and other resources, consideration of expected loss (e.g., loss of locally available resources) (Nagy 2019).

> *"I had plans to go somewhere else, but I also took account of the fact that we had everything built up here, an existence or something. If you pack everything up, it's hard for me, cause I have to slave, but it's good to be here... (middle-aged man, skilled labourer)*

4.2 The role of access to local resources in immobility: the characteristics of forced, voluntary and resigned immobility among young people with different social status

Highly educated young people have a significant advantage in the labour market of smaller villages, which justifies, and also confirms the love of their own municipality, the interpretation of their stay in villages as an opportunity. It is typical that the parents of highly educated young people have also been heavily integrated in their villages, most of them tie to the local community, and they would never leave their village, which could also contribute to the immobility of the young. In the research, young people with the highest academic qualifications interpret their immobility as an opportunity and view their stay in the area as a perspective. On the basis of their interpretation of their place in the society of their settlement, Fischer et al. (2000) resulted in a distinction between "holders of insider advantage" and another group that do not own such advantages. The first group includes highly educated young people with strong, local roots, and characterised by strong local bonding. We classified here those, too who also have access to the local resources, which means that they also enjoy insider advantages. They view their own village only as living resources and are emotionally involved in their own small settlement in quite a negative way, and their parents are encouraging them to migrate.

The situation of young people owning "insider advantage" can be seen as an advantage in the labour market, taking into account high unemployment rates and limited labour market opportunities in their villages and neighbourhoods. Most of them have jobs within the boundaries of their own settlement, working in local institutions or living on agricultural production, so young farmers.

> *"I went to "M" for industrial school. I graduated as a welder, and I've been working as one for three years. Besides this, we're beekeeping that we're doing at home. Well, after all, it's a family farm. It came to me partly because I won a young farmer's bid in July, and we will now go further in this direction in the forthcoming period." (young man, single, graduated, working)*

Their integration and local affiliation in the municipality is high, considering the image of the family of the young and their own image, their recognition in the society of small towns. The majority of *"insider"* youths identified the appreciation their parents gained as a defining factor in the context of their own recognitions. They typically live with their parents and their families are perceived by young people as average or above average compared to those living in their settlements. Most of them justify their status by the labour market situation of their parents and/or their own.

> *"Standard of living, that we have a job, those who have a job. Because the majority of people live either from community work or off unemployment benefits. And we can afford to have motor vehicles, everyone's own. There's electricity, water in the house because for many people, there is none. So that's all I can say, "(young man, single, graduated, working)*

Another type of voluntary young people is the highly educated ones also having insider advantages, but staying in the village is viewed primarily as an opportunity/power source for them with no emotional attachments to the settlement. In many cases, they had a rather negative view of their own municipality even though they looked at their stay as an opportunity. They are also helped by their education to have a head start in the labour market of small towns. Among the residents, these youngsters are well-known, but they do not consider themselves and their families recognised. No young people reported on a higher level of local embedding. By asking the parents of young people, there is a majority of those who believe that there is no future for their children in the small settlement and that is why they encourage their children for mobility.

> *"Well, they shouldn't live here for sure, they had better go elsewhere and deal with something they like, they do what they like... well, I say go away, because there's no life here. I always tell them not to be stuck here like me."(middle-aged mother, single, five children, with eighth-grade education)*

These two groups of highly educated young people with high social status voluntarily assume municipal immobility, whether they have insider advantages or are only users of local resources.

Young people living in poverty have a common characteristic of low education, unemployment and/or community work and occasional work, poverty or even deeper poverty. We assumed that in this situation, the young people interviewed also experience exclusion subjectively, but we saw the opposite. As most villages in our research are the most disadvantaged, a large proportion of the population live on a low standard of living, in a negative sense of social equality (in terms of low standards of living). It also means that there are villages where families living at a higher level of well-being are not detected by the young people surveyed and most of them are in contact with a reference group living in a comparable situation with similar fate, which results in strong conformities. Young people and their parents recognise their position in social space in similar ways (even so their families') and their opportunities and future action related to this. In their situation, most of them resigned and settled themselves in the elimination of daily life uncertainties. Despite their low social positioning, it has become clear from the replies in the surveyed social space that neither the parents polled living in poverty nor their adult children living in poverty are feeling excluded. Moreover, it sticks out that they all consider their families average or only slightly worse (but they all view themselves as poor). The extent or absence of personal networks affects the mobility of young people living in poverty and their attachment to the village in a peculiar way. We have been looking for an answer to see the extent to which local solidarity links and solidarity safety net surrounding young people can affect their mobility, whether there is a source of support for young people, too within the small communities, which might also go against their mobility. We also looked at how dense and what quality their relationships are with members of their own age class. Family relationships within the village and micro-solidarity built on them via the parental family also grounds the relationship network of young people; they quasi inherit the relationship capital of their parents in the village. The narrowest, cohesive relationships surrounding young people are homogeneous and closed, most of which are characterised by trust, solidarity and reciprocity, and are primarily of family ties. They clearly play the role of safety net and are based on emotional attachment. However, in the case of young people interviewed, these characteristics are not considered to be only positive, which is a consequence of their exclusivity as it does not help mobility, contact with other social groups and social mobility. Indeed, youngsters are locked in

their own environment, which leads to a tightening of their peripheral situation. It is due to the lack of other types of connections, such as connecting and interconnecting links, i.e., their nature of being inwardly oriented and locked for the outside become a more negative, restrictive and closing force. All this make it impossible for individuals and families at a low social status coming from such villages of low population to interact with individuals from other social status, too.

> *"I don't really go farther than the shop, I don't really talk to anyone, I'm almost nonstop at home." (21-year-old female, married, two children)*

Close family links based on trust, solidarity and reciprocity, which have been mentioned earlier, are also the cause of socially recreated embedded actions resulting in reduced life goals linked to low social positioning and status transmission at the same time.

> *"Well, they are everyday (relationships – C). We keep in touch with family members and those who remained here every day. "(25-year-old male, single)*

Although *friendships and familiar relationships* basically serve different purposes in the lives of individuals, there are no significant differences between the two categories in the lives of the youngsters belonging to the lowest social group in the small communities surveyed. To the question, "Are there friends, relatives, familiar relationships in the village?", they sporadically mentioned friends and acquaintances in their responses. This also means that whether or not this group of young people have family-related relationships, they are mostly unable to build friendships, and friendships are usually replaced by young people of the same age (sisters-in-law, siblings) living in a larger family. In case of familiar relations, the "buddy relationships" arose primarily from ex-classmates of the like. In this case, neither strong-bound friendships nor weak-bound familiar relationships can compensate for the previously mentioned closed, family relations acting like mobility barriers. As they either do not have acquaintances at all or belong to the same group as their own status, that is to say, the young people interviewed are unable to build bridge-like, social cross-strata from their personal relations, which could be a mobility factor.

> *"I have no friends; I go to work and party with my siblings and sisters-in-law." 25-year-old woman, divorced, 1 child.*

> *"I have a bunch of friends who went to school with me in the same class. And in the village, who are as young as I am. Drinking, partying."(21-year-old male, living in a relationship, 1 child)*

In the light of the low status presented previously and the limited relationships tailored to it, we summarise youngsters' benefits for staying in the village and the effects on the lack of mobility despite all these disadvantages. The first type of young respondents includes those who have never thought about living elsewhere, for them being born in the village is the main link with the place that provides security for their poverty and a predictable habitat in their lives. This is referred to as the main advantage and no other positive or negative characteristics are attached to the settlement.

> *"I grew up here, so that's why." (woman, 25, divorced, single parent)*

> *"Well, we were born here, we were born into this place. We're used to it." (woman, 21, unemployed)*

The other group of young respondents unanimously emphasized silence and calmness as an answer to the question: "*Why is it good to live in the village?"* None of them mention according to what or compared to what, and none of our interviewees could declare what "goodness" of the village means in any other contexts. Those belonging to this category, unlike the previous group of respondents, associate both positive and negative attributes to their village.

> *"On the one hand, my own opinion is quiet and calm. There're obviously no shopping malls, etc., but there's some nearby. I like it when I get home after work, let's say, I take a bath, drink coffee, eat and it's quiet. I can go anywhere. Calmness, mostly that's why. (...) This is an ordinary village, a village of comparatively worse condition. Well, there's not much good in it, rather in a negative sense, but I think it's an ordinary village, a poor village. " (man, 23, single)*

It is also dependent on the existence of (occasional) work providing income security, whether peace and silence is a positive assessment which means a relaxing environment or a negative one which rather reinforces inertia and vulnerability if there's not enough to live by.

> *"Honestly, I can tell you good about it, but bad as well, because it's too far away to ... it's too isolated where people can't improve and can't really break out." (woman, 25 years old, 2 children, domestic partnership, public worker)*

Parents whose children were able to highlight the positive aspects of silence and calmness in their villages drew a more complex picture of their villages than their children, but unlike them, none of them appreciated the settlement as "quiet and calm." In fact, they had stronger wording with regard to satisfaction and discontent than their children had, and these are closely connected to their present family ties, and the maintenance burdens falling upon them, which are evoked by a better or worse situation of their young adult children.

According to our findings, for the polled, poor, low social status youngsters staying in the village was never a real choice. The problem of multiple-generation unemployment, the world of occasional work and today's world of community work do not create an opportunity for individuals to have free disposal over their own destiny. Fear of the unknown, attachment to the familiar, learned security environment and survival strategies are important links to the village. The benefits shared reciprocally between members of the family living together or the benefits of many relatives living together, i.e., there is always a family member who is able to earn some income, which can be shared with the actual sufferers make it risky and do not even promise success as it is also loaded with acquired inertia.

In the following, we summarise young people's self-image in the life of villages which they depicted as quiet and calm, based on their responses to the issues examined in each dimension, which can also be interpreted as a complex system of dimensions confirming their immobility.

Young people living in poverty find themselves poor or average in their villages, they consider themselves to be either the same or worse than their neighbourhood, they have no experience of exclusion. They do not meet role models, or better placed ones, they do not come into contact, and, in a positive sense, they do not get out of the people living there, they do not live with frustration in relation to the reference group. They had their educational background with school failures, and they did not learn a trade. They do not go out as its routine has not developed for them, and there is no demand for these habits either, they only rarely have onsite "drinking, partying," but do not have any regular leisure activities. The lack of all this does not cause dissatisfaction for them. The ones without fixed workplaces search and undertake occasional work within the village, if necessary, around houses, primarily the older ones employ them for heavier physical jobs, but they do not go far away from the village. There is no time schedule, a world of unpredictable casual jobs and community service is the only life arranging factor. They do not know the concept of fraternization, they do not have real (confidential) friendships, their relationship system is mainly built on the family members who live there, their network of acquaintances outside the village is scarce or non-existent. Their visibility within the village mostly means their identification by others rather than actual contacts and communication. They had never been away from their village (except for those who tried to work elsewhere with their husband, but they could not "bear" and came back). There are some, who would not even leave their village for a short time, while others only go shopping to the nearby town by bus or car; otherwise, they have nowhere else to go outside the village. Learning the new environment, achieving better opportunities do not create a repulsive effect from the village. Many have a family member who has left the village and lives either abroad or far from the village. Despite this, these patterns do not act as motivation for their mobility and future plans, even if they believe that the leavers "have got lucky." The visibility of young people in the village depends on the visibility of their parental family, and they have not built new relationships themselves. They do not feel that they are central figures to the village, just like their parental family, and they could not mention anything that would make them essential, well-known, popular, or wanted in the village. Most of them have the greatest pride in "respectable poor existence." They hear about smaller or bigger local conflicts, but they're not really involved. They don't ask for help in the village, but they'd be happy to help if someone came to them. They do not want others to interfere in their lives, nor do they feel that they have the right to give advice

to anyone in the village; they never do, unless it is about a very close family member. They see no solution for change, some of them are hoping for a certain move, but the feeling of being responsible for parents and/or the uncertainty of distant life from parents do not allow them to do any planning. They do not openly admit their fears from the unknown, nor do they interpret their lack of mobility in terms of this. That is mostly explained by the presence of external circumstances or emotional attachments. There are no challenges in their lives, no competition, no joy in accomplishments, as they mostly focus ensuring the livelihoods of everyday life. They do not meet members of other social groups and do not interact regularly. Neither do they have knowledge nor any definite future plans to change their future; their sense of security is given by the perpetuation of their own private world.

The interviews with young people give an outline of a rolling-do, uninformed, dependent, vulnerable lifeworld of people who are not the leaders of their own lives and do not even intend to think deeply about it. They are not familiar with the world around them, and the closed community of the village means confinement and also exclusion for them.

5. Conclusion, discussion

In the qualitative study carried out at small settlements in Hungary, we examined the young people's immobility skills and intentions. We have explored the causes and characteristics of staying in less-favoured rural areas, constraints, and opportunities.

Our results show that among the factors influencing immobility under consideration, young people can be strongly encouraged to remain in the same locality due to opportunities for work and income, local bonding, communal characteristics, and patterns of relationship networks. However, the effect of these factors is not clear-cut, using Schewel's (2019) differentiation between them, there are retaining factors, reelling ones and internal constraints. In many cases, one or more of the factors may affect young people staying from various directions and encourage them differently for coercive and/ or elected immobility. The factors determining the process, also justifying the results of Mata-Codesal (2015), were all present and because of their complexity, these required combined interpretation. Firstly, we examined the effects of the characteristics separately, after which we developed two groups on the basis of examining the impact of access to local resources, namely the categories of young people with high and low social status.

Some of our main findings of examining retaining and repelling factors:

- the parent-generation (and sometimes grandparents) in the same village has a strong retaining effect on young people
- multi-generation co-life forms are more of a compulsion, rather responses to scarce opportunities rather than forms voluntarily chosen by young people (and their families)
- the career choices of young people in rural areas have not been determined by interest and talent, but by learning opportunities available in the immediate vicinity of the village
- the higher or more specialised school education the young people have, the more difficult it is to find employment equivalent to their education or profession in or near their local area
- the network relations of young rural young people are characterised by strong relationships, mostly with family members and relatives.

Among the social groups with two different characteristics (young people with high and low social status), we examined the presence of the types of immobility introduced by Carling (2002), supplemented by Schewel (2015): involuntary immobility, voluntary immobility and acquiescent immobility.

Young people with a high status or higher education set off in a more favourable situation in the labour market of small municipalities, they are the ones who have voluntarily undertaken their immobility. Some of them can be interpreted as holders of inside advantages described by Fischer and Others (2000), their local embedding and local affiliations are high, their jobs are concentrated within the boundaries of their own municipalities, working in local institutions or young farmers, known and recognised in their municipalities. Another group of young people with high status is the ones voluntarily assuming their

immobility, seeing it as an advantage, an opportunity, but their emotional attachment to their settlement was not significant.

The low-status, low-educated young people have been characterised by involuntary and acquiescent immobility. Their common features are closed family relationships inducing mobility barriers and labour market vulnerability (unemployment, community work, casual work). One group of these young people has never thought of living in another municipality. Although in many cases they face real-life difficulties, they do not see mobility as an opportunity, in particular because of the lack of contacts and mobility patterns. They also lack the mobility intention and the ability, thus represent the acquiescent immobile young people. They are those who, as a sort of psychological defensive mechanism, accept their immobility as natural, which they do not feel ashamed of, or see as failure, but take as the source of their jollies and security (Carlin, Schewel 2018). The stay of another group of young people with low social status can best be understood by forced labour mobility, and they sometimes crave mobility but remain immobilised due to some forces in their living conditions. Meanwhile, their stay is not experienced as subjective pressure, which is made possible by the reference group with low status, as the local population in contact with them also has a low social status in many cases. The essential human need to belong somewhere, to feel at home and secure in the world around them is also a binding dimension even in an uncertain world. Silvey (2004) and van der Velde (2015) interpret this as a delimited area of attachment (’bordered space of belonging’) that the village occupies for poor young people.

Corbett (2013) examined the mobility choices of young people in Canada in a similar field and with the same target group as our research. Atlantic coastal villages are economically and socially underdeveloped, yet young people tend to choose to stay in villages. As a result of his longitudinal study, he highlights the strength of the local attachment of young people, the financially unstable situation of families often anchors young people to their village, as there would be a high emotional risk and financial investment in leaving. In line with and related to the conclusions of Nugin (2019), the existence of social, cultural and symbolic capital is an important aspect of access to mobility. It would be important to examine who and how mobility is accessed and how this mobility is transformed into social mobility.

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Appendix

1. Details of young interviewees

	Gender	Age	Education level	Family status	Employment
Y_01	female	24	university degree	partnership	unemployed
Y_02	female	23	secondary school	partnership	unemployed
Y_03	male	21	university degree	single	employee
Y_04	male	22	skilled worker, secondary school	single	unemployed
Y_05	female	25	secondary school	single	employee
Y_06	male	25	primary school	single	employee
Y_07	female	21	primary school	married	child support
Y_08	female	25	secondary school	married	employee
Y_09	female	25	skilled worker	married	employee
Y_10	male	20	skilled worker, secondary school	single	public employee
Y_12	male	18	skilled worker	single	unemployed
Y_13	male	21	skilled worker	single	unemployed
Y_14	male	20	skilled worker	single	employee
Y_18	male	24	skilled worker	partnership	public employee
Y_19	male	21	skilled worker, secondary school	single	employee
Y_20	male	23	skilled worker	partnership	employee
Y_21	female	25	secondary school	partnership	employee
Y_34	female	21	secondary school	single	student
Y_35	female	25	secondary school	married	employee
Y_36	female	25	skilled worker	partnership	employee
Y_37	female	24	university degree	single	employee
Y_38	male	24	university degree	single	employee
Y_39	male	25	university degree	partnership	public employee
Y_40	female	21	secondary school	partnership	student
Y_41	male	21	skilled worker	married	employee
Y_42	male	22	skilled worker, secondary school	single	employee
Y_43	female	25	skilled worker, secondary school	single	employee
Y_44	male	25	secondary school	single	unemployed
Y_45	male	19	secondary school	single	tanul
Y_46	female	23	university degree	single	employee
Y_47	female	24	secondary school	partnership	employee
Y_48	female	24	secondary school	single	employee
Y_49	female	24	university degree	partnership	employee
Y_50	female	22	skilled worker, secondary school	partnership	public employee
Y_51	female	22	secondary school	single	employee
Y_52	female	25	secondary school	partnership	employee
Y_53	female	24	secondary school	partnership	employee
Y_54	female	25	primary school	divorced	public employee

2. Details of the parents

	Gender	Age	Education level	Family status	Children	Employment
P_01	female	59	skilled worker, secondary school	married	3	employee
P_02	female	48	skilled worker	married	2	employee
P_03	male	41	skilled worker	married	1	employee
P_04	female	42	skilled worker	married	1	employee
P_05	female	47	primary school	single	5	public employee
P_06	female	43	primary school	married	5	public employee
P_07	female	42	skilled worker	married	2	employee
P_08	female	62	primary school	divorced	1	employee
P_09	male	47	skilled worker	married	3	employee
P_10	female	41	skilled worker	married	2	employee
P_11	female	49	skilled worker	married	2	employee
P_12	female	41	secondary school	widow	2	employee
P_13	female	35	skilled worker, secondary school	single	0	unemployed
P_14	male	43	skilled worker	married	2	employee
P_15	female	45	primary school	married	2	employee
P_16	female	56	primary school	married	3	employee
P_17	female	46	skilled worker, secondary school	married	2	unemployed
P_18	female	58	primary school	married	4	employee
P_19	female	54	primary school	married	3	householder
P_20	female	64	primary school	married	4	unemployed
P_21	female	60	primary school	married	3	disable pension
P_22	female	36	primary school	married	3	unemployed
P_23	female	40	primary school	married	3	employee
P_24	female	47	primary school	married	3	unemployed
P_25	female	45	skilled worker, secondary school	married	2	employee
P_26	female	45	secondary school	widow	1	employee
P_27	female	49	primary school	married	3	public employee
P_28	male	48	primary school	married	3	public employee
P_29	female	43	primary school	married	7	public employee
P_30	female	43	primary school	married	4	public employee
P_31	female	57	primary school	divorced	2	public employee
P_32	male	48	skilled worker	married	11	employee
P_33	female	44	university degree	married	5	employee
P_34	female	52	skilled worker, secondary school	married	2	employee
P_35	female	56	primary school	married	3	unemployed
P_36	female	50	skilled worker	married	3	employee
P_37	female	43	secondary school	married	2	employee
P_38	female	50	skilled worker	married	2	employee
P_39	female	48	skilled worker	married	2	employee
P_40	female	39	skilled worker	single	4	employee
P_41	female	57,5	secondary school	married	2	employee

P_42	female	53	skilled worker	married	2	employee
P_43	female	44	primary school	single	1	employee
P_44	female	57	skilled worker, secondary school	married	2	employee
P_45	female	49	primary school	widow	1	employee
P_46	female	45	skilled worker	married	2	employee
P_47	female	50	secondary school	married	2	employee
P_48	female	47	skilled worker, secondary school	widow	2	disable pension
P_49	female	43	primary school	married	2	employee
P_50	female	57	skilled worker, secondary school	married	3	public employee
P_51	female	57	secondary school	married	5	public employee
P_52	female	60	primary school	married	4	public employee