

# **EADI-ELTE PHD SYMPOSIUM**

## **Budapest**

### **JUNE 12-13, 2025**



**Budapest, Pázmány Péter stny. 1/A, 1117**

# PROGRAMME

Thursday 12 June

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 9.30-10.00  | Registration (0.100C)  |
| 10.00-10.30 | Welcome words by Béla Soltész (ELTE) and Susanne von Itter (EADI)  |
| 10.30-11.00 | Round of introduction of participants  |
| 11.00-11.30 | <i>Coffee and tea break</i>  |
| 11.30-13.00 | Opening roundtable: <b>“Fortress Europe”: migration debates and policy challenges</b><br>Speakers: <b>Luciana Alexandra Ghica</b> (University of Bucharest) and <b>Attila Melegh</b> (Corvinus University of Budapest)<br>Moderation: <b>Kinga Soós</b> (ELTE) |
| 13.00-14.00 | <i>Lunch</i>   |
| 14.00-15.30 | PhD presentations – Session 1 & 2  |
| 15.30-16.00 | <i>Coffee and tea break</i>  |
| 16.00-17.30 | PhD presentations – Session 3 & 4  |



**18.30-21.00**

**Informal networking event at**

Gólya

Budapest, Orczy út 46-48, 1089



# PROGRAMME

Friday 13 June



|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 9.00-9.30   | Presentation of EADI network (0.100C)   |
| 9.30-11.00  | Roundtable on “ <b>Emerging donors</b> ”<br>Speakers: <b>Ildikó Szilasi</b> (KultúrAfrika), <b>Zsófia Elek</b> (Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs),<br><b>Luciana Alexandra Ghica</b> (University of Bucharest)<br>Moderation: <b>Béla Soltész</b> (ELTE) |
| 11.00-11.30 | <i>Coffee and tea break</i>   |
| 11.00-11.30 | PhD presentations – Session 5 & 6   |
| 13.00-13.15 | Closing words and goodbye   |

Thursday 12 June

**Session 1 Politics and development** (room 0.100C)

Chair: Andrew Richard Ryder (ELTE)

14.00-14.30

Adelina Brad (NSPAS): The deterioration of the rule of law and the consequences over economic development

14.30-15.00

Chwayita Mkrola (CUB): The Quality of Governance and Inclusive Economic Growth: investigating the effects of the quality of governance on inclusion of women and ethnic groups in the economy

15.00-15.30

Fedor Zolotarev (UP): Are Cities Truly Autonomous? Examining the International Contacts of Russian Cities Post-2022

**Session 2 Development in Africa** (room 0.100B)

Chair: Judit Kiss (IBS)

14.00-14.30

Anna Sebestyén (ELTE): The EU's sanctioning practice towards Sub-Saharan African countries: the role of coherence in sanctions' imposition

14.30-15.00

Mária Babarik (UPS/LA): Development Policy as a Security Instrument? Great Power Influence and Stabilization in Post-Conflict Sub-Saharan Africa After 2022

15.00-15.30

Ece Yazıcı (ELTE): Whose Development? Global Actors' Visions and Local Realities in the Horn of Africa

Thursday 12 June

**Session 3 Conflicts and Peace** (room 0.100C)

Chair: Viktor Eszterhai (LUPS)

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 16.00-16.30 | Júlia Gy. Molnár (CUB): Media Coverage of Ethnic Conflicts |
|-------------|--|

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 16.30-17.00 | Sathees Mohan (ELTE): Resilience building: Social Resilience and Local Peace in Post-conflict Sri Lanka |
|-------------|---|

**Session 4 Varieties of Capitalism** (room 0.100B)

Chair: Béla Soltész (ELTE)

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 16.00-16.30 | Emese Dobos (HUN-REN, CUB): National varieties of capitalism in global value chains: What drives upgrading in Europe's peripheral textile, garment, leather, footwear, and fur sectors? |
|-------------|---|

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 16.30-17.00 | Muhammad Raynaldi (CUB): Analysis of Current and Future Policies for Carbon Emissions Reduction in the Energy Sector: A Comparative Study of Hungary and Romania |
|-------------|--|

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 17.00-17.30 | Thomas Buijnink (ELTE): Ordoliberal influences on the European Development Fund |
|-------------|---|

# ABSTRACTS

## Sessions 1-4

### **Adelina Brad (NSPAS): *The deterioration of the rule of law and the consequences over economic development***

The research analyzes the relationship between the deterioration of the rule of law and the negative consequences on socio-economic development in the contemporary world. To scrutinize this correlation, quantitative-comparative analysis and secondary data review methods will be used. This aims to determine the extent to which the rule of law has a determining role or not in the development of states and societies. These results can serve as data for the basis of qualitative and sustainable public policies. The research aims to compare and contrast countries such as the United States of America, South Korea, Romania and Poland and determine the correlation between the deterioration of the rule of law, with a specific focus towards measurable elements such as the absence of corruption, and the consequences over economic development and prosperity. The country case studies have been identified purposefully to reflect different geographical areas, different historical pasts and various levels of economic development. Despite the differences, the research aims to solely analyze the correlation between the rule of law and economic status.

.....

### **Chwayita Mkrola (CUB): *The Quality of Governance and Inclusive Economic Growth: investigating the effects of the quality of governance on inclusion of women and ethnic groups in the economy***

This research seeks to estimate the effect of the quality of governance on inclusive economic growth in a panel of 187 countries comprising high-, middle- and low-income countries. To add to existing literature, the study focuses on the inclusion of women in i) participating in the economic growth process-measured by the female labour force participation rate, ii) benefiting from growth-measured by the gender pay gap by skill level, and iii) accessing economic opportunities, measured by composite indicator for gender disparities in education (primary, secondary, and tertiary school enrolment disparities) and health. The research will use the six governance indicators from the World Bank to estimate the effect of each element of the quality of governance on the inclusion of women in the economy.

Owing to the debates surrounding the validity of the World Bank Governance indicators, this research will use the quality of government index from the International Country Risk Index guide as an alternative measure for the quality of governance. Moreover, the research will use economic growth, investment, government expenditure, international trade, and dummy variables for countries with laws against discrimination in the workplace. These control variables will be measured by real GDP per capita, gross fixed capital formation, government expenditure as a percentage of GDP, international trade as a percentage of GDP control variables and dummy variables for countries with laws against gender discrimination in the workplace. The study further aims to investigate determinants of and barriers to inclusion of different ethnic groups in economic growth.

.....

**Fedor Zolotarev (UP): *Are Cities Truly Autonomous? Examining the International Contacts of Russian Cities Post-2022***

Networks play a crucial role in social activities, extending into international affairs. However, the complexity of international entities makes these interactions unique. Contemporary politics involves various state and non-state actors within a global anarchy, as described by Kenneth Waltz. While nation-state networks are well-studied, the networks of subnational actors, like city authorities, hold a special place in International Relations academia.

Studying cities and their networks is not a novel approach, as significant contributions from world/global city researchers have aimed to understand globalization as an inclusive trend for people worldwide. However, these studies often overlook the significant aspects of exclusion and the disintegrative effects of increased connectivity, particularly in cases of macroregional decouplings and ruptures between nation-states, which can create opposing neo-ideological camps. International shocks and military conflicts can exacerbate these breaches, affecting both supranational and subnational levels with multiple actors involved. Thus, while city networking and the existing hierarchy of cities are well elaborated as products of globalization, there remains a gap in understanding the coherence of global shifts between the world of cities and the world of nation-states. For example, the rise of international city cooperation with Ukrainian mayors and city halls of European and U.S. local and regional authorities occurred alongside a cascade of cuts, frozen projects, and halted communications with Russian cities.

This dynamic can be analyzed through the lens of the solidarism and pluralism debate within the English School. Solidarism suggests a high degree of shared norms and cooperation among international actors, while pluralism emphasizes the coexistence of diverse entities with minimal common ground. The transnational networks of cities, especially during international crises, are subject to "ruptures" and polarization, which challenges the notion of solidarism at the subnational level of international politics. While subnational relations with Ukraine fall within the scope of research, it is challenging to make a similar assertion regarding Russia. The networks of Russian cities have changed in terms of geography and intensity since 2022, reflecting the state-led agenda, a drastically altered international environment, and a reactive nature. To address these changes, this paper examines the networking of a sample of Russian cities that have had to rebuild their foreign strategies and pivot towards non-Western international cooperation with various non-state actors, including other cities. The sample consists of 82 cities and towns that are the administrative centers of federal subjects of Russia in order to represent the geographical variety of cities. By analyzing digital footprints from official city halls, mayors' websites, and social media platforms like Telegram and VKontakte, I will construct and analyze the networks of selected Russian cities and their cooperation from 2022 to 2024, during the ongoing military conflict between Russia and Ukraine. This analysis aims to verify two hypotheses: H1: Russian cities have increased their contacts with foreign partners from non-Western regions to compensate for the loss of connections with Western partners. H2: City diplomacy is heavily influenced by the nation-state context and its relationships during times of global shocks and confrontation between Russia and the West. The outcome of this empirical analysis will provide insights into how Russian cities have adapted their international networking in response to the shifts of world politics. This stance challenges the idea of the universalism of global city networks as a comprehensive internationalization toolkit and highlights the limitations of cities' communicative resources in positioning themselves as autonomous actors in international affairs.



**Anna Sebestyén (ELTE): *The EU's sanctioning practice towards Sub-Saharan African countries: the role of coherence in sanctions' imposition***

Since the 1990s, the European Union (EU) has become increasingly active in imposing restrictive measures against third countries, including Sub-Saharan African states, however, the EU's sanctioning practice often seems inconsistent and selective. The question emerges, how can we explain that in some cases the EU is able to impose CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy) sanctions against third countries, while in other cases the EU fails to do so, especially in the Africa-EU context. The EU's relationship with Sub-Saharan African countries is highly complex, as the EU is the largest donor and partner of them, which might affect the EU's response to local conflicts and serious human rights violations. The presentation focuses on the internal processes within the EU which shape the EU's sanctioning practice in Sub-Saharan Africa. What is the role of internal coherence within the EU to be able to impose restrictive measures towards third countries? The research examines the emerging internal challenges and impediments through the case of the Tigray war (2020-2022) in Ethiopia related to coherence when the EU could not impose any CFSP sanctions, but suspended aid. Having a closer look at inter-institutional and policy coherence within the EU reveals the challenges of sanctions' imposition, and also provides further insights into the factors which highly influence the EU's global actorhood.

.....

**Mária Babarik (UPS/LA): *Development Policy as a Security Instrument? Great Power Influence and Stabilization in Post-Conflict Sub-Saharan Africa After 2022***

The 2022 Russian–Ukrainian war triggered a significant realignment in global development priorities. Western donors, particularly the United States and the European Union, have redirected attention and resources toward their own security concerns, leading to the marginalization of Sub-Saharan African countries—especially fragile, post-conflict states—in global aid agendas. Simultaneously, emerging powers such as China and Russia are strengthening their presence in the region, using development assistance to pursue their strategic goals. This study examines how great powers utilize development policy as a soft power instrument in post-conflict Sub-Saharan Africa and how these strategies contribute to (or hinder) long-term stabilization.

It focuses on three country cases — Ethiopia, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo — applying a qualitative, comparative methodology based on donor strategies, NGO reports, and international policy documents. The research explores how development assistance reflects political interests, embeds conditionality, and shapes institutions and governance in fragile states. The core argument is that development cooperation is not a neutral or technical practice, but rather a politically embedded tool of influence in security-sensitive contexts. Through aid, external actors exercise indirect control over local development paths, reinforce dependency, or pursue stabilization through institutional transformation. By reframing development through the lens of international security, the study contributes to a critical understanding of the development–security nexus. It aligns with the symposium’s objective to reassess development cooperation in light of geopolitical competition, offering an interdisciplinary perspective rooted in international relations and global political economy.

**Ece Yazıcı (ELTE): *Whose Development? Global Actors’ Visions and Local Realities in the Horn of Africa***

Development financing has become a central pillar of external engagement in the Horn of Africa, a region marked by geostrategic significance, fragile governance, and complex development challenges. Global actors such as China, Japan, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, and the United States have advanced distinct and sometimes competing development visions, shaping not only economic priorities but also political alignments and local institutional dynamics. These initiatives range from China’s infrastructure-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to Japan’s institution-building TICAD process; Türkiye’s soft power-driven humanitarian diplomacy to Gulf states’ investments in ports, logistics, and religious outreach; and the U.S.’s fragmented engagement emphasizing governance, private sector partnerships, and strategic balancing.

This study aims to analyze the development activities and strategic interests of these actors in the Horn of Africa. Through a comparative lens, it investigates the financial mechanisms, geopolitical motives, and sectoral focuses of each approach, while also examining how local governments and societies negotiate, adapt to, or resist these external interventions.

Ultimately, the research asks: whose vision of development prevails, and to what extent are local realities shaping or being shaped by global ambitions?

.....

**Júlia Gy. Molnár (CUB): *Media Coverage of Ethnic Conflicts***

he Western media plays a crucial role in the coverage of conflicts globally, receiving interest both for their role in shaping world discourse and what is perceived to be differing levels of quantity and at times quality of coverage provided to particular regions or conflicts. Drawing on findings from previous studies, ranging from the lack of coverage some ethnic conflicts receive, negative representation of certain regions or showing groups of people through stereotypes, to analyze determining factors and framing characteristics of ethnic conflict coverage of The Guardian, a globally available news source, with an established presence in the US and strong British roots. The research utilizes a two-tier method with a broad quantitative content analysis examining three decades of reporting, from the end of the Cold War to current day, relying on concepts like the World System and News Flow theories. As well as being aided by scholarly works on ethnicity research which argue for the inclusion of social and cultural theories within their approach. Following is a qualitative analysis which provides more depth and detail to particular trends which were found within the results of the first quantitative analysis. The study showcases a newspaper which have become more global and digital in the past decades, headquartered in and operating out of countries which, respectively, have seen their standing be uncertain as a political and economic power, and had their position as world hegemon be questioned; while also adding to the literature of ethnic conflict and media studies.

.....

**Sathees Mohan (ELTE): *Resilience building: Social Resilience and Local Peace in Post-conflict Sri Lanka***

Sri Lanka concluded nearly 30 years of protracted armed conflict in May 2009. While the military solution to the civil conflict has only restored peace in Sri Lanka, it does not ensure the sustainability of local peace in a post-conflict country. Research on post-conflict Sri Lanka has identified significant challenges in justice, reconciliation, and economic development.

The limitations and shortcomings of the liberal peace approach in post-conflict Sri Lanka necessitate a new perspective on the local peace agenda. This research adopts an interdisciplinary approach to building resilience in post-conflict settings. A practical strategy for social resilience, local conflict resolution, and gender roles in peacebuilding is essential for understanding the post-conflict peace agenda. Scholarship on resilience-building offers a fresh perspective on the post-conflict peace approach but often lacks conceptual and empirical support in local peace-building contexts. The study addresses two key research questions. First, how do ethnic groups (Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims) in the post-conflict context maintain resilience and foster sustainable peace instead of succumbing to greater vulnerability to renewed conflict? Second, is resilience always beneficial, or does it hinder achieving local peace and sustainability in Sri Lanka? The study argues that a comparative analysis of social resilience and local peace provides a new perspective on conflict prevention and the sustainability of post-conflict peace in Sri Lanka. Consequently, it aims to develop a new framework for resilience research in post-conflict settings.

.....

**Emese Dobos (HUN-REN, CUB): *National varieties of capitalism in global value chains: What drives upgrading in Europe's peripheral textile, garment, leather, footwear, and fur sectors?***

Central-Eastern European countries enjoy a special position in terms of contract work: while contract work allows an opportunity for industrial development in lower developed countries, these semi-peripheral countries even increased their contract work share after the 1990s as it was rather a pressure not an opportunity for growth. The light industry sectors – the textile-, garment, leather, and footwear segments - have saved their relative significance within the region and numerous firms have shown a different upgrading trajectory. Regarding its theoretical background, the research combines the global value chains (GVC) and the Varieties of Capitalism (VoC) literature. The research relies on both quantitative (descriptive statistics) but mainly qualitative research methods (semi-structured research interviews and comparative case studies) to examine

1) what drives upgrading in the Hungarian textile, garment, leather, footwear, and fur sectors, if neither the latest developments of international production and trade nor local policies support these sectors, and 2) Is there any common factor, responsible for upgrading within the sectors of textile, garment, leather, footwear, and fur?

.....

**Muhammad Raynaldi (CUB): *Analysis of Current and Future Policies for Carbon Emissions Reduction in the Energy Sector: A Comparative Study of Hungary and Romania***

Transforming the energy sector is a critical challenge in achieving the European Union’s ambitious climate targets, including carbon neutrality by 2050 and a 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. These goals require a profound restructuring of energy systems, particularly in EU member states like Hungary and Romania, which play pivotal roles in this transition. However, their approaches to carbon emissions reduction differ significantly due to varying economic, political, and infrastructural contexts. This study analyzes the current and projected policies of Hungary and Romania in reducing carbon emissions, evaluating their alignment with EU climate goals and their potential effectiveness. By examining national strategies such as Hungary’s National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) and Romania’s Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan, alongside EU frameworks like the European Green Deal and Emissions Trading System (ETS), this research identifies key similarities, differences, and challenges in their decarbonization efforts. Findings reveal that while both countries have made progress in renewable energy deployment and energy efficiency, Hungary’s reliance on nuclear energy and Romania’s untapped potential in wind and solar energy highlight distinct strategic pathways. The study emphasizes the need for enhanced policy integration, increased investment in innovative technologies, and stronger regional cooperation to address barriers such as funding gaps, infrastructural limitations, and socio-economic disparities. By providing actionable recommendations, this research contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable energy transitions, offering insights for policymakers in Hungary, Romania, and the EU to achieve their climate targets while fostering economic resilience, social equity, and long-term sustainability.

.....

**Thomas Buijnink (ELTE): *Ordoliberal influences on the European Development Fund***

This article explores the theoretical underpinnings of ordoliberalism and its influence on the European development fund. It begins by examining the origins of ordoliberal thought in the Freiburg School of the 1930s, particularly through the works of Walter Eucken. Ordoliberalism advocates a structured economic order in which the state plays an active role in maintaining market competition, ensuring price stability, and preventing monopolies, while refraining from direct intervention in economic processes. The discussion extends to the European Union (EU), analysing how ordoliberal tenets have shaped its institutional design, fiscal policies, and responses to economic crises. During the Greek debt crisis, the economic reforms imposed on Greece have been criticized. Scholars have argued that the allegedly ordoliberal design of the reforms has not been suitable for Greece's national economic circumstances. The EU Agenda for Change (2011) was a reform of European development policy aimed at increasing the effectiveness and impact of development aid. The 'agenda for change' ties European financial help to a market-oriented growth policy, "good governance", macro-economic stability and structural reforms. This raises the question if the European Union in through its development fund and the agenda for change imposes ordoliberal requirements on the beneficiaries of these funds. This contribution aims to lay the foundation for analysing the European Development Fund and Agenda for Change from an ordoliberal perspective. Aiming to answer the question to which extent an ordoliberal economic design might be pushed on beneficiaries from the European Development Fund.

Friday 13 June

**Session 5 Migration and dependencies** (room 0.100C)

Chair: Magdolna Sass (KRTK, Budapest)

11.30-12.00

Gabriela Roxana Irod (SNSPA): Institutional Change and Environmental Migration

12.00-12.30

Imen Khemakhem (ELTE): Migration Governance in Tunisia: Developmental Dependencies and the Role of External Actors

**Session 6 Identity, development and power** (room 0.100B)

Chair: Klára Fóti (ELTE)

11.30-12.00

Marta Monika Wollner (ELTE): Changin[g] Values in Contemporary Egyptian Society - Empirical analysis of changing sacred identity

12.00-12.30

Costin Adrian Cace (UB): Ruins of Progress, Rituals of Negotiation: An Anthropological Inquiry into Development Practices in Post-Socialist Romania

12.30-13.00

Patrik Pavlicsek (CUB): CNP comparative case study with a focus on Central and Eastern Europe – a comparison of the overall national strength of Hungary and Romania in the context of the European Union member states at the beginning of the 21st century

# ABSTRACTS

## Sessions 5-6

**Gabriela Roxana Irod (SNSPA): *Institutional Change and Environmental Migration***

This paper analyses environmental migration from the perspective of institutional change. By examining specific cases involving individuals and/or states, it argues that international law and national legislative procedures that regulate forced migration are already undergoing a process of gradual change and that the emergence of the issue of environmental migration is one of the factors that will push this process further. To illustrate this phenomenon, the paper examines specific cases in which individuals and families affected by climate change tried to benefit from protection mechanisms but were denied access and as a consequence appealed those decisions in courts, as well as legal actions taken in international courts and tribunals by states among one another in which they set out to assess their obligation in regards to climate change and the migration it might cause. The findings reveal that national laws, rules and practices can be reshaped through international courts and tribunals and that the current international institutional framework that deals with forced migration is already undergoing a process of change.

.....

**Imen Khemakhem (ELTE): *Migration Governance in Tunisia: Developmental Dependencies and the Role of External Actors***

This presentation examines the interplay between development policies, external actors, and migration governance in Tunisia – a key North African country navigating its semi-peripheral status. Tunisia's migration policy has increasingly reflected external influences, particularly from the European Union (EU), as part of broader development and cooperation frameworks. Using a multidisciplinary approach combining international relations, development studies, and political sociology, this research analyzes how migration governance in Tunisia is shaped by the dynamics of developmental dependencies. The study explores the extent to which migration policies serve not only domestic objectives, but also external agendas tied to development aid, financial support, and geopolitical interests.

It assesses how this complex relationship reinforces North-South dependencies and influences Tunisia's sovereignty in policymaking, especially regarding irregular migration and border control. The presentation argues that external pressures from the EU, framed as developmental cooperation, significantly impact Tunisia's migration policies, leading to a securitized approach that often conflicts with local societal demands and human rights considerations. By situating Tunisia within broader debates on the North-South divide and developmental dependency, the research contributes to understanding how semi-peripheral regions manage the tension between domestic needs and external influences in shaping migration governance. This study offers valuable insights for scholars and policymakers interested in migration, development, and the intricate relations between Europe and the Global South.

.....

**Marta Monika Wollner (ELTE): *Changing Values in Contemporary Egyptian Society - Empirical analysis of changing sacred identity***

This research examines the value shifts in contemporary Egyptian society. The key question is: How do modernization processes affect changes in sacred identity? The central hypothesis of this research is how a transforming society breaks down its own sacred spaces, with a particular focus on sensitive points exemplified by the Islamic value of purity. This can be explored through qualitative and quantitative methods, highlighting Islamic purity value's complex social and personal ritual dimensions. Examining purity's value reveals current secularization, rationalization, and individualization in Islam through examples in religious law discourses and people's behavior. The research utilizes a filtering mechanism to identify the optimal example for analysis. A prime example of the shift in sacred identity is: 1. the presence of social and ritual aspects of purity value in Islam, 2. significant disagreement in religious law, 3. the occurrence of phenomena that go beyond individual secret violations, and 4. significant conflict with Western universalism (human rights), which is also reflected in the internal discourse of religious law. Ultimately, the chosen example for analysis is female circumcision.

The research explores internal changes in Islam through the example provided, highlights the various narratives emerging within religious law, and identifies the challenges of this process. The research is interdisciplinary in methodology: it primarily employs methods from Arabic studies, sociology, and anthropology while also incorporating relevant aspects of political science related to Middle Eastern studies. The benefit of the research is an internal understanding of Islam, one of the great civilizations of the Global South.

.....

**Costin Adrian Cace (UB): *Ruins of Progress, Rituals of Negotiation: An Anthropological Inquiry into Development Practices in Post-Socialist Romania***

This paper offers an anthropological critique of development practices, exploring the complexities and contradictions inherent in the post-socialist transformation of Romania through a longitudinal, multi-sited ethnography conducted over several years. Situating development as a contested terrain where neoliberal rationalities and global bureaucratic protocols collide with local histories and lived realities, the research investigates the elusive promises and concrete effects of international development programs (such as PHARE, PNDR, and LAG initiatives). Through the analytical lens of "development brokers"—key actors who operate at the juncture of global paradigms and local contexts—the study reveals how everyday negotiations and subtle acts of resistance shape and reconfigure the intended outcomes of externally imposed development agendas. Anchored in nuanced ethnographic fieldwork, the research goes beyond the emblematic introductory cases of Braşov's Tractorul Factory and the rural community of Valea Seacă presented in the prologue to incorporate diverse localities across Romania. These ethnographic vignettes illuminate the ongoing interplay of memory, identity, and practice, exposing how communities creatively engage with and contest the technocratic visions of modernity imposed from above. Ultimately, this inquiry contributes to critical anthropology by highlighting the performative and ritualistic dimensions of development, capturing how its implementation not only restructures economies but profoundly transforms social fabrics, identities, and everyday lives.

This nuanced understanding foregrounds the complexities of global-local encounters, marking a significant step toward comprehending development as an embodied, contentious, and inherently political process.

.....

**Patrik Pavlicsek (CUB): *CNP comparative case study with a focus on Central and Eastern Europe – a comparison of the overall national strength of Hungary and Romania in the context of the European Union member states at the beginning of the 21st century***

In his speech to the European Parliament on 9 October 2024, Viktor Orbán called for the need of a new European competitiveness agreement and urged targeted and strategic intervention by the European Union. The bloc's deterioration in competitiveness by the 2020s coincided with an economic downturn and the growing regional security challenges. The main question of this research is whether it is acceptable to compare different nation-states on the basis of Comprehensive National Power (CNP), what effects Hungary and Romania may have faced, and how their power changed in terms of their capacities. To interpret the overall national power in a point system, the Ray S. Cline weighting of the Fukujima model is applied, which models the natural capacities, economic, military, domestic political and diplomatic power values of the examined countries examined through a 24-indices system interpreted in a normalized space. The results of the quantitative calculation are expected to make it possible to determine how the overall capacities of the member states of the European Union have changed in relation to each other, and in which areas can strategically significant competitiveness difference be quantified. The hypothesis of this research is that in the period between their accession to the Union and the 2020s, Hungary and Romania, as two Central and Eastern European countries, were able to generally increase their capacities in terms of overall capacities, thus they can be considered as fundamentally successful national economies.