



DEMFAM THURSDAY TALKS

Rethinking Parenthood in Central and Eastern Europe: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives



Thursday, 4–5 PM (CET) online

Boglárka Körösi

Navigating independence: Young parents with physical disabilities in 1980s Hungary

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During the final decade of Hungarian state socialism, growing social awareness, the founding of MEOSZ, and the 1981 UN International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP) brought unprecedented attention to physical disability. Media and policy discussions increasingly depicted young people with disabilities as “rehabilitated” and ready for social (re)integration. Yet many, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, struggled after leaving state care due to inaccessible housing, infrastructure, and limited employment.

While independent living and family formation often remained out of reach, such aspirations gained legitimacy in the 1980s. MEOSZ promoted family rights and showcased wheelchair-using parents. Drawing on archival and policy materials, I argue that conformity to heteronormative gender and family ideals served as both emancipation and destigmatization. However, a Budapest “disability housing project” established under the IYDP reveals how selective pronatalism and inflexible policies failed to meet disabled parents’ needs, exposing both their resilience and the persistence of dominant gender norms.

Speakers’ bio

Boglárka Körösi is a PhD candidate in interdisciplinary history at ELTE in Budapest. Her dissertation focuses on the social struggles of young adults with physical disabilities in late state socialist Hungary. She has been an external lecturer at Budapest Metropolitan University and a mentor and module leader at the Milestone Institute

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