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Salutation for Péter Somlai

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Péter Somlai was born in 1941 in Budapest, thus he celebrate his 75th birthday in 2016. He is one of the greatest professors and researchers in the field of sociology of Hungarian and international social sciences as well. Professor Somlai belongs to the scholar-teacher generation whose members professionally established and grounded the framework of the institutionalization of the discipline of sociology at the Hungarian universities by their theoretical work, research and publication activity



before the change in 1989. There is no department of sociology at Hungarian universities where the middle generation of sociologists have not been either a disciple or colleague of professor Somlai. His half-century long career as a researcher, instructor, organizer, mentor, real and school founder played a substantial role in creating of conceptual, theoretical and empirical research directions of the diverse knowledge of the Hungarian sociology. We can hardly find a field in social sciences which does not wear his “hand prints”. With his lectures, scientific publications, conference presentations or talks he always impresses the audience, conversation partners with his clear, eloquent style and the shaded richness of questioning and solutions.

After finishing his studies at the Faculty of Arts and a short by-pass at the Hungarian Theatre Institute, Péter Somlai started his tutorial and scientific work at the Department of Sociology founded by Tibor Huszár. His work has always been bound to the Eötvös Loránd University. He has been an active participant of the founding of the university’s Institute of Sociology and the Faculty of Social Science. He gained imprescriptible merits for working out the formal and substantial model of the sociology program. As typical for the “founders”, he has dealt with many fields of sociology. The main focus of his interest has developed at an early stage. After the publishing of his first book “Bureaucracy and intensive industrialization (1977)” his further monographs and publications focus on the research field of sociology of family and socialization. Beyond Zsuzsa Ferge his scientific and research orientation has been influenced by Cseh-Szombathy László. His academic dissertations: *Theory of family relationships* (1983) and in 1998 *The theory of socialization (Dissertation at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences)*. These works are results of his vast, internationally remarkable empirical researches of more decades. The international interest at and appreciation of his works is indicated by his membership in the presidency of the Centre for Family Research (CFR) since 1994 and in the Centre of Family Research of the International Sociology Association. He was a visiting professor at many universities abroad: in 1986 he taught for six months at the Purdue University (USA) and in 1992 also for six months at the University of Hamburg. From the 1980’s he had courses in the field of his research at the Masaryk University

in Brno, The University of Vienna, The University Babes-Bolyai in Cluj Napoca and in Hungary at the University of Miskolc and Győr.

Meanwhile, he was busy in the Hungarian scientific life as well: he was president of the Sociology Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1999-2001), head of the Department of the History of Sociology (1990-1992, 1994-2006), member of the Doctoral Council and Habilitation Committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences, and active participant and member of the organizing committee of the National Scientific Students' Associations Conferences and of the editorial board of sociology journals (*Review of Sociology*, *Papers of Sociology*, *Social Research*). He is a founder or curator of many associations related to science or teaching. Péter Somlai obtained his habilitation in 1996, he was nominated a professor in 1997. In 2013 for his work he was given the "*Eötvös József-koszorú*" a high ranked award of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Besides the research and writing, the university lectures – as he admitted – were and still are his favourite activity. He always followed a two-way purpose in his lectures: on the one hand to familiarize the university students with the approach, theories and methodology of sociology, on the other hand to introduce and explain the most important processes, context and tendencies of the contem-

porary Hungarian society. In this endeavour the research topics and the issues of the lectures are in accordance as in the topics of his monographs and papers in the field of the sociology of family – like births, fertility, marriage, mortality, reproduction, the historical and contemporary tendencies of demography in Hungary and in the world: women's issues, modernization of childhood, the conditions of the elderly, the functions and the structures of family life, nuclear family and kinship, the process and sections of primary socialization, the role of the peers in the ontogeny, the models of learning: education and the reproduction of cultural capital, the education system and the world inside the schools: the hidden curriculum and group structure, deviancies, the normative order, the construction and following of the rules, the grades of conformity, the investigation of the presence and statistics of deviancies, certain deviancies in Hungary, the process of labelling – are all thematic units and the review of these topics in the lectures opened and opens alternative perspectives of orientation for the newest generation of researchers.

Professor Péter Somlai – youthfully as always – if is not in the process of researching, writing and lecturing, watches movies or goes jogging. In his seventy-fifth year we wish him to good health and continue his habits, for the pleasure of all of us.