

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Sociology of Technical University of Budapest is relatively young. It was set up only in 1984. Our main task is teaching. At the same time we carry on empirical, theoretical and methodological investigations, as well. First of all, characteristics of our research activity were to find the way or to take on experimental complexion as regard of to both the subjects our research and the methods of organizing it. At that time neither the objective conditions nor the subjective ones gave any preference to the work of concentrated research direction. During this period we have hoped to develop conditions that make it possible to concentrate the research work and to reconcile — more intensively — the individual research interests and ones expected from the Department. We have attempted to realize an adequate subject concentration in the last years.

The main purpose of our Department is to research into the basic social processes that explain and develop the phenomena of the present Hungarian society. We wish to discover these social processes with empirical investigations but at the same time we have also the aim of the theoretical generalization of these processes by deep analysis of the empirical results.

The principal research directions (or topics) of our activity are as it follows:

- Social problems of science, technology, engineering and industrial development. (Farkas, Jávör, Mátyási, Krémer, Szakadát, Kelemen)
- Settlement problems and housing (S. Nagy, Berey, Krémer, Virányi, Mészáros),
- Social phenomena in organizations, conflicts, entrepreneurship etc. (Jávör, Krémer, Mátyási),
- Sociology of art, industrial design, etc. (S. Nagy),
- Social aspects of communication (Szakadát, Virányi),
- Political system in state-Socialism (Szakadát, Kelemen),
- The role of experts in decision-making processes (Farkas, Szakadát, Virányi, Jávör, Mészáros),
- Mathematical modelling of social processes (Mészáros).

Our publicational activity is remarkable in spite of the fact that most part of our future-planned investigations have not been finished yet. From 1984

our collaborators had published 12 books and a lot of long studies. A half dozen of collective books were edited also by our colleagues. Our connections to foreign countries are wide spread enough. During this period we had participated in about 45 international meetings. Paralelly we have got 9 OTKA and 12 other research grants.

Our purpose with this volume is to present the research activity of our department. We take good care entering into good relations with other social research institutes and chairs and of other research units of different technical faculties of our University. We are eager to study interfaces between technology and social life. We did not want to let the history of the Department of Sociology know from the very beginnings but to give some information on the present situation and our research tasks for the colleagues and for the reading general public. However, we hope that this short introduction and this common volume can give some information on our point of view of the function of sociology and how we do our tasks in the work division of social science units.

Prof. Dr. János FARKAS
head of Department of Sociology