

**Pension Systems and the Cultural Understandings of The Old Age –
Shifts Between the Macro and Micro Level Conceptions**

Tünde Turai
(Summary)

The institutionalisation of the life-course has had an essential impact on the division of the life-course and on the meanings related to the specific life stages. The paper presents this process in a historical dimension focusing on changes in attitudes (of the state, of social institutions, of the individual) toward old age and in the way generations perceive each other. The case of Romania shows that there are essential differences concerning the pre-socialist, socialist and post-socialist periods. Moreover there are also shifts in the meanings of different co-existing social and cultural levels. The paper presents the results of an anthropological study on the formation of the life-course in rural Romania. In the agricultural and the non-agricultural population the inactive-active-inactive model used by the formally constructed pension system has a varying impact on the flow of life. The cultural codes are not universal; rather, they vary and take complex forms. Both a diachronic perspective and a cross-sectional analysis of the current situation bring out the complexity of the third age.