

# **Social perspectives in the dynamics of human development**

## **HABILITATION THESIS**

### **Abstract**

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The following thesis presents the most important scientific and academic achievements following the year 2008, when I obtained my Doctorate degree in psychology.

Within this thesis I have presented my scientific achievements, illustrated through a series of publications: books published as a single author, books written in co-authorship, articles appearing in prestigious publications recognised in the academic community, both nationally and internationally, also including references to texts, papers, articles and main avenues of research that I am currently involved in.

In recent years, my scientific and academic focus has been on the psychology of human development. I have gradually discovered that this field, though studied for a long time in our country, is far more vast and complex, far more dynamic and provocative than most of us were aware of.

The issue of human development and particularly that of psychological development has long been a subject of fascination for many scientists - philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, doctors, biologists, psychologists, teachers - and continues to be the subject of complex, interdisciplinary studies, devoted to the in-depth investigation of the mechanisms of psychological genesis and that of the laws that govern the forming, evolution and function of the psyche across a person's life. (Golu, 2010, 2015)

The themes and issues studied herein are highly topical, both from a theoretical standpoint and from a practical one. Unravelling the processes of early prediction, even from the prenatal period, of certain basic psychological structures and of their subsequent

enrichment, maturation and diversification across an individual's life can offer the key to understanding what is constant and what is variable in the process of human becoming, of what constitutes normalcy and what can be considered a deviation from it during this process.

It has become evident that certain methods of practical approach of the developing personality, and of its specific response behavior related to a specific moment in its developmental history, can be structured according to the perspective we have on the internal dynamic of psychological evolution. This developmental process starts in early childhood, continues into adolescence and reaches fulfilment in youth, adulthood and old age.

The developmental moments and stages are vastly different, with distinct psychological profiles, but they are not strictly and rigidly delimited by insurmountable boundaries. On the contrary, any new stage has its origin in the former, and constitutes in its turn the premise for the next stage of development. Here we distinguish the fact that although the evolution of the human being may be unitary, self-identical and self-consistent, it is also marked by the accumulation and assimilation of various changes - be they cognitive, emotional, behavioral or actional - all the while adapting to the new roles and statuses that society offers in accordance with each age.

During the course of this adaptational process, people often exhibit certain irregularities and deviations from the expected psychobehavioral models. This in turn causes the so-called "developmental errors" which, if left uncorrected through specific educational methods, may cost the individual dearly, delaying his evolution and reducing the adaptive potential in his personal, professional and family life. To this purpose, we have attempted to identify and outline several strategies for improvement to counteract the effects of a possible disorganised, anomic evolution. (Golu, 2015)

An extensive study of the existing literature, doubled by the conducting of concrete research and fieldwork constitute a compelling, scientifically sound argument to illustrate the fact that at the basis of psychological genesis is the interaction of hereditary, environmental and educational factors, constantly influencing and shaping each other. (Golu, 2010, Golu & Gâtej, 2012)

This methodological framework - both systemic and interactionist - is evident in most of the present works, taking specific forms for the analysis of each developmental stage. This framework was used as an explanatory basis for what is common, what is constant and what is variable within a group of individuals of similar age, but in fact belonging to different developmental phases. Each evolutionary trajectory is marked by the systematic binding of

similarity, homogeneity and difference, the general with the particular, unique aspects of the individual.

Daily life is constantly influenced by the requirements of social practice, by political decisions, by models, rules, by moral, judicial and religious values, and both individuals and groups must learn to structure and regulate their responses in accordance with these standards. Knowing these performances and their long-term effect is a tempting task for the social researcher, who must uncover, among other things, the factors and conditions conducive of a person's wellbeing, of their achievements and professional and relational performance, of their heightened motivation to achieve justice and truth at any cost, of the engagement of their legitimate wish to live in a socially and physically sanitary environment. (Golu & Golu, 2012)

In the following years I will maintain my efforts towards the outlining of a detailed and vast image of the area of human developmental psychology, applied socially through constant involvement in research projects and through the elaboration of new and methodologically consistent research designs. I also intend to continue motivating Bachelor and Master students through the coordinating of research and thesis projects, as well as by stimulating their interest in this field, which is vastly interconnected with every other area of psychology.