

ROMA AND ROMANIAN CHILDREN: ETHNIC PERCEPTIONS WITHIN THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

The present paper focuses on the education of children belonging to the Roma minority in the context of contemporary Romanian school system. The first part synthesizes the main issues raised within the process of both integration and adaptation of Roma students to the school conditions, paralleled by those factors that specialists emphasize on when examining the causes of the present situation. The second part of our study addresses the specific issue of the relations among members of the classroom. Our research comprised 76 children aged 6 to 12 years, including ethnic Romanian and Roma students, the participants belonging to both ethnically homogeneous and ethnically heterogeneous school classes. We have identified, in case of Roma children, but also for ethnic Romanian children, the level of the prejudices against the out-group members. The findings foreground the differences existing in the intergroup perceptions of ethnic Romanian and Roma children, in accordance to the social representations of the two ethnic groups in the Romanian society.

Keywords: ethnic prejudice; stereotypes; Roma minority

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