

The thesis presents the results of qualitative research conducted in foster families raising Roma children. The data obtained during unstructured interviews was analyzed using both what is called a simple and a narrative analysis. The results of the simple and the narrative analysis are presented to show the effects of raising a Roma child on these white families.

The results suggest that the life of such families is affected by racism in the society while the characteristics described as typical for the Romas do not influence the family life more than other individual characteristics of the children.

Furthermore, the process of how children in care become adults is described. The major factors which influence the process are: a complicated search for identity, handicaps gained by the children in their past and their low self-esteem. It takes longer than is normally expected for these children to become stable and mature – often until they are between 25 and 30 years old. Separation, which is the most important part of this process, is painful both for the children and for their families. The foster parents usually adopt either positive or negative views according to the outcomes of this process. In the latter case, the foster parents learn to cope with the negative feelings by realizing that it is only the child who is responsible for his/her life.