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Growing Up On the Border Identity Routes in Immigrant Children: A Psycho-Anthropological Study

Summary:

Through a series of meetings with children belonging to the so-called Òsecond generation of migrants,Ó the specific difficulties encountered by people trying to construct identities on the border between two cultures are examined. Two fundamental determinants of identity, derivation and body, become bones of contention between origins (country of emigration) and daily fabric (host country), and manifest themselves as mechanisms of intense conflict, both intra-psychic and relational.

Particular attention is paid to the analysis of the bodily experiences of these children, for whom the body becomes a site of conflict as well as an object to decipher. The specific difficulty in recognising and representing one's own skin colour, particularly in children of African origin, is also examined. After having critically discussed the possibility of using psychoanalytical listening tools in an ethnographic enquiry, the particular experience and narrative of a young girl are viewed and assessed.