
Blagovest Nyagulov**FROM FICTION TO REALITY: THE MACEDONIAN MINORITY IN
ROMANIA**

(Summary)

Subject of research in the study is “the newest of the national minorities” in Romania – the Macedonian minority, which was born at the dawn of the twenty-first century, but claims that “comes from a people with a millennia long history”. Through interdisciplinary analysis, including historical one, the author seeks answers to the questions of how and to what extent a fiction of a minority can become reality nowadays. For this purpose, the following issues are investigated: the internal ethno-political preconditions for the emergence of the minority such as Romania’s policy of positive discrimination against the small minority groups through special parliamentary quotas and generous funding of their organizational and cultural activities, as well as the inter-ethnic conflict or crisis among the Bulgarian minority; Romanian-Macedonian context in relation to the political interests of the official Bucharest to Aroumanians and their constitutional recognition in Macedonia, which is a prerequisite to Romania’s support of the process of formation of the Macedonian minority in Romania in the logic of reciprocity in international relations; political history of the minority, which began as an imitation of representation on behalf of an initially fully imagined community; construction of a Macedonian minority as an organization and identity, which takes place on an imaginary or ethnic Bulgarian “terrain”, following the model of creation of the Macedonian nation in the Yugoslavian and post-Yugoslavian Macedonia, and demonstrates a significant discrepancy between propaganda and real facts; ethno-demographic portrait of

the new minority, which, as presented by its representatives, is almost entirely imagined, created at the expense of settlers from the lands south of the Danube marked in the Romanian historical sources as “Bulgarians” or “Serbs” (as sometimes Bulgarians are denoted) and contains inexplicable paradoxes especially in relation to the matches between the exonym of Aromanians in Romania (called macedoromâni, macedono-vlahi, machedoni, etc.) and the ethnonym of modern Macedonians (macedonenii slavi or macedoneni); historical traces of the Romanian Macedonians, who are mostly with Bulgarian identity.

The late onset and current history of the Macedonian minority in Romania illustrate the ongoing fracturing and new affirmations in Eastern Europe and the Balkans in the spirit of the regionally traditional ethnic understanding of nation. At the same time they give expression to some defects in the application of positive discrimination, which is proposed, imposed and perceived as a liberal tool in terms of democratization in the former socialist countries. The “little” issue of the Macedonians in Romania is also projected in the Bulgarian-Macedonian debate about the identity of the Slavic population in the region of Macedonia. It demonstrates at micro level the mechanisms by which the differentiation and separation of Macedonians as a distinct ethnic group, nation, or ethnic minority is performed. Regional characteristics of a community, Bulgarian by language or by origin, that can be real, but can be imagined as well, are, under favorable political conditions, consecutively transformed into ethnic nationalism through propaganda in national language, “useful” national history and national culture, created in the mother country. Initially a fiction, through the years of its existence the Macedonian minority in Romania apparently becomes more “normalized” reality, although this reality bears the marks of the infamous appearance, manipulated ethno-political development, counterfeited

linguistic, historical, cultural and demographic arguments, total dependence on the state policy and an end in itself justification of granted state subsidies. Whatever may be the development of this minority case, no matter how insignificant and sometimes comical it may look, its appearance and its brief history remains a vivid example of “ethnic business” and free from sticking to the facts “minority engineering” in the modern ethno-political landscape of the region.