

Identity problems of Minorities in the Slavia

(The case of Goranians, Pomaks, Autochthons, Old believers)

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My linguistic fieldwork was and is dedicated to minorities in different social-political situations and geographic conditions.

By definition minorities exist only in contrast to a majority, whose prominent position is based primarily on the numeric predominance of this group. Differences between minorities and majorities exist in religion, race, language, culture, economics etc. and have an evident impact on the social status of their members.

Language is an important, but not the decisive indicator in this context. Only if the other features are not obvious the importance of language increases in this special context. A different language is a strong sign of alterity and in communication always manifest.

The relations between minorities and majorities are usually conflictious, even if they are very old and stabile. The dominance of one of the groups implies usually the suppression and discrimination of the others. The treatment of the minorities and the forms of their discrimination range from officially imposed tolerance to apparent persecution and even the interdiction of languages. Various aspects of the relations the Goranians, Pomaks, Autochthons, Old believers have with their surrounding majorities will be discussed in this paper.