Romania’s disregarded minority?
A study of the challenges of the Rroma people

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Abstract

The Rroma people have a complex and highly contested narrative which is partly due to the fact that the Rroma are a homeless society, a society with no borders, no economy, no territory but with an origin. The perception of ethnicity itself is based on subjective interpretation and not based on some kind of scientific sociological truth. Those that apply their notions of ethnicity on a group may do so based on particular aspects of physical appearance or differential culture customs.

This research draws heavily on the theories of two authors, Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka in order to answer my research question: *To what extent can the challenges of the Rroma people in Romania be explained by Kymlicka and Taylor’s theories? What rights if any do they have?*

Despite the fact that Romania is a democracy and that all people have the fundamental human rights, one can easily see the big disparities that exist between the Rroma ethnical group and the Romanian society. Members of a culture that has failed to be recognized will feel uprooted and it is important to give the recognition that a minority or unprivileged group is due and thereby acknowledge the fact that they have a cultural identity with their own traditions and aesthetic history. People should have the right to express their ethnic culture without any fear from persecution and prejudice from the society they live in.

Key words: Rroma, Rromani, Romania, ethnicity, multiculturalism, minority right
Table of Contents

1. Introduction .............................................................................................................4
   1.1 Purpose of this study .....................................................................................6
   1.2 Research question .......................................................................................6
2. Methodological Framework and Material .........................................................6
3. Definitions of Terminology ................................................................................8
   3.1 Discrimination ..............................................................................................8
   3.2 Self-determination .......................................................................................9
   3.3 Ethnical Minorities .....................................................................................11
   3.4 Multiculturalism .........................................................................................12
4. Theory ..................................................................................................................15
   4.1 Charles Taylor ............................................................................................15
   4.2 Will Kymlicka ............................................................................................20
5. Analysis ................................................................................................................26
   5.1 The Rroma people’s history in Romania ....................................................26
   5.2 The Rroma integration 2020 Project .........................................................29
   5.3 The Rroma people in current Romania .....................................................32
6. Conclusions .........................................................................................................37
7. References ..........................................................................................................38
1. Introduction

The Rroma people have a complex and highly contested narrative which is partly due to the fact that the Rroma are a homeless society, a society with no borders, no economy, no territory but with an origin. Historically, the Rroma people have chosen to live without compromising their freedom, ethical identity and residential flexibility. Thus meaning that they have chosen not to be tied to the soil in which they temporarily inhabited and did not care much about establishing themselves as part of the community. In the feudal times of Europe, Rroma were treated as slaves and even thou thought-out time their status changed, the main population had a negative attitude towards them that was always exacerbated by racial prejudice and religious hostility. This view has led to the many anti-Rroma laws that have existed around Europe throughout time that explicitly prohibited entry of these people in their lands and penalized those who dared to help them. The Rroma people, originally nomads, became ostracized by the society at large and were forced at times to settle.

This ethnic group has its origins in India where they have migrated from because of poor living conditions and the largest migrations took place in the 13th century. Due to their nomad way of life, complexion and unusual clothing, spiritual belief they were considered by most Christians to be heathens and of a questionable moral and thereby they were outcast by the populations that they were encountering (Potra, 2002). This did not discourage the Rroma from continuing to keep moving from place to place and trying to avoid persecution. Until recent times the Rroma were facing persecution from almost every country in Europe, including northern countries such as Finland and the Netherlands (Bates, 2002).

Due to their strange rules, habits and ways of handling themselves in society has made the majority of populations develop prejudices against the Rroma and thereby they have been considered second class citizen (Potra, 2002). In Europe as a whole, approximatively 10 to 12 million Rroma are in poor socio-economic conditions as well as living in extreme marginalisation in both rural and urban areas (European Commission, 2010). There is a huge difference between the Rroma and the majority population of Romania when it comes to living standards, education and employment. The Rroma people have mixed sources of income where some are of a sporadic nature while others are of a regular character. Of the Rroma population 80.9% are living “below the minimum level considered necessary for a decent living” (Achim,
1998, p203) contrasting highly with the 42 % of the majority population in the same situation (Achim, 1998). Another huge problem the Rroma people face is the fact that they have the lowest life expectancy in the country and also rank highest in infant mortality (Achim, 1998).

In today’s world most countries are culturally diverse and very few countries are homogenous in their language and its citizens belonging to the same ethnonational group. This diversity has paved the way for a number of possibly discordant questions such as the clash of minorities and majorities over language rights, regional autonomy, immigration, educational curriculum, land claims, political representation and much more (Kymlicka, 1995). Recognition and identity are strongly correlated and the idea is that our identity is shaped by recognition or in some cases its absence. The idea of self-determining freedom derives, according to Taylor, from a want of exerting more powerful free choices in themselves as individuals, getting recognition for their ethnicity and not feel oppressed by the government at large (Taylor, The Ethics of authenticity, 1992).

Despite the fact that Romania is a democracy and that all people have the fundamental human rights one can easily see the big disparities that exist between the Rroma ethnical group and the Romanian society. In accordance with Taylor, the members of a culture that has failed to be recognized will feel uprooted and purposeless and will not feel part of a community and have a basis for self-esteem. In worst case scenario those people will feel threatened with a risk of culture annihilation. It is important to give the recognition that a minority or unprivileged group is due and thereby acknowledge the fact that they have a cultural identity with their own traditions and aesthetic history. People should have the right to express their ethnic culture without any fear from persecution and prejudice from the society they live in.
1.1 Purpose of this study
The main purpose of this study is to research the Rroma people’s challenges regarding their ethnicity in the framework of Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka theories.

1.2 Research question
The research questions are:

- To what extent can the challenges of the Rroma people in Romania be explained by Kymlicka and Taylor’s theories? What rights if any do they have?

- Does the cultural identity of the Rroma people have natural political consequences in Romania according to the theory of Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka?

- How does Romania acknowledge the ethical minority of the Rroma people?

2. Methodological Framework and Material
This research draws heavily on the theories of two authors, Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka in order to answer my research question. A qualitative case study research can give a more in-depth view of the case itself and the amount of collected information involves a direct control of variables. The term ‘case study’ is often carrying implications of the kind of data that is being collected and for what purpose. The purpose of this study is to research the Rroma people’s challenges regarding their ethnicity in the framework of Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka theories. I have chosen the most fundamental descriptive material with the help of the case study and it is important to keep track of the assembled information that will provide a sufficient specification of the research purpose (Hammersley & Gomm, 2000). The weaknesses of the case study research method are that “selection bias” are indeed a potential problem since they can occur because of self-selection and the researcher unknowingly select cases that represent a small number of variables. However, the strengths of the case study methods are that one can achieve a high level of validity, by considering the contextual factors (George & Bennett, 2005).

My case study is focusing on one of the biggest minorities in Europe and because of the limitation that I put on the research question, I have chosen to focus on the case of Romania.
and not Europe as a whole. This research study will use Taylor’s and Kymlicka’s theories in order to answer the research questions.

When it comes to the material collecting part of my research I am fully aware that gathering information and previous research about one of Romania’s biggest minority would be a hard thing to achieve. I have a slight advantage since I am fluent in Romanian and thus I can also reach out to information in the native language such as state reports that are open to the public. Most of my research is going to be from English sources. I mostly rely upon documents from the EU Commission and books from the library that are of relevance to my case.
3. Definitions of terminology

3.1 Discrimination

In the eyes of the law all humans are equal and thus should be entitled to equal protection of the law against discriminations and any intentions of discrimination (United Nations, CERD, Treaty Series, vol. 660). Discrimination or rather say racial discrimination is including in Article 1 of the United Nations international convection on the elimination of all forms of racial discriminations and states following:

“Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life” (United Nations, CERD, Treaty Series, vol. 660, art.1).

In the book Culture Clash by Anne-Marie Mooney Cotter the general definition of discrimination is “to discriminate is to make a distinction” (Cotter, 2011, p7). Skin colour, nationality, race, ethnicity, nationality, marital status, gender, religion, disability, socio-economic class and age are but a few of the most common forms of invidious discrimination that occur in our society. Also discrimination can occur towards a groups as a whole not only on an individual level and nation-building governments have sustained and in turn formalized discrimination. Despite this many governments are indeed trying to rein in discrimination with the help of civil rights legislation, institutionalized policies of affirmative action and equal opportunity laws (Cotter, 2011, p8).

According to Timo Makkonen discrimination or equality for that matter, do not have a distinct definition. But at the same time one should not state that equality is an abstract concept because those that have experienced inequality and discrimination for them it’s an absolute concept. At the same time Makkonen states that “what represents an instance of discrimination for one person may not represent it for another” (Makkonen, 2012, p31-33). Discrimination can have a different range of meanings and has been defined, alongside equality, in many legal, political, social science and philosophical documents but at the same time there is not an absolute and
universally claim definition on what exactly entails discrimination (Makkonen, 2012, p33). At the same time discrimination is today mostly related to unfair treatment of others (Makkonen, 2012, p34).

Discrimination and inequality can be fought, according to Cotter with the help of the law and she states that “law can go a long way in forbidding inequality and providing for equality; where one ends the other begins”. In order to fight ethnical discrimination, people of all ethnicities should fight for the enforcement of equality and formulations of laws in court. According to Cotter ethnic discrimination is one nation undercutting their own people and beside ethnicity, poverty and class, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation etcetera, can be the causes that lead to discrimination (Cotter, 2011, p4).

Despite its grey areas, discrimination is condemned by international law. The fundamental principle of international law is the given recognition to any discriminatory actions that deprives individuals or groups of attaining their rights because of their race or ethnicity (Makkonen, 2012, p263). While the law has worked on ensuring that discrimination cannot occur in accordance with the law and for example shop owners cannot longer post outside signs that no gypsies are allowed in. But despite the laws, discrimination has by no way disappeared and it is instead driven in the background of official institutions. Studies have shown that discrimination is still happening in our society although at a lower level that in has happen in the course of history and not on an open and direct front (Makkonen, 2012, p264).

Discrimination is strongly correlated to ethnic inequality and our duty in society is to be “seeking out ethnic inequality and bringing it to the forefront of microscopic debate” (Cotter, 2011, p4). Only then can a development in the fight for equality and no discrimination can take place.

3.2 Self-determination

The principle of self-determination started to make its appearance in the post-war period and it has been developed into a legal right (Musgrave, 2002, p90). The principle and fundamental right to self-determination of all peoples is firmly established in international law and brings forward that all the peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right people are thereby free to choose their own political stature and pursue the, cultural, economic and
social development (Carly, 2015). The right of self-determination is closely associated with the process of decolonization but in reality it is entailing much more than just that aspect, which is part of the international law. The principle is somewhat considered to be ambiguous because there are no clear definitions of differentiation between self-determination as a political concept and self-determination as a legal right and it is a matter of controversy between states (Musgrave, 2002, p90).

The International Covenants, the Declaration on Principles of international Law and the United Nations Charter all contain the right to self-determination (Smith, 2016) and in the United Nations Charter the right to self-determination is establish in Article1(2) and it is stating that one of its main purposes is:

“to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace” (Charter of the United Nations, 1 UNTS XVI).

The right of self-determination of peoples is fundamentally the right of all peoples to free themselves from foreigner, racial and colonial authority. It encompasses two different aspects, internal and external self-determination. Internal self-determination refers to the right of all the peoples to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development without external interference and in this case participatory democracy is a requirement. When it comes to internal self-determination people have the right of exerting their own culture, political and religious autonomy within the boundaries of the existing state they are a part of (Smith, 2016). On the other side external self-determination encompasses that all the peoples have the right to determine their own political status and in doing so also they can determine their place on the international community in relation to other states based on the principle of equal rights. External self-determination is referred to as giving full self-determination to peoples and it is including and used when it comes to liberation from colonialism, prohibition to subject peoples to alien subjection, exploitation and domination of peoples. Also external self-determination comprises the right to separate from the existing state of which the group affected is part of and thereby they can set up a new independent state (Praag, 1999).

One can remark upon the fact that internal self-determination is the accepted political development of a state and therefore does not necessarily indicates claims to succession.
Contrariwise external self-determination can only be invoked unilaterally in extreme situations as for example when people’s rights have been violated by their state and only when they have gained the right to internal self-determination can they move on to the next step which involve external self-determination (Praag, 1999).

3.3 Ethnical Minorities

Ethnic groups or minorities for that matter can take on diverse forms. Ethnicity can be understood as being a collective identity group that wants to claim and define their customs and/or historical memories among other things (Schöpelin, 2002). Collective identities have shared values, meanings, a sense of a shared past and future, myths and symbols alike and all of these accumulated can in a way delimit an individual choice and thereby coerce it in terms of recognition. We, all of us people, have ethnicity and we all are thereby automatically and systematically affected by ethnic belongings. The rules of our ethnic culture are not only affecting our sense of ethnic belonging, but also our sense of what is wrong and right and the way we are viewed the structure of the future but also of the past (Schöpelin, 2002).

Primordialism and constructivism are the two different types of ethnicity theories that most scholars agree over and the starting point when trying to have an understanding over the nature of ethnic groups are, according to Cordell and Wolff, theories of ethnicity (Cordell & Wolff, 2010, p14). Likewise, there is no longer a debate over which theory is the more credible, generally scholars agree upon that constructivism is the prominent discourse on ethnicity. The Primordialism theory of ethnicity is profoundly imbedded in historical experience and therefore should be treated as being part of human relations. On the other hand, constructivism states that “ethnicity is not a historical given at all, but in fact a highly adaptive and malleable phenomenon and it is primarily a practical resource that individuals and groups opportunistically to promote their more fundamental security and economic interest” (Cordell & Wolff, 2010, p15)

One definition of what an ethnic group is, states that an ethnic group is a cultural collective and are distinguished by a collective myth of common ancestry, name, historical memories and a sense of loyalty and solidarity to a homeland or important sectors of the population. All of these markers contribute to a sense of belonging and provides self-identity and uniqueness to a group.
Besides all of these, a group should also have a common language, customs, religion or traditions (Cordell & Wolff, 2010, p15).

When discussing ethnicity and what it is entailing, a distinction has to be made between the ethnicity that a group of people are claiming by themselves and the ethnicity label that it is attributed to certain groups of people. Nonetheless the perception of ethnicity itself is based on subjective interpretation and not based on some kind of scientific sociological truth. Those that apply their notions of ethnicity on a group may do so based on particular aspects of physical appearance or differential culture customs. The term ethnic group has been used to classify minorities by the dominate and majority groups, whom mostly do not perceive themselves as being ethnic at all. Usually the term, ethnic minorities, is used to describe non-white immigrants and in some countries for example, the term is used in relations to the Australian Aborigines, Rroma or Gypsies, Native American and the Sami in Scandinavian countries (Guibernau & Rex, 2009).

According to Max Webber ethnicity group are “those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs of both, or because of memories of colonization or migration” (Weber, 2010).

3.4 Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism has over the past years been both criticized and advocated for and it is ambiguous in the way that it cannot really be defined in exact term. Political doctrine, philosophical episteme or intellectual paradigm are all viewed as multiculturalism but nonetheless no one is really close to have a strict definition of what it stands for. According to Peter Caws, multiculturalism entails an extensive variety of social articulation, practises and ideas that become fixed into a cemented condition of a culture (Goldberg, 1994). The concept of multiculturalism prevailing concerns are identity, difference and a renewal of multicultural conditions. For any culture and groups of people it is important to establish the possibilities for self-direction and the struggles for representation, self-naming and using their own language (Goldberg, 1994).
Multiculturalism is mostly perceived as a policy agenda whose main objectivity is to address the unequal treatment of cultural groups and fight the racism and unjustly treatment that minority cultural groups can be and are exposed to (Phillips, 2007).

Multiculturalism or rather liberal multiculturalism argues that “a natural equality should exist among whites, African-American, Latinos, Asians and other racial population” (Goldberg,1994, p51). In addition to this, polycentric multiculturalism has in a way modernized and globalized the concept of multiculturalism as it “envisions a restructuring of intercommunal relations within and beyond the nation state according to the internal and party overlapping imperatives of communities” (Goldberg,1994, p300). Liberal multiculturalism looks at multiculturalism throughout traditional concept of freedom, tolerance and charity. Some criticism to this view is that our modern day society needs more perspective than something that may be tainted by its historical roots. A polycentric multiculturalism view remarks upon all cultural history in relation to social power and it is about disbanding power while empowering the disempowered. It is about transforming and improving institutions and discourses for the underrepresented, the oppressed and the marginalized. In polycentric multiculturalism making connections is important, as well as rejecting an immovable, unified and essentialist concept of identity and thereby are determined to disband the dominant and narrowly national discourses (Goldberg, 1994).

Multiculturalism is not to be confused with the concepts of assimilation and social integration. The policy of multiculturalism regards the recognition of different cultures and seeks to maintain those differences while cultural assimilation is a political response to “the demographic fact of multi-ethnicity which encourages absorption of the minority into the dominant culture” (Cotter, 2011, p13).

Given the above, it is important to state the significance of multiculturalism in its whole and its need for giving recognition to the existential realities of pain, reassessment and anger that exist due to the fact that different cultures did not coexisted in mutual respect in equality. It is not simply a matter of communicating across borders that are in place but to find out how and discern the forces that are generating those borders in the first place. Multiculturalism has to accept and face those irrevocable differences, not only to recognize the differences in themselves (Goldberg, 1994).
4. Theory

When it comes to the theory that this research is based on I have chosen to analyse the theories about multiculturalism of Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka. Both have worked extensively on the subject of minorities and what right they should have, how one’s identity is centralised in the culture we live in as well as the nation itself.

4.1 Charles Taylor

One of the driving forces in nationalistic movements in politics is the need for recognition and it comes forward in different ways through minority or subaltern groups, feminism and in what it is classified today as the politics of multiculturalism. Recognition and identity are strongly correlated and the idea is that our identity is shaped by recognition or in some cases its absence. A group of people can suffer tremendously if non-recognition or misrecognition is applied on them, it can be a form of oppression and can be “imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being” (Taylor et al., 1994, p25). For example, feminist have argued that women that are from a strong patriarchal society have been made to adapt a depreciatory image of themselves that lines up with the overall view of the society. They have adopted this idea that it is their own inferiority that makes them not go ahead and make the most of themselves and their capabilities. Even in the case when obstacles fall in the way to their advancement those women may be incapable of taking part of those new arisen opportunities (Taylor et al., 1994).

The same idea can be applied in connection to the white and black controversy where the white society has diminished the black peoples’ imagine of themselves and in some cases some of those have adopted this destructive self-image of themselves and it became the “most potent instruments of their own oppression” (Taylor et al., 1994, p26). Same theory can be applied to indigenous people and colonized people, where Europeans have since the 15th century held such low opinions over the colonies and projected an all-over idea that indigenous people are inferior and uncivilized. These misrecognitions are showing a great lack of respect for a different culture and it is “saddling the victims with a crippling self-hatred” (Taylor et al., 1994, p26).

The collapse of social hierarchies and the rise of the modern notions of dignity have made it possible for a sense of equality to appear and imbed in the historically oppressed groups of
people. The concept of dignity is universally accepted and it can be stated that is the only one compatible with a democratic society. Democracy has open the door to equal recognition and over the years it has been taken into consideration in different forms and now it has resurfaced in the form of demand for equal statutes of cultures and genders (Taylor et al., 1994).

The importance of recognition derives from the recently developed sense and understanding of individual identity that has emerged at the end of the 18th century. It started with the notion that humans are born with a moral sense and an intuitive sense of what is right or wrong. And it has developed until nowadays we think of identity as describing who we are and where we are coming from. Taylor (1994) states that identity is strongly correlated with language and the dialogue one uses with the other around themselves. People do not just acquire by themselves the language needed to assume their own identity but rather it is assimilated when interacting with others. The individual identity derives from one self and it is depended on the dialogue, language used with others significant person around ourselves. But social identity is depending on society at large. Before the rise of individual identity as something important, one was only recognized as part of the society as a whole and not as an individual in a society. People did not speak of identity and recognition in premodern times, because it simply put was not acknowledged that people had identities (Taylor et al., 1994).

On an individual level one can remark upon the fact that one’s identities relies strongly on the recognition given by the surrounding people. But on the other side, social identity is a much more complex matter due to the fact that one needs to understand that identities should be formed in open dialogue and unshaped by predefined social norms. Equal recognition is the right thing to do in order to have a healthy democratic society and its refusal could be damaging on those that are denied their rightful recognition. As Taylor (1994) states in his book: “the projection of an inferior or demeaning imagine on another can actually distort and oppress, to the extent that the imagine is internalized” (Taylor et al., 1994, p36).

Politics of equal recognition emphasizes the equal dignity of all citizens and their rights and entitlements. One thing that should be always avoided is the divide between first-class and second-class citizens. This principle brings on controversies regarding the fact that equalization has affected only civil and voting right, while for others it has reached the socioeconomic sphere as well. Some people whom are handicapped by poverty are having a harder time of taking advantage of their citizenship rights and according to this principle are thereby regarded as
second-class citizens. A solution to this would be according to Taylor equalization and in time the principle of equal citizenship has become universally accepted. “Everyone should be recognized for his or her unique identity” (Taylor et al., 1994, p42). In the light of the politics of equal dignity, a group is to be recognized for their unique identity and their distinctness from everyone else while maintaining the same rights as everybody else. In respect to this idea comes to light the fact that exactly this distinctness of a special group has been overlooked, ignored or simply assimilated to a dominant or majority identity and this in itself goes against the ideal of authenticity. All humans are equally worthy of respect and is the basics of the politics of equal dignity (Taylor et al., 1994).

Taylor states that the demand for equal recognition expands beyond the simple acknowledgment of the equal value of all human potentiality and also includes the equal value of what humans have come to achieve out if this potential. Both of these modes of politics are based on the notion of equal respect and they come into conflict with one another. Firstly, is the principle of equal respect which has as a requirement that people are to be treated in a difference-blind fashion, this refers to the blindness that politics can have when it comes to the way citizens can differ. The basics of this idea is that it is the same in all of us and it is important to take in account the need for recognizing and thereby fostering particularity in a society. The principle of equal recognition has as a critic that it negates identity and is enforcing people into a homogenous mould that is not an absolute true to all of humans (Taylor et al., 1994).

According to Taylor the demand for equal recognition surpasses the bare acknowledgement of the equal value of all humans potentially and it is including into this also what they have made out of this potential. All of this is creating a problem, because even thou both the case of the politics of recognition and the politics of equal dignity are based on the notion of equal respect, they still come into conflict. “The principle of equal respect requires that we treat people in a difference-blind fashion” (Taylor et al., 1994, p43) but on the other side one must accept and acknowledge and promote particularity in our society. The criticism that is brought up when it comes to the politics of equal dignity is that it is according to Taylor (1994) “negating identity by forcing people into a homogenous mould that is untrue” to all people. On the other hand, the politics of differences also faces criticism that states that it is violating the principle of non-discrimination. According to Taylor, only the minorities or the suppressed cultures in one society are forced to adapt and take alien form in order to fit into the mould that is made by one homogenous culture. The difference-blind principles of the politics of equal dignity can be
looked upon as being a reflection of one homogenous culture, thus leading to it being highly discriminatory in an oblivious and subtle way (Taylor et al., 1994).

In today’s world more and more societies are turning out to be multicultural and more than one culture wants to find a way to survive. It is argued that a difference-blind liberalism can offers the neutral ground that is needed for people of all cultures to meet and coexist on. In relation to this view one needs to make a distinction between what entails being private and public, for example between religion and politics. The controversial arguments than can arise when politics and religion are too interconnected can be avoided when there is a clear difference between those two and thereby religion does not impinge on the politics. By doing this a minority does not feel left out because its own religion is overshadowed in the main scheme of things by the majority religion in the political sphere. Thereby a stability is maintained in the society (Taylor et al., 1994). Despite this argument Taylor maintains that liberalism should not and cannot claim absolute cultural neutrality because liberalism is “not a possible meeting ground for all cultures, but is the political expression of one range of cultures and quite incompatible with other ranges” (Taylor et al., 1994, p62). For example, mainstream Islam would not easily be able of totally separating religion from politics in the same way it is achieved in Western societies, even if there is a perfect secularism. As mentioned above, societies are today becoming more and more multicultural and at the same time becoming more permeable towards national migration where more of its people are living in diaspora whose homeland is not the place they live in. In this instance one can no longer argue that this is how things are done or are in this society and the newcomers should adapt, but the society itself should become more inclusive and adaptable to the new wave of multiculturalism that is occurring (Taylor et al., 1994).

According to Taylor the challenges that arise are that one has to deal with the sense of marginalization without compromising our basic political principles. One issues that has arisen while dealing with multiculturalism is the imposition of some cultures over others and the self-imposed superiority that strongly influences this imposition. Western societies are particularly found to be guilty of this imposition partly due to their history of colonial times and their marginalization of other cultures that are not similar to their own Western culture (Taylor et al., 1994). There is a demand for letting cultures defend themselves within legal boundaries and also there is a demand for recognizing the equal value of different cultures. Thereby not only letting them survive but also acknowledging those cultures own worth. It is important for a
group to give recognition of equal worth to another group and this is in a way leading to stability in a multicultural society. Taylor states that just as we all must have equal civil rights and voting rights nevertheless race or culture must therefore have the presumption that their traditional culture has value (Taylor et al., 1994).

Charles Taylor refers to negative freedom and positive freedom when talking about the individual and its freedom within a state. The notion of negative freedom is that individuals should be free from restrictions and interferences from outside sources as long as its actions are not causing any harm to others. Freedom of speech, assembly, publication, religion, marriage and many other individual’s freedoms are part of the negative view of freedom. Those of a liberalism theory have an open-mind towards negative freedom and are on the other side opposing positive freedom. Individuals living in a society that has a positive view of freedom are to be enabled and empowered to do certain things in order to accomplish that society’s specific purposes and cooperation is needed in order to achieve positive freedom. When the whole of the society are able to rule themselves, can they be able to call themselves truly free. Negative freedom on the other side is when the individuals of a society can act without any interferences from outside sources and nothing is being done against hers or his will. (Abbey, 2014)

In accordance with Taylor, the members of a culture that has failed to be recognized will feel uprooted and purposeless and will not feel part of a community and have a basis for self-esteem. In worst case scenario those people will feel threatened with a risk of culture annihilation. It is important to give the recognition that a minority or unprivileged group is due and thereby acknowledge the fact that they have a cultural identity with their own traditions and aesthetic history. A failure in acknowledging a group’s cultural identity and its value leads to a somewhat vast consequence as mentioned above (Taylor et al., 1994). Taylor also states that should an individual or a group feel discontented with their own standing in society and how they are perceived by others, those persons or groups are entitled to establish their right for recognition. This usually involves the proclamation of their own dignity and equality and therefore demand to be perceived as an independent being and not continue to accept being treated as a subaltern group (Abbey, 2000).
4.2 Will Kymlicka

In today’s world most countries are culturally diverse and very few countries are homogenous in their language and its citizens belonging to the same ethnonational group. This diversity has paved the way for a number of possibly discordant questions such as the clash of minorities and majorities over language rights, regional autonomy, immigration, educational curriculum, land claims, political representation and much more (Kymlicka, 1995).

According to Kymlicka ethnic identity should be something that people should be free to express in their private life and should not be of any concern to the state, the same as the topic of religion. A state does not impinge on the freedom of people expressing their ethnical cultures but neither does a state help it along and encourage people’s right to express their ethnicity as they seem fit (Kymlicka, 1995). As one would expect, members of ethnic and national groups are indeed protected today against discrimination and prejudice and they are free to uphold any part of their ethnic heritage identity as they deem suitable and are in agreement with the rights of others. On the other side those efforts are happening mainly on the private sphere. Public agencies do not have as duty to “attach legal identities or disabilities to cultural membership or ethnic identity” (Kymlicka, 1995, p4)

Kymlicka (1995) states that he believes “it is legitimate, and indeed, unavoidable, to supplement traditional human rights with minority rights” (Kymlicka, 1995, p6). The recognition of minority rights and its language has been ill used by many different groups, such as the Nazi. It has also been used in order to subdue a minority and to justify the domination of a group of people by those that were and still are intolerant and belligerent nationalists. Thus according to Kymlicka a theory of liberalism of minority rights must entail how minority rights should coexist with human rights and how those rights are being limited by the principles of individual liberty, social justice and even democracy. (Kymlicka, 1995)

The politics of multiculturalism has its challenges and one of them being the increase demand of minority groups in modern societies for the recognition of their identity. Cultural diversity has according to Kymlicka two patterns. Firstly, is the case that cultural diversity is arising from the incorporation of earlier self-governed societies and territories into a larger state. Those incorporated cultures which are refereed by Kymlicka as national minorities and they frequently aspire to maintain a separate society alongside the new incorporated and majority
culture. The national minority would most likely demand different forms of self-governance and autonomy in order to obtain a survival of their distinctive society. In addition to this, the second case of culture diversity is deriving from the individual and familial immigration. Those immigrants often have a wish of integrating in the majority culture and thereby have a desire to be accepted as full members in that culture. Kymlicka refers to those immigrants under the loose term *ethnic groups* and while they have a wish of integrating into the new culture they often seek further recognition of their ethnical identity. Contrary to *national minorities*, *ethnic groups* do not have an aspiration to becoming self-governing but instead wishes upon modifying the laws of mainstream society and its institutions in order to receive more understanding and compliant of cultural differences (Kymlicka, 1995). As stated by Kymlicka “these are just general patterns, of course, not laws of nature” (Kymlicka, 1995, p11).

Western democracies tend to be multicultural and this is a manly a result of colonization and thereby forcing assimilation of the indigenous population or because those democracy states were formed by merging two or more cultures into a homogenous one. Also many countries around the globe are found to be multicultural because they have gathered inside their borders multiple previous self-governing nations. It is important to distinguish that by calling these states multinational does not naturally imply that its citizens do not view themselves as a single people, many do so in fact. Furthermore, it is essential to distinguish between national identity and patriotism. National identity refers to the feeling of belonging to a group in a nation while patriotism is one’s loyalty to the state itself (Kymlicka, 1995).

Immigration is a source of cultural pluralism as long as the state can accept a large number of individuals from other cultures while allowing them to maintain their ethnical identity. In recent years it is mostly agreed upon that immigrants or national minority groups should have the right to preserve their cultural heritage and practises. This is no longer frowned upon as being unpatriotic. Kymlicka underlines that being an immigrant group is not the same as being a nation because they do not occupy homelands (Kymlicka, 1995).

According to Kymlicka, a multicultural state is the result of national difference and ethnic differences (polytechnic state) found inside of a single state. Oppression is an occurring problem within multicultural states and it leads to a high demand of cultural rights for these disadvantaged minority groups (Kymlicka, 1995).
In his book Multicultural citizenship, Kymlicka states that there are three forms of group-differentiated rights and according to him “the challenge of multiculturalism is to accommodate these national and ethnic differences in a stable and morally defensible way” (Kymlicka, 1995, p26). The protection of the civil and political rights of individuals is the best approach in all liberal democracies to accommodate for cultural differences (Kymlicka, 1995).

The first group-specific right is the right to self-government which according to the United Nation’s Charter is each individual’s right to self-determination. Some form of political autonomy or territorial jurisdictions is to be expected and stipulated by most multinational states in order to protect the best interest of their people and their cultures. On the extreme scale of things some nation may come to believe that it is better to separate from the larger state if they feel their self-determination is at risk and unattainable (Kymlicka, 1995).

According to the UN Charter all peoples have the right to self-determination and one of its controversies occurs because it is lacking a clear definition by what peoples generally exactly entails. Generally, the principle of self-determination is applied to overseas colonies and not involving national minorities which in its own creates a limitation to this principle. Many nations and minorities for that part mean that they to classify as being peoples and as following they to deserve to apply the principle of self-determination. In this instance Kymlicka states that a mechanism for recognizing when a claim to self-determination is federalism which is diving powers between reginal subunit and the central government. And in instances where minorities are regionally concentrated, the borderlines of federalism become clearer in order to help the national minority form a majority in one reginal part of the state. In this instance federalism is helping a national minority achieve a certain level of self-determination and able of making decisions in certain areas without the risk of being outvoted by the majority culture (Kymlicka, 1995).

The second group-specific rights are polyethnic rights. In this context Kymlicka states that the Anglo-conformity, where it was expected and essential that as an immigrant one should immediately renounce any bounds to their cultural heritage in order to successfully assimilate into the main culture and its customs, has changed. Immigrant groups have in the last thirty years or so managed to challenge this view and have demanded their right to have freedom in expressing their ethnic culture without any fear from persecutions and prejudice from the society they live in. The notion that has arisen here is that ethnicity should become a separated
entity from politics as once upon time religion become separated from politics (Kymlicka, 1995).

In order to uproot discrimination and prejudice, anti-racism policies are in countries like Canada and Australia, a part of the multiculturalism policies. In some cases, ethnic groups have also demanded different forms of public funding, which can include ethnic associations, festival or magazine in order to promote their cultural heritage. Some of the most controversial demands made by ethnic groups are those that seem to seek exemptions from laws and regulation that it is disadvantageous to them. For example, is the request of the Jews and Muslims in Britain to change the animal slaughtering legislation and stop closing on Sunday. In Canada Sikh men have asked to be free of having to wear a motorcycle helmet and also have exemption from the mandatory dress-codes of police forces in order for them to be able to wear their turban. These are a few of many examples and these groups specific measure are what Kymlicka refers to as polytechnic rights. The intention is for them to help an ethnic group to be able of expressing their culture without it having a negative reaction on its people’s success in the economic and political institutions of the majority society. Polyethnic rights do not promote self-governance but instead seek to achieve a greater integration into the larger society (Kymlicka, 1995).

The third group-specific rights are the special representation rights and it is something that has in recently years gathered more attention beside the more traditional concern for minorities of self-government or polyethnic (Kymlicka, 1995)

There is an increased trepidation in the believe that the political process is unrepresentative throughout Western democracies. In the sense that the system fails to notice and reflect upon the diversity that exists in a nation and the legislatures are, more often than not, dominated by “middle-class, able-bodies, white men” (Kymlicka,1995, p32). If a more representative process would be in place and fully functional it would include people of ethnic and racial minorities, women, the disables, the poor and etcetera (Kymlicka, 1995)

According to Kymlicka (1995) one way to start reforming the process is to “make political parties more inclusive, by reducing the barriers which inhibit women, ethnic minorities, or the poor from becoming party candidates or party leaders” (Kymlicka, 1995, p31). A goal for the society is to try to eliminate the oppression and disadvantages that exists and thus eradicating the need for those special rights (Kymlicka, 1995).
On the other side the question of special representation rights for groups, is complicated because it is in some cases a result of self-government and it is not a manifestation of oppression. If an external body could unilaterally revise or revoke its power without involving the minority or seek its approval, a minority’s right to self-determination would be greatly undermined. Thereby a consequence of self-government is that the national minority would be ensured to have representation on any body that in its turn would have the authority to modify its powers of self-government as it is the case today with the Supreme Court. The right to self-government are looked upon as being inherent and permanent and from it derives the guarantees of representation (Kymlicka, 1995).

Multiculturalism is a powerful force in modern societies. Kymlicka states that one should keep a clear distinction between the impact of racial and ethnic diversity and the impact of multiculturalism policies have on our society. It is argued by many other scientists that ethnic and racial diversity leads to a difficulty in maintaining in place redistributive policies, regardless of the policies that have been introduced in order to handle exactly that diversity in a nation (Banting & Kymlicka, 2006). It is believed that these kind of uncertainties are reinforced by the multiculturalism policies to undermine the national security and trust. Those policies that have in the first place been implemented in order to recognise and accommodate ethnic minorities in a larger state. If these concern turns out to be the truth, Kymlicka states that we all may indeed have to face a growing problem in our society. There is to be expected a growing increase in the demand of ethnic minorities, newer immigrants or historically rooted, for recognition of their cultural heritage (Banting & Kymlicka, 2006). The aim of multiculturalism according to Kymlicka should be “a precondition for individual autonomy” (Banting & Kymlicka, 2006, p6).

Limited self-government has been used by large states as an instrument in order to mollify and manage the minorities within their borders. Without having to resolve different underling issues by violence and thereby an avoidance of territorial integrity is being achieved (Banting & Kymlicka, 2006). Multiculturalism policies purpose is to recognize and accommodate national minorities. Those policies involve the recognition and encouragement for minority languages, higher representation in central government and parliamentary institutions, constitutional recognition of the multicultural aspect of a state and also the opportunity to have better access in the international arena (Banting & Kymlicka, 2006).
Ethno cultural minorities have limited options when they come into confrontation with the nation-building state. Their choices mostly consist out of reaching an acceptance of assimilating into the larger society, thus trying to establish and sustain their own public institution, like schools, media, legislature etcetera, or at the very least they can live in voluntary isolation. Minorities are fearful of the nation-building state and its rising barriers, burdens and disadvantages that occur. Therefore, it is of high importance that minority rights are implemented for protecting them. Minority rights are viewed to be fundamental and its violation is seen as being an assault on basic dignity and respect (Kymlicka, 2001)
5. Analysis

5.1 The Rroma people’s history in Romania

The Rroma have since entering the medieval provinces of Wallachia and have been treated as second class citizen and became enslaved. This has regrettably lasted until the mid-nineteenth century. One can state that in the long course of the Romani history they had the worst experience in Romania. Historically it is impossible to determine the exact moment when Rroma people have entered Romania’s historical provinces of Moldovia and Wallachia. But most evidence states that it would have occurred by the 13th century. Initially the Rroma (Lash & Featherstone, 2002) people found a place for themselves as craftsmen and metalsmiths among those societies but unfortunately they began to be enslaved for a variety of economic, social, military and probably racial reason as well. Romani slavery became institutionalized over the next century and the most important fact to this plights of theirs is warfare. They were used as bargains chips between opposite sides. For example, in 1471 King Stephen the Great brought back from his fights 17,000 Rromani to be used as slave labour and he instated a law that stated that any Moldavian to marry a Rromani would lose his bright right and status and thereby become a slave himself (Crowe & Kolsti, 1992).

In the era of the Ottoman authority over Romania in the 16th century, Rroma slavery became more integrated in the system and with the serfdom peasant class. And those two groups of people became the foundation for labour institution in Romanian countryside. But Rroma people unlike selfdom peasant were not initially farmers and worked best with crafts such as metalsmithing, gold washers, bear trainers, spoon carvers and this set the line for the kind of jobs Rroma people still have in this day (Crowe & Kolsti, 1992).

As a result of the Rromani slave’s value on the work force as both a labourer and a craftsman laws were passed down to constrain movement and thereby prevent runaway slaves and illegals Rroma slave trading. A distinction was made between serfdom and Rroma people and in the 18th century serfdom was outlaw while Rromani still remained serving as slaves. In the middle of the 18th century it was decreed that Rroma children would no longer be sold separately from their parents. The distinctions that started to take place now between serfdom people and Rroma have created new problems because of intermarriage between previously two equal classes on the social sphere. And with these new problem came other laws that tried to keep those two
groups of people separated and it all ended with intermarriage being banned as it was deemed to be un-Christian and immoral (Crowe & Kolsti, 1992). Will Kymlicka states that ethnic identity is very similar to religion in the way that it should be free to express in their private life without it being of any concern of the state itself. The state thereby should not contest the freedom of the people to expressing their own particular culture and ethnical groups, like the Rroma, should always be protected against prejudice and discrimination (Kymlicka, Multicultural Citizenship, 1995). Minorities have the right according to Kymlicka and Taylor alike to maintain and protect their ethnical heritage and identity as they seem fit.

It wasn’t until the 19th century that significant changes came about for the Rroma people. Pavel D. Kiselev the Plenipotentiary President of the Divans of Wallachia and Moldavia declared that reforms had to occur in order “to construct a social base of support for” power among the peasants and the reforms were “designed to eliminate the most offensive abuses with local officials inflicted upon peasants” (Crowe & Kolsti, 1992, p65). On the other side these reformers defined better the Rroma status and empowered their owners even more than before. But regardless of that it was a start for the changes that came to the status of slaves for the Rroma people. In the year 1837 the Prince of Wallachia freed all Rroma people from slavery but after the collapse of a new regime the Rroma were once again enslaved in 1848. The Rroma gained liberty, for good, this time in 1864 (Crowe & Kolsti, 1992). Taylor states that a fundamental aspect of individual identity is deriving from the belonging to a community and having the recognitions and the right to admit it (Abbey, 2014). Thus community memberships it is important and not to be ignored. In accordance with negative freedom interference from the outside when in regards to an ethnical group should be absent in as long as a person or its actions do not do harm to others. But this will not give a minority total freedom as long as they are not self-governing. And negative freedom does exist when things are not condone to a human being against his or her will (Taylor, o.a., 1994). According to Kymlicka it is important to involve the minority in power decision making process because it will include their ethnical diverse views. A goal the society should incorporate on a fundamental level is to try to eliminate the oppression and disadvantages that exist and eradicating the need for those special group rights (Kymlicka, 1995).

In the wake of the emancipation of the Rroma people followed a new problem for the Roma, the prejudice that has always surrender this group of people. The anti-Rroma prejudice was huge at that beginning of the 20th century and even though they were renowned for their
craftsmanship, musicality and arts, they were not treated with the respect there were due. It was believed that if you treated the Rroma as your fellow citizen “you will make nothing of them”. The societies idea was the Rroma people would not work and adapt to the society. (Crowe & Kolsti, 1992, p67).

Despite this kind of thinking, “a sense of Rroma ethnic self-awareness began to emerge” and they slowly began to rise the problem of the rights they are entailed to. After the First World War the government of Romania was forced to give them, their minority rights and to the other minorities in the country as well. But even thou this sounded great on paper, in reality the Romania leaders of that time had a vision to “Romanize” the big minority of Rroma who made approximately 1.5 percent of the population. But this new will of the Romanian state only had a determine effect on the minorities of this country. In 1929 when the Depression his Europe and Romania with its oppressive government policies only helped to increase the prejudice against Rroma and to some extend they were viewed as being “untouchable” and were viewed as being “less valuable than farm animals” (Crowe & Kolstiy, 1992, p68). There were written remarks that described the Rroma as being filthy and miserable and that they were wasting good ground that should be put to use instead of just being used for their camps, that were usually at the end of a village. The males were seen as being lazy and indolent while the women were seen as being wild and had an unconscious grace about them (Crowe & Kolstiy, 1992). Taylor is of the opinion that every human being is to be seen as having his or her own way of being human and should be encouraged to realize this rather than accept conformity to an already existing model or pattern imposed by the outside or the majority culture. (Abbey, 2014). “each has to discover an original way of being, has to recognize it as a true or faithful expression of who they are, and has to adopt and take responsibility for it”(Abbey,2014,p86).

Their status in Romania as that of a second class citizens were the officials felt that they had no lawfully right to demand minority rights as they neither had “a protective state, a history, nor a culture and civilization thought written languages” (Crowe & Kolsity, 1992, p70). And despite this attitude towards them, they formed their own collective groups that had a hand in help towards demanding the rights that were due them by law. However, the Rroma were not given the same official recognition as other minorities in Romania. This is a clear reflection of the historical treatment of Rroma where an ambivalent attitude towards them was the norm. (Crowe & Kolsity, 1992). Their position was not helped by the majority of the population having a negative attitude towards the Rroma and they becoming an embarrassment due to their life
style that coincided with Romania wanting to be viewed as a modernized in the new era after the Second World War. In order for the Rroma people to receive their minority rights they should adapt to the more settled and cultural Romanian lifestyle and integrate, in what the society of that time viewed as being a good citizen and thereby blend in with the norm (Crowe & Kolsity, 1992). Taylor is of the opinion that every human being is to be seen as having his or her own way of being human and should be encouraged to realize this rather than accept conformity to an already existing model or pattern imposed by the outside or the majority culture. (Abbey, 2014). “each has to discover an original way of being, has to recognize it as a true or faithful expression of who they are, and has to adopt and take responsibility for it’ (Abbey, 2014, p86).

There is a divide between Roma and non-Rroma people and the general idea is that they are inadequately integrated into Romanian society. Another reason is the problem of a deeply integrated animosity and stereotyping of Rroma people throughout Romania that has developed an ethnical hierarchy where Rroma people are at the very bottom. “These feelings are so deeply ingrained in the Romanian mind that the term Tigan (gypsy) is synonymous with someone who is worthless and shiftless” (Crowe & Kolsity, 1992, p73). According to Taylor (1994) our identity is shaped by recognition or its absence and persons or a group can suffer greatly because of it. How the majority view them as being that is how a certain group will perceive themselves as being and therefore if their identity if not recognized can suffer distortion leave a confining or demeaning perception of the ethnic group. (Taylor, The Politics of Recognition, 1994)

5.2 The Rroma integration 2020 Project

The European Union has for a long period of time stressed the need for an improvement in Rroma integration and accepted that the EU and its member states have indeed a responsibility towards the Roma. The full integration of Rroma will have an improved economic benefits for societies and this is referring to the integration off all Rroma communities all around Europe (European Commission, 2010). In Europe as a whole, approximatively 10 to 12 million Rroma are in poor socio-economic conditions as well as living in extreme marginalisation in both rural and urban areas (European Commission, 2010).

National, regional and local integration policies should focus on the Rroma people in order to accomplish a significant progress towards Rroma integration and their needs should be
addressed. Thus, one should focus on preventing and compensating for the disadvantages they face in everyday life. The principle of non-discrimination at the EU level as well as national level is included alongside the fight against poverty and exclusion and EU Rroma integration goals have been laid forward in order to help states achieve a better integration for Rroma minorities. (European Commission, 2011). European Union’s Rroma integration goals should cover “four crucial areas: access to education, employment, healthcare and housing” (European Commission, 2011, p4). According to EU commission rapport in 2011 many member states will have a long way to go in addressing the situation of Rroma in terms of poverty, education and employment (European Commission, 2011).

Access to education primary goal is to accomplish to make Rroma children stay in school and at least finish primary school. Education and finishing the mandatory school years in Rroma population is at a much lower grade than the rest of the population. While primary school attendance it is mandatory, Member States do have a duty to ensure that all children have access to schools and a good education. The European Commission plans to strengthen links between different communities, throughout school or cultural mediator where their many duties are to inform and advise parents on how the local education systems work and thus actively getting involved in making sure children stay in schools and can make the transitions between different school stages. The EU Commission states that “Member States should ensure that all Rroma children have access to quality education and are not subject to discrimination or segregation, regardless or whether they are sedentary or not. Member States should, as a minimum, ensure primary school completion. They should also widen access to quality early childhood education and care and reduce the number of early school levers from secondary education pursuit to the Europe 2020 strategy” and “Rroma youngsters should be strongly encouraged to participate also in secondary and tertiary education” (European Commission, 2011, p6).

Access to healthcare primary goal is to decrease the gap between the majority group and the Rroma people. For Rroma people life expectancy at birth is 10 years less than the rest of population, which is 82 for women and 76 for men. Among Rroma communities the child mortality rate is between 2 to 6 times higher than that of the majority population depending on which country. This disparity in healthcare between non-Rroma and Rroma is strongly correlated to their poor living conditions and as well as a lack of targeted information campaigns. Due to limited access to healthcare facilities their exposure to health risks is higher than of those that are non-Rroma. Therefore, the EU Commission states that “Member States
should provide access to quality healthcare especially for children and women as well as preventive care and social service at a similar level under the same conditions to the Rroma as to the rest of the population. Where possible, qualified Rroma should be involved in healthcare programmes targeting their communities” (European Commission, 2011, p7)

Access to housing and essential services primary goal is to improve on the living conditions of the Rroma people of whom many do not have access to public utilities such as gas, electricity and water and as a result this disadvantages them even more and aggravates their difficulty integration in the society. Thereby the EU Commission states that “Member States should promote non-discriminatory access to housing, including social housing. Action on housing needs to be part of an integrated approach including, in particular, education, health, social affairs, employment and security, and desegregation measure. Member States should also address the particular needs of non-sedentary Rroma (e.g. provide access to suitable halting sites for non-sedentary Roma). They should actively intervene with targeted programmes involving regional and local authorities” (European Commission, 2011, p7)

Last but not least access to employment which has as a primary goal to diminish the employment gap between the Rroma population and the majority population. The Rroma find themselves to be discriminated against when it comes to employment and therefore the EU Commission has agreed upon that “Member States should grant Roma people full access in a non-discriminatory way to vocational training, to the job market and to self-employment tolls and initiatives. Access to micro-credit should be encouraged. In the public sector, due to attention should be given to employment of qualified Rroma civil servants. Public Employment Services can reach out to the Rroma by providing personalised services and meditations” (European Commission, 2011, p6). This is a way to achieve a better employment rate and thus attract Roma to the labour market (European Commission, 2011).

Policies that give public recognition to ethnic minorities are usually represented as a strategy for coping with the growing pluralism of liberal societies, as both Kymlicka and Taylor states in their discussion about ethnicities and multiculturalism. Some critics states that giving recognition to minority groups will in fact erode the sense of shared citizenship (Kymlicka & Norman, Citizenship in Diverse Societies, 2003) which it is not true, as Kymlicka brings up the example of Canada and how the group recognitions of minorities has been an imbedded part of educational policies since the very begging of the modern state in the middle of the 19th
century (Kymlicka, Multicultural Citizenship, 1995). One question to regard to minority rights that one should bestow on those disadvantageous groups is if they indeed create advantages or is they indiscriminately give privileges to some groups at the expense of others (Kymlicka & Norman, Citizenship in Diverse Societies, 2003). This thought is not really approved by Kymlicka and Taylor that both feel that minorities should have access to help in order to advance in the majority society and be at the same level as them, in the case where minorities have been long time living in poor conditions than the majority of the population. Discrimination and segregation are two of the main difficulties that surrounds ethinical groups and diminishes their advancement in the society while maintaining their ethnicity and not have to assimilate into the larger culture.

5.3 The Rroma people in current Romania

The Romanian National Institute of Statistics says that approximatively 15% of the Rroma people over 10 years of age are illiterate, 70% of which are living in the countryside and this greatly diminishes their chances of finding adequate employment. Many of those are employed by hour or are hired for a workday only, mostly illegally and have no job security. Out of the 35.5 % of those that work 56% are unqualified, 32% are qualified, 9% are farmers and 13% have traditional Rroma occupations. Restrictive participation conditions to adult requalification programs, initiated by EU, make the integration process on the job market difficult (Prison Fellowship Romania, 2017).

The collapse of social hierarchies and the rise of the modern notions of dignity have made it possible for a sense of equality to appear and imbed in the historically oppressed groups of people. The concept of dignity is universally accepted and it can be stated that is the only one compatible with a democratic society. Democracy has open the door to equal recognition and over the years it has been taken into consideration in different forms and now it has resurfaced in the form of demand for equal statutes of cultures and genders (Taylor et al., 1994).

In Romania as late as 1989, people started to recognize that minorities have rights as well and the state started to change its Constitution accordingly. Romania’s constitution from 1991 recognizes and guarantees to persons belonging to a national minority the right to keep, develop and express their ethnical, cultural, linguistic and religious identity (Micu, 2009). According to J. Micu the Rroma population was not a priority for the Romanian government between 1990
and early 2000 and this fact arises from the lack of proper documentation about this minority. One significant problem is the fact that the real number of Rroma citizens is unknown and a lot of them are still undocumented citizens of Romania. Because of the negative connotations that being part of Rroma ethnicity brings forth, many people do not acknowledge their ethnicity and that leads to erroneous data (Micu, 2009). The last official data from the year 2002 found an increase of the Rroma population and 2.5% of the total population have identified themselves as being of Rroma ethnicity (Micu, 2009). In Romanian society there is a relatively low number of Rromani organizations and have a low threshold for trust among those that represent those organizations from the public. All organizations are inclined to lean on supporting the interest of the Rroma in the public sphere with the help of media and public opinion. The lack of trust that surrounds these organizations is a huge impediment in mobilizing the Rroma people on a large scale. (Sigona & Trehan, 2009)

More than half the Rroma people have no jobs or work in places that require no qualification. Here one can also notice a huge difference between women and men, where only 15.3% of men have no qualifications whereas 37.1% of women are unqualified (Micu, 2009). In isolated communities lack of qualification or traditional ethnical occupations are prevalent. Generally speaking, the poor Rroma communities have developed their strategies of acquiring money and making a living: they take the jobs no one else will take which positions them on a lower position on the social scale compared to the majority of Romanians. For example, they collect plastic, glass, iron or they can sell street food. These occupations are viewed by the majority in the society as being degrading and are often associated with Rroma working people. They may also work as a street cleaner, garbage gatherer or at petrol stations as car cleaners among other lower end jobs (Micu, 2009). Few of them resort to begging, small embezzlements or stealing which influences in a negative way the reputation of the whole ethnical group and does not help combat the prejudiced views people already have of them (Micu, 2009). One of the greatest injustice against a ethnicity group is that its distinctness has been ignored, assimilated or glossed over by the majority culture and have been treated as second-class citizens (Taylor, o.a., 1994). According to both Taylor and Kymlicka all people are equally worthy of respect and having the right to preserve their cultural differences without it leading to negative effects on them as a group. Such as lower end jobs, discrimination, poor living conditions and segregation etcetera.

In Romania the rise in criminality and violence among the Roma has instigated even more prejudice against them as an ethnic group and the ostentatious attitude of those Rroma people
that are rich has led to more social problems than can easily turn into ethnic problems, according to V. Achim. (Achim, 1998). In communities where the Rroma form the majority one can easily remark upon high tension between the Rroma and non-Rroma and unfortunately in Romania up to date there is almost a universal attitude of rejection in regard to those of Rroma ethnicity. According to Achim a social and educational policy for the Rroma should be implemented in order for them as a group to achieve prosperity and integration in the society (Achim, 1998) as one can remark upon earlier in this text those policies have been implement and the Rroma populations problems are taken into account and no longer are ignored.

Romania, as any other nation-state, experiences disparities between the civic and the ethno cultural communities and a lot of people confuse integration with ethno cultural assimilation. A clear distinction between those two has to be clear if there is to be any integration and improving the social standing of minority groups such as the Rroma. In order to prevent conflicts, nations states have been accepting and accommodating to new ideas of minority rights (Brown, 2000), such as those of Taylor and Kymlicka. Kymlicka explains that it is important not to force assimilation of the ethical group into the state of Romania as it has been tried to be done before (Kymlicka, 1995). Furthermore, Taylor states that in the light of equal dignity a group id to be recognized for their unique identity and their distinctness from everyone else, while maintain the same rights as everybody else (Taylor et al, 1994).

Multiculturalism is seeking to political fortifications which will make it possible to defend the integrity of the ethnic minority and alongside it to establish a social justice community that has common values and it is embracing ethnic diversity. A national community where different ethnic groups can grow to its full potential. Those that are disadvantaged by society now, like the Rroma people, should be guaranteed the rights and resources necessary in order for them to be able of achieving full progress (Brown, 2000). Taylor states that the members of a culture that has failed to be recognized will feel uprooted and will not feel part of the community and have basis for self-esteem. People will feel threatened with a risk of culture annihilation, as such has been tested in Romania’s history. It is important to give recognition that a minority group is due and acknowledge the fact that they have a separate culture identity (Taylor et al, 1994).

The main cause of poverty is the lack of income that creates demoralization and hopelessness, helplessness as well as a lack of wanting to do well and get out of the situation. This also
aggravates a state of being compliant and not work to get out of what society has reduced you to being and just accept the low expectations (Micu, 2009). Kymlicka states that social relations between and amongst groups can have major effects on individual identity (Kymlicka & Norman, Citizenship in Diverse Societies, 2003) and it is important that minority groups or rather members of disadvantaged group not be given as Taylor has mentioned a demining portrait of themselves (Taylor, The Ethics of authenticity, 1992). One should remark upon the fact that promoting diversity in all positions of authority will lead to excellence in a nation and more inclusiveness.

The level of education among the Rroma people is significantly lower than that of the general population: four times lower during preschool; 15-25 times lower during primary-school; 13% lower during secondary-school and up to 40% lower at high-school. University enrolment is usually considerate to be an exceptional situation among the Rroma people (Micu, 2009). Beside the financially reasons, there is also the belief that school is a way out of the Rroma community and it represents a way for them to be assimilated into the majority culture and many desire to avoid that (Micu, 2009).

The lack of paperwork that the Rroma people faces leads to a lack of legal rights and thereby social exclusion. Therefore they mostly work on the black market and find themselves in the impossibility of acquiring social and health insurance (Micu, 2009). Politics of recognition are bringing forward the issues of the assumptions of neutrality and claims that equal dignity and liberalism are made by collectives and not by the individuals themselves (Lash & Featherstone, 2002).

The health and the stability of a modern democracy is depending upon the qualities and attitudes of its citizens and not only on the justices of the institutions. It is important that all inhabitants of a country have their own sense of identity, being it national, regional, ethnic, religious, are given their due recognition and people should tolerate and be able of working together with those that are different from themselves and should also feel free of taking part in the political process in order to endorse the public good and also hold political authorities accountable. All should commit to a sense of justice and a fair distribution of resources and then the nation state will flourish (Kymlicka & Norman, Citizenship in Diverse Societies, 2003). In retrospect this ideal is not really happening in Romania with the disparities that exist between the ethничal Rroma people and the majority culture. Things have started to look up and the Rroma people
have with the help of minority rights and EU policies combating discrimination have started to act up and demanded more rights in the last decade than they have throughout history.

One can summarize that the Rroma people see themselves as entitled to full membership in Romania and for the nation to respect the ethnical groups rights it will enlarge the freedom of individuals and thus the nation avoids a violent conflict. Group differentiated rights such as territorial autonomy, which the Rroma people do not qualify for, veto power, guaranteed representation in central institutions all can help towards rectifying the inequalities that exist between the minority group and the majority culture (Kymlicka, Multicultural Citizenship, 1995).
6. Conclusions

No culture is above another one despite its size and political power and to even counterplan such an atrocious idea it goes against human equality but it is more frequent happening than one may want to admit. Taylor states that it is necessary that people belonging to an ethnical group have the chance to act or not act as they choose and do not have to fear outside interferences.

Economical marginalization and cultural misrecognition are effecting the Rroma people and one solution to better things for them is to improve people’s standing on the labour market and give them access to better jobs, better education and so on. Due to their historical background filled with a accounts of slavery, discrimination, prejudice and persecution have led to them having a huge mistrust of the justice system and no longer have faith in the nation state. They have surpassed attempts to assimilation and fought for the rights that they now have as a minority group in Romania. The EU organizations and policies are hoping to improve upon the state and minority relations and they have a goal of endorsing their right to express their ethnicity without any fear.

Kymlicka states that social relations between and amongst groups can have major effects on individual identity (Kymlicka & Norman, Citizenship in Diverse Societies, 2003) and it is important that minority groups or rather members of disadvantaged group not be given as Taylor has mentioned a demining portrait of themselves (Taylor, The Ethics of authenticity, 1992). One should remark upon the fact that promoting diversity in all positions of authority will lead to excellence in a nation and more inclusiveness.

“Oppression is a struggle for multiculturalism” (Kymlicka, 1995, p19) and “Roma should get involved in politics. Problems faced by Roma are political in nature, and in order to deal with them, there is a need for a consistent budgetary allocation from the state. At the end of the day Roma will have better lives only when they are strong enough to have a stay in politics. Social change is not God-given but man-made.” (Sigona & Trehan, 2009, p 182)
7. References


