"Reflexivity of reflexivity" with Roma-related Nordic educational research

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Abstract

In this article, I reflect on the various uses of reflexivity in Roma-related educational research focusing on the Nordic context, in my own and other authors' writings. I respond to the call of the recently founded *Critical Romani Studies* journal for reflexivity, which has been raised since mostly non-Romani scholars produce Roma-related research. I purposefully selected 34 academic texts, which I closely read in relation to various research paradigms and their typologies of reflexivity, after which I further reflected on my own readings. The article contributes to recent debates arguing for reflecting on uses of reflexivity, or for a reflexivity of reflexivity, as a strategy to address the reproduction of epistemic privileges in research.

Keywords: reflexivity; Roma; Nordic; education; coloniality; epistemic racism

Introduction

A discursive shift in academic, cultural, and policy discourses occurred around 2000 in Europe, from assimilation of Romani people towards historical justice, political responsibility, and Roma rights. In a Nordic context, several late 1990s societal changes can be understood to have led to this shift. The Finnish, Swedish, and Norwegian churches and governments apologized for their historical roles in discriminating against Romani people and recognized for the first time Romani groups as national minorities[2] (Selling, 2018). More recently, Romani academic and artistic voices have initiated debates on access to knowledge production, addressing topics like voice, positionality, epistemic racism, self-representation, and reflexivity (Kóczé, 2015). A group of Romani curators, artists, and academics launched in 2015 the digital archive of Roma arts and cultures *RomArchive*, telling the history of important Roma contributions to what are considered

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[2] Although the presence of Romani groups in the region has been attested from the beginning of the 16th century (see Pulma, 2006; Tervonen, 2010).

European arts and cultures[3]. A special 2015 issue of the *Roma Rights Quarterly* journal was titled "Nothing About Us Without Us?". The title refers to the persisting exclusion of Romani contributions from knowledge production and policymaking on and for the Roma. The special issue introduced a new critical paradigm for Romani Studies, which then the *Critical Romani Studies* open access journal, founded in 2018, took further. The journal seeks to challenge homogenizing tendencies of mainstream Romani studies with new avenues that de-essentialize how knowledge is produced[4]. In this endeavor, researchers, and particularly non-Romani researchers, should reflect on their epistemological and methodological underpinnings and on how they use reflexivity towards disrupting the reproduction of whiteness in their research (Bogdan et al., 2018; Fremlova, 2018).

Whiteness in critical whiteness and social justice studies is seen as a socially constructed category sustaining power structures that reproduce and normalize white supremacy. It is not just about skin color but also about inhabiting a position of privilege, which becomes invisible for those who inhabit it (Applebaum, 2010). Zembylas (2018) goes beyond social constructivism and representation, and theorizes whiteness as assemblages of affects, materialities of bodies and spaces, discourses, encounters and power relations that are "continually emerging in an open-ended process" (p. 5) to constitute white supremacy differently in different historical, social, and political circumstances. Reflexivity can guide researchers towards mindfulness of how they navigate and potentially reproduce whiteness and *epistemic racism* – what is considered valid knowledge, reliable theory or method, and whose work is cited according to norms shaped by whiteness (Fremlova, 2018).

During the 1970s and originating in anthropology, a post-colonial form of reflexivity was introduced to overcome colonizing research methods (Hertz, 1997). Feminist and critical race studies argued for reflexivity at each step of the research process and collaboration between researchers and researched. Feminist women of color challenged the problematic gesture of 'giving voice' to the disempowered (hooks 1981, 1990; Spivak, 1987; Villenas, 1996, 2000). The "epistemic decolonial turn" (Grosfoguel, 2007) has shifted the attention from the research process, relations and representation, to the unevenness of knowledge production. Reflexivity on colonial power relations vested also in research, thus focused on knowledge claims by those people who found themselves at "crossroads of imperial and colonial differences" and who were denied their humanity (Thapar-Björkert & Tlostanova, 2018, p. 3). The decolonial turn further entails a "coalitional consciousness" across affiliative groups that can challenge hierarchies and exclusions in knowledge production (Sandoval, 2000, p. 4).

In this article, I respond to the call for reflexivity put forward by various authors published in *Critical Romani Studies* and *Roma Rights Quarterly*. I write from the

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[3] https://www.romarchive.eu/en/about/history-of-romarchive/
[4] https://crs.ceu.edu/index.php/crs/about

position of a non-Romani Romanian researcher living in Finland. Both in my home country and in diasporic contexts, I am often read as 'white'. I can thus benefit from structural privileges based on white supremacy. When I am read as Eastern European in western/northern Europe through classed readings, I may be seen as coming from Europe's 'developing' semi-periphery. At times, I am identified through gendered and racializing readings as 'woman of color', as in potentially Roma. However, passing is not equivalent with becoming. This raises questions about appropriation, solidarity, and "abjectification" of/with an 'other' (Ahmed, 1999; Tudor, 2017b).

With the decolonial turn away from reflexivity of representation, is the confessional tale I just told reflexive enough? How could I further disrupt my own claims to knowledge? This article answers two research questions:

1. How is reflexivity used and what roles or purposes does reflexivity play in Roma-related educational research focusing on the Nordic context?
2. How can a reflexivity of reflexivity disrupt claims to knowledge and allow opening for pluriversal knowledges in research?

In the next section on methodology, I explain how I constructed my data and how I answer my research questions. The analysis then has four sections. Each section covers a research paradigm or option. Researchers writing in different paradigms use reflexivity differently. I start each section by defining the paradigm/option and its corresponding reflexivity, and identifying the texts from my data belonging to that paradigm. Each section of the analysis has one or more subsections according to the uses of reflexivity I identified in my data. Each subsection has two parts, each part responding to each of research question. The part below constitutes autoethnographic gestures to trouble my claims to knowledge from the part above. I conclude the article with open-ended reflections towards a conversation on reflexivity and decoloniality in Roma-related educational research.

Methodology

Reflexivity seems to be a difficult concept to define, which nonetheless qualitative researchers see as common practice "without defining how they are using it" (Pillow, 2003, p. 176). Researchers commonly treat reflexivity as a methodological skill or tool to produce trustworthy research. This may translate to ethical, contemplative, collaborative, inquiring, or unsettling research purposes, practices, and representations (Berry & Clair, 2011; Calderon, 2016; Dohn, 2011; Madison, 2011). Reflexivity may answer questions like: How does the researcher's subjectivity affect all the various research steps? How, should or can one represent or know others or truths?

Given the ambiguity surrounding reflexivity, I read reflexivity in the texts comprising my data while acknowledging the impossibility to fully know or convey how reflexively a text was written. I answer my first research question with "hermeneutic generosity" (Benei, 2011), reading reflexivity within the authors' paradigmatic position. Pillow's

(2003, 2015) discussion of uses of reflexivity in different research paradigms assists me in this process, accompanied by decolonial options to reflexivity discussed by Sandoval (2000) and Lugones (2006) (*Figure 1* in Appendix).

To answer my second research question, I reflect on the knowledge I produce as I read others' reflexivity through autoethnographic gestures. With "reflexivity of reflexivity" (Pillow, 2015), I attempt to show where epistemic privileges and theoretical alliances (in my own and others' writings) may reproduce whiteness and epistemic racism, focusing on affects and discomfort with established ways of knowing. I question the mechanisms, ideologies, and biases in my analysis with views from further literature, towards opening space for pluriversal co-existence of knowledges (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2009).

I constructed the data by selecting 32 articles that explore Roma related topics within the Nordic context through a rigorous search and selection process in university library databases[5]. I added to the sample one article published in the Critical Romani Studies journal written by a Roma-identified researcher (Stenroos, 2019) and one book chapter discussing antiracist education with some references to Roma struggles in the context of solidarity across affiliative groups (Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018).

Modernist paradigms: reflexivity toward the familiar

Modernist paradigms reflect Enlightenment modernity values like reasoning, clarity, truth and progress. In post-positivism, research describe, clarifies and explains an objective reality through rigorous scientific studies. Researchers transmit knowledge to readers with the aim of knowing the world (Lather, 2006). As reflected in my data, this can be done through mixed methods (Mattila, 2018; Özerk, 2013) and historiography (Montesino, 2012), among others.

With the interpretivist turn, reality becomes subjective and constructed based on many truths. Discourse creates reality instead of reflecting it, based on a dialogical, albeit not necessarily collaborative, transaction of knowledge, to understand the world (Lather, 2006). As shown in my data, this is often achieved through interpretive mixed methods (Crondahl & Eklund, 2012), phenomenology (Eklund Karlsson et al., 2013), classic ethnography (Engebrigtsen, 2011; Puskás & Björk-Willén, 2017), historiography (Engebrigtsen, 2015; Ericsson, 2017), content analysis (Granqvist, 2006; Harris et al.,

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[5] This was done by combining the terms Roma or Romani or Gyps* or Traveler*, with education* or school*, and Finland or Sweden or Norway or Denmark or Iceland or Nordic or Scandinav*. I did not include Greenland in my sample because of the lack of Roma-related research. I searched for academic articles in peer-reviewed journals in English, with full text available, published after 1998 to reflect the discursive shift from assimilation to historical justice and political responsibility. I searched through four EBSCO international databases – Academic search ultimate, Education research complete, Teacher reference center, Sociology source ultimate – and two ProQuest international databases – Education Collection (including Education Resources Information Center) and Social Science Premium Collection. The EBSCO and ProQuest searches generated 148 and 175 results respectively, among which there were many duplicates when comparing the two samples. I removed the duplicates and those articles that were off-topic, did not approach at all education and schooling, or did not refer primarily to a Nordic context.

2017; Lipott, 2012; Saukkonen & Pyykkönen, 2008), and grounded theory (Alex & Lehti, 2013; Berlin, 2015).

Modernist uses of reflexivity translate to situating oneself as non-exploitative, tolerant, and compassionate towards research participants, conducting ethical research and creating less distorted and more legitimate research accounts. Pillow (2003) identified four typologies as the most common uses of reflexivity in modernist paradigms – reflexivity as recognition of self, recognition of the other, truth, and transcendence. All four uses interact with each other and are often mutually dependent methodological tools to represent truth and subjects as knowable, or to be reflexive toward the familiar.

Reflexivity as truth and recognition of self/other

These types of reflexivity entail scientific rigor, exposing the context in which research is conducted, situating oneself closer to the other and representing the other while pointing to limits of such recognition.

Mattila (2018) reflects on 1935-1970 Finnish eugenic sterilization. He describes power structures through triangulation across multiple sources – policies, sterilization orders, and quantitative statistics from archives – to confer authority and validity to his research, which shows that eugenic sterilizations mainly targeted Romani women due to their lack of formal education associated with social disability. He problematically uses the term "gypsy" throughout the entire article, without reflecting on its racist connotations. The author seems to use reflexivity for sound methodologies and scientific rigor.

In her comparative analysis of relationships between Roma and non-Roma in Norway and Romania, Engebrigtsen (2011) frames her ethnographic study within perceptions and practices of self and other in intercultural interactions. The author positions herself through her own life experiences – being head of a kindergarten for Roma children, working as a cultural expert, having a Romani husband, and having conducted fieldwork on Romanian Roma communities as part of her PhD (p. 124). She seems to claim a cultural insider and expert status to validate her ability to define the Roma, treating reflexivity as storied confessions to situate herself closer to her subjects through disclosure. Her findings reveal Roma people's simultaneous identification/dependency on majoritarian society and distancing/oppositionality to that society. She seems to recognize an otherness of self and the self of others by, for instance, flipping the concept of Orientalism to explain how Norwegian Roma Orientalize white Norwegians while at the same time wanting to be like them and thus Orientalizing themselves:

> With their orientalist perspectives, they ridicule everything of gažé and particularly Norwegian as hopelessly naive and even immoral, while at the same time idealizing and mimicking the affluent gažo lifestyle and morality. Their hostile engagement with local government agencies strengthens this orientalist view and renders the world 'outside' strange and even threatening (Engebrigtsen, 2011, p. 142).

According to my reading, the voice in the above telling is indicative for the rest of the article, which lacks a reflexive account of power relations between the analyzed groups.

By flipping Orientalism without accounting for the impossibility of also flipping power positions, the telling might contain the other within the self and keep hierarchies in place.

Through ethnography of multilingualism in a Swedish preschool and interviews with Romani/Arabic language teachers, Puskás and Björk-Willén (2017) reveal dilemmas arising from lack of rules that would, the authors argue, help children reach their full bilingual potential. Through mixed interviewing methods, Alex and Lehti (2013) represent Roma and Sami women's perceptions of well-being in Sweden. Both studies use strategies to share data and interpretations with participants data for them to check for accuracy or potential misinterpretations. Their strategies point to a feminist shift from truth to voice and collaboration. However, women of color feminists have critiqued white feminist attempts to give voice or "let" participants speak for themselves (hooks, 1981, 1990; Villenas, 1996, 2000; Visweswaran, 1994), which may serve the findings' validity and accuracy and the researchers' affirmation and validation.

I seem to criticize these studies quite harshly for proliferating hegemonic knowings. Is this hermeneutic generosity? Still, when does hermeneutic generosity become hermeneutic complicity? Postcolonial feminists highlight colonial research relations that shape researchers' power over participants. By learning from them, I acknowledge how researchers might use their power positions towards temporary acts of solidarity with their participants, while more uncomfortable reflexivity would also require questioning the very terms of this research relation, accounting for the impossibility to represent others, and acknowledging the political requirement for self-representation.

How could the researchers have questioned their expert position on the Roma? A study by Montesino (2001) disrupts the unquestioned historical expertise of so-called 'gypsy experts' in post-World War II Sweden by exposing how they reinforced the distance between Roma and non-Roma through constructing Roma communities as inaccessible to non-'experts'. Are some of the researchers here continuing the historical legacy of 'gypsy experts'? From these studies, I learned that researchers might maintain the distance from the other perpetually reaffirmed when claiming an expert position but also when positioning themselves close to the other. How could researchers learn with the other in a non-subsuming manner? Panikkar's method of "im-parative" philosophy, as explained by Tlostanova and Mignolo (2009), considers learning with the other as a "dialogic and experiential (not interpretative as in Western hermeneutics) learning from the other, thus enriching our thinking by the other's intuitions and revelations" (p. 17).

As this section has shown, although modernist types of reflexivity contribute to gaining insights into workings of social worlds, if those are not accompanied by insights into how this knowledge is produced, it may ultimately reproduce Eurocentric ideologies. Importantly, and as will be seen in the following sections, Pillow (2003) stresses that these common uses of reflexivity are not only present in modernist paradigms. Research framed as critical/emancipatory or as postmodernist also uses reflexivity toward the familiar when it questions ways but not notions of knowing.

Critical paradigm: seeking emancipation

With the critical turn, research unravels power structures of modernity beneath the surface, paving the way to postmodernism, with a shared focus on interpretive and deconstruction techniques. Reality is subjective and constructed based on many truths that form a system of socio-political power, while discourse is controlled by rhetorical and political purposes (Lather, 2006). Knowledge is produced to change the world by building alternative power systems or alternative modernities through, as my data shows, praxis-oriented critical ethnography (Ravnbøl, 2017; Tervonen & Enache, 2017) and critical discourse analysis (Al Fakir, 2019; Alexiadou & Norberg, 2017; Avery & Hoxhallari, 2017; Keskinen, 2019; Montesino, 2001; Montesino & Al Fakir, 2015; Olesen & Eklund Karlsson, 2018), among others.

In a critical paradigm, reflexivity is ongoing accountability for how the researcher's interests and positionality – across gender, race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, religion – affect all stages of the research process. Researchers ask themselves how they know what they know, question representations and investigate ways of empowering through research, based on advocacy and reciprocity with participants (Pillow, 2003). Critical reflexivity often has a shared focus on discovering links through interpretivism *and* postmodernist discursive strategies and problematized subjectivities in play (Pillow, 2015).

Reflexivity as critical interpretation

This type of reflexivity operates through a hermeneutics of suspicion – seeing realities below surfaces, identifying power constructions, and deepening understandings (Pillow, 2015).

Tervonen and Enache (2017) and Ravnbøl (2017) conducted critical ethnographies of everyday bordering practices against Eastern European Roma in Helsinki and Copenhagen respectively to shed light on precarious health, housing, labor and education conditions sustained by citizenship institutions and lack of access to welfare. Both studies deconstruct stereotypes and highlight migrants' agencies, using reflexivity as a methodological tool to focus on representations and uncover injustice and inequalities. Furthermore, both studies offer policy recommendations for reducing the marginalization experienced by participants, also using reflexivity in relation to advocacy to seek systemic changes.

Alexiadou and Norberg (2017) conducted a critical discourse analysis of Roma inclusion policies in Sweden to address the racism and lack of Roma voices in debates about themselves. They also contrast policy representations with the opinions of Roma consultants and activists to problematize representations without claiming to reach representativeness. They use reflexivity to question authority and misrepresentations, and reveal power and privilege in policymaking.

Montesino and Al Fakir (2015) and Al Fakir (2019) problematize knowledge production that legitimates the marginalization of Roma people in Sweden by focusing

on different aspects of post-World War II Roma inclusion policies and how they affect present circumstances. Montesino and Al Fakir critically deconstruct the labeling of Roma as a socially disabled, homogenous racial group whose members should turn into useful citizens through schooling and forced labor, with implications in current inclusion/exclusion mechanisms of education and labor policies and practices. Al Fakir examines literature that informed the 1940s-1960s discursive shift from *tattare* to *zigenare* in categorizing the Roma in relation to the concept of purity that was instrumental to gaining citizenship, with legacies in present categorizing between tolerated and 'failed' citizens. These studies use reflexivity to unsettle present assumptions through close readings of socio-historical conditions and structures for deep understandings, critical historical awareness, ethical and historical responsibility.

In a critical paradigm, researchers tend to reveal power structures and advocate for social justice. Given my own migrant rights' activist background, am I reading these texts with a certain degree of comfort and familiarity? I may thus associate high quality and reflexive research with the ability of authors to write from an activist standpoint, a position of awareness of structural inequalities, of willingness to expose, confront them, and envision change and justice. If a change occurs from within the system to offer alternative power systems or alternative modernities, it may reproduce systemic injustices. If the authors acknowledged the potential futility of their advocacy, would that make them more reflexive? Can one expose systemic inequalities from within the system while at the same time envision not just alternative power systems, but alternatives to modernity altogether? Such a move away from the familiar to a position of discomfort towards research representations would perhaps also require acknowledging one's complicity with the structures one critiques (see Tudor, 2017a), which seems to be missing in the above texts.

Reflexivity as transcendence

This type of reflexivity builds on and departs from the other three types commonly used in modernist research – reflexivity as truth and recognition of self/other – by claiming to transcend one's subjectivity and socio-cultural context and position oneself as free from misrepresentations (Pillow, 2003).

Dahlstedt and Olson (2016) make general claims about the non/belonging of Roma in Sweden (and Hungary) through an individual case study – interviewing Ana, an ethnically mixed Romani-Hungarian woman living in Sweden. The authors theoretically frame their research within Fanonian studies on colonialism and colonized mentality. They make links between Fanon's theorizations of lived experiences of Blackness and colonialism and Ana's story about adapting to Swedish society and internalizing and expressing anti-Roma racist views in the process.

> The essential difference between Fanon's colonized negro and Ana is that she can pass as a non-Roma, if she is not self-disclosing her Roma origin. Negro skin color is black and - on the contrary

> - always visible. There is no way to get rid of it, other than to annihilate itself and become white. The same applies to the 'typical' Roma. […] Ana describes an almost ancestral mentality that in itself helps to restore Roma's existence in the margins of society. By describing herself as an atypical Roma she emerges as a free individual, while they [the Roma] appear to be more dependent and deeply rooted in discrimination (Dahlstedt & Olson, 2016, p. 5).

Although the authors position themselves within critical studies of race and colonialism, they do not reflect on the political and colonial implications of their research. They repeatedly use the term "negro" without critically reflecting on what this reproduces, nor do they reflect on why they are telling Ana's story. In describing Ana as an 'atypical' Roma who maintains divides against 'typical' Roma, the authors may overlook how Ana might have borrowed the oppressor's discourse as strategic essentialism, a tactic of resistance and survival often employed by racialized minorities (see Costache, 2018). Although the authors later mention that "the Roma themselves have been actively involved in defining both problems and solutions" (p. 16) to the racism they face in Europe, they do not provide any research accounts by Roma authors in which these issues are addressed. Their critical interpretations may serve to free themselves from the weight of misrepresentations, by claiming to know/capture the other and truth.

I seem to be quite critical of how this study is framed theoretically while using a type of reflexivity not in line with its paradigmatic position. Despite its reflexive limitations, it is the only article from the sample thus far connecting lived experiences of Blackness and Roma-ness to account for how racism shapes the lives of Roma in Europe, as well as focusing on in-between Roma identity and using Fanon's theories is this endeavor. Still, the theories' reflexive use would require reflecting on who the knowing subject is and why this subject is interested in "encounters with Roma in Sweden and in Europe" (Dahlstedt & Olson, 2016, p. 16). As Tlostanova and Mignolo (2009) write, while

> the formula of encountering the other is a catchy metaphor to be found in various scholarly publications, […] otherness and encounters with otherness [are] necessary for the successful self-reproduction of culture [and help] to define the same as the norm (p. 12-13).

Postmodernist paradigms: poststructural, postcolonial and disruptive

With postmodernism, reality becomes unknowable and attempts to understand it subvert themselves. 'Truths' are socially constructed systems of signs which contain the seed of their own contradiction. Discourses are contingent, vulnerable and inseparable from subjects. Knowledge is produced to challenge its own nature and disrupt unquestioned ways of knowing (Lather, 2006). As reflected in my data these can be achieved through, among others, poststructural feminist theory (Helakorpi et al., 2018, 2019), Foucauldian discourse/policy analysis (Vesterberg, 2015, 2016), genealogy (Pyykkönen, 2015), performative ethnography (Roman, 2018a, 2018b), and autoethnography (Stenroos, 2018).

Reflexivity in postmodernism should disrupt the author's authority and focus on how reflexivity is theorized to counter epistemic privileges. This requires a genealogy of

reflexivity and reflexivity thought through and with genealogy, or what Pillow (2015) calls reflexivity as genealogy, which is what informs the reflexivity of reflexivity I am applying in this article.

Reflexivity as critical interpretation informed by genealogy

Pillow (2015) shows that postmodernist research often uses a combination of reflexivity as genealogy and reflexivity as a critical interpretation. In other words, emancipatory and postmodernist reflexive strategies need each other, while being in irreducible yet linked tensions.

Helakorpi et al. (2018, 2019) problematize subjectifications of Roma minorities (in Finland, Sweden and Norway) and Roma school mediators (in Finland) respectively through ethnography and policy analysis of basic education informed by poststructural feminist theories. Against the current responsibilization of minorities for their own (lack of) educational attainment, and against the requirement for Roma mediators to perform and teach the roles of tolerable subjects, the authors offer alternative solutions such as antiracist education targeting members of majority populations. They thus deconstruct claims to power with poststructuralist theories in dialogue with an emancipatory focus on envisioning pathways toward liberation.

Why did I read the reflexivity in these texts as being informed by genealogy? Is it due to the authors' use of poststructuralist theories? Still, as I wrote above, researchers from critical standpoints are increasingly using deconstruction discursive techniques. In my reading of these authors' reflexivity, I may have taken for granted their postmodernist standpoint. Petersen (2014) has challenged the realism in policy research in education that cites authors associated with poststructuralist thought:

> There does not appear to be much discomfort with standard and foundationally based social scientific practices. Rather, the practice of offering realist 'descriptions' seems unabated as does the reliance on scientistic accountability (p. 156).

Reflexivity of discomfort

In postcolonial studies, women of color feminists have challenged white feminist desires to 'know' and 'give voice' to the other (Visweswaran, 1994) by adding to discussions of voice and representation the question of ideology, the history of colonialism and the political economy of global capitalism (Spivak, 1987). Reflexivity becomes a relation that defines both the subject written and the writing subject – the 'postcolonial self' as a site where multiple centers of power inscribe (Chaudhry, 2000). Mindfulness of these requires writing oneself as researcher-colonizer-colonized, a contradiction of complicity and oppositionality (Villenas, 1996).

By learning from postcolonial feminist reflexivity, Pillow (2003) suggests a reflexivity of discomfort to go beyond claims to represent knowable subjects, which re-inscribe

difference. Reflexivity of discomfort questions whether and how differences are constructed and how they are linked with structures of power.

Roman (2018a) conducted a two-year ethnography "with" Pentecostal Kaale Roma in Finland and Romania to disrupt mainstream Roma mobility discourses that mainly focus on east-west migration, political and socio-economic marginality. The study challenges those discourses with mobility of Roma for ethnic solidarity, missionary and humanitarian purposes. She is reflexive about the heterogeneity of Roma participants and their relationships – beyond missionary/missionized binaries – and her multiple conflicting roles – as translator, researcher, and local guide for the Finnish Roma missionaries in Romania (p. 48-49).

Based on feedback she received on her previous research from Roma people in Finland who do not necessarily live by 'traditional' standards, Roman (2018b) engaged in further ethnographic research with people whom she calls "in-between" Kaale Roma:

> I met most of them throughout my fieldwork with "traditional" Kaale families, yet often through different channels […] youth movements, artist groups, and human rights organizations. As they knew of my research within the Finnish Kaale community more broadly, they recurrently expressed their disappointment in the lack of academic representation (both my own and others') of those who do not fit within the overwhelming images of "the" Finnish Roma. This article was written in direct response to their subjective invisibility and in close connection to the overwhelming absence of "non-traditional" voices within broader research (p. 244-245).

By applying this criticism in further research, she admits to knowing as being tenuous, never quite right, always transforming, thus challenging the constructs and assumptions she had brought to her previous research. With the concept of in-betweeness, the author shifts from identities to identifications. She questions whether and how differences are constructed by showing how "experiences of marginality are recurrently constructed and re-constructed within and between groups" (p. 242). Still, her aim is to "give voice" to in-between Roma and to "understand" their complexities (p. 242). The text thus also presents elements of *reflexivity as recognition of the other*, while accounting for in-between Roma's "constant struggle for recognition and of finding their belonging," (p. 242), or their political requirement for self-representation.

Stenroos (2018) conducted a two-year autoethnography of a Finnish Roma inclusion project, focusing on Roma agency to disrupt discourses of objectification and precarity. He positions himself as Finnish Roma and addresses his dual power/subordination researcher subjectivity that challenges the research process:

> I had a double role in the Finnish Roma project. I was both an ethnographer doing fieldwork and a project worker with a Roma background. […] The project workers were both Roma and non-Roma (21 out of 30 project workers were Roma). […] Those who participated in the planning sessions already were involved with Roma politics and therefore represented only a small segment of the Roma community, that is, so-called "ordinary" Roma were absent from the process. […] Outsiders to Roma communities might assume that Roma ethnicity implies one shared history and the "same culture." If there is one representative from the community, it is thought to be enough to facilitate the objectives of the projects among Roma (Stenroos, 2018, p. 10, 7, 9).

The telling above exemplifies a researcher-colonizer-colonized position – as in *postcolonial feminist reflexivity* – through which power structures expect representativeness of a whole group from the presence of a few of its members. The author then disrupts those expectations and the existing assimilative structures with arguments from Roma people's "own social organizations," showing that 'integration' "would require changes in ways of seeing and experiencing the world" (p. 11). Without considering these, the author observes that inclusion projects "end up contributing to processes of marginalization" (p. 8). Still, the alternatives he recommends seem to remain within dominant structures by envisioning for Kaale Roma to "become part of the power structures" (p. 11) – denoting also a use of *reflexivity as critical interpretation*.

I identified two authors whom I believe practice reflexivity of discomfort while also presenting elements from interpretative and critical uses of reflexivity. Are the tensions between reflexivity towards the uncomfortable and reflexivity towards the familiar problematic? Are they "fruitful" in the sense that they dissolve oppositions through movement between paradigms (Lather, 2006, p. 40)? Through hybrid reflexivity, can researchers address epistemological and methodological underpinnings towards "connections between seemingly contending intellectual communities generating similar models for psychic and social transformation that can lead to postcolonial futures" (Sandoval, 2000, p. 135)?

Towards a decolonial turn?

Historically and conceptually, coloniality is the darker and hidden side of modernity, a colonial matrix of power that regulates and validates fixed modes of knowing and being in the world (Quijano, 2000). These continue existing after formal decolonization, independence or desegregation through divisions in education, labor and housing, historical, political, academic, literary and artistic exclusions or misrepresentations (Maldonado-Torres, 2016).

Decoloniality is then a collective effort at "rehumanizing the world" and "breaking hierarchies of difference" through "counter-knowledges and counter-creative acts" (Maldonado-Torres, 2016, p. 10). Reality and 'truths' are non-intelligible to oppressors (Lugones, 2006), while discourses recreate agents as agents create actions and spaces (Sandoval, 2000).

With the decolonial turn, reflexivity entails producing knowledge from the geo-historical and epistemological locations and memories connected with "historical agents who were erased as cognitive subjects" (Tlostanova, 2015, p. 43) and learning with those knowledges in a non-appropriative way through complex communication (Lugones, 2006) towards differential social movement (Sandoval, 2000).

Reflexivity as liminality and the reflexive middle voice

According to Lugones (2006), deep coalitions against intersecting oppressions in a liminal space lead to plural movements outward towards other resistant affiliative groups. This requires what Sandoval (2000) calls a "reflexive middle voice" moving within and between past, present and future, active and passive to recreate the agent as the agent intervenes in social reality in an ongoing loop of transformation. Liminality thus consists of multiple realities, perceptions, praxis, consciousness, which are beyond the reach of oppressive, paralyzing, and reductive descriptions.

Alemanji and Seikkula (2018) co-wrote a dialogical text about their teaching experiences on topics of race and racism in Finnish universities, as Black and white teachers respectively. The two researchers address each other questions and answers to "explore how racialization shapes teaching" and show "different possibilities to challenge racialized structures" (p. 173). They mainly write from a critical race and whiteness perspective to reveal difficulties towards building solidarity with (mostly white) students against racial injustices. Their critical paradigm standpoint also intersects with certain aspects of a reflexive middle voice and complex communication from the limen.

Alemanji (in Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018) identifies common struggles in differences with Roma people as a Black African living in Finland:

> Inquiries into how a black man is called in Finnish language left me smiling, as it seemed like I had to make a choice between mustalainen (black) or just tumma (dark). Majority opinion leans towards tumma as mustalainen in Finnish refers to the Romas. Before coming to Europe, I would not have been able to distinguish between the whiteness of the Roma and a 'white Finn', as growing up we referred to every white looking person (not of visible black decent) as Whiteman (or Whiteman woman). Interestingly, today, I still struggle to make such distinctions. However, what intrigues me in this case is that the identity of blackness was given to the Romas long before huge groups of blacks started coming into Finland in the early 1990s. This identity of blackness was given to the Roma to distinguish them from white Finns and place upon their identity characteristics binding them with their name 'black people'—mustalaiset. Such characteristics include their inferiority, inaptness and backwardness associated with the black or African identity (p. 174).

Seikkula (in Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018) discusses the invisibility of whiteness which masks racial privilege, particularly for those who inhabit that privilege, such as herself "as a light-skinned, natively Finnish speaking secularised Christian in Finland" (p. 175). She problematizes the difficulty of positioning herself as having white privilege when whiteness is the invisible norm against which institutional and societal structures hierarchize people based on race.

The authors share teaching experiences from their different positions. When teaching, Alemanji (in Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018) uses personal experiences through storytelling and humor to exemplify racism in Finland. Still, students often find his classes confrontational. His challenge is to make these tensions productive with the aim for students to become allies in "the fight against racism in Finland" (p. 181). Seikkula (in Alemanji & Seikkula, 2018) often shares her students' privileged racial position, which makes them "feel too at ease to make uninformed comments" (p. 177). She therefore constantly deconstructs her (reproduction of) whiteness in the classroom.

A coalitional limen emerges from subversive communication across liminal sites and negotiation of communicative difficulties to decipher resistant codes (Lugones, 2006), as the two authors attempt with this text. They reflect on the spatiality and historicity of their journeys to a limen, while highlighting how these journeys constitute liminal spaces differently.

What might be missing from the authors' mutual reflections? Perhaps an attempt to engage in complex communication with other potential affiliative groups, such as Roma people, towards deep coalitions against oppression. By reflecting on historical and current oppressions in Europe, Romani researchers have also found similarities between lived experiences of Roma-ness and Blackness (Kóczé, 2015; Fejzula, 2019). It would perhaps have been fruitful to engage with Romani scholarship to further address these similarities. By not going beyond mainstream racializing discourses, the reflexive tale may remain within the oppressor's reality (Lugones, 2006).

Final remarks

In this article, I read various uses of reflexivity in several academic texts within, between and beyond research paradigms. I disrupted my own readings and attempted an opening for pluriversal knowledges with the help of further literature.

According to my analysis, much of Roma-related educational research focusing on the Nordic context apply comfortable uses of reflexivity as a methodological tool to get data that are more comprehensive and create more trustworthy representations. Authors may thus reproduce whiteness and epistemic privileges in their research, even with – or sometimes due to – their good intentions. The analysis also shows attempts to move away, although not completely, from comfortable uses of reflexivity in the works of a few authors. As my autoethnographic interventions show, I may also practice comfortable uses of reflexivity while attempting to disrupt the familiar in others' writings. By applying a position of discomfort towards my own research beyond this study, I may see beyond my good intentions when, for instance, delivering conference presentations on problematizing Roma integration policies without challenging my positionality, in the context of sometimes being read as Roma in such settings. Reflecting on those conferences and their lack of Romani voices, I retrospectively wonder, did I perform an imagined Roma identity as part of my presentations? Did I enact this performance as an Eastern European migrant resisting assimilation within a white Nordic narrative? Did I thus fetishize the Roma through "an apparatus of knowledge that masters the other by taking its place" (Ahmed, 1999, p. 99)? Was I complicit in constructing the Roma as the "abjects" of discourses on migration and racism (Tudor, 2017a, p. 31)?

By documenting research inconsistencies, which inevitably occur, researchers may reassess their positioning in colonial hierarchies of the knowledge economy and contribute to an ongoing, incomplete departure from colonizing research, with no predictable destination. In the spirit of unpredictability, my analysis has an open ending.

The question mark in the final section's title points to an unfinished project, hopefully, a conversation among educational researchers towards what a decolonial turn would entail for practices of reflexivity in Roma-related research. Romani scholars have recently entered the academic stage and are now in a historical moment of speaking back to dominant representations by others. Non-Romani scholars producing Roma-related research should make space for Romani authors and learn with Romani knowledges in a pluriversal, non-subsuming way.

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Appendix

Figure 1: Reflexivity mapping

Modernist paradigms: (post)positivit and interpretivist/constructivist	Critical/emancipatory paradigm	Postmodernist/deconstructivist paradigm	Decolonial turn
Reflexivity as truth	Reflexivity as critical interpretation	Reflexivity as genealogy	Reflexivity as liminality (Lugones, 2006)
Reflexivity as recognition of self	Reflexivity as critical interpretation informed by genealogy	Reflexivity as critical interpretation informed by genealogy	Reflexive middle voice (Sandoval, 2000)
Reflexivity as recognition of the other		Postcolonial / women of color feminist reflexivity	
Reflexivity as transcendence		Reflexivity of discomfort	

(Pillow, 2003, 2015)