

FULL-LENGTH ARTICLES

'Reflexivity in Action': Navigating Researcher Positionality(ies) and Responsibility(ies) Through a Community Advisory Board

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The 'reflexive turn' across the social sciences has increasingly emphasized the scrutiny of researcher positionality and its impact on the research process. However, less attention has been paid to strategies that not only interrogate, but mobilize, positionality. Key questions remain: how might positionality shape ongoing research practices and outcomes? and what role do participatory methods play in facilitating reflexivity across the research process? Drawing on my experience as a Hungarian-Australian researcher conducting Hungarian diaspora research, this paper documents the application of reflexivity through a participatory research project. In particular, it explores how I engaged in reflexivity through a Community Advisory Board (CAB) with leaders from the Hungarian-Australian diaspora. I explore how CAB engagement was instrumental in navigating my changing roles across the research. As part of my critical reflection, I highlight how CAB engagement not only ensured a more ethically grounded research process, but enabled the fulfillment of my moral responsibilities to the community. Overall, this paper contributes to the limited discussion of practical reflexivity as it unfolds across participatory research. In reflecting on my 'lessons learnt', the paper adds to the ethical and pragmatic function of CABs for negotiating insider-outsider dilemmas, suggesting that researchers work flexibility with community to maximize benefits for all involved.

Introduction and research background

The 'reflexive turn' in the social sciences has emphasized the importance of researchers critically navigating their positionality throughout the research process (Bashir, 2023; Borg et al., 2012; Bourdieu, 2003; Lumsden et al., 2019; Manderson et al., 2006, among others). Reflexive researchers do not hide their experiences, but instead, actively recognize, scrutinize, and mobilize them in all acts of their research (Grenfell & Lebaron, 2014; Lumsden et al., 2019). For researchers working within communities they are connected to, reflexivity is not merely a practical choice, but an epistemological necessity. Parallel to this reflexive turn, there has been a growing emphasis on participatory methodologies (PR), which have redefined the value and role of community expertise in shaping research processes and outcomes (Brydon-Miller et al., 2011; Cyril et al., 2015). Community Advisory Boards (CABs), for instance, represent one participatory mechanism designed to engage

community insights to advance shared goals of community betterment (Ali et al., 2023; Loerzel et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2021; O'Brien et al., 2022; Wallerstein et al., 2018). Unsurprisingly, CABs with diasporic and minority communities have been popularised across public health and medical research, due to their effectiveness in amplifying community voices around disparities in health outcomes, services, and policies (Filler et al., 2021; Kaminstein & Brown, 2023; Miller et al., 2021; Nyirenda et al., 2017; Pancras et al., 2022; L. Vaughn et al., 2017).

Despite their significant contributions, there remains a lack of practical consideration of the combined influence of reflexivity and participatory approaches as they unfold across the social science research process. Such a consideration is crucial, as both reflexivity and PR share a commitment to advancing epistemic justice. By situating and demystifying knowledge production, reflexivity, through a participatory approach, can contribute to essential questions about the legitimacy, authority, and basis of knowledge claims (Appadurai, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Dutta et al., 2023). While existing studies have explored reflexivity through the dynamic nature of positionality during fieldwork encounters (Adu-Ampong & Adams, 2020; Andits, 2016; Chereni, 2014; Rafferty, 2017; Sharma, 2024), limited attention has been focused on practical strategies that foster reflexivity throughout the research process. Rather than thinking about reflexivity, how might we 'do' reflexivity?

This paper draws from a 3-year project on Hungarian-Australian diaspora politics¹. One aspect of this project sought to understand the impact of one of Hungary's largest diaspora programs on collective Hungarian identity and organisational sustainability in Australia. The program is funded by, and facilitated through, Hungary's leading cultural diplomacy organisation, the Balassi Institute (*Balassi Intézet*). It invites people of Hungarian origin (aged between 18 and 35 years), born outside of Hungary, to improve their language skills and cultural knowledge. This is achieved through a 10-month structured educative curriculum and culturally immersive experience in the city of Budapest². The program has a two-fold aim: firstly, to strengthen the Hungarian identity of students, and secondly, to prepare them for their future work in disseminating Hungarian culture. It does so by increasing Hungarian language competence and transferring up-to-date knowledge of Hungary and Hungarian culture. The focus on the Hungarian-Australian context emerged from my personal awareness of some of the challenges faced

1 While diaspora politics is not a new phenomenon, investments by homeland states in strengthening diaspora relations has grown significantly since the 1990s (Délano & Gamlen, 2014). Currently, entire government departments and cultural institutes exist which are wholly dedicated to creating and overseeing an array of policies and initiatives which impact and involve diaspora communities (Gamlen et al., 2019; Kovács, 2019).

2 Since its inception in 2001, the program has welcomed consistent groups of young people from across Europe, North and South America, Canada, and Australia. Understanding the program-related experiences and impacts was important, given the aim and duration of the program, among other factors, which has marked it as significantly different than the diaspora tourism programs commonly explored in the literature.

by this diaspora community in sustaining youth interest. Given the program's purpose to revitalize Hungarian cultural engagements in the diaspora in an immersive, 'fun' environment (see Kantek et al., 2023), it 'appeared' that the program could serve in addressing some of the resource gaps faced by community organisations (see Kantek et al., 2021).

The project was granted full ethics approval in 2018³ and involved a series of qualitative inquiry methods. These included semi-structured interviews (N=17) with previous program participants, document analysis (N=15) of program-related materials (including motivation and reference letters, application forms, and promotional items), and mini focus groups (N=2). These mini focus groups involved 5 Hungarian community leaders in Australia who formed a Community Advisory Board (CAB) that were engaged during the beginning and end phases of the research process. Community leaders were a clear and obvious choice for research engagement, due to their roles as 'key informants' and 'local experts' (Duke, 2020) who could elicit the views of the wider community, while also speak to the value of the program, given their prior roles in endorsing applicants via reference letters (see Kantek et al., 2021).

In drawing on my experiences as a Hungarian-Australian researcher, this paper examines how implementing a CAB was crucial for ensuring a practical application of reflexivity. I argue that the CAB enabled me to navigate the dynamic and shifting positionalities I occupied throughout the research process, while ensuring that community leadership expertise remained central. I reveal how the CAB fostered greater reciprocity through co-learning and co-production, addressing critical knowledge gaps, but also facilitating important integrated knowledge transfer opportunities with, and for, the community. Further, in drawing on Jacobsen and Lanfau's (2003) concept of 'dual imperative', I highlight how the CAB enabled me to uphold my ethical research(er) responsibility(ies) while addressing some of the moral obligations I had to the community. Overall, this paper contributes to the limited discussion of practical reflexivity and positionality as it unfolds across participatory research. In reflecting on my 'lessons learnt', the paper adds to the ethical and pragmatic function of CABs for negotiating insider-outsider dilemmas, suggesting that researchers work flexibility with community to maximize benefits for all involved.

The paper is structured as follows: first, an exploration and application of positionality is provided. This is followed by a discussion on the importance of reflexivity. Reflective insights are offered to provide crucial researcher context and highlight the complex and interconnected relationship between reflexivity and positionality. As part of this discussion, the concept of 'dual imperative' is used to illuminate a key insider-outsider dilemma which results from such reflexive work. Lastly, the paper critically reflects on the practical

3 Full ethics approval was granted by Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee on 30/11/2018 (Approval no. H12981).

value of a Community Advisory Board (CAB) as a conduit to reflexively navigate this dual imperative, enabling the shifting and mobilising of positionality(ies) for mutual benefit.

Research(er) positionality

Positionality refers to the “researcher’s social location, personal experience, and theoretical viewpoint, the relational and institutional contexts of the research, and the bearing of these elements on the research process itself” (Suffla et al., 2015, p. 16). Aspects of social location include age, generation, class, gender, ethnicity, educational background, and institutional affiliation. For some time, the extent to which researchers have related with the research setting and/or participants, has shaped their positions as ‘insiders’ or ‘outsiders’ (Bilecen, 2016). The benefits and limitations to both insider/outsider positions are well documented across various disciplines (Beals et al., 2019; Chhabra, 2020; Willis, 2007). For example, insider researchers have examined the benefit of achieving accelerated rapport with participants. They also claim a sensitive and empathetic understanding which enables them to “look at things through the eyes of members of the culture being studied” (Willis, 2007, p. 100), due to shared cultural background, knowledge, and/or lived experience (Gummerson, 2000; Kham, 2024). Comparatively, an outsider positionality has been argued to facilitate a type of ‘emotional distancing’, claimed to result in greater objectivity in data collection and interpretation (Gasman & Payton-Stewart, 2006).

In my case, shared characteristics along the lines of common organisational membership and ethnicity - as a third generation Hungarian-Australian - may initially qualify me as occupying an ‘insider’ position. By third generation, I emphasize that both my parents were born in Australia to Hungarian parents who migrated to Australia during the 1956 and WW2 forced migration waves. Like many other post-war forced migrants from Europe, my grandparents contributed to the formation of ethnic community organisations in Australia (for example, Hungarian scouting, language schools, social clubs, and dance groups) as a way to support their settlement and sense of belonging. These organisations have continued to function as key sites for shared Hungarian cultural performance for several generations, including for myself and for my parents (Constantinovits, 2023; Kanteke et al., 2019). My membership across select organisations has nurtured my Hungarian language proficiency which has been crucial to my own self-identification and belonging. As a historically language-centred culture, speaking Hungarian has long been considered an “important means to express and keep Hungarian identity” (Hatoss, 2008, p. 6), one which is highly praised in the diaspora, given that Hungarian functions as a minority language and has been difficult to maintain among subsequent generations (Fenyvesi, 2005; Hatoss, 2018; Osvát & Osvát, 2011). Additionally, the voluntarism of my family across several organisations, foremost scouts, has resulted in the development of social networks and rapport with members across the community. This membership I have experienced has not only

informed my awareness of community challenges, but also made me privy to enduring community goals pertaining to maintaining an organised version of Hungarian cultural life in Australia.

However, while it is undisputed that I was not 'emotionally-distant' from the research, I did not always neatly fit the insider position. My experience reflects those expressed by an array of scholars who have criticized the insider-outsider binary as providing an essentialized, one-dimensional view of research positionality (Bridges, 2001; Bukamal, 2022; Chhabra, 2020; Collet, 2008; De Andrade, 2000; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Ergun & Erdemir, 2010; Fine, 1994; Kerr & Sturm, 2019; Kerstetter, 2012; Mason-Bish, 2018; Mullings, 1999; Wagle & Cantaffa, 2008; Zou, 2023). Understanding research positionality through the insider-outsider dichotomy incorrectly "freezes it in place and assumes that being an insider or outsider is a fixed attribute" (Mullings, 1999, p. 340). Such thinking "misses the nuances, oscillations, dissonances, and paradoxes" of identity which take place across the research process (Kerr & Sturm, 2019, p. 1144).

It is now widely recognized that researchers embody multiple positionalities (Ryan, 2015), also conceptualized as 'third positions' (Carling et al., 2014; Irgil, 2021), or 'in-between spaces' (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). According to these conceptualisations, insiderness and outsiderhood are not mutually exclusive but rather, coexist simultaneously (Dowling, 2000). Positionality is therefore a contingent, complex, and unstable aspect of researcher identity (Bridges, 2001; Bukamal, 2022; Chhabra, 2020; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Ergun & Erdemir, 2010; Irgil, 2021; Kerr & Sturm, 2019; Suffla et al., 2015). In accordance with Chavez (2008, p. 477) a "...researcher can experience various degrees of insiderhood and outsiderhood given how she/he is socially situated to (and by) participants during the research process". Given this, researchers now have an even greater ethical and moral responsibility to consider how their social locations impact on the process and outcomes of their research (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Kerstetter, 2012).

Research(er) reflexivity and the 'dual imperative'

Reflexivity can be characterized as the process encouraging researcher self-awareness of identity and habitus when conducting research (Borg et al., 2012; Bourdieu, 2003; Lumsden et al., 2019; Manderson et al., 2006). Such a process is particularly integral in qualitative research, as it accentuates that experience is never 'raw', but is embedded in a social web of interpretation and re-interpretation, placing emphasis on the ways in which particular ways of seeing and thinking are constructed (Silverman, 2011). To be reflexive, researchers are called to announce and scrutinize their complex positions and explore the effects that their own experiences might impose on the research (Bourdieu, 2003; Kenway & McLeod, 2004). It is within such scrutiny where the relationship between positionality and reflexivity becomes evident (Borg et al., 2012; Bukamal, 2022; Fries, 2009; Lumsden et al., 2019; Manderson et al., 2006). Positionality is an increasingly important

aspect of reflexivity. In many ways, they are two sides of the same coin; any reflexive researcher must be aware of their positionality in relation to both the research object and process.

As key in the reflexivity process, I needed to be comfortable in admitting how much I did not know and what I could learn by acknowledging the biases and the limits of my positionality. Firstly, at the time of the research, I had only experienced locally organized forms of Hungarian cultural expression across a select number of ethnic organisations. Secondly, I had never travelled to Hungary, nor had living relatives in the country. Hungary was merely a distant place in which I knew I was somehow connected. My perspectives of the community had only been shaped by my own lived experiences accumulated during childhood and adolescence. Whilst I could therefore empathize with some of the historical contexts and challenges influencing the work of community organisations, I lacked a nuanced understanding of current community conditions, especially from a leadership perspective. Finally, as a university researcher, I embodied an additional identity and set of competencies which further complicated my perception and positions across the research. Rather than hiding “behind a false veil of neutrality and disembodiment” (Wagle & Cantaffa, 2008, p. 136), it was crucial to recognise how my social locations and experience might manifest across the research and consider the implications of this for my research(er) responsibilities.

It was clear that I had a personal investment to address the cultural sustainability future of the community I grew up in. I wanted my research to contribute to community betterment – a way I could ‘give back’ to the organisations that were critical in the formation of my own identity and belonging. However, I also recognized my academic obligations to contribute ethically-robust evidence-based research on matters affecting the community. This led me to consider how I might design the research to ensure mutual benefit, while doing so within tight research timeframes, and against the acknowledgement of my own personal investments in the research. While challenges to negotiate ‘insider-outsider dilemmas’ (Sharma, 2024) have been widely acknowledged, Jacobsen & Lanfau (2003) provide a useful conceptual framing which captures the complex aspects of such reflexive work. Writing on ethical and methodological considerations in forced migration research, the authors offer the ‘dual imperative’ to describe a set of (often competing) responsibilities researchers experience. This includes the responsibility to satisfy rigorous academic standards, whilst ensuring that the research benefits and advances the protection of participants, their communities, and policy.

CABs: a conduit for research(er) reflexivity

My resonance with the dual imperative encouraged the prioritisation of a pragmatic community-based approach through the implementation of a Community Advisory Board (CAB). CABs provide opportunities to share local knowledge and lived experience, ensuring research is guided by “a robust understanding of the community and relevant data that can lead to

more effective research, programming, and policymaking” (Arnos et al., 2021, p. 2). They thus represent a critical mechanism facilitating knowledge co-production and translation, similar to Integrated Knowledge Transfer (IKT)⁴. When organized and engaged meaningfully, CABs can engage in IKT by gathering people with relevant lived experiences and authority to speak on issues specific to their communities, as well as co-devise and implement recommendations from the research (Kothari et al., 2017). Hence, they can narrow the ‘know-do’ or otherwise, ‘knowledge to action’ gap, by shifting focus to practical outcomes that align with community needs and values (Jul et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2022). As Lewis et al. (2022, p. 3) state, CABs ensure that community voices are “actively, fairly and continuously represented in the most meaningful phases of the process”.

The representation of CABs as facilitating IKT is also what makes them an especially important conduit for reflexivity. When carefully considered in design and implementation, CABs have the potential to de-centre researcher perspectives, limiting the influence of tacit biases onto the research, in turn (Adu-Ampong & Adams, 2020; Borg et al., 2012; Lumsden et al., 2019; Manderson et al., 2006). Interestingly, while there is broad agreement that researchers should outline their approaches to CAB design for IKT, detailed descriptions of their methods and activities remain scarce (Scher et al., 2023; L. M. Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020). For instance, Cowdell et al. (2022), refers to how CABs have previously been engaged in ‘practical actions’ such a ‘collaborative brainstorming’, while McGrath et al. (2009) refer to ensuring ‘methods’ promote evaluation, feedback, and local perspectives, as part of ‘deliberate steps’ to minimise power imbalances and support collaboration. As Vaughn & Jacquez (2020, p. 7) note, some methods might be participatory by design, whereas others might represent more conventional methods such as surveys and focus groups. If so, it is important that these ‘conventional’ methods are “adapted and re-thought so they are approached in a participatory way”.

In this Hungarian-Australian CBPR project, the CAB were deliberately engaged through the mini-focus group method structured as ‘meetings’. As later sections will explore, the CAB meetings became critical spaces for inter-organisational discussions, influencing data interpretation and analysis. To meet this aim, collaborative activities were required to engage CAB members. For example, one activity involved distributing a ‘research findings’ worksheet (developed by the researcher) two weeks before the second CAB meeting. The worksheet contained preliminary thematic analyses of interview data, relevant quotes, and prompt questions designed to encourage reflective engagement and prepare leaders for discussion. Through this activity, the

⁴ IKT is a collaborative research model widely promoted as a best practice approach to research, because of its emphasis on the equal relationship established between ‘knowledge users’ (for example, community partners) and the researcher. Unsurprisingly, IKT has growingly been recognised as a ‘best practice’ research approach, with competitive research grants often requiring researchers to demonstrate impact through evidencing the prevalence of IKT in their projects.

CAB introduced perspectives that might have otherwise been overlooked by the researcher. The worksheet not only deepened reflective engagement with the data, but also inspired critical discussions on potential strategies for addressing key community concerns. Therefore, in devising CAB activities which promote reflection and collaboration, the perspectives and/or skills of both the researcher and community can be successfully harnessed (Jul et al., 2017).

Navigating the dual imperative through shifting positionality(ies): CAB reflections

It is important to note that my positionalities as community member and researcher influenced the research prior to CAB commencement. During my snowball recruitment strategy, participation in the CAB was received as both a community-based problem-solving opportunity and act of goodwill in support of my research career. As a community member, I was perceived as an enthusiastic young Hungarian with an academic researcher status which could be trusted and leveraged for community benefit. This perception influenced my credibility in the eyes of leaders, shaping the view of their involvement in the research as a worth-while investment (Adu-Ampong & Adams, 2020). As the following sections will explore, such perceptions influenced how my role shifted and unfolded across the research process.

The eager learner

The first CAB meeting served as a forum to ask questions and seek further exploratory insight into community-based challenges and relationship with the program. As Hacker (2013) explains, community consultation early in the research process is important when minimal is known about the topic, or when gaps in information and knowledge are evident. Hence, whilst I obtained some relevant social and cultural capital in the form of prior organisational membership, I was aware that I lacked other forms of critical knowledge relevant to the research topic. In considering such gaps, I was able to recognise how my positionality could be harnessed to elicit community-led insights. I did so by shifting my presence and role in the research similar to that of an 'eager learner' (Adu-Ampong & Adams, 2020). Adu-Ampong & Adams (2020, p. 590) define the eager learner as a researcher identity whereby the researcher "displays an open mind and willingness to ask for and take in new information...with an interest in learning about the wider context". Adopting this role was an easy and appropriate option, given my age and gender as a young woman, paired with the cultural mores which stipulate the respect of elders and individuals with higher status in the community.

Engagement with community leaders also became a reflexive strategy to cross-check and further develop my own understandings of the community landscape. For example, from the meeting, it became clear that several challenges were threatening community sustainability. Leaders shared the difficulty in attaining critical mass, as well as the influence of voluntary migration and technology in shaping the declining value of organisational

participation. They provided further context into their views of the program, conceptualising their involvement as a strategy to co-opt and incentivize the 'right' kind of young people to participate, with the intention to encourage and prepare them to fulfil community leadership roles upon program completion – as 'good-will ambassadors' (see Kantek et al., 2021). Leaders also shared the attached benefits to the program, such as assisting in cultural education transmission, relieving pressures from local community organisations, and allowing for their limited resources to be invested into other, equally worthwhile projects, such as local event planning.

Hence, the eager learner identity enabled leaders to story-tell and accentuate issues and views that were deemed significant for my awareness. In the context of insider-outsider community-based research with diaspora communities, Collet (2008, p. 81) supports such an approach, claiming that insider-outsider researchers engaging in participatory approaches "serve communities better when they maintain particular boundaries". Implementing the eager learner position facilitated engagement with a form of reflexivity where I could distance myself from well-established ideas to prioritize the development of alternate, new ones. This enabled the disruption of the 'researcher as expert' discourse and a movement away from narcissistic forms of reflexivity (Dahinden et al., 2021; Pillow, 2003). In another example, through the CAB, I developed new knowledge around the role of digital technologies and individual transnational engagements in undermining collective cultural sustainability. Hence, the CAB was not only a chance for me learn about real-time community concerns, but also for leaders to "get stories off their chest, to get them told to and recorded by those who cares and shows sincere interest in them, to someone whom they perceive as one of them" (Halilovich, 2016, p. 92).

Additionally, the CAB became a rare collaborative opportunity for leaders to learn and represent the views and concerns of their organisations to me – and to each other. At times, conversations shifted to discussions about the frustrations attached to community work. In one example, the CAB spoke of the burnout faced by leaders, as well as the lack of inter-organisational collaboration which would otherwise benefit and support shared aims in cultural sustainability. In one example, during discussions about the program, language school leaders were critical of the program's perceived prioritisation of young people from the scouts, as well as the limited promotion efforts occurring outside the organisation. They raised concerns to scout leaders in the CAB about the impact that such perceived gatekeeping could have on broader shared community aims. They emphasised the necessity for further inter-organisational conversations to develop a more holistic approach to program promotion and recruitment. Thus, the CAB, and my adoption of the eager learner role, resulted in the creation of a liminal space where leadership expertise, criticisms, and alternate knowledges could be gained.

The co-CAB member

Embracing the eager learner role also continued to influence the data-collection process, including during the interview stage of the research. This was achieved by going out into the field, finding young people from the community, asking them questions shaped by leadership concerns, and listening to their experiences⁵. Once the interviews were conducted with previous program attendees, and key themes identified, the second CAB meeting was held to discuss the findings. One such finding indicated strong gap year motivations for the program related to partying and other pro-social youth cultural practices, with minimal value given to the program's educative curriculum (see Kantek, 2023; Kantek et al., 2023). During the CAB meeting, leaders debated the extent to which gap year conceptions of the program hindered or enhanced youth retention efforts, evaluating the role of the program in incentivising community participation. Some members reflected on their shock and disappointment in perceived program exploitation for personal benefit. Others exhibited a more optimistic view, discussing the promising potential that memorable experiences abroad could have in enhancing emotional attachments to local Hungarian cultural activity over the life course.

Through distributing and immersing leaders with the interview findings, leaders became active agents in an integrated knowledge transfer activity which could impact their approaches to planning for cultural sustainability. Engagement with the findings had a 'consciousness-raising' impact which encouraged leaders to critically reflect and act on what they had learnt (Maiter et al., 2013; Pham, 2016). Such engagement also resulted in knowledge co-production aimed toward devising solutions which could be embraced across community organisations. For example, varying reactions to the findings prompted leaders to re-think their prior approaches to recruitment. Leaders in the CAB brainstormed developing less formalised and more flexible roles in the community and the need to embrace a different view of leadership engagement and expectation among young people. Such critical deliberation work emerged from interview findings which indicated that transitions to adulthood, paired with traditional views regarding weekly attendance at community activities, reduced motivations among young people to participate in the community. In another example, the CAB considered how they might develop youth events which could draw on similar pro-social youth cultural practices enjoyed by the program participants interviewed.

It was during this later stage of the CAB planning where I was able to fulfil my responsibility to the community, transitioning from the eager learner role to co-CAB member. Several invitations to contribute to discussions by

⁵ As Vaughn and Jacquez (2020) have emphasised, the frequency of CAB participation in the research should prioritise the attainment of real and meaningful outcomes for the researcher-community partnership which can, in some cases, see higher rates of community participation in some stages of the research process, and more research-driven strategies, at others.

CAB members indicated that leaders viewed me as an extension of the group; a community member and researcher-consultant for the community who could comment on, and respond to questions about, the data collection process and overall findings. For example, leaders requested I share further thoughts into the types of activities interviewees particularly enjoyed during their time in the program, as well as provide suggestions for events that would be popular, given my direct interactions with the interview participants and perceived identity as a young Hungarian adult and community member. This collaborative exchange underpins the integrated knowledge transfer process and supports the reciprocal and multi-layered nature of the researcher-community relationship and knowledge co-production process (Wood, 2017). Invitation into CAB conversations presented a community-initiated opportunity to fulfil my obligations to leaders, by partaking in co-learning and shared decision-making processes. The CAB thus availed the leveraging of my community and researcher positions for community benefit.

Conclusion and recommendations

This paper has provided reflective insights into the pragmatic and ethical role of a Community Advisory Board (CAB) in a Hungarian-Australian CBPR project. The CAB enabled me, the researcher, to navigate and leverage the liminal space I occupied as a simultaneous insider and outsider. Shifting from eager learner to co-CAB member created unique opportunities for co-learning and knowledge translation, fostering a shared journey toward community betterment, as a result. It also facilitated a shift away from reductionist interpretations of reflexivity, which often conflate it with a sole focus on self-discovery. Instead, CAB engagement prioritized co-learning to enhance understandings of broader community issues. Through CAB engagement, I navigated my positionality(ies) in ways that produced important moral and methodological outcomes. These included generating new and co-constructed knowledge that considered community concerns and goals. Such co-construction is particularly valuable for minority communities with finite resources, as research engagement should provide access to context-specific information that supports community development and improvement. The CAB also enhanced reflexive engagement with data interpretation and analysis. It achieved this by situating the program's impacts within the broader communal context of cultural sustainability efforts defined by community leaders. Without this engagement, such analytic insights would have been difficult to discern.

Furthermore, the CAB aided in facilitating the navigation of my dual imperative, by enhancing the research's usefulness to the community, while ensuring a more robust approach to data analysis. Overall, the findings of this paper hold broader relevance for qualitative participatory research projects. They offer guidance to researchers on how participatory methods may be used to grapple with, and address, positionality concerns with greater reflexivity (especially in cases where they work with communities they know or on topics they are somehow connected to).

Based on lessons learnt from this CBPR project, several recommendations can be offered to researchers to maximize the reflexive potential of CABs. For one, researchers should structure engagement in ways that foster ongoing critical reflection and co-learning. This should involve the careful choice of methods and activities which promote real-time collaboration and can be easily adapted to meet community-researcher needs. This may involve the creation of preparatory materials such as journals, research summaries, and/or worksheets (and distributing such ahead of meetings) to support and encourage meaningful knowledge co-construction outcomes for all involved. Secondly, researchers should recognize their dynamic positionality(ies) and organize CABs in ways which accommodate and respond to these shifts. Embodying the 'eager learner' identity early in the research process can contribute to the building of trust and demonstrate commitment to prioritising community insights. Finally, it is critical that researchers are prepared to work with greater flexibility, given that the community-researcher partnership and research process itself, may evolve in new and unanticipated ways. As a result, researchers must be open and prepared to embracing changes to several aspects of the research, such as to their own roles in the CAB itself. Therefore, in demonstrating how CABs can mobilize reflexivity and positionality, this paper adds to the growing recognition of participatory methods as tools for fostering epistemic justice and reciprocity. It also contributes to more limited work on the practical applications of reflexivity and positionality as they unfold across participatory research. Finally, the paper adds to the ethical and pragmatic value of CABs for negotiating the dilemmas and opportunities associated with insider-outsider positionality(ies).

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