

Situating positionality and power in CBPR conducted with a refugee community: Benefits of a co-learning reflective model

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Abstract:

Reflexivity, an important component of qualitative inquiry generally, gains additional significance in community-based participatory research (CBPR). The varying partnerships among researchers, community partners, and community members are strengthened when a co-learning, reflective model is applied. The use of reflective field notes can be a powerful tool to help achieve this end. In this article, we describe the dynamics of community-engaged research team where members applied a co-learning model to reflect upon their positionality in the community and in research. Using reflective field notes examined through a narrative approach to the PI's time in the field, we assess these positionalities through the relationships between CBPR work and power relations. The reflective practice embedded in the CBPR process brought these power relations to our attention. We then turned to the literature on power relations to better understand what was occurring in the study. The current case details the additional complexity that occurs when issues of language, translation, gender, and culture are introduced. Thus, this paper is a reflective analysis of a bilingual researcher's experience in the field specific to cross-cultural CBPR work.

Keywords: Reflexivity | reflective practice | positionality | CBPR | cross-cultural research | power relations

Article:

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) includes an equity-focused reflexive practice (Yang, 2015). Equity-focused reflexivity in CBPR is a collaborative process involving community members, organizational representatives, and researchers in all aspects of community-engaged studies (Johnson et al., 2009). This practice can be viewed as a culturally responsive tool that is especially helpful when working with vulnerable communities, such as refugees. Refugee-related research requires appropriate cross-cultural strategies to avoid

disrupting the social positionality of these vulnerable populations. CBPR is becoming one of the most effective methodologies for conducting research among refugee populations.

In this paper, we highlight a co-learning reflective model (Lazarus et al., 2014) within the equity-focused reflexive principle of CBPR. A co-learning reflective model stresses the importance of fostering reciprocal relationships among all partners thereby providing rich perspectives to the partnership process (Minkler, Garcia, Rubin, & Wallerstein, 2012). Partnership approaches encourage communities to feel empowered through ownership in shared decision-making. We used reflective field memos generated from a CBPR study conducted with a refugee community, to identify unique challenges to fostering cross-cultural reciprocal relationships. This process required us to examine differential power relations between researchers and community members through varying aspects of gender, language, culture, and identity.

We identified cultural interpretations, or interpretations of cultural representations that demonstrate how people make sense of themselves and their world (Reyna, 2006), as an important construct for understanding power relations observed in the field. The Principle investigator's (PI) cultural interpretation lens helped us understand the complex interplay of power, gender, culture, and language. It is necessary to stress that the reflective practice brought these power relations to our attention and we turned to the literature on power relations and translation studies to better understand their role and operationalization in the study. We also clarify our use of the term 'bicultural' in relation to the PI's cross-cultural proficiency. There are varying perceptions of the term 'bicultural'. One perception is that bicultural identity is formed through social and cultural structures (Dennis, 2008) that are not necessarily restricted to ethnic identity. Instead, cultural structures are recognized as being fluid (Gjerde, 2004) and can be used to refer to identities that are embedded through social affiliations (Dennis, 2008). Thus, we describe the PI as bicultural to highlight her familiarity with the population's culture and the culture around academic research. This bicultural stance is embedded in the intersecting cultural insider/outsider role. The duality of cultural positions that the PI shares between the community and academic research is critical to understanding, situating, and interpreting positionings of cultural roles within our cross-cultural CBPR study.

Foucault's theory on power

Any entity that can possess and exchange resources with other entities is a potential locus of power – (Neal & Neal, 2011)

Power is an important aspect of the social world that constantly influences people's relations, actions, and place in society (Pearce, 2018). Foucault defines power as a relational tool, placing emphasis on power's ability to impact human relations (Hanson & Ogunade, 2016). Power may be held or exercised by a wide range of agents depending on the context of the situation (Neal & Neal, 2011). Community-engaged research has been studied as a context where Foucauldian analysis of power has a dominating effect (Golob & Giles, 2013) because researchers hold more power than the community. In CBPR, despite the myriad literature on community and research partnerships, relatively little is published on power relations among cross-cultural and bicultural approaches to community-engaged research.

Foucault's approach to power as a relational tool, rather than a construct of domination, is argued to be especially useful in CBPR because it identifies how discourses in research strategies can act as constraints in power relations (Golob & Giles, 2013). Additionally, Foucault's perspective of power as a 'network of relations' highlights the importance of broader authority relations and their engagement through an array of communicative tactics (Heizmann & Olson, 2015). This strategy can be most effective in understanding the structures of power and knowledge within community research. Since power exists in CBPR work, we need to recognize that power differentials are indigenous to CBPR and therefore, it is important to explore and understand them. We explored this strategy through a comprehensive examination of the PI's reflective memos from fieldwork.

The CBPR study

The CBPR study from which the reflective notes are drawn, focused on understanding maternal health experiences of ethnic Nepali-speaking Bhutanese refugee women in Greensboro, NC. The Piedmont Triad in North Carolina is one of the fastest-growing refugee resettlement areas in the US. Of the 84,000 total Bhutanese refugees resettled nationwide, Greensboro is home to over 1,600 Nepali-speaking Bhutanese refugees (CDC, 2014). Bhutanese refugees have the highest reported suicide rate among resettled refugees with implications for mental health issues. Furthermore, Bhutanese refugee women experience poor maternal health knowledge, practices, and outcomes (CDC, 2014).

The CBPR study was conducted in an apartment complex that predominantly houses refugee populations and includes a community center where refugees are able to take English as a Second Language (ESL) and citizenship classes. The citizenship classes were the starting point for the formation of the CBPR team. With the assistance of their tutor, five Bhutanese refugee women attending the classes started a women's group. These were middle-aged to older Bhutanese women, most of whom were preliterate, and living in the U.S for less than 5 years. Their American tutor, Mark, helped the women explore opportunities to establish a formal community group to bridge health resources and services for the community. Mark introduced a former student, the PI, to the women as she shared language and cultural similarities with the women. After several constructive conversations around addressing health issues among the Bhutanese community in Greensboro, the team decided to pursue the CBPR study together.

All partners shared a common goal to improve the health of the community and, as a team, they agreed on a research focus to better understand maternal health concerns among Bhutanese refugees. Refugee newcomer women in particular, often lack maternal health literacy (Parajuli, Horey, & Avgoulas, 2019) specifically needed to navigate the complex United States healthcare system. Thus, the CBPR research was developed to address Bhutanese refugee women's maternal health status post resettlement. However, group members varied in how they prioritized activities within the partnership, a common occurrence in the CBPR process. These community activities were implemented with limited funds secured through a local community grant as well as two internal university grants, and Mark served as the women's advisor in strategizing and facilitating community work. Activities such as a maternal health fair, weekly maternal health discussions, and informational sessions with local doulas were highly prioritized by the PI and other university researchers. Doulas are trained to provide physical, emotional, and informational

support to women during labor, birth, and in the immediate postpartum period (Gruber, Cupito, & Dobson, 2013). Mark prioritized community building activities such as community gardening, garden bed constructions, seed swaps, culturally relevant methods of farming, and involvement of student volunteers as community goals. The women's weekly group meetings served as the central vehicle for developing and sustaining partnership and research strategies, and they facilitated all community activities. Essentially, the commonly shared goal of community work was pivotal to the success of the study as it demonstrated the reciprocity principle of CBPR. The resulting partnership grew to include faculty and student researchers from a local university (name redacted), the research fellow and mentor of the women's group, and the women's group.

Intersection of language and cultural roles

Issues of language and power are entwined in cross-cultural research. In CBPR, both researchers and community partners can experience inhibiting and enabling dimensions of power relations (Golob & Giles, 2013), with researchers invoking directional power over communities due to research-related knowledge and expertise. However, they are often challenged by the constraints of language and require assistance with translation. Language is a key component in cross-cultural research due to its critical role in accessing 'hard-to-reach' populations (Abrams, 2010). Since the act of translation is embedded within cultural interpretations and norms (Li & Guo, 2013), language constraints do not tell the entire story. Instead, it is important to understand the cultural roles inhabited by the various partners attempting to bridge the constraints of language.

Our study encompassed multiple roles among and between partners. The PI is a cultural 'daughter' to the women, a student to Mark, and a researcher in the field. Her relationship with the women as their cultural daughter is crucial in sustaining the CBPR partnership, but at the same time, her position as an academic researcher demands maintaining neutrality in the field uninfluenced by her cultural position. The women, on the other hand, are 'mothers' of the community, research participants, and students of Mark. The women's cultural positions as mothers of the community drive their interest in leading community engagement activities in collaboration with the PI and Mark. Similarly, Mark's multiple roles include a teacher, mentor, community advocate, and the 'American Sir'. The interplay between cultural roles, language translation, and the ability to exercise power can be seen in the following scenario, summarized from observational field notes.

Scenario: During the PI's initial volunteering/observation phases, she observed women's group meetings facilitated by two different community partners/advisors- one American (Mark) and one Nepali (Jay). Jay's sessions were highly structured. He would often read from a piece of paper he had prepared for the meeting. The field notes describe the women giving him their full attention and complying with his requests. For example, in an early session, he asked the women to brainstorm ideas for an upcoming event the group was going to lead for their community. The women immediately started suggesting ideas like community gardening, garden tool dissemination, community potluck, etc. MS (the president of the group at the time) even suggested going door-to-door to let community members know about the upcoming event. Mark's interactions were notably different. Although he did not share their language, he is a skilled artist and often communicated with the women through drawings. After a couple of

weeks, the sessions were solely led by Mark (Jay had accepted a job position elsewhere). Mark's sessions began to get very casual. During one session, he got up and started drawing different animals and tiny houses on the board (to initiate conversations about farming and pets in Bhutan). When he drew a mouse, K was reminded of beavers that her Burmese neighbors cooked and ate, and so all the women started discussing similar incidents where their neighbors of different ethnicities cooked foods that seemed very unusual to them. At one point, GD (member of the women's group) commented on what Mark would think if he knew what the women were discussing. The PI couldn't help but giggle at the comment, which made Mark curious and he asked her what the conversation was about. GD quickly whispered for her not to translate it to Mark since he may not like that, they had diverted the conversation to a different topic. The PI simply shook her head.

In this scenario, we see how shared language with Jay played a key role in establishing authority and ensuring women's attention to the session's goals. Although the women respected Mark, they were more casual in their interactions because he did not understand the Nepali language. This made it easier for them to have side conversations unrelated to the agenda and also allowed them to ignore certain questions posed by Mark, if they wished. In other instances, they initiated discussions around personal issues in the presence of Mark because they knew that he would not understand their language. When asked about their topic of conversation, the women would simply laugh and seemingly pretend to not understand his question. Although the women realized the PI's role as a translator during the sessions, they expected the PI's role as their 'daughter' to supersede any obligations she had in competing roles.

In this manner, Mark and the PI were disproportionately disadvantaged in their ability to effectively communicate with the women. By examining these interactions through a cultural interpretation reflexive framework, we see how the women exercised power in controlling the directionality of the sessions. CBPR work often witnesses discursive power relations similar to the scenario above since the 'field' itself is the space that determines discursions in human relations (Gawlewicz, 2016). Peci, Vieira, and Clegg (2009) highlight Foucault's concept of knowledge as an important tool for exercising power. In the scenario from our study, the 'tool' refers to the interplay of language and cultural roles. The women share knowledge of a language Mark does not have access to. Even though the PI shares the language, the women's cultural relationship with her allows them to curtail her ability to translate. Thus, her 'daughter' role negatively impacts her ability to maintain control over the direction of the conversations. In this way, the women negotiate power through their positionality where both Mark and the PI are inhibited – Mark, through his limited 'access' to the women's language, and the PI, through her cultural role of a daughter.

Intersection of translational power and cultural roles

Translation from one language to another can be considered on a continuum from the uncontested to the highly contested – (Wilson, 2001)

The above scenario shows the importance of shared language in research settings. In cross-cultural research, a lack of shared language can cause inequities in power relations. Researchers often utilize bicultural research associates/assistants to overcome the barrier of a 'foreign

language.’ This forms a dual role for bicultural researchers that requires constant negotiation and juggling. Within CBPR, bicultural researchers are essential drivers of effective interaction and serve as a cultural bridge between the community and the research team. Stapleton et al. (2015) use the insider/outsider debate to discuss the importance of bicultural involvement in community research. Insiders are expected to be knowledgeable about the population and their cultural context, as well as perceived by the community as credible and trustworthy (Stapleton et al., 2014). While bicultural researchers’ insider status serves as an essential resource to the team, their positionality in the field is impacted by their translational power. Unlike a paid translator, bicultural researchers become the instrument of data reporting, data interpretation, and data presentation. In this study, we interpret the term ‘translational power’ within the context of language as the researcher’s ability to have decision-making control over the type of information and the extent of information being translated between the community members and the U.S stakeholders. Fawcett (1995) views this decision-making choice to translate or not to translate as an expression of power relations.

Although researchers often idealize this notion of ‘value-free’ research, i.e. research that has been produced with impartiality (Jupp, 2006), language is never neutral. Translational power relations may be hidden from researchers, but the act of translating can reinforce unequal power relations due to inconsistencies between the original ‘data’ generated and how that data is translated. This inconsistency is further complicated in cross-cultural CBPR as cultural roles can impact either party’s communicative capacities. The scenario below summarizes an instance of translational power play.

Scenario: On the second day of PI’s observation as a part of the CBPR observation protocol, Mark asked her to help the women open a bank account since they had received a small amount of money through a local community grant. The women’s group received a debit card two weeks after opening the bank account. The PI’s field notes describe discrepancies regarding the perception of women’s empowerment between Mark and one of the women in relation to this debit card incident. All but one of the women expressed excitement at receiving the debit card. MG, one of the elder members of the group who is preliterate and lives with her son reacted indifferently to this ‘achievement’. The PI later found that MG had never used a debit card and did not appreciate its vitality. A few days after, Mark instructed all the ladies to use the debit card at the ATM center located across the complex as a part of their leadership activity. The PI noted MG’s reaction to be hesitant and her constant murmurs about the uselessness of this activity because her son handles all the finances. When the PI translated MG’s comments to Mark, he reiterated that the activity would empower the women to become self-sufficient. MG shook her head in disappointment when the PI translated Mark’s response to her (i.e. she did not buy into Mark’s empowerment strategy). Mark made MG practice the ATM transaction first, and although she tried to follow the instructions, she continued to mutter ‘*ugh ... Even though I would rather not do this, well ... I suppose I have to*’ (quotes were recollected after the observation and are not verbatim). The PI chose not to translate MG’s comment to Mark, but she documented MG’s growing frustration as she struggled to successfully complete the activity.

The scenario above demonstrates an example of an expression of power within translation (Fawcett, 1995), and how translational power intersects with cultural roles. Without the context of cultural roles, the scenario may only highlight the PI’s translational power. However, a

cultural interpretation of the various roles all three of the actors in the scenario inhabit provides a deeper understanding of how power is negotiated.

The PI as the 'daughter' is expected to concur with MG's attitude towards the debit card activity. Simultaneously, as a mentee and former student to Mark, she is obligated to encourage activities that are aimed at empowering women. These conflicting cultural roles create a polarity of expectations between the community member (MG) and the research partner (Mark), which hinders the PI's ability to maintain neutrality in the field. Since CBPR methodology requires relationship building, bicultural researchers are often faced with a dilemma of choosing between insider and outsider relationship obligations, which may lead them to make their own interpretations of the data within the moment. These interpretations, in the absence of reflexivity notes, may remain hidden to the rest of the team. Thus, there are two consequences of the forced choice where one is the effect on relationship building and the other on data reporting.

Additionally, Kuhn (1982) claims that translation often or perhaps always has a small amount of interpretive component. Without interpretations, translated statements are stripped of context and provide no value to reflexive conversations. Specific to the scenario above, MG may not have been convinced with Mark's empowerment spiel because 'empowerment', an external concept, is not a commonly used term in Nepali. Often times the equivalent English word used to refer to 'empowerment' directly translates to 'strength' or 'power'. The interpretation of 'empowerment' in the Nepali language does not parallel the English interpretation of the concept. MG did not feel empowered to refuse or abstain from participating. Therefore, the PI's use of interpretation to explain empowerment to MG in Nepali introduces a cultural bias. This act of translation through interpretation then becomes contested due to the manifestation of power relations across cultural roles that are entwined with cultural interpretation.

Intersection between research agenda and cultural roles

Identity is a process of positioning the self within a symbolic system which is associated with social practices in which power relations are inherent – (Cooper & Burnett, 2006)

The previous scenario highlighted how conflicting roles inhabited by the bicultural researcher can affect relationship building in CBPR work which also has implications for biases in data interpretation and representation. We will now take a step back and assess how relationship building in cross-cultural CBPR work affects the data collection process. With varying cultural roles, cross-cultural CBPR work is bound to face discrepancies in how members involved in research perceive their priorities with research (Clark, 2012) in relation to their cultural roles and social identities in the field. Social identities in research are defined as constructs developed by individuals based on their significance in the research field (Simpson & Macy, 2004). Specific to the context of our study, we view social identities in relation to cultural roles as contributions of each partner in the field either as a teacher, student, volunteer, or community leader/member. The varying priorities of each research partner and their pertaining cultural roles often complicated the research process even when the entire team initially agreed upon a shared CBPR goal. This is because social identities drive overall agendas as well as perceptions of how the team will interact, but the cultural roles moderate an individual's ability to pursue their agenda in

the field. The scenario below is an example of the interplay between social identities and cultural roles affecting CBPR fieldwork.

Scenario: As the number of student volunteers with the community project increased (all but one of them being non-Nepali speakers), the PI's role became perceived as more of a translator than of a researcher. All the students and Mark expected the PI to translate conversations throughout the meeting. Discussions around community projects started to take most of the meeting time, and the PI had difficulty finding time to discuss maternal health stories as she had previously. The PI documents frustration with this group dynamic that disrupts her research goals as an academic researcher. Her primary goals were to collect data for her research in the form of interviews and informal conversations with the women. To continue this work, the PI would pull aside one or two of the ladies while in the same meeting room, and initiate conversations specific to the research agenda. Mark would often make comments about not sharing the information with the rest of the group. The PI would then respond by clarifying to the group the confidentiality of the information being shared to her with the women as per the Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol.

In this instance, we see the varying priorities of all members attending the meeting even though each member understands the shared overall CBPR goal. Mark's priorities were to empower the women to help their community, and involve student volunteers in various community projects; the women's priority was to help their community either through maternal health research or community projects; the student volunteers were mostly interested in learning about the women and their community through interactions between Mark and the women; the PI's agenda was to collect data on maternal understandings of Bhutanese refugee women while assisting with community projects. Therefore, even though the mothers group meeting serves as the common space for all research partners to exercise the 'co-learning' reflexive practice, there exists a discrepancy between their daily agendas and expectations of each other's social identities and cultural roles during the meetings and community activities.

There is an underlying assumption that CBPR has the potential to bridge gaps, which exist due to differences in worldview and educational experience, between members of the community under study and university researchers (Foster & Stanek, 2007). While this can hold true, cross-cultural CBPR work is further complicated by the intersections of cultural roles, gendered cultural dynamics, and their cultural interpretations within the research. In the example above, the overarching agenda of all parties remains the same: helping the community. However, how they prioritize the activities to achieve that goal varies. Both Mark and the PI negotiated their power in the field by using their social identities and cultural roles in order to achieve their own perceived agendas. Mark's cultural role was that of an 'American sir' or mentor but he also identified himself as a community organizer who helps empower refugee communities through community projects. Thus, this social identity drove both his agenda for the group and how he envisioned groups meetings should occur. His cultural role gave him the authority to assert his vision within the meetings. Likewise, the PI's social identity as both a student and a researcher drove her agenda for the group and meetings, but her cultural role as Mark's former student may have inhibited her ability to meet her agenda. However, her role as a translator reinstated some of that power during the meeting when she pulled the women aside and pursued her 'data collection' as this inhibited Mark's ability to share information with the women. The women in

this situation remained neutral due to their shared goal of helping the community either through community projects or data derived research; neither of which held more priority over the other for them. In this way, all members involved in research navigate through these intersecting cultural complexities in order to pursue their perceived agenda within a shared CBPR goal.

Understanding how team members negotiated these individual priorities within the intersecting cultural complexities also highlights differences in shared decision-making processes within a cross-cultural CBPR study. In cross-cultural studies, where members have different understandings of 'shared decision-making,' the end product of negotiations is often an agreement of understanding rather than Western concepts of consensus. Although the group priorities at the meeting table varied, members were still able to negotiate their priorities at the table without losing their ability to pursue their day's agenda or neglecting other member's agenda. This is very important in cross-cultural CBPR since consensual-shared decision-making can require some members to give up more than others in an effort to reach agreement. However, in our scenario, all members worked through a negotiated agenda where agreements were made through a sense of understanding that individual priorities may differ, but those varying priorities eventually cater to the shared goal of community health enhancement. In this way, each member was able to have some of their agenda addressed in order to move forward, which was a reality for our cross-cultural CBPR interaction.

Intersection between gender and cultural roles

The scenario above provides an example of how power asserted through social identities can often determine the directionality of research agendas in cross-cultural CBPR work. Social identities and cultural roles are negotiated within relationships. The team builds their relationship through these negotiations, which are conducted while trying to balance individual priorities with the shared goal. Although we have framed our exploration of our reflexivity practice through the interpretation of cultural roles, we cannot ignore the importance of gender, and the significant role it plays in positionality and power enactment. Gender remains a consistent factor that underscores how these roles interplay in culture and how they are interpreted. The scenario below illustrates how gender, language, and culture intersect in a community partnership focused on building relationships and progressing with research goals.

Scenario: With two successful community-wide events and multiple outreach activities, two of the women leaders in the group started questioning the lack of monetary compensation for their work. Since the PI was not a part of the initial group development phase, she was not aware of the community grant logistics but wondered if discussions between Mark and the ladies had gotten lost in translation. MD and SS (the president and vice-president at the time), pulled the PI aside after one meeting and requested she ask Mark about the monetary compensation. When she told them that the grant may not have funds allocated for members of the group, the women quickly corrected that they were promised an amount of 100 USD each by Jay and Mark after the community events. The other two women, K and MG did not express any expectations of monetary compensation. When the PI explained the situation to Mark, he stated that either all four women receive an equal compensation, or no one receives any money. When the PI reported this back to MD and SS, they seemed frustrated and expressed they deserved more due to their comparatively advanced English-speaking skills and their position in the group. Soon, SS

stopped coming to the meetings. When inquiries were made about SS, MD simply said that she had secured a job opportunity and would not be attending the meetings anymore. MD did not bring up the monetary compensation at the meeting in front of Mark but pulled the PI aside after the meeting and inquired about the situation. The PI documents MD's hopefulness in her request for the PI to negotiate her compensation with Mark. K and MG witnessed the conversation between MD and the PI and told MD they are fine with not receiving any compensation. When the PI informed them Mark would only allow compensation if it is shared equally between all the women, K expressed that although she does not expect any compensation, she also realizes that her contribution to the project has been vital. MD responded that she and SS have made the most significant contribution due to their English-speaking skills compared to K and MG. K and MG stayed silent. (The PI then documents recollection of sessions where Mark often used the term 'money' repeatedly every time the grant was mentioned. She assumes this may have mistakenly alluded to the women that they are to receive money from the grant). After bringing back issues with Mark, he threw out a question to the ladies during one of the meetings, '*How much money do you think you all should get? 10 USD? 50 USD? 100 USD? 1000 USD?*'. The women stayed quiet. The conversation was dismissed. K and MG kept expressing their frustration and asked the PI to *just give the money* to MD. MD continued to ask the PI about the compensation after every meeting and stated that she may leave the group if she did not receive what she was promised. Neither parties directly confronted each other regarding the issue but left it up to the PI to negotiate the issue between the parties due to her 'cultural role'.

This scenario shows how the intersections of language, power, gender, and culture may disrupt cohesion in a cross-cultural community research partnership. This can occur, in part, because of gendered norms and cultural expectations of confrontational style and conflict resolution strategies as well as perceived gendered power differentials and access to language. In the example above, Mark negotiated his power with the women through his access to the community grant and also through his position as a male 'American sir'. His power was also negotiated with the PI to conduct herself as an unbiased academic researcher and not give into MD and SS's requests because their requests did not benefit the entire group. The women although inhibited by Mark's role as the male teacher negotiates power with the PI by expecting her to advocate for them as a cultural insider. The PI, on the other hand, remains inhibited with either parties due to these polarized cultural expectations.

Specific to the women, MD and SS were quick to correct the PI about the promised monetary compensation when confronted by the PI but refused to even bring up the issue to Mark during the meeting. In this case, the intersection of gender norms and cultural roles is more influential than language access. The women are arguing that it is their skill with English that makes them deserving of more money but they were not using those skills to negotiate with the person who holds the purse strings. Their reluctance to address this directly with Mark is reflective of their acceptance of his power as both a man and the American sir.

Cultures in Nepal and Bhutan rely on male authority figures to handle financial decisions for the household (Cameron, 1995). When this gendered hierarchy is coupled with the perception of people from the Global North holding more authority over people from the Global South, confrontations then become selective. It is likely the women chose to confront the PI because of her role as both their cultural 'daughter' and a student. As their 'daughter', they are comfortable

speaking to and being honest about their feelings towards payment. As a student, they understand she has more cultural capital for negotiating on their behalf.

Implications for CBPR with vulnerable groups

In this paper, we highlight the importance of using reflective field notes to capture reflexivity in cross-cultural CBPR work. We have argued that a reflective practice can assist with understanding the discourses of power around positionalities through language, gender, and culture. It assists researchers in identifying and addressing researcher-and-community positioning in the field. The scenarios presented speak to the intricacies of the relationship building aspect of CBPR and how the unique position of the bicultural researcher can create ethical dilemmas since it allows opportunities for bias in the field. Building trusting relationships is vital for CBPR, but the process of relationship building also has implications for conflict when two parties face difficulty in bridging cultural differences. While bicultural researchers have the power to mediate these minor conflicts, without the right tools and resources, he/she may exacerbate the issue. Thus, trainings in cultural humility and cross-cultural conflict resolutions could be instrumental to effective community research. The scenarios also raise issues of researcher bias in data collection, interpretation, and presentation which are influenced by social identities embedded with cultural roles. The reflections can identify ethical concerns that can arise within this type of work.

As the utilization of bicultural researchers grows within cross-cultural CBPR research, it is essential to understand the various interplays that contribute to 'effective' research. Rendering research to be 'effective' and CBPR to be an 'equity' focused methodology requires acknowledgment of power relations among all individuals, organizations, and systems throughout the research process. In the perfect world, CBPR is supposed to lead to community empowerment by allowing community members to have a stake in the research partnership. Reflexivity, however, challenges the Western construction of empowerment. Co-learning, an equitable bi-directional decision-making CBPR principle (Israel, Schultz, & Parker, 2005), in addition to the use of reflexivity allowed us to challenge the notion of CBPR as a way of empowering others (Vaughn, Jacquez, Lindquist-Grantz, Parsons, & Melink, 2017). Empowerment as an American ascribed concept represents one viable reason for pursuing CBPR. Reflexivity allowed us to recognize that CBPR is rarely void of power play especially in cross-cultural research. It provided the opportunity to exercise positionality as is relevant to the enterprise. The implication is that reflexivity of positionality and power play may perhaps be core ingredients to doing 'good' CBPR with vulnerable populations. Inattention to positionality and power play issues could potentially compromise sustainability and long-term goal setting with cross-cultural CBPR. As such, it alludes to messiness and difficulty in strict adherence to static CBPR principles. It serves as a reminder that CBPR is an adaptable framework with approaches that vary across populations and study topics of interest. We must understand CBPR as one strategy with malleable principles and methods that allow for customized research practice.

We value the importance of using cultural interpretations to assess fieldwork as their absence would have made it difficult to cohesively work together as a research team. Cultural interpretations accommodated the differences in cultural beliefs and positions of community

members, research, and community partners, and university-affiliated researchers. CBPR, as a translational research practice (Wallerstein & Duran, 2010), requires community members and research partners to constantly negotiate their positions within a collaborative partnership. Thus, recognition of their multiple positionalities is central to communication among community advocates, members of the community, and academic research. Specific to our research, the practice of reflexivity allowed the PI to move fluidly among the multiple cultural roles and helped recognize areas of comfort and discomfort as illustrated in scenarios presented. The PI's unique bicultural position as a cultural interpreter and her ability to form meaningful relationships with the women allowed us to illustrate concrete examples of culture, gender, language, and its effects in research and community. Thus, we believe that reflexivity consciously applied in field research provides a vital tool to develop robust field data with minimum research bias and ensure strong equity in research partnership.

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Kunga Denzongpa, MPH is pursuing her PhD in the department of Public Health Education at UNCG. Her research focuses on refugee and immigrant health, global health, and maternal healthcare with emphasis on prenatal health care access and quality of care specifically among immigrant women.

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Sharon D. Morrison, MSPH, PhD is an Associate Professor and community engaged researcher in the Department of Public Health Education in the School of Health and Human Sciences at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. Her areas of interest include refugee and immigrant health and the use of community-based participatory research approaches with vulnerable populations.

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