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We are all adjusting to the realities of the pandemic. Undoubtedly, it has become the topic of numerous personal and professional discussions, as we navigate newfound challenges in uncertain times. As a student of anthropology and an ethnographer, I find myself in a world where the very foundations of generating rich qualitative understandings of the human experience rest uneasily amidst the threat of COVID-19. Ethnography's strength lies in its immersive and intimate approach to being present in and observant of everyday life. Generally, for extended periods of time. However, it is these very qualities that now place both informants and researchers at risk of a virus we know little about (Fine and Abramson 2020; Lems 2020). These concerns are amplified for those who study human health and well-being, as perhaps now more than ever, the simple presence of an ethnographer may endanger the lives of those we seek to understand.

For the time being, most ethnographic work has been suspended. A number of universities and granting institutions have recalled ethnographers from the field, prohibited further travel, and suspended the majority of in-person research. The return to research is now dependent on the satisfaction of various criteria, such as the level of in-person contact and the availability of effective therapies and/or a vaccine for COVID-19. However, some ethnographic work has persisted. Rapid ethnographic studies have been used in clinical settings to document patient-provider experiences during the early moments of the pandemic (Palinkas et al. 2020; Moloney et al. 2020). Other projects took the opportunity to document responses to the scientific unknowns of COVID-19 (Boer 2020) or, for those in the midst of their fieldwork, record initial perceptions of the virus and responses to subsequent health advisories (Meza-Palmeros 2020).

Such efforts contribute to our understanding of the pandemic as it unfolds. However, these examples are likely under conditions where social distance can be maintained and protective

equipment, such as masks, are available. For those unable to limit their risks or continue their work under quarantine conditions, the pandemic has served as an opportunity to re-evaluate our methods. The integration and/or use of virtual methodologies offer possible alternatives and opportunities for the continuation of current and future ethnographic work (Saxena and Johnson 2020). Certainly the possibilities should be considered, as virtual spaces account for a growing part of our social lives and we have ethical responsibility to avoid inducing harm. Yet the ability to work and exist virtually is a privilege (Saxena and Johnson 2020). Unless one's questions and population of interest exist entirely or partly in virtual settings, ethnographers may quickly encounter limitations (Kumar 2020; Lems 2020).

This may be particularly true for ethnographic work with marginalized and impoverished populations, where access to technology is often limited, or its application for research is all but impractical. It is here where traditional methods of participant observation and in-person interviews have allowed for numerous ethnographies of health and well-being to be carried out. However, these already disadvantaged populations are, perhaps unsurprisingly, those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic (Shadmi et al. 2020). Overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, as well as poor health and limited access to care, greatly reduce individuals' ability to insulate themselves from the consequences of COVID-19. Additionally, the totality of human and socio-economic loss that now further compounds the realities of the impoverished and vulnerable remains to be seen (Shadmi et al. 2020). Though traditional ethnographic work is often critical in addressing such inequalities by offering nuanced and culturally sensitive insights, under the circumstances, it is inappropriate. The pandemic has not only confronted us with the limitations of ethnographic methods, but serves as a further reminder of the existing disparities that place much of the global population at risk.

Ethnographers are left with little choice but to wait for safer conditions. I and many of my colleagues anxiously look ahead to the unknown. There is little doubt that this hiatus is in the best interest of global communities' health and well-being, though the intense politicization of the pandemic continues to threaten any progress made. In the meantime, ethnographers are well served by reflection as we prepare for an eventual return to the field. It should be recognized that even under "normal" circumstances an ethnographer may act as a vector of known and common disease (Fine and Abramson 2020), begging the question of how some risks have become normalized or taken for granted. The strain of the pandemic may further alter the willingness of individuals and the organizations we collaborate with to invite ethnographers back into their worlds. It is very possible we could face distrust and fear and be dismissed as a burden (Fine and Abramson 2020). These concerns will require our utmost respect and understanding as we navigate our re-entry into drastically altered social worlds.

I encourage ethnographers of all disciplines and standings to be patient and cautious. These are trying times for us all, and the impacts of COVID-19 will likely be with us for some time. Ethnography is a powerful tool which has helped and, I believe, will continue to help us understand human realities.

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