Bumbling Along Together:

Producing Collaborative Fieldnotes

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Authors' Note

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Abstract

With shifting scientific research practices, team ethnography is becoming more common and visible, partly due to changes in technological infrastructures and funding schemes that support collaborative work. In many ways, the rise of team ethnography also challenges ethnographic practices built around the ideal of a "lone ranger" in the field. In this chapter, we explore one aspect of ethnographic fieldwork that changes in team ethnography – producing and sharing fieldnotes. Specifically, we reflect on our experiences producing "collaborative fieldnotes" across three geographically distant medical schools. Like the anthropologist Janelle Taylor (2014), we recognize the value of sometimes being able to "bumble" – allowing ourselves to be flexible and responsive to our experiences in the field – through ethnography. We suggest that producing collaborative fieldnotes within team ethnography is generative for bumbling along together within what Taylor refers to as "regimes of accountability." In addition, allowing ourselves to bumble through producing collaborative fieldnotes helped shape our accountability to each other as members of a team. We draw upon examples of instructing, sharing, and discussing our collaborative fieldnotes to illustrate this formative relationship between bumbling, collaboration, and accountability.

There is often a "just do it" attitude when it comes to ethnographic research, a recognition that no amount of planning can fully prepare researchers for fieldwork, as the experiences of the field clarify the significance of the place, people, or process chosen for study. Anthropologist Janelle Taylor (2014) characterized this messy, sometimes ignorant, but ideally open approach to ethnographic research as "bumbling" (p. 524, 529). She argued that while ethnographers continue to bumble about in practice, the figure of the bumbler is disappearing from "professional discourse" (p. 524). Taking its place is a "regime of accountability," in which "ethnographic research…[appears] increasingly as [a matter] to be carefully planned, controlled, policed, documented, and accounted for in terms of measurable outcomes, testable competencies, standardized and bureaucratized procedures, and controllable risks" (p. 524).[1] Taylor lamented the demise of the bumbler as marking a change in the valuation of experience in higher education, likely because experience is difficult to hold accountable when the definition of accountability is documentation and measurement (p. 529). In other words, the move towards a regime of accountability marks a move away from valuing the immeasurable.

Taylor was not alone in pointing out changes in the way research is structured. Scholars studying research processes generally agree that they are shifting (Hessels & Van Lente, 2008). The increasing use of team ethnography in the social sciences is arguably part of these changes (Barry, Britten, Barber, Bradley, & Stevenson, 1999; Creese, Bhatt, Bhojani, & Martin, 2008; Mauthner & Doucet, 2008; Scales, Middleton, & Bailey, 2011; Woods, Boyle, Jeffrey, & Troman, 2000). Funding schemes encourage multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, or cross-national research (Akrich & Rabeharisoa, 2016; Creese et al., 2008). Advances in technological infrastructure facilitate communication (Antonijević, Wyatt, & Dormans, 2012; Beneito-Montagut, Begueria, &

[1] Taylor (2014) identified this trend in both anthropology and medical education. We are only concerned with the former in this chapter, specifically as it relates to ethnographic research.

Cassián, 2017; Woods et al., 2000), and teamwork provides an advantage in studying phenomena distributed across multiple sites (Jarzabkowski, Bednarek, & Cabantous, 2015). Team ethnography explicitly departs from the trope of the lone ethnographer who bumbles through fieldwork alone. Yet, as we explore in this chapter, bumbling does not disappear in team ethnography, even when it leads to the increased institutional regimes of accountability.

In this chapter, we consider the role of bumbling in team ethnography. By exploring a productive and creative way in which we bumbled as a team of ethnographers conducting fieldwork at three geographically distant medical schools, we can support the reanimation of the bumbler in professional discourse. When we zoom into our collaborative ethnographic practice, we find that accountability is more than the documentable, measureable, and testable accountability of funders, ethics boards, and home institutions. For instance, we must be accountable to one another, as members of a team. We suggest that bumbling together can enrich accountability in teams, and we describe our practice of producing collaborative fieldnotes to support this claim.

In what follows, we first contextualize our research about medical education within constellations of accountability in order to demonstrate some of the various forms that accountability takes within team ethnography. We then engage with literature on how teams produce and share fieldnotes as well as the effects of sharing material, and describe how we designed "activities" – collaborative fieldnotes – for three ethnographers working in three geographically distant fieldsites. Following this, we explore the relationship between bumbling and accountability in producing collaborative fieldnotes with a focus on instructing, sharing, and discussing research material. We conclude with a reflection on the broader implications of our practice for producing fieldnotes in team ethnography.

Constellations of Accountability

We situate our discussion of producing and sharing fieldnotes within team ethnography in the context of a larger, comparative study called Making Clinical Sense.[2] Based in Maastricht, in the Netherlands, this project explores the role of technologies in how doctors learn sensory clinical diagnosis skills. Comparison informs the project in many ways. This includes comparing across place, by conducting ethnographic fieldwork in three medical schools, and across time, by bringing insights from ethnographic and historical fieldwork together. Our seven-person research team includes Anna Harris as the principal investigator, Andrea Wojcik and Rachel Allison as PhD candidates, John Nott as a post-doctoral researcher, Harro van Lente and Sally Wyatt as the PhD candidates' supervisors, and Carla Greubel as the project's research assistant. Each ethnographer is responsible for her own fieldsite, while John, the historian, traverses the archives and oral histories of all three locations.[3] Andrea conducted her fieldwork in Tamale, Ghana; Rachel in Budapest, Hungary; and Anna in Maastricht, the Netherlands. [4] We conducted between eight to ten months of fieldwork simultaneously in 2017/2018. As we discuss later, being in geographically distant fields at the same time played a large role in inspiring the form of our collaborative fieldnotes.

We are a publicly funded project, awash with both external and institutional support, and thus exist within a myriad of institutional regimes of accountability that push us "to account explicitly, and in advance, for the value, outcomes, and impact of [our] work" (Taylor, 2014, p. 529). With generous financial support from the European Research Council

[2] For more information, see www.makingclinicalsense.com.
[3] At the time of writing, John is conducting roughly three months of field study at each site. He played a formative role in our collaborative fieldnotes by writing historically attuned activity instructions (see more on writing instructions later). However, he only sometimes contributed to generating material for our collaborative fieldnotes as he was not in the process of collecting material at the same time we were.
[4] We respectively conducted fieldwork at the University for Development Studies, Semmelweis University, and Maastricht University.

(ERC), we must meet the council's protocol for research, including open access for project-related publications, public engagement, and specific requirements regarding ethics approvals, data management and security, and budget. These protocols, along with our university's institutional requirements, have practical implications such as producing comprehensive research plans and ethics applications before conducting research, and communicating our findings to different communities as part of the practice of valorization,[5] which has been formalized in the Netherlands.

Yet, we argue that there is still some room for the bumbler within such regimes of accountability. For instance, in addition to being asked to account for the value and impact of our work, we are also tasked with the goal of reaching "out of the box," for we are funded to conduct "risky" research. For us, this includes the promise of methodological innovation. It was important then to experiment, as a team, with the ways we made fieldnotes in order to explore the ineffable qualities of learning sensory skills. In designing our methods, we worked with assumptions that posit learning as an embodied, material, sensory process (see, for example, Ingold, 2000; Pink, 2009; Prentice, 2013. Prior to fieldwork we had experimented with and found sensory methods useful for attending to bodies, materials, and sensations and for tracing this learning (Harris, Wojcik, & Allison, Submitted; see also, for example, Pink, 2009). During our experimentations with methods such as drawing, video, and photography, we needed to bumble along, to try different techniques and learn from our experiences of using them, so that we could attend as closely as possible to medical students' learning process.

In bumbling along, we realized that we needed to attend to a different kind of accountability than Taylor (2014) discussed – the accountability between members of a team.

[5] Valorization is a "compulsory feature of research proposals in the Netherlands and broadly refers to the 'use,' 'impact,' 'relevance,' or 'added value' of research beyond the place where it was carried out" (Older, 2015, p. 5).

We focus in this chapter on the collaborative practice of relating to and engaging with academic researchers, and how this became evident in our fieldnote making practices. Our approach to team ethnography does not represent a straightforward replication of traditional, individual ethnographic work on a larger scale (Scales et al., 2011, p. 24). Team-based ethnographic research operates within various constellations of accountability that necessitate careful consideration of communication within the group about material collected and shared, and about techniques for sharing and comparing. Attention must be paid to the role of fieldnotes (Creese et al., 2008; May & Pattillo-McCoy, 2000), the use of digital software (Beneito-Montagut et al., 2017), methodological practices of comparison (Deville, Guggenheim, & Hrdličková, 2016a), and the framework through which we, as a team, engage with one another's fieldsites and material. In our study, we needed to share ethnographic material across contexts (institutional, national, and geographic, for instance) and between researchers (person, position, academic background, and digital infrastructure).

Our team chose to approach the comparative nature of our project in a fundamentally collaborative manner. We worked with comparison as a reflexive collaborative practice and sought to understand how the material and insights produced at each specific fieldsite might inform the research conducted at the other two sites. In practice, this meant engaging with one another throughout fieldwork so that our research had opportunities to influence one another. It also meant that every team member needed to have access to all collected material (fieldnotes, photographs, videos, sound recordings, interview transcripts, etc.). We saved this material on the university's secure server, therefore coordinating our sharing across time and space, as institutional and personal schedules differ, but also attempting to incorporate the technological infrastructures specific to each locality.

It was highly possible that we could have lost our sense of bumbling amongst the various constellations of accountability discussed above, but our anthropological training is

imbued with the value of bumbling. We view our research as the study of people and "things" (see Henare, Holbraad, & Wastell, 2007; Pfaffenberger, 1992) and the social and cultural meshwork in which they are entangled (Ingold, 1992, 2001). We believe in the ethnographic method as the primary source of empirical material collection and as a window to understand human experience (Eriksen, 2001 [1995], p. 24). We subscribe to a "being there" methodology which proposes that we learn about the topics of our research from within the context of our interlocutors' own lived experience (Atkinson & Pugsley, 2005; O'Reilly, 2005, p. 84), and strive to locate ourselves in the daily goings-on of each medical school (Rapp, 1999, p. 2). We wanted to maintain this responsiveness to the field entailed in bumbling in our collaboration with each other. In the following section, we describe our attempt to produce fieldnotes that would allow us to bumble along through fieldwork together.

Producing Collaborative Fieldnotes

Sharing material, often via fieldnotes, is central to team ethnography. It does not matter whether members conduct research at the same or different sites, simultaneously or asynchronously, or from the position of a research assistant, PhD candidate, postdoctoral researcher, or principal investigator. All teams share material. What differs from team to team – whether due to deliberate choices, implicit assumptions, or idiosyncratic behaviors – is what, how, when, and with whom researchers share material as well as how sharing material affects the team. We knew that we needed to share fieldnotes in more or less real time (rather than conducting fieldwork and sharing material upon returning from the field) to achieve a reflexive collaborative practice, so our first challenge was to find a format that could complement the immersive experience of fieldwork.

The form of "sharable" fieldnotes varies widely. For instance, one team of nine ethnographers shared 5,000 word summaries each month (Miller et al., 2016); another team

shared two to four singled spaced, typed A4 sheets weekly (Creese et al., 2008); some have shared photos and videos while in the field (Burrell, 2016; Horst, 2016); and still another team wrote "memo-notes" via email (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015, p. 22). Each of us planned to write "traditional" fieldnotes, and we agreed to upload them to a shared drive. We could not expect to stay up-to-date with each other's pages upon pages of fieldnotes because we would each be conducting fieldwork intensively by going to class, hanging out with teachers and students, examining teaching texts, conducting interviews, and typing up observations. Furthermore, we were aware that fieldnotes are difficult to interpret by anyone other than the original author; a difficulty we expected would be magnified because we would not share the same fieldsite(s) or the same experiences (see, for example, Burrell, 2016).[6] Long, text-based fieldnotes would not support our collaborative goals.

In the summer of 2017, prior to each of us embarking on fieldwork, we met together to establish a team-based model of collaborative notetaking that could help to facilitate the wider aims of our comparative and collaborative project. Thus, we created "activities" (a form of collaborative fieldnotes) as a platform for producing and sharing fieldnotes, and as a means to afford both individual and team-based insights into our three, distinct field locations, during real time. We designed the activities to be weekly exercises, to take as little as five to ten minutes to complete, and to be incorporated into our daily fieldwork practice, where possible. Before leaving for fieldwork, we created a shared folder on the university's server and a word document containing a table, with week dates in the left-hand column and blank spaces for the activity in the right-hand column. Every week, on a rotating basis, one of us would choose or invent the instructions for an activity for each of us to complete individually in our fieldsite within that week. For example, the instructions might read:

[6] Sometimes we selected parts of our individual notes to share with the team in the form of typed updates or, upon returning from the field, presentations. While sharing our individually generated research material was part of our collaboration, we focus (in this chapter) on our efforts to produce fieldnotes together, because it is these efforts that shaped our accountability to one another.

Capture, with your sound recorder, some of the sounds of the cities and spaces you are in, or *Climb on a table or somewhere high and take a picture of one of the teaching or learning spaces*. We then each uploaded our outcomes (sound recording, drawing, video clip, textural notation, for example) to the shared folder for each of us to access and view in our own time. We began the activities in September 2017, a few weeks into the fieldwork, and they ran through May 2018, when we each left our fieldsites. In total, we designed and completed 25 activities.

Our second challenge was how to articulate sensory experiences of technologically aided sensory learning in medical education. Prior to fieldwork, we conducted three days of team ethnographic experiments (Harris, Wojcik, & Allison, submitted). These experiments afforded us the opportunity to work with different elicitation methods that imaginatively attended to sensory learning. We decided to continue to play with photography, video, and drawing in our activities. As a team of ethnographers, we had varying degrees of experience with visual and sensory methods, although none of us considered ourselves an expert. As such, we committed to making multi-media fieldnotes in the true spirit of bumbling, allowing our activities to create space for us to playfully learn about themes and forms outside of our daily individual ethnographic inquiries.

We chose not to require all activities to explicitly draw on, or relate to, sensory learning because we anticipated that many activities would have unexpected outcomes related to other social and material aspects of our fieldsites (see, for example, Guillemin & Harris, 2014). We wanted to be open to the possibility of learning from and adjusting to our experiences in the field. Our collaborative fieldnotes allowed us to probe into one another's ethnographic practice by providing windows into our daily lives across contexts. The snippets of one another's fieldsites helped "unlock" memories from our different sites (Burrell, 2016,

p. 147), and triggered questions about how we chose to complete a weekly activity and the significance of the resulting fieldnote.

One of our explicit goals with the activities was to allow the fieldsites to inform one another. In both our telephone and face-to-face meetings, the activity outcomes in our shared drive triggered observations and questions about the similarities and differences between our fieldsites. These early interpretations and analyses then influenced our later observations in the field, and allowed us to focus on site specificities. Several scholars similarly acknowledge that sharing and discussing fieldnotes as a team influenced how fieldnotes were interpreted and, therefore, directed future field observations (Creese et al., 2008; Erickson & Stull, 1998; Jarzabkowski et al., 2015). Judith Wasser and Liora Bresler (1996) called this collaborative interpretation in group research the "interpretive zone" (p. 6). Collaborative interpretation, however, is not the focus of this chapter. Instead, we turn our attention to another possible effect of sharing fieldnotes in a team. With this in mind, we demonstrate that producing collaborative fieldnotes helped to hold us accountable to each other in various ways.

Instructing Fieldnote Production

Writing the instructions for our activities was an essential part of our collaborative fieldnote practice as it foregrounded our dependence on one another, but was also an individualized task. It involved balancing our accountability, offering a space to both challenge "the cult of individualism" within ethnography that can run counter to team research (Erickson & Stull, 1998, p. 26) and enabling us to pursue our particular interests as individuals. Striking such a balance was important because, when the project ends, we still need to be able to show our individual contributions. This is especially true for Andrea and Rachel, who are working towards their PhDs. Being flexible and responsive to our individual experiences in the field – allowing each other to bumble – was crucial in striking this balance. Therefore, we suggest that bumbling and accountability are intertwined.

Bumbling was embedded in our activities' design. We had only a few rules: that activities should explore our shared interest in the relationship between the sensory and the technological in medical education, and should therefore incorporate multi-media. Halfway through fieldwork, we added themes of materiality, sensorality, getting outside yourself, history, and recording equipment to help guide our instructing. Even when we decided to sharpen our focus, there was no formula. The particulars of weekly instruction were always up to an individual's discretion. Sometimes, for instance, an individual invented her own activity and at other times, she was inspired by external influences such as, Miranda July's (2007) *Learning to Love You More*, Andrew Causey's (2017) *Drawn to See*, and Dara Culhane's (2016) "Sensing."

For example, inspired by the Instagram account "Scents of Sardinia" (scents_of_sardinia, 2018) and struck by the smell of formaldehyde in dissection laboratories, where she spent much time during her fieldwork in Budapest, Rachel was curious about the other ethnographers' experiences of smell, and what objects were particularly "smelly" in their sites. She wrote the "sensorality" instructions for week 15: 1) *Find five "smelly" objects – three from your fieldsite, and two from your city (if/where possible)*; 2) *Take a photograph of these objects*; 3) *Add three-five relevant scents in a caption of the photograph and "geotag" it (i.e. add a location, time, and date stamp)*; 4) *Upload to our shared folder*. This activity gave our noses the lead to explore the pungent odors of laboratories and classrooms as well as the subtle aromas of cupboards and hallways. We stole sniffs of dusty models, cherished mannequins, sugary candies, and decorative flowers to find many smells having become all-too-familiar, all-too-quickly. We scrunched our faces up at cleaning products, invited dust to tickle our noses, and delighted in undertones of sweetness. Most importantly, however, Andrea and Anna gave themselves over to Rachel's inclinations as inspired by her fieldsite.

In some ways, our activities brought bumbling beyond the individual to the level of the team. Taylor (2014) identified faith and surprise as positive characteristics of bumbling, and these elements were certainly present in our practice of producing collaborative fieldnotes. We never stipulated that our writing instructions should be able to predict the value of an activity for the team. Instead, we trusted that our loose focus for the activities, inspired by our individual fieldsites, would yield interesting insights for everyone. In this sense, we expected to be surprised by one another. Our bumbling not only took place by allowing us to be open to our experiences of the field as individual ethnographers, but also through our attempt to relate the fieldsites to one another.

The photographs from the "smelly objects" activity (see Figure 1) illustrate the kind of surprises that we encountered by performing these activities together. Andrea found it striking that within the variety of smells documented, everyone submitted a photo of sanitary objects. From Budapest and Maastricht, Rachel and Anna submitted photos of hand sanitizer and soap dispensers, while Andrea submitted a photo of gloves from Tamale. In the classes for pre-clinical students that Andreas attended, hand sanitizer was not incorporated into the classroom infrastructure. Instead, portable hand sanitizer pumps were often saved for formal assessments, where pre-clinical students would demonstrate their clinical skills. Andrea interpreted these differences to reflect the limited budget available to the medical program at the university in Ghana.

Figure 1. Collection of photographs and descriptions of "smelly objects"

This general insight into the material conditions of our fieldsites demonstrates Jenna Burrell's (2016) point that the "value of fieldnotes is partly in their explicit contents but also in what they unlock in the fieldworker's memory" (p. 147). Importantly, the comparative material generated by Rachel and Anna, rather than individually generated and analyzed fieldnotes, unlocked Andrea's memory. Our insights from our collaborative fieldnotes are, of course, only starting points for further exploration. In relation to the "smelly objects" activity, Andrea must now carefully consider if, when, and how the limited budget comes to matter in learning medicine. Despite their partiality, however, our collaborative fieldnotes have the potential to highlight the specificities of our fieldsites. Our commitment to bumbling together, evident in our distributed task of writing weekly activity instructions, allowed individual interests to inform our project rather than demanding that they be subsumed by it.

Sharing Multisensory Snapshots

It was important for us to share fieldwork as it happened, rather than to compare at the end, in order to push our assumptions, to question and highlight local specificities, to connect across project themes, and to assist our individual analytical work at each site. With little time to engage with other literatures, let alone others' empirical material in the midst of the all-consuming immersion of fieldwork, we looked for ways to quickly but genuinely engage with one another. During our pre-fieldwork experiments, we developed a toolkit of smartphones for taking videos and photos, digital drawing notebooks for making sketches, and audio recorders for recording sound and interviews. We felt these methodological "tools" could help us both in exploring the sensory details learning clinical diagnosis and in generating bite-sized snapshots of the field. We used video, photography, and drawing, but not in ways that we expected. We needed to adapt our toolkit to work with our field observations: how medical students learned to palpate, how teachers moved across blackboards making drawings, and how course designers wrote sensory instructions. Soon we

were sharing textures of our site's materials in drawings, conducting performative re-enactments, and making collages using archival material.

What worked so well in making multisensory fieldnotes was that we could share them with each other as rich, bite-sized windows into our fieldsites. These fieldnotes opened up new insights, meanings, and possibilities for finding localities and generalities in a way which written text would not have allowed. For a start, they were accessible and took little time for us to engage with, meaning that it was feasible to watch a video from Tamale in a lunch break in Maastricht, or to look at some drawings from Budapest while catching some late-night Wi-Fi in Ghana. This approach meant that we could be accountable to our commitment to each other in a way that did not impede upon the demands of our own fieldwork. The videos, photographs, and sounds also gave us some insights into the conditions of each other's field in a way that extended beyond the content of the material, as well as offering insights into our own fieldwork. For example, in week 23, Rachel asked us to make a short video of a regular day in the field: *Choose one day next week and make 5-10 video recordings for each hour between 0800 and 1800 (work hours, essentially, with a little before and after).* In watching these short videos, we saw the different ways that we traveled to our fieldsites (see Figure 2): by bike, along the windy bridges and cobbled streets of Maastricht; by the ancient ornate metro, under the car-filled streets of Budapest; and by dust-filled yellow-yellows, past busy markets and stalls in Tamale.

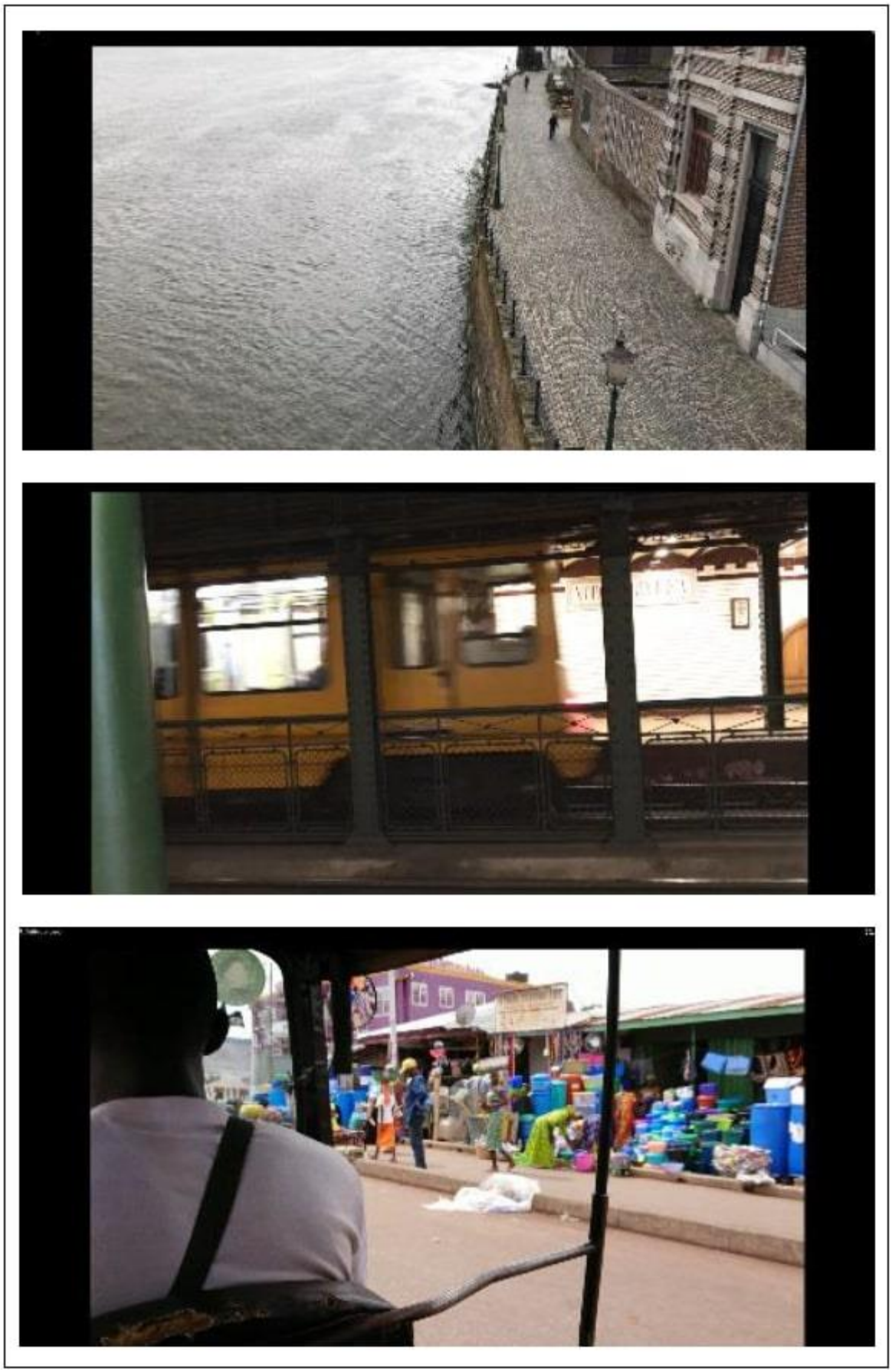

Figure 2. Stills from videos, from top: Maastricht, Budapest, Tamale.

We also saw the insides of Skills Lab classrooms, lecture halls with digital microscopes, the potted plants and green tiles of the anatomy department, and the Tamale medical school library. We saw and heard where we took fieldnotes – at our desk, home, and in vast quiet public libraries. All of this sensory detail helped us not only understand each other's material, but also the conditions of their existence. Our fieldnotes enabled what Heather Horst (2016)[7] referred to as a form of "co-presence" (p. 162). Creating and appreciating the connections between our sites, we took responsibility in sharing details of our lives as ethnographers, bumbling along within the local routines of our interlocutors.

Discussing Bumbling

Our collaborative fieldnote making also required that we purposefully create space and time for discussing both the processes and outcomes of our instructions and activities. We pre-planned both virtual and in-person discussions. In the field, we organized periodic three-way meetings, using a free video call service (these usually lasted around an hour). We also met face-to-face twice at our faculty in Maastricht in January and July 2018 (for between one to two hours each meeting), during which we consulted our fieldnote materials on our individual computers as well as on the larger meeting-room screen.

In her discussion of the contemporary place of bumbling within anthropology, Taylor (2014) made clear that ethnographers have not ceased to bumble about (as ethnographers know all too well). Rather, "as ethnographers increasingly are asked to account explicitly, and in advance, for the value, outcomes, and impact of their work, the trope of the bumbler has been effectively dethroned within anthropological discourse" (p. 529). However, we found that bumbling was very much intertwined within our research practice, particularly during entry and the initial stages of fieldwork.

[7] From the work of Science and Technology Studies scholar, Anne Beaulieu.

We bumbled along through setbacks, accommodations, and concessions that occurred in gaining access to our fieldsites and interlocutors. The beginning phase of fieldwork was a busy and stressful time, and team communication was most difficult as we settled into our new localities. During this time, we each bumbled in different ways regarding the specificities of interactions at each medical school. This included unexpectedly drawn out ethics approvals, communication failures, delayed email responses, differing expectations when dealing with external researchers, and the initial busyness of gatekeepers at the beginning of the academic year.

We did not formally discuss access to our fieldsites, nor was access codified in our written outputs or reporting systems. Indeed, this type of experience or practice is ill-fitted within the "carefully planned," "documented," and "accounted for" (Taylor, 2014, p. 529) regimes of research today. While difficult to fully discern, the initial lack of any "official" recording of the processes of bumbling in the beginning stages of fieldwork also has likely to do with aspects of pride and/or fear of amateurism or incompetence that might exist for researchers. In particular, the two PhD candidates Rachel and Andrea sought to earn a marker of professionalism in their first long-term fieldwork project (see, for example, Marcus, 2009). These extra stressors highlight the added importance of our collaborative fieldnote process in projects with multiple members and many moving parts. However, during our January meeting, access and our vastly different experiences in gaining it, bubbled to the surface of the discursive space we had created, through a discussion of one particular activity.

In week five of fieldwork, each ethnographer was asked to make three "spatial drawings" of her fieldsite. In Budapest, Rachel made a series of maps of the city, highlighting the routes she took to and from the anatomy department where she would eventually be conducting her fieldwork. In Tamale, Andrea produced a map of the clinical skills classroom that she had been attending, along with an instructive map of abdominal examination. In

Maastricht, Anna drew three maps of the floors of the Skills Lab building, also noting places relevant to her, for instance the "copy machine" and "tea room" (Figure 3).

Discussing this activity, questions arose as to the temporality of one's stages of fieldwork. A little over a month into fieldwork, Anna had access to storage rooms and building blueprints and Andrea was already drawing abdominal examination; whereas Rachel was drawing her metro route. The assigned activity had no intended outcome, and did not (at least not yet) directly address our research questions in the same way as, for instance, the "smelly objects" activity. Instead, the maps emphasized timing differences within our ethnographic practices, forcing us to note how access was very different for each ethnographer. We began to speak more openly about our individual difficulties with entry into the field and gaining access in three different institutional settings. These discussions highlighted anxieties about both falling behind and having perhaps achieved access "too smoothly." This activity not only gave each ethnographer a window into her fellow researchers' progress and daily life, but also carved out a safe space that allowed us to discuss bumbling, both personally, and in relation to working within a team.

Deville, Guggenheim, and Hrdličková (2016b) note, "most discussions of comparison conceive of it as if it were a smooth and transparent practice… This is equally true of those who critique comparison as being oppressive for forcing entities together" (p. 112-113). We too submit that "access to the field" can be a site embroiled in contingencies and disruption, where local specificities have the power to disturb and shape the collaboration that occurs within teams. However, these processes and their outcomes are often obscured (and perhaps even hidden). Our activities, and the conversations carved out around them, allowed us to consider our individual practices of ethnographic bumbling, particularly in the initial stages of fieldwork. These discussions, in bringing to light our difficulties, anxieties, and fears, in turn prompted us to take seriously each other's struggles and to remain accountable to one

another by opening up and shifting the temporalities of our wider, shared research project. Our collaborative fieldnotes allowed us to notice, speak about, and push back against any potential "oppressive" or homogenizing forces of comparison that may present themselves within team-based research.

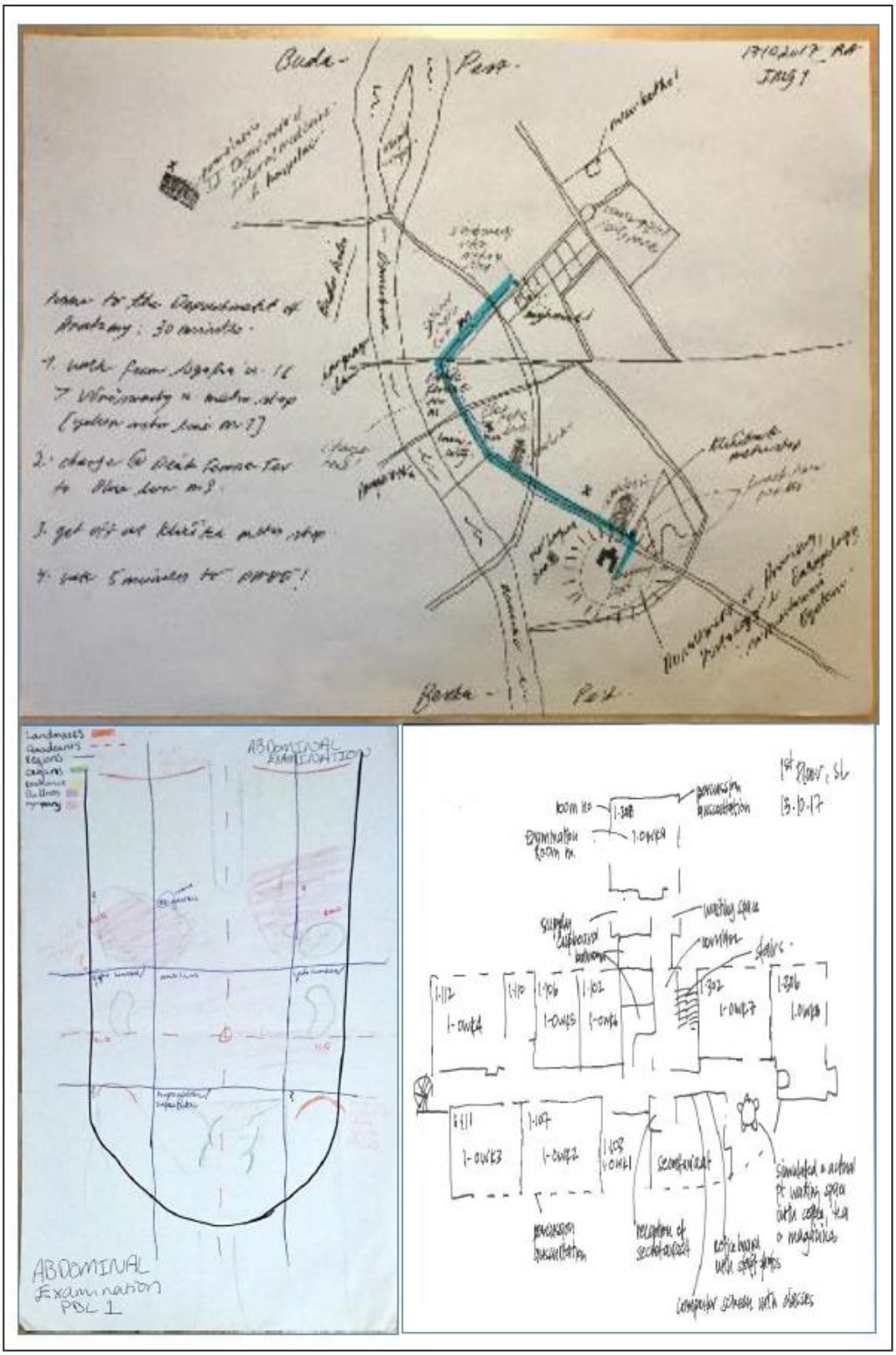

Figure 3. "Spatial drawings" made by each author. A drawn map of travel to and from fieldwork at the anatomy department of Semmelweis University in Budapest (top). A drawing showing abdominal examination from The University for Development Studies in Tamale (bottom left). A blueprint map of the first floor of Maastricht University's medical Skills Lab (bottom right).

Conclusion

Given the increased prevalence of team ethnography, this chapter has elucidated some of the dynamics of producing collaborative fieldnotes in the context of medical education research. In particular, we have shown that Taylor's (2014) regimes of accountability do not always devalue bumbling in research. We also find other forms of accountability in team research, which do not fit neatly into the documentable and measurable accountability of bureaucratic institutions. Drawing on our experiences of instructing, sharing, and discussing weekly activities as a team of ethnographers distributed across three fieldsites, we argue that bumbling and accountability are, at times, intertwined in team ethnography.

Our commitment to bumbling held us accountable to each other in various ways. Writing instructions allowed us to explore individual interests in the field while simultaneously creating opportunities for us to better understand how our fieldsites relate to one another. Experimenting with multisensory forms of inquiry and sharing enabled us to catch glimpses of each other's fields, in more or less real time, while attempting to speak to the multisensory character of our project. Carving out space to discuss the activities, both periodically while in the field and in greater depth when together in Maastricht, helped emphasize our bumbling practices throughout the initial stages of fieldwork. This helped us to readjust our expectations regarding the temporality of our individual fieldsites and wider team project, and to retrieve the figure of the bumbler within our own, shared discourse. In conclusion, we suggest that bumbling is valuable because it can help positively shape accountability in teams in ways that are not bureaucratic and instrumental. Producing collaborative fieldnotes created opportunities for bumbling within regimes of accountability, and bumbling in our fieldnote practice held us accountable to our commitment to collaborative ethnography.

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