

A Fieldwork Manual for Women and Night Witches



Fierce, Fearsome, Fearless



Oxford Anthropology
& Museum Ethnography
Alumni Society

Dr Helen Carr

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Acknowledgements

There are so many women I would like to acknowledge in this section — **Fierce, Fearsome and Fearless** — these sorts of sections are usually skipped over by readers, but I encourage you to read further about the women who have inspired this publication in the hope their stories will inspire you too.

Of the twentieth century alone, some famous women that I wished I had known. Founding Mothers of Anthropology, Ursula Graham Bowers, Margaret Mead and Phyllis Kaberry. The French mistresses of the Resistance, Violetta Szabo and Odette Hallowes, English nurse, Edith Cavell. Night Witches, Tamara Pamyatnykh, Raisa Suruachevskaya and Nadezhda Popova — the first women to fly lone combat missions for the Soviet Airforce in World War Two.

The courageous Ingrid Betancourt who survived six years of captivity at the hands of guerrillas in the Columbian jungle. I hope to meet her yet.

And the inimitable Betty Boothroyd — a UK, cross bench politician and the first female Speaker of the House of Commons. If you are interested in politics and do not know who Baroness Betty Boothroyd is, look her up!

Some I knew, such as Mary Douglas. And others, such as Israel's Fearless, Fearsome (but never Fierce), Eta Eretz. A child of the Holocaust who sadly died before seeing this acknowledgement in print: she always worried about where I was and what I was up to because she experienced the worst side of human nature, yet remained unfailingly optimistic, kind and generous of spirit.

And some I knew who might seem unlikely choices for this part of the publication, but who remind us embracing life and being Fierce, Fearsome and Fearless, has unimagined and unintended consequences. Women such as Budapest based journalist, Anita Altman — a bon viveur with the bon mot — who insisted on visiting me with a party of ten others from Hungary for my first Christmas in Gaza where she unwittingly charmed Yasser Arafat's wife Suha, as much as the incredulous checkpoint guards on both sides of Eretz checkpoint. Anita died from a stroke in 2005. She had developed Lupus, thought to have been triggered by a virus infected during her trip to Gaza. Anita was, according to her own description, the first (last and possibly only) New York Jewish Princess to have spent Christmas in a Palestinian refugee camp in Gaza. And Zoe Peterssen, a well-known, much loved and much missed figure of the University Parks of Oxford.

And to all my colleagues at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Refugees of Palestine (UNRWA). The first 'edition' of this fieldwork training manual was written while I was working in Gaza.

Lastly, to my clients and colleagues from my time with the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture and to the residents of Mapesbury who, by voting for me, allowed me to sit on the Congress of the Council of Europe and to continue to defend human rights — one resident especially — Sir Hersch Lauterpacht of 104 Walm Lane, Cricklewood London NW2 — who died before I was born, but who assisted at the Nuremburg war crimes trial, and who created the terms of Article 6 of the Nuremburg charter, enshrining crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression into modern international law, later and whose work contributed to the adoption of the 1950 European Convention of Human Rights.

All from this and future related publications go to charity.

H.C.

Why is This Manual Useful? Who is This Manual For?

This is a manual, not a scholarly work. It is aimed at women undertaking fieldwork, and at all those who want to better understand women's fieldwork experiences, men and women. It is intended to be both practically useful and thought-provoking. Although the chapters do not lend themselves to anthropological categories, the Recommended Reading lists are intended not just for those who are students, but would like to find out more about the anthropological approach.

If in parts the manual is blunt, it is because subtle nuance is not enough. The reality of fieldwork remains largely unspoken, except within the realms of male bravado. Until now, the harsher aspects, particularly as experienced by women, have been glossed over or ignored completely. Not all of the recommendations here are advice exclusive to women, but all will be significant to women and may play out differently for women. To some readers with greater travel experience, certain of the key points made might read like admonishing signs fixed to the fridge door. But so what? This book is designed to benefit those coming to fieldwork after me, by offering practical solutions to situations I have faced, and which we might all face. No manual could cover every permutation of events or every cultural interaction. But this one is based on my (not inconsiderable) experience as a traveller, tourist, overseas development worker, anthropologist and cross-cultural psychotherapist, and, currently, politician. Without such experience, a publication of this kind would lack credibility and integrity.

There are some general principles the manual encourages you, as fieldworker, to consider. Is my field trip worth the objective? If I need to acquire survival skills, is the objective worth the trouble, effort and risk? Is the objective achievable, given the limitations on 'women' described? What are my attitudes to what women can and cannot do and will these limit my ability to achieve my objective? This publication is designed to be first read before fieldwork is conducted, if only to encourage the reader to ask themselves 'is this for me?'

You are urged to consider how your own attitudes and values affect your behaviour, as well as anticipate how these may be regarded by people from other cultures — are they those of invader, liberator, occupier...? Also ask how your visit will impact those around you and with you. Good intentions are not always good enough. As a powerful reminder of this, I urge you to read Anthony Trollope's **The Warden** prior to travelling.

Your modus operandi needs to be to listen and observe what people, especially women, from other cultures say and do, and to be sensitive to any differences in attitudes, values and behaviour. If you have never lived or worked overseas for long periods, how can you know your way of thinking, doing, seeing, or of being seen, is not the norm? Goethe said you never know your own language until you have to learn someone else's.

This text has been written in English, though it is understood that the reader of the English language version may not be a native speaker, rather using English as a second language. The guidelines offered here should always be adapted to the local culture of the people you are living and working amongst, and preferably translated into the local language whether or not this is one of the languages of mass communication — Arabic, Hebrew, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Hindi, Farsi, Mandarin. The process of translation will help to put the principles

set out in the manual in a form that is relevant to those who speak the local language and will help workers and researchers to be more effective.

Showing respect for other ways of living, thinking and doing is easier said than done, especially if you find yourself offended, at what you perceive at a disadvantage, or when your own way of living, thinking and doing is not respected. Of course, it is important not to be misled by stereotypes — neither you, nor the individuals you meet will necessarily reflect some simple version of a “home culture”. Interactions will not always be easy; yet provided you are honest with yourself, and others, discussing and clarifying the aims and objectives, and expectations, for the outcomes of any interaction, everyone can benefit. If others have gone before you to the same area, you might ask if they remain in contact with people they met overseas and in the field, and if not, why not? This can be a starting place for thinking about the relationship between host peoples, the researched and the researcher, the aid worker, the consultant.

If you are younger, in the face of the challenges you experience, you may long for more radical change — for yourself and others. Yet incremental not revolutionary change is usually more practicable and more likely to be sustainable. No matter how enthusiastic you are, you will need to appeal to a broad spectrum of people to succeed. Being sympathetic and diplomatic, expressing ideas carefully and with caution, you are more likely to win over the mistrustful.

It is important to make yourself aware of the laws of countries in which you are living and operating, and how they might apply to you. This may range from recognising the differences in rights and protections, to specific issues relating to the tasks you are taking on. For instance, even within Europe, if you are conducting research, be mindful of privacy laws — France, for example, has laws related to the ‘reasonable expectation of privacy’.



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It is hard for anyone to understand the realities of living and working in another country, with the differences in culture and language, and perhaps ideology, before they have actually been in the field. This is especially (but not exclusively) true for young and inexperienced women from wealthy, liberal democracies who might take for granted legally enforceable rights such as the right to vote, the right to equal pay and opportunities, the right to choose the life they wish to lead, even the right to read and write. Such rights are only relatively recently gained, but now assumed, thanks to the suffragette and women’s liberation movements. However, even in the “home” setting the assumption of shared values can be too easy. It may not even be that the women in your class at college or university — your work colleagues, or your comrades — are from families, religions or cultures that share your particular understanding of what constitute ‘rights’, nor agree with them if they do. The fear of accusations of racism, sexism and other prejudices might silence those who hold those beliefs or prejudices, but does not necessarily alter them.

Like it or not, women doing research or work in other countries have to accept that the types of rights and protections we may be accustomed to simply do not always apply (or may exist in theory, but not in reality), and therefore we have to think about whether we will enjoy the experience and how we will manage situations before, not just as and when, they arise.

This book encourages women to be Fierce, Fearsome and Fearless, and to make informed choices. By taking a very practical approach and allowing readers to look up items prior to travel, in the field (as their relevance becomes increasingly clear), as well as when they have returned home and need a debrief, the manual aims to ensure that neither they nor the people they have lived and worked amongst, should be damaged in any way by the experience. Hopefully, they will all thoroughly enjoy their fieldwork.

In pursuing its approach, the manual will challenge readers' assumptions. Not all will make comfortable reading. This is an intention. If education teaches how to think, not what to think, then, more than anything, this manual is designed to trigger conversations many would prefer to avoid. You are urged to create not simply criticize, which is easy and passive, but rather to develop your critical thinking. Disagreements are useful. I position myself (white, 50 something etc.) in the Introduction so the reader knows the base from which the publication arrives. Future editions might be written from other perspectives and positions, but this is not the publication for intellectualising. This is about doing: predicting and pre-empting problems before they arise, and is embedded in the experience of teaching, training and travelling. The reader can dip in and out according to need or interest. As I have suggested, I encourage women to make informed choices about whether they really should be engaging in the work at all, and if so (without philosophising, as a more scholarly work might), how they might be safe while doing so, while not posing a risk to others.

The writing style and reading level are intended to be as accessible and informal as possible to reach the widest audience. The references to novels, for example to Primo Levi's works under the section 'Feet', are designed to engage a range of readers otherwise not interested in a dense, heavily referenced academic work.

There are some differences in tone between sections of the manual. This reflects the fact that motives and incentives for travelling, living and working overseas differ. So, some material is more about forming a relationship with the peoples and places of destination, while some is more task-oriented and may be of greater appeal to those conducting fieldwork for research purposes, and the corporate world, governmental departments and international organisations. Yet, having had more than 30 years' experience working in the field in various capacities, I can say that whether you are an international aid worker, a politician, or if you work for an NGO, consultancy or mining company, we all face many similar issues. This publication is not restricted to one type of fieldworker or to a specific subject area — it is a guide aimed at women from any discipline, and from non-academic backgrounds, who are contemplating doing research or work in other countries where norms and values may be very different.

Men would also benefit from reading this book. Men are sons, brothers, fathers, husbands, friends and lovers — and men need to see themselves as others see and experience them.

With the wide range of themes covered, there will inevitably be differences in the degree to which, and ways in which, different sets of readers engage with particular topics.

For instance, some topics covered may be less relevant to younger undergraduate students — such as that of 'dependents'. However, with the increased market for life-long learning, and the tendency for NGOs and voluntary organisations to recruit older or retired professionals, it would be wrong (possibly litigable) to assume some readers do not have children.

A topic, such as ‘Sport’ is most relevant for readers living for long periods in one place. That of ‘Feet’ may be especially significant for those roughing it for long periods, possibly without access to medical facilities, yet draws out more general practical points such as the difficulty of finding women’s shoes in larger sizes in many countries, so that tall women travelling to countries where women are generally smaller and shorter cannot assume they will be able to find shoes that fit locally, even where stores exist.

Certain topics could be readily discussed with an entire cohort of those engaging in overseas work or study, others would be addressed on a more discreet, one to one basis, or in pastoral work — such as health and disability — as those are more sensitive issues some might prefer not to discuss in front of peers or even strangers.

It is possible that some points made might be read as contradictory, but should be seen in the context of awareness-raising. For instance, suggesting that women might think about bringing condoms does not alter the fact that in some areas women traveling with contraception may be labelled a prostitute and run into problems if they are found to have contraception on them at customs. An informed choice as to whether to bring contraception such as condoms lies with the reader.

New topics or debates which have emerged in the last five to ten years, such as those of ethical approval and health and safety risk assessment, often focus on the procedural aspects of fieldwork rather than on the reality of the actual collecting of data, or of being in the field, as this manual does. Formalised Risk Assessments and Analyses is the stuff of HR departments and insurance administration. ‘Ethics’, especially, is a separate theme in its own right — the Recommended Reading material has suggestions. This publication is concerned with raising significant questions for you to consider.

Safety issues are of special concern not just to women, but this is a manual for women. We are not ‘other’. As universities and workplaces become more diverse over time, programmes need to grapple with how to adequately prepare those who will be doing fieldwork and consider their safety issues that simply were not addressed when students and bosses were largely white men. Formerly, given the narrow band of participants, much training could be reduced to a ‘tick box’ corporate culture designed to fulfil insurance policies. Advice has been, until now, largely anodyne and unrealistic. This publication begins the process of acknowledging a change, and of seriously considering the position of the researcher when amongst the researched, the individual on overseas secondment to a headquarters or a regional office, the ‘expert’ among the poor and uneducated, the ‘rescuer’ amidst the ‘victims’.

Given that many are studying in overseas campus universities, this publication may also contribute to conversations about how to deal with sexual assault on college campuses or compounds, and the role of institutions in trying to reduce assault, or to adequately protect women after an assault, and ensure they feel safe so their education or career is not disrupted or damaged. For many, travelling overseas to attend school or university will be the first time they have left the relatively safe environs of their home and home country. This manual can also serve as an ‘induction’ of sorts.

Some readers might react emotionally to the way certain topics are addressed. Good. For instance, as part of the discussion of women needing to take precautions to avoid sexual assault, they are urged “Consider the long term impact (unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, HIV and Hepatitis) of sexual assault which could be life threatening and tragic.” The intention is to encourage women to think carefully about the very real possibility of assault, and to be certain about what risks they are willing to take. In some situations, and with some readers working in areas of armed conflict or war, women DO (myself one of them)

make a rational cost-benefit analysis of actions in trying to avoid rape and sexual assault. And why shouldn't they? So do men.

The manual makes recommendations while also raising thought-provoking issues of practical significance — for example, issues around menstruation. Some women might not want to prevent menstruation (hence the false 'break' introduced to oral contraceptives which give an impression of menstruation). Travelling, different time zones, routines and time tables as well as unusual (to you) foodstuffs can trigger menstruation and upset otherwise regular cycles. Having spent long periods rough camping, in jungle, desert, sub-zero temperatures, intense humidity, and temperatures of above 100 degrees F, without running water and electricity,



Women have been working in disciplines such as social anthropology since the discipline's earliest days, and increasingly students of the life sciences are women. I have never been anywhere that a woman in a crinoline and bustle has not been before me, no matter how remote and inhospitable.

I would recommend that women stop menstruating unless there is a medical reason preventing them from doing so. They might explore more recent inventions — the 'mooncup' has been suggested. The choice is theirs. Women have been working in disciplines such as social anthropology since the discipline's earliest days, and increasingly students of the life sciences are women. I have never been anywhere that a woman in a crinoline and bustle has not been before me, no matter how remote and inhospitable. We do not know how those women 'coped' with menstruation, but we do know there are myths and taboos around menstruation all over the world. Given the diversity of the students, NGO workers or engineers who might be about to embark on a long trip overseas it would be wrong to assume that no female reader (let alone her male or female companions and colleagues) will hold some of these myths or taboos, nor feelings of disgust or shame. Again, norms and values, will vary.



General advice regarding vaccinations, medication and money is always salient and tends not to date. It appears in more than one section.

Women dominate many academic disciplines. They will be ever more involved in research across a range of fields and, given the number of political and humanitarian crises worldwide (which show no signs of decreasing), more women will be traveling in roles such as aid and medical workers, non-profit volunteers, etc. As world events shift, the manual will need to be updated. Different 'versions' of the publication might emerge, which is surely to be welcomed.

Women are not vulnerable just because they are women. If what is offered here is seen as too closely guided by my individual experience, or too general, I would encourage readers who disagree with the points made, or want further information because what is presented is insufficiently developed for a black, LGBT or other community, to consider writing their own publications. The manual has its acknowledged limits and cannot be all things to all women (or men). Yet I hope that it will embolden people to write about their own experiences for the benefit of others (not as therapy, although the process might be therapeutic), as well as learning from those of others.

The distinctive contribution of this publication is the focus on realistic tips about what to do or consider. It will not give an answer for every problem women might face — that would be impossible, especially so given the variety of regions and cultures they may encounter. But wherever possible, it emphasizes what questions women should ask or what action they should take; I believe that is its strength.

“There is, after Herodotus, little interest by the Western world towards the desert for hundreds of years. From 425b.c. to the beginning of the twenties century there is an averting of eyes. Silence. The nineteenth century was an age of river seekers. And then in the 1920s there is a sweet postscript history on the pocket of earth, made mostly by privately funded expeditions and followed by modest lectures given at the Geographical Society in London at Kensington Gore. Those lectures are given by sunburned men who, like Conrad’s sailors, are not too comfortable with the etiquette of taxis, the quick, flat wit of bus conductors.

When they travel by local trains from the suburbs towards Knightsbridge on their way to Society meetings, they are often lost, tickets misplaced, clinging only to their old maps and carrying lecture notes — which were slowly and painfully written — in their ever present knapsacks which will always be a part of their bodies. These men of all nations travel at that early evening hour, six o’clock, when there is the light of the solitary. It is an anonymous time; most of the city is going home. The explorers arrive too early at Kensington Gore, eat at the Lyons Corner House and then enter the Geographical Society, where they sit in the upstairs hall next to the large Maori canoe, going over their notes. At eight ‘clock the talks begin.

Every other week there is a lecture. Someone will introduce the talk, and someone will give thanks. The concluding speaker usually argues or tests the lecture for hard currency, is permanently critical but never impertinent. The main speakers, everyone assumes, stay close to the facts, and even obsessive assumptions are presented modestly.

My journey through the Libyan desert from Sokum on the Mediterranean El Obeid in the Sudan was made over one of the few tracks of the earth’s surface which present a number and variety of interesting geographical problems ...

The years of preparation and research and fund-raising are never mentioned in these oak rooms, The previous week’s lecturer recorded the loss of thirty people in ice in Antarctica. Similar losses in extreme heat or windstorms are announced with minimal eulogy. All human and financial behaviour lies on the far side of the issue being discussed — which is the earth’s surface and “its interesting geographical problems”.

Can other depressions in this region, besides the much discussed Wadi Rayan, be considered possible of utilisation in connection with irrigation or drainage of the Nile Delta? Are the artesian water supplies of the oases remaining to be discovered? Where are the tortoise marshes of Ptolemy?

John Belle, Director of Desert Surveys in Egypt, asked those questions in 1927. By the 1930s, the papers grew even more modest.” **I should like to add a few remarks on some of the points raised in the interesting discussion on the ‘Prehistoric Geography of Kharga Oasis.’”** By the mid 1930s the lost oasis of Zorzura was found by Ladislaus de Almasy and his companions.

In 1939, the great decade of Libyan Desert expeditions came to an end and this vast and silent pocket of earth became one of the theatres of war.”

Ondaatje. M P133-134 *The English Patient*. Picador. 1992.



My intention in this manual is to raise questions and to encourage women to predict and pre-empt problems, where possible before they arise. In doing this they need to understand the sometimes complex relationship between intent and impact. The aim here is not to discourage all risk-taking, but to make sure if, and possibly when, things go wrong, preparation and actions taken limit damage. This involves accepting unpleasant possibilities. But the current tendency to instant outrage, or at the very least, take and decry 'offence', to refuse to listen to anything unpleasant and to shoot the messenger closes down essential conversations. This manual starts conversations some might not want to hold, hear, or take part in. If you assume, for example, that you will become ill at some stage, then you will be psychologically and practically prepared for when you experience the worst diarrhoea you have ever known. Assume it will be a case of when you are robbed, not if (especially if this is one of your first major expeditions overseas), and if you arrive home safe, you will be delighted. Women have always been Fierce, Fearsome, Fearless. Women have always fought for their country, for their families, for their rights and there is no excuse for being ill prepared. Women are not victims because they are women. Anyone doubting women can be perpetrators as much as men might want to read some of the literature on the women only Nazi concentration camp, Ravensbruck.

Some of the issues this publication touches upon occur unpredictably, hence the value of reading this material prior to travelling. At the same time, some of what is said here may echo familiar situations to women, offering a comparative perspective and ways of coping. This manual relates to a wide variety of interactions and a wide spectrum of travellers: from those going on a short trip, to those on a long expedition in remote corners of the globe. This might be as an anthropologist, as an archaeologist, Egyptologist, biologist, zoologist, a photographer, as an aid or relief worker, as a medic, as part of a team from your Foreign Office, a civil servant on a fact finding mission, a student, a journalist or someone from a major financial consultancy. My academic background and training is anthropology, my practical training is teaching and psychotherapy.

The manual is, in part, a response to an enormous gap in the market of field training, in the corporate and academic environment, which, if carried out all, is so often conducted by men. Their instructions concise and to the point, arranged efficiently in a way that might be expected of someone who has worked in a military style operation. There is an obvious lack of practical training and resources geared towards women in both the academic and corporate worlds. If you are a woman, your life is not 'other.' I am not arguing any point that has not been made before, but seems to fall on deaf ears. You have the right to demand that your existence, safety and experiences matter. I am reminded of this point again and again — only recently, at the time of editing this publication, on advising a thirty something, male estate agent that I required a property close enough to a tube station to be safe walking home in the dark in the winter, was recommended a short cut that was in fact a field that I would not use, even in broad daylight. It had not occurred to him a woman would not comfortably use this route. So this is a manual for men as well as women. Men are sons, fathers, brothers, nephews, colleagues, friends, teachers, tutors, supervisors, line managers and so often, the Boss.

The term 'gender' is so often an intellectualised smokescreen disguising basic inequalities and differences between the sexes, I use the term 'sex'. For the majority of the world, there are two sexes. Men wear the trousers, and women the skirts. You wear trousers because you are

a man, and because you fulfil a role and do x y z and you have a wife or wives. A woman wears a skirt or at least disguises the shape of her legs with pantaloons, has babies, does a, b, c. and has a husband. An adult is defined as someone according to prescribed roles and who has had a child or children — simple. Here I refrain from using the term ‘gender’, which is loaded with meaning in the English language, but is not understood widely outside the English speaking world, and is not even a recognised term in all countries and languages, for example Magyar, the language of Hungarian speaking peoples, has no gender.

All female fieldworkers would be wise to remember this. You will be defined largely by what you have not (a penis). If a man’s world consists of the ‘shoulds’: should be brave, true and strong, should be responsible, should be in charge of his (and your) destiny, then your world consists of ‘should nots’. For most of the world, there is still no ambiguity. Men marry women and their roles and functions are defined in the same way they have been for centuries, often according to Islam, Christianity or other world religions. And why shouldn’t they? Not so long ago, people were considered ignorant, primitive and backward because they were not Muslim or Christian (et al). In much of the western secular ‘aid’ industry, they are now ignorant, primitive and backward because they are or because ‘their’ interpretation is not the ‘right’ one or is the cause of human rights abuses.



The existence of any law prohibiting homosexuality speaks volumes about expectations, roles and functions of women as much as men. This is awareness.



You would be advised to remember that homosexuality is illegal in 85 countries of the world’s 194 (according to some statistics). I am a UK Delegate to, and Vice President of the Independent Liberal Democrat Group of, the Strasbourg-based Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. As I write, the Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights has recently condemned Russia’s homosexuality ‘propaganda’ law as discriminatory and encouraging homophobia. Russia is a favourite target and the usual suspect. But what of huge swathes of Africa or the Arab world? China? You would be advised to find out if the country you are visiting prohibits homosexuality, whether you are gay or not. It would be wrong to assume ‘I’m ok, because I’m not gay’ in the same way it would have been wrong to have done nothing when ‘they came for the Jews because I was not Jewish’. The existence of any law prohibiting homosexuality speaks volumes about expectations, roles and functions of women as much as men. This is awareness.

If you are going to any of these countries, consider how being a woman will impact your ability to talk and live freely as you might be accustomed to doing. Ask yourself what “living freely” means to you. If that includes legal abortion, for example, then consider how many countries attempt to restrict or prohibit this practice (including a part of the UK: Northern Ireland), why and how this might impact you, and what it says about attitudes to sex, women and children and the relationships between men, women, children and the State. This is not about supporting or being against legal abortion: the choice is never between abortion or no abortion, but legal or illegal abortion, in the same way homosexuality and/or same sex relationships might be legal or illegal, but always exist. Important to you is what this represents to the peoples living with, abiding by, subjected to, or supporting these laws.

There are, of course, some countries that do not explicitly ban same-sex behavior, but use the law to punish gay and lesbian behavior. In some places, same-sex behaviour might not be illegal, but this does not mean it is tolerated. Post-apartheid South Africa has some of the most radical laws in the world, yet the term 'corrective rape' was coined in South Africa, while in many parts of Eastern and Central Europe, for women who prefer other women to men, or who choose neither (Nuns for example), 'unused women' is the preferred term of men of a certain age.

You can expect disapproval if you are 'suspected' of being a same sex 'couple'. Men and women travelling together, who are older, not married and not obviously related in some way may meet this in otherwise cosmopolitan Istanbul as well as in a provincial English B&B whose owners are practising Christians and of a brand of their faith that prohibits same sex ('hate the sin, love the sinner' is a phrase oft used), but consider celibacy an option for the 'homosexually inclined.' Like most people, your social world will probably be limited to those who think and behave like you and share your norms and values. If you choose to leave the safety and stability of your norm, do not be surprised if you do not like what and who you find and they do not necessarily like you.

Consider that in many countries, you may be required to produce a birth certificate proving who your children are, i.e. you have responsibility for the children you are travelling with. If you travel without a man who is recognised as your husband, or with a man who is not your husband, or not the father of your children, or who does not share your name or the family name of your children, expect difficulties when applying for a visa or when you encounter any sort of local administration. These lifestyle choices are seldom recognised outside western metropolis and can cause huge headaches for embassy staff if you require their assistance. This might be for moral and religious reasons, or simply because child prostitution and trafficking is big business. You may be required to show a marriage certificate if you wish to share a room with a man even in countries that attract and invite mass market tourism, such as Morocco. I do not use my married name and carry my marriage certificate when travelling with or without my husband. On a work trip for the Council of Europe to Rotterdam, I included his details for security reasons under the title of 'Consort'. To our amusement, he was considered the Delegate and still receives an email circular from one group of representatives attending, presumably on the assumption a man could not possibly be the 'and one other'.

Women need to learn to look after themselves. 'Independence' means being independent of men — your father, brother, husband, or boyfriend — financially, emotionally and physically. Your personal safety is your personal responsibility. If you are living and working in a country or a region where there is continual violent organised (or disorganised) conflict, then your Embassy website will keep you updated about travel, areas to avoid, as well as offering advice on particular situations, such as not travelling after dark on local or international buses. Become accustomed to the sight of guns and if necessary, learn how to use one. Consider if you can kill someone if you have to, before they rape and kill you. A quick trawl (if 'quick' is at all possible), through the website of any disaster and emergency agency's website or a news site such as the BBC or Reuters will provide you with some basic facts and figures. Historical accounts, fiction and non-fiction, from Anthony Beevor's works focusing on World War Two, or Tibor Fischer's **Under the Frog** (1993) a personal account of the Soviet suppression of Hungary's 1956 uprising, create stark pictures of worlds when law and order and social norms break down. Women and girls can be in danger as much from the marauding troops, ne'er do wells and deserters of their own side, as hostile enemies. The most common observation I have heard from young professionals seconded to London consultancies from Brazil, Argentina and Chile is how safe London is and how they have all experienced car-jacking, armed robbery and even kidnapping 'because people have nothing to lose'. Our police do not have guns. 'How do

they kill people' I am asked in jest, invariably from those who are brought up with police forces to avoid, not ask directions.

Do not assume female penetration into the masculine and macho worlds of 'security' or 'aid and development' will always be welcome. Sometimes you may be seen as another security problem and a liability, hindering objectives. Organisations that provide fieldwork and security training (both private and those with charitable status) have boomed in the last 20 years. A cynical and sometimes unsavoury industry, it is nonetheless one you may need prior to departure or during your trip. They may be the people who negotiate your release or rescue. These are not idealists, nor politically or religiously motivated. But men, and some women, to whom the spoils of war have been franchised — private 'consultants', IT, logistics, medics, engineers — many of whom have a mortgage, school fees to be paid, or a wife back home (never it seems, the husband or partner).

Many agencies that recruit workers for overseas positions require their staff, paid and unpaid, undergo some sort of 'security' style training provided by an external consultant. This can be largely so the employer won't be sued, and to fulfil insurance conditions. As an employee of a private company or corporation, you might be prevented from taking risks as far as possible. This means only ever staying in an approved hotel, using a company driver, eating, sleeping and mixing with company people. This can be interpreted as protective on the part of the employer or as limiting liability for its expensive human resources.

Some of the large international corporations struggle to second middle ranking and above staff to countries such as Dubai or the Emirates because despite having huge expat communities, extra money can only compensate so far for the limitations on their private lives. The older you are, the more likely you will have 'baggage' — a family, a dog, an aging parent, making relocation for long periods unattractive. The UK Foreign Office, recognising this dilemma and the trend away from sending children to boarding school, now permits staff from certain embassies in Europe to commute, thus minimising the disruption of a permanent move. Such commuting would be exhausting, but is certainly also practised widely in private corporations and seems more attractive to some, especially to female staff reluctant to leave smaller children. Such options can also be seen as part of anti-discriminatory practice.

Admittedly, many private companies, operating their own health and safety guidelines, policies and procedures, will, discreetly, avoid sending female staff on excursions to very remote sites even within one country if the 'interior' is considered dangerous. This could be in Brazil, or even an E.U. country such as Romania. They might be right. Many people, and especially women, have been brought up to be trusting and trustworthy. Many women — too many — are still raised to be in need of protection, naïve, vulnerable and dependent on others for approval and their sense of self-worth: targets of the industry that now exists for the raising of self-esteem.

But you are not one of them. You are **Vanity Fair's** enterprising Becky Sharpe, not the helpless Dora Spenlow of **David Copperfield**. You are **Fierce, Fearsome, Fearless**.

RECOMMENDED READING

Recommended reading for those to about to undertake fieldwork as a journalist with an international aid organisation or missionary work are lesser known works by Helen Fielding — she of Bridget Jones fame and immense fortune — who actually wrote a novel based on her experience as an aid worker called **Cause Celebre**. Likewise, Hilary Mantel wrote a memoir **Someone to Disturb** as well as articles and novels based on her experience of being an ex-pat wife in Saudi Arabia, including **Once Upon a Life**, and **Eight months on Ghazzah St**.

These women are fantastic authors and their works illustrate better than I so many points made in this manual. As well as being informative, they are also good reads.

- > Fielding, H., 1994. **Cause Celebre**. London: Picador.
- > Mantel, H., 2009. **Someone to Disturb**. London Review of Books. (Vol.31:1, pp.13-17.)
- > Mantel, H., 2010. **Once Upon a Life**. The Guardian. 21s..February 2010
- > Mantel, H., 1988. **Eight months on Ghazzah St**. London: Viking.

For those of you about to work in war zones and refugee camps especially, I urge you to read J. G. Ballard's **Empire of the Sun**: an account of his survival as a child in a Japanese prisoner of war camp, and Primo Levi's description of a Polish concentration camp.

- > Ballard, J. G., 1984. **Empire of the Sun**. London: Gollancz.
- > Levi, P., 1991. (1947). **If this is a Man**. London: Little, Brown.

Non-Fiction

- > Beevor, A., 1999. **Stalingrad**. London: Penguin.
- > Beevor, A., 2012. **World War Two**. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson
- > Boo, K., 2012. **Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, death and hope in a Mumbai undercity**. New York: Random House. > Fox, K., 2004.. **Watching the English: The hidden rules of English behaviour**. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- > Ho, K., 2009. **Liquidated: An ethnography of Wall Street**. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- > Mahmood, S.,2005. **The Politics of Piety: The Islamic revival and the feminist subject**. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Fiction

- > Dickens, C., 1997 (1850). **David Copperfield**. Ware: Wordsworth Classics.
- > Fischer, T., 1993. **Under the Frog**. London: Penguin.
- > Thackeray, W.M., 2003 (1847). **Vanity Fair**. London: Penguin Classics.
- > Trollope, A., 1984 (1855). **The Warden**. London: Penguin Classics.



PART 1

Preparing for the Trip





Chapter 1

Before You Go

Getting ready for your time in the field can involve many different kinds of preparation — ranging from making sure that you are mentally prepared (recognising the validity of your aims and motivations), to intellectual preparation (achieving the best possible understanding of the situation which you are about to enter and of the tools needed to deal with it), to highly practical preparation (administrative, medical, etc.) The following sections discuss issues across this range.

Questions to ask yourself

What am I going for? Because you are Fierce, Fearless and Fearsome? Then go, but be honest with yourself. Go with your eyes open. Will the experience be life-changing or life-threatening? If the latter, you had better have a really good reason to go. Do you need to go to obtain a qualification? Are you going for ideology or religious conviction? How will you explain or justify to yourself the loss of a limb, for example, if the only reason you chose that particular path is because you were told to? For promotion? For the money? Because you don't like to be thought a coward? Because you might lose your job. Because you wanted to please or impress your boss. Because it looked awesome. Ask yourself, can I answer the research question somewhere else and somewhere safer? Do I really need to go there? Know the history of the project you are working on, the people past and present working on it, who you might be working alongside, and your place in the grand scheme of things. Are you Mistress of your own destiny, or Rudyard Kipling's 'Kim', finding yourself involved in a 'Greater Game'?

Ask yourself why you choose to do this, as well as why not.

Do your homework

Always speak with a range of peoples of different ages who have lived or worked in the country or region you intend to visit — preferably a man and a woman and, also, try to speak to a 'local' who has lived in the country recently and was brought up there and will have recent knowledge of how things are, not how they used to be, or how a non-resident, dissident, or refugee thinks things should be. Being in touch with someone from the area might provide a local contact, essential when you first arrive if you are unaccompanied. If you are travelling on your own, it would also be useful to speak with a woman who has travelled alone, and so is not part of an easily understood 'package' in most societies' and cultures' eyes.

These kinds of contacts may be relatively easy to find in a city like London, but otherwise look on the Internet: there will always be clubs and societies with a regional, religious or country focus that can help, and will have a mix of people who have settled overseas as spouses or employees. They can often give valuable information or, at the very least, an overview.

You will always find someone who has maintained contacts and connections. In many parts of the world, this might mean a government official, a consultancy or a faith group. Think outside the box — an oil corporation, a private helicopter company, the military, VSO or Peace Corps, local media, religious organisation. Do not reject any of these options. You need their advice, you may need their company, and, importantly, you may need their help in an emergency. These may be people you might not otherwise mix with or come across in other walks of life, but you might be surprised and get along. Religiously motivated folk often get their hands dirty in a way people involved in the ‘human rights industry’ do not. Anthropology and anthropologists are steeped in the history of the military and the religious orders — churches, synagogues, mosques — groups that proselytise and cater for overseas travellers and visitors. Staying on the Catholic Mission on a recent trip to Mende in the mountains of Papua New Guinea, I was struck how precarious, difficult and dangerous life could be for the Sisters and Brothers running schools and clinics. Only someone with a spiritual conviction and vocation would risk their life in that way for years on end. Being religiously motivated, their curiosity and presence are better understood and possibly more welcome, than vague mumblings about research or ‘development’.

There may be safety in numbers if you are among an established group. You will all have something in common: you are ALL expats of a sort, you are ALL ‘other’ and NONE of you are ‘one of the people’. You might achieve some sort of acceptance, but at what price? In Bali, Indonesia, anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) believed he had become ‘one of the locals’ when he did not disclose information about an illegal cockfight to the authorities. But what if the activity is sexual activity with a girl or boy you consider a child? Do you then become an ‘informer’? Or a particularly grotesque pig killing or hunt, culminating in the torture of an animal? Activities which are illegal in your chosen field site location. What will you do or not do to become accepted? If you collude with an illegal act, you may be liable if the police are looking for someone to prosecute. This does not mean you should inform on people, but does mean you need to maintain firm professional and personal boundaries. Keep to your own moral compass.

Are there on-line local media that will give a picture of the society you intend to visit or live amongst? They will provide ‘a truth’ or a version of truth you need to be aware of. Watch CNN, Sky, Fox, the BBC, but also the international Chinese, Russian and Arabic channels for local focus. There is nothing new in fake news, it used to be called propaganda. Be critically aware of agendas — commercial and political.

A research student once confided in me that her colleague had been raped by a local man, while they were living on a recently independent island in the Pacific. She was still angry at what she felt to be a lack of support shown by the British Consular official. However, she had also said she had been ‘told’ to avoid the ‘expat community’, although she could not supply, it seemed to me, any justifiable reason for this, other than they drank too much (not unsurprisingly, as this seems a feature of expatriate life as I have always understood it, and as anyone who has lived overseas or read James Fox’s **White Mischief** (1998) might testify). Whatever her motivation, a 27 year old woman, unmarried and unaccompanied on a Pacific island would be vulnerable in a society not as safe or stable (especially outside the resorts) as the tour guides might promote. Some islands, such as those in the Republic of Vanuatu, are accustomed to hosting medics from the UK doing six month electives. However, these women presumably did not fit into any of the ascribed and familiar roles. They had no religious affiliation (i.e. ‘references’) and therefore no connections with any church (this would be thought of as unusual), were not tourists, and

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 of the law in the country you are about to embark to. What protection does it give you? How much of a deterrent does it provide and what are the maximum or usual sentences? What are the conviction rates? What are the types of defense accepted? Even in (western) Europe you may be surprised at how the law treats assault and sexual assault, rape and murder.

had no obvious or understandable reason to be there in many local eyes, and were a target. This might be no more or less than if they were out drinking unaccompanied with a group of strange men in a London bar, but perhaps the men they encountered quite rightly realised that raping a foreign woman had consequences not as grave as if the women were local. This was her description of the incident, after all, and may not have been theirs. Quite what support the women expected, beyond financial (according to their account, they did not have sufficient funds to fly home quickly in an emergency, which in the credit card era, seems strange and at the least, irresponsible) it is not clear. Another young researcher said she had been warned prior to departure to New Caledonia to “as soon as alcohol appears, disappear”. Do not hang around when people, especially men, are drinking. Always be able to walk away and out of trouble. My recent experience on Mangaia, a remote Cook Island, taught me this might apply to all women, including locals — while all at the island’s one bar were married or related to each other in some way, drinking tables were segregated and the women, also binge drinking, hid the bottles in anticipation of alcohol- fuelled violence later on.

This is not about blame or finding fault, it is not really even about the perils of the Pacific, since you could be raped anywhere under the circumstances described (within the subjective account). Rather it demonstrates how lack of awareness — of how you and your actions are perceived — can be dangerous. The sense of entitlement many women in parts of Europe, Australia, New Zealand, the US or UK have grown up with — that ‘I have the right to travel, live, dress, say, and go where I please and live an independent life’ — has no relevance or resonance outside the salons of western urban elites. In many countries, including those within the European Union, vulnerability is something to be exploited, not protected. Consider the long term impact (unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, HIV and Hepatitis) of sexual assault which could be life threatening and tragic. Women argue that no means no. But a woman wandering around in a bikini or shorts is understood all over the world to be ‘demanding’ at the very least, attention. It might not be the sort of attention you would want. Think about the message you are sending out. In Barcelona, it is illegal to wear only a bikini or swimming trunks in the street. Just because you are on holiday, does not mean the local population have to stop going about their daily business to accommodate you. You could expect stares if your wear a bikini in or Canary Wharf or Wall Street, why not other towns and cities?

It is easy to drop your guard once ‘abroad’ despite a home-grown familiarity with risks. Who was not taught as a child not to accept sweets from stranger? ‘Don’t talk to strangers?’ ‘Don’t get in a stranger’s car?’ Unwanted, unwarranted and unsolicited attention is not just a feature of overseas life, but of every office. In such a case, an unwelcome advance or invitation might be rebuffed with a ‘did I do something or has something happened to make you behave like this?’ This way you politely indicate that their attentions are about them, not you — the responsibility lies with them — the one who is initiating the suggestion, not you, the ‘object’ of the attention. Nabakov’s *Lolita* (1955) is about a man obsessed — the object of his obsession, her needs, desires, pain and misery is only relevant if this fulfils or relieves, albeit temporarily, his obsession. Obsessive behaviours and thoughts are considered to be a symptom of inner turbulence. *Lolita* is not, as popularly presented and understood, about a young temptress. This interpretation reveals more about the society we live in, than the nature of desire and says much about unsavoury, sexist attitudes to young pre-pubescent girls (children in fact) as well as women. However, this analysis would find less favour in Naples, Madrid or Cairo, and countries and cultures where part of the courtship process is understood to involve initial rejection, but eventual submission of the woman to the man. In the Spanish and Portuguese languages of South America and Spain, a woman is ‘conquered’. A man will pursue obsessively until he has conquered the object of his desire. This is about the chase, and eventual domination and conquest, (in South America, Spanish and Portuguese colonialists are known as ‘conquerors’) not necessarily love. Could Gabriel Garcia Marquez’ *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1988) be written in contemporary UK? What might be

interpreted as a romantic gesture and a measure of devotion in one culture, in another provides a reason to call the police. 'Mock' abduction of the bride might be part of a traditional Hungarian wedding, but kidnapping or abduction of women to force marriage remains a very real threat in many countries. In Kyrgyzstan, women may be snatched from the street and taken to the prospective spouse's home. She may be raped, ensuring she is shamed into remaining. If she spurns his advances and returns to her parents' home, she may be returned as she is 'spoilt goods' and a financial burden, if nothing else. What place for such women? In many societies, the brothel is the place for women who are known to have engaged in sexual activity, consensual or non-consensual, outside the permitted boundaries of marriage. This might mean someone who is not selected by her parents, someone not a relative, or someone who is not of the same religion, race, caste or colour.

At the back of this manual I have listed terms and phrases useful when managing difficult people and situations. They may be obvious, or they may make the difference between being insulted and assaulted and being able to walk away head held high ready to fight another day. But find out if you can before you go how the peoples you will be travelling, living and working with engage with each other. Understand inter-personal communication and relationships, and how this might impact you. Perhaps you will be treated as a guest, an honorary visitor, a person in need of protection and hospitality. Or perhaps you are a threat. You might be seen as someone who will bring disease, discord, and disaster, as other foreigners before you.

Do not assume the explanations behind certain behaviours are universal, especially where amour is concerned. For example, the definition of marriage is not universal, although mostly it seems to be about legitimising children and assigning responsibility for child rearing. The anthropologist's favourite, the Nuer of Sudan, have 'ghost' marriages: women to women marriage. This allows the children of a woman, who may be widowed, to 'belong' to her dead husband, even if the father of children born subsequent to his death are is not the deceased. A Nuer woman might be married to another, more senior woman. Rights and relationships are collective, not individual. In many societies, on the Indian sub-continent and in the Arab world, for example, but also, traditionally, among the UK's own Royal family, marriage is an arrangement between families which are often related, an objective being reproduction and continuity of the line as well as keeping wealth, money and property, within the wider group. First cousins might have the right of first refusal. Many couples will have barely met — it is assumed love develops later because of sexual intimacy. Sexual intimacy is not necessarily an expression of love, but may be understood as a 'right' of the husband in relation to the wife (hence rape not being illegal in marriage or even thought a possibility in many societies).

Marriage, then, is about legal and social commitments providing the right environment for the rearing of children. According to this logic, raping a woman is a tactic designed to attack, hurt, insult and destroy her family and a whole range of relations and relationships because this relegates her to the status of a prostitute and negates her primary function as a bearer of (especially male) children. In some societies of Central Asia, a woman, considered guilty, might be forced to marry her abuser. Rape and abduction as outlined above can be a tactic to acquire a bride. This is legal in Tajikistan, but understood closer to home. Occasionally, this tactic has been used in the UK by someone who believed his victim would be forced to marry him, thus fast tracking his process of asylum. Sex in all societies can be purchased, but some view being 'in love' as dangerous because it might upset the status quo. This does not mean there are no love marriages, but that these are formally prohibited or frowned upon. In India, for example, a man may be accused of kidnapping his bride and she might run the risk of being 'returned' if the family can convince themselves, and more significantly others, that sex has not taken place. Mostly, arranged, endogamous, and even forced marriage, is accepted.

In societies where sex for a woman is prohibited outside marriage, the only sort of woman who has sex with someone not her husband is a prostitute. According to this logic, YOU are a prostitute if you have sex with, or openly conduct, an intimate relationship with a man not your husband. The choice is yours. Nuer exceptions aside, for the majority of the world, women do not have sex outside marriage if they are to be considered 'decent' and worthy of 'respect'. Seduction, after all, may be a ruse for perceived financial or political gain or perceived advantage. Is not the youngest sister, Lydia, in **Pride and Prejudice** (Austen, 1813) vulnerable or vain and silly enough to be seduced in order to blackmail her family? The shame of an elopement for a family of five daughters would mean the whole family might be ostracized, leading to financial ruin, poverty and deprivation.



In societies where sex for a woman is prohibited outside marriage, the only sort of woman who has sex with someone not her husband is a prostitute. According to this logic, YOU are a prostitute if you have sex with, or openly conduct, an intimate relationship with a man not your husband. The choice is yours.

If you are not considered decent and worthy of respect by the people you are with, according to their definitions of 'decent' and 'respectable' you will not be able to function amongst them. Your behaviour may pose a risk to you and any people you are with and associated with you. You need to seek their approval and if that means 'being decent' according to their terms and conditions, so be it. Find out before you go.



Geography and Weather

Doing your homework means knowing your geography — get a map that you can physically hold. Google might be useful for locating the trendiest bar in London's Soho, but there is a reason Rommel's cartographical expertise, from World War 2 was utilised once more during the 2011 US/UK Allied Forces' intervention in Libya. Know how to read a map and be mindful that there remain huge areas of the world 'uncharted'.

Read accounts of other travellers. What can you expect of the terrain? Will you need clothing suitable for monsoon and rainy season? Boots? Will the area you are travelling to be muddy and impassable, or snowed in for most of the year? Will you be trapped in a small village once winter sets in (and when is that exactly?) — you don't have to be travelling the Karakorum Highway to be trapped suddenly: eastern Europe's Carpathian Mountains are notoriously isolated during the winter, with snow falling suddenly in a region that only has two distinct seasons, few roads and fewer snow ploughs. What is the range of temperatures you can expect and when? Where are the borders? Who are the neighbours — are internal borders more significant than external ones, such as in Israel? — will you arrive in an area that is segregated for political or religious reasons? What are the transport options — air, four-wheel-drive, local minibus or on foot? What of escape routes — where are the ports, the railway stations, the river terminus? Air? Roads? — what conditions are they in?

These options are also considered under the sub heading 'Emergency', but it is wise to understand where you are, the difficulties you might face getting there and getting around, how you might overcome these, with whom you might have to deal and why. The issues may be similar in parts of Scotland or Wales or the remoter areas of your own country, but if you are a city girl (like me) even the most basic precautions have to be taught. Have a contingency plan.

Learning the Language

Learning the language of the area in which you will work, as best you can, is a must before, during, and after your expedition. Language offers an entrance to your peoples, country or region of choice, and an exit: as part of the-debrief when you return. If you are in a city like London, Sydney or New York, or a metropolis anywhere in the world, there will be every sort of language group, whether the language is written or unwritten. The internet is your friend — link up with people — universities invariably run courses specialising in world languages, but they will also know how and where to connect with speakers of smaller, minority languages, and unwritten ones. A local university might provide great connections and if you are a native English speaker or the native speaker of any world language, you will always find someone willing to 'exchange' languages with you, or at the very least see you as an opportunity to practice their own skills. Approach embassies — the smaller the better. Cultural Attaches are often very happy to put you in touch with someone who can teach you about, and to speak, the languages of the country they represent.

Some peoples are trusting and open to strangers, others more suspicious. In the early days of my research in Eastern and Central Europe, investigating Gypsy populations, the official bodies — in the UK and overseas, including the EU Representative in Budapest, were overwhelmingly helpful and supportive. It seemed as if at one stage everyone was involved in my project. But I was ahead of a trend, and later on people became bored and irritated with research and researchers on Gypsies (or Roma as the EU now chooses to call them), especially the peoples themselves, who are quite capable of doing their own research, thank you very much.

In contrast, pilot research I conducted amongst the Kurds in London with an overly optimistic view to continuing in Northern Iraq (this was 2004) was viewed more cynically by the paymasters. Northern Iraq has oil, after all. Yet I, and one or two of my students at the time, were embraced by the Kurds in London from Turkey and Iraq, happy and eager for us to learn about their languages, culture and customs. Perhaps they were more naïve. Or perhaps they were more comfortable with the idea that IF I turned out to be working for intelligence, then they would have no qualms about killing me. As I had worked with Kurds at the Medical Foundation, I knew this. Therefore, we all knew where we stood.

Know your history and politics

As a pre-trip task, read the literature and histories of the places you intend to visit and the peoples you will live amongst. Views of history are always unpredictable, and accounts might differ wildly from yours, depending on language, religion, culture, politics and ideology. It might be easier to teach a grand narrative to eleven year olds, but more difficult with adults. In Ireland, a history project begun in the 1940s has recorded memories of Ireland's struggle for independence — the same events from different perspectives — age, gender, religion, politics etc. Now that census is on line, it is possible to analyse contributors' social background. Were people householders or homeowners, for instance?

Age, sex or political affiliation might be as, or more, significant than you imagine. Likewise, you may well find everything you are told during your expedition wildly conflicts with what you have read previously, so a critical eye is essential — being aware of intent, context, outcome and impact. Forewarned is forearmed. Your nationality may have more influence your experience more than your sex if you are viewed as an historical ‘friend’ or enemy. Whose ‘side’ were you on in the war (and which war are you talking about?) and what place and role did the peoples who are hosting you play in the wars of the twentieth century?

Many western Pacific islands were settings for fighting between Japanese and Allied troops in World War Two, despite most of the indigenous peoples knowing and caring little or nothing of Hitler or Hirohito. The impact of this period is still the subject of fury and debate since US troops remain in the region. Some islands, notably the Japanese Okinawa, are the location of huge military bases. The Iron Curtain in the twenty first century is more of a net curtain as the usual suspects and old, traditional ‘frenemies’ — Russia, France, the UK, and now China, and ex-English colony (!), America, joining the affray — eye each other warily once more. You may not realise you are seen to represent your country, rather than being representative of a group from your country. Americans especially tend to see themselves as individuals, but would be wise to understand that the rest of the world sees them as American.

During the Balkan wars of the 1990s, a group of young Americans, including a journalist, I knew, took a trip from Budapest to Zagreb (currently in EU member Croatia) that even I, the more experienced, albeit cynical, traveller, refused to join. They seemed surprised when their trains were largely full of troops and yes, refugees, and even more surprised when they were spat at in the street. It was as if, because they could travel there, they assumed it was safe. Clearly, they had not done their homework. I asked them why, when asked, they had admitted to being American, and not claimed a more neutral status such as Irish. They seemed ignorant not only of the perception of America and Americans overseas in a region where the war was being funded and fought by NATO founder member America, but incredulous that it might be necessary to pretend you were something other than American. They got off lightly. Others have not, and will not.

In an emergency such as civil war or armed conflict, heed your government’s advice, if only because you will not be insured if you remain. Whose side are you on and whose passport do you have? Dual nationality is not widely understood — for most peoples, dual nationality is not a possibility and not something you would want — being neither fish nor fowl. The UK government will not intervene overseas on behalf of a person who has dual nationality if they are, for example, imprisoned in the country of their ‘other’ passport. You had better make up your mind what you are before you leave — evacuations are conducted strictly according to procedure. If you haven’t got the right passport and no other country is willing to take responsibility for you, then you are going nowhere. Increasingly, your passport might be seen as establishing some sort of administrative category only. Palestinians, for example, fume at being treated as

Understanding the social-historical background of events can be very important in understanding the patterns of change in any society. Until the Russian Revolution and the ending of the Ottoman Empire by World War One, the vast majority of Eastern and Central Europeans were subject to serfdom. A serf was a ‘Soul’ attached to the land. If you bought the land, you also bought 100 ‘souls’. Dostoevsky’s **Demons** (1872) describes provincial Russia of the mid nineteenth century and does more to explain the success of communism than any historian (hence I encourage the reader to explore literature and literary accounts of the peoples and places they visit, as well as non-fiction of all disciplines).



Palestinians and (allegedly) prevented from entering Israel at Tel Aviv Airport, being told to use the Egyptian/Rafah entrance, despite their travelling on a British passport. Similarly, women married to Palestinians might be prevented from leaving the Gaza Strip in the same way as their national sisters, being treated as if they too are Palestinian, i.e. stateless. They are perceived to have become members of the same category as their husband. A category that is all-encompassing, and too easily acquired, loses its value and meaning. If you are married to a man of different nationality, you might find your own nation state will also consider you belong to his nation state, as might any friends or enemies. Consider the fate of poor Margaret Hussen — an Irish born aid worker for Care International, kidnapped and murdered after living for years in Iraq. Margaret had converted to her husband's branch of Islam, but with Irish, British and Iraqi nationality. Despite devoting her adult life to Iraq, and being well known in Iraq, she was murdered and a video distributed widely — a common tactic used as a warning to others long before the Gulf Wars. A Palestinian colleague of mine working at the British Consulate in Gaza (before it was firebombed) was sent the video of her brother being tortured to death by other Palestinians, amidst claims that he was an informer.

If you are travelling to take on the role of an Interpreter or Translator, especially in zones of conflict, be mindful that you may have the passport of the US or UK, may have been born or raised there, but might well be considered an informer by both those you interpret and translate for, as well as those whom you translate from. 'Informant' is a term used anthropologically for someone who supplies information and data. Since my work involved conflict zones and the former Soviet sphere of influence, I was in a region where the term 'informant' is highly pejorative, if not inaccurate, given the extent of subterfuge in the Soviet world. Nobody likes an informer. You might consider you are 'helping' the peoples you are working among, but there is no room for romanticism in situations of conflict as Margaret Hussen found to her cost. This publication is not targeted specifically at Interpreters or Translators, but if this is the objective of your trip, or as many find, your services are called upon, consider who is in charge when you are interpreting and who is paying for what exactly?

Always think about how others see you, as well as how you see yourself. Are you a confidant (for whom?), an advocate, a patriarch or matriarchal figure, a cultural consultant, comrade or co-worker? If you are an 'informant', are you a traitor?

In most societies, you are your father's child — a man who marries a non-Moslem will insist she converts, but more importantly the children are raised as Muslims, and as far as Islam is concerned, you cannot convert. You 'revert' to Islam, you do not 'convert'. A Muslim converts on pain of death, hence successful claims for asylum in the UK based on conversion to Christianity. These are rare enough to be instantly successful — Muslims I have encountered who 'confess' to being non-Believers in the mistaken belief that since I am not baptised and do not ascribe to an organised religion, I am neutral or possibly 'communist', still describe themselves as 'Muslim'. In Judaism, the child of a man not Jewish is Jewish — this accommodates situations where a woman is raped for example, and means the child can be accepted and raised as a Jew. But there are plenty of insulting terms in Yiddish that curse a Jewish woman who marries a non-Jew, suggesting context is significant. Not all Jewish peoples accept such relationships, nor the bi-products. 'Mixed race' becomes a euphemism for the sort of ambiguity of heritage that is connected with prostitution or 'polluting'. A collection of short pieces entitled **American Local Color Writing 1880-1920** (Amons & Rohy, 1998), written by peoples of America not recognised or with a voice until recently, describes the interactions and relationships that develop between a range of immigrants and indigenous peoples, including the impacts on those who marry exogenously.

Many people associate these sorts of prohibitions with the Hindu caste system, which, while illegal to discriminate according to caste in India, seems to be still very much alive amongst

Hindu peoples all over the world, in urban areas as much as the villages. But the basis for caste — purity and linked to occupational pursuits — can be found everywhere. In its crudest form, people who empty rubbish bins as an occupation, call them environmental health managers, or 'Dalits' might be, at best, considered 'unsavoury'. At worst — people will not touch you, drink from the same well, or eat from the same utensils. You can be raped and even murdered with impunity in some remoter areas.

Caste is a term derived from *casta* meaning species, lineage, race or clan, and was used by Portuguese traders on the West coast of India when they arrived there in the 16th and 17th centuries. This is not the publication to discuss the intricacies of hierarchies, or castes, beyond encouraging you to consider how this might impact you and the people you are with, especially if you or they are of Hindu heritage, albeit raised elsewhere.

Each caste is thought to share substances, such as blood or bone, and this has impacts on behaviour because these substances have embodied in them particular codes for conduct which govern exchanges between one caste and another and also maintain its morality. Through procreation, the bodily substances from both parents are mixed to make a child who will share the characteristics of his or her caste. Correct moral actions maintain these shared characteristics but acts which mix wrong bodily substances such as those considered improper procreation or commensal relations challenge the shared morality of a caste and its offspring. Marriage is regulated in order to keep order by indicating. However, since the economic reforms of the 1990s, according to Daves Kapur (in *Defying the Odds: the rise of Dalit entrepreneurs*) Dalits have benefited from the changes by advancing themselves economically. Positive discrimination and affirmative action has seen many receive the sort of education they were once denied, allowing social advancement of a sort. Their participation in society, once so heavily regulated, has seen Dalits emerge as customers and clients. Instead of being confined to particular occupations such as bonded agricultural labour and tanning, they are now citizens of a democracy. In 2007, a female Dalit, Mayawati Kumari, was elected chief minister of India's largest state.

Food regulation is most easily understood, and more obvious from a fieldwork perspective. Food prohibitions in any country or culture can always be rationalised scientifically, although as Mary Douglas explains in *Purity and Danger* (1966), they might be without any real scientific basis. It is as if a religious justification is no longer enough for many peoples. Sometimes food prohibitions do develop out of very real fears of disease and should not be mocked or transgressed — how is typhoid or cholera spread, for example? People might not know why a disease spreads, but they will have the same observational skills as you and I that indicate how that indicate how this may happen.. In remoter areas, it would be understood that a stranger or foreigner might not look ill, or be ill themselves, but they might expose others to illness. This process of elimination and analysis is what led to Jenner's development of the small pox vaccine in 1798. The intentional spread of diseases by settlers in the US amongst indigenous peoples in order to eliminate whole tribes is well documented. Fear of the disease and death strangers or foreigners bring is not unfounded.

The complexities of the Indian sub-continent are too great to describe here. There is a wealth of literature that might be of more interest than academic analyses. Of the more recent, Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008), Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), and Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* (1993), will help you grapple with, and understand the significance if not the actual 'meaning' of the system of social relations and how you might be affected.



While staying in a village on coastal Papua New Guinea, I assumed our waste, detritus from meals etc. was being discreetly collected for hygiene reasons — the village was clean, relatively tidy, and seemed devoid of cockroaches. Besides two recent visits by medical students, we were the only Europeans to have ever stayed in the village and it seemed the concern was the villagers might be polluted by us in some way. Perhaps a connection had been made between Europeans and disease — although the explanation and conclusion differed from our own. Certainly the fear of spreading disease as much as contracting some sort of otherwise unusual virus was constantly at the back of everyone’s minds. We were treated with the utmost respect, courtesy and hospitality, but I wonder if they did not also breathe a sigh of relief when we had gone.

What about your religion or political beliefs? Will these have an impact in terms of whom you want to mix with locally? Or upon who wants to mix with you? A single woman travelling, living and working alone without a family, of an age when locally she would be married with a child, might be the object of pity, ridicule, or even hostility. Rarely would your, what you might consider independence, privileges and freedoms, be envied or understood. Many people who considered themselves left wing according to UK or US criteria find themselves ridiculed and deeply unpopular in the liberated Eastern and Central Europe. Nobody was shot trying to get into the Soviet Union, after all. In the 1970s and 80s, South American politics was a fashion amongst a certain dinner party set — might they read Ingrid Betancourt’s **Even Silence Has an End** (2010) about her six years in captivity in the Columbian jungle, having been kidnapped by a leftist guerrilla organisation funded by drugs, organised crime and ne’er –do-wells of the region, while bound together by a cocktail of ‘feudal like dependency, submission, allegiance, interest and fear’ (p76). Don’t interfere and declare allegiance to one group or another, one politics or another, when for the most part, you won’t really understand the context or the complexities, and you won’t know who your government supports, or secretly funds, supplies arms to, or trains through a spider’s web of ‘security consultancies’. The world is murky and muddy.



For many in the world, the ‘wrong’ opinion can be a death sentence, something female fieldworkers would do well to remember — and what the vast majority of the world does not want is a woman, especially with an English or American accent, telling them what to think, say or do.



For a lucky few peoples, war, civil unrest, persecution, armed conflict are all something that happens to other people and that you read about. But in Eastern and Central Europe, Central and South America, amongst others, every family has a member murdered or incarcerated by Fascists, Nazis, military juntas of one sort or another, or of course, Communists. Campus politics is a lot safer if the campus is not likely to be invaded by armed and angry troops loyal to the regime you have been demonstrating against. If Churchill said (of France) that those without a history of invasion (i.e. ‘us’ the English) should not judge those who have lived under occupation, then those people who feel that your views come from an experience very different from their own might still judge you, and find you wanting.

Keep your nose out of other peoples’ politics if you are there to study rare species of frog or

construct a bridge. Better to return and record and describe what you have seen and experienced with a non-partisan eye. If you have any declared political, ideological or religious motivations, your account will be viewed at best as subjective, at worst propaganda for one side or another. My time at the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture taught me, amongst so many other things, that all peoples rationalise torture. Some admit to it, others allow it to take place somewhere else. Some pay other people and/or peoples, to do their dirty work. Before you protest outside someone else's Embassy, consider what is being done in your name, behind your back or when you were busy at the end of season sales.

For a lucky few peoples, an opinion, informed or uninformed, left or right, is a right. For many in the world, the 'wrong' opinion can be a death sentence, something female fieldworkers would do well to remember — and what the vast majority of the world does not want is a woman, especially with an English or American accent, telling them what to think, say or do.

Know your religious and sacred history

This can be a pleasure as well as part of your pre expedition preparation. Question any work where the focus is exclusively on the pre- Christian or Islamic world religion, the sacred or the sexual, i.e. the weirder bits — especially if participant experience involves drug taking.

On a recent expedition to the Pacific islands of Samoa, Tonga and the Cook Islands, I was obvious that social life revolved around church communities. Sunday was spent almost entirely at one church or another. On Mangaia (population 600, 200 of these being children) there are seven Christian denominations. People were delighted when I joined them. This immediately gave me access to people of all ages and I was invited into peoples' homes ; not that people were not exceptionally hospitable and welcoming anyway — dropping by with fruit and introductions. However, attending church meant acceptance of another kind- being an Overseas and Honoured Guest, and also 'Kith' of sorts, if not actual Kin — and to be honest, there was nothing else to do. The singing was beautiful, the churches all unique and lovely structures in their own way (and cool in the intense heat). People picnicked in the grounds. There seemed to be a 'uniform' of sorts going on, with one congregation of women dressed in straw boat-ers and flowers, another in more sober, formal dress. This was competitive Sunday Besting of the sort found in churches all over the world. While, perhaps, the local religious life is not the focus of your research, to omit this aspect of social life is an error.

Likewise, while not all Palestinians are Muslim, and not all are practicing (why should they be?) of Islam or Christianity, in Gaza, many peoples' lives are governed by Islam, but nearly always by choice. This does not mean they are not fun or friendly, just fun and friendly in a way you might not be used to. If you celebrate peoples' festivals and religion with them — share their feasts, give small gifts — demonstrate you have bothered to find out what is important to them, not just to you — you can become a part of their life. This is participant observation and experience. Find out about their religion — all holy books have been translated into English. How will they be different from yours? Or what is the same? How will they explain difference and similarity? My Palestinian colleagues threw me a Christmas party because they were concerned I would feel homesick. I am brought up in a Christian country that celebrates December 25 so, Christian or not, would feel a bit miserable not having someone to recognise and share the event with me. As it happened, I was inundated with people and invitations — from Muslims and Christian Palestinians and Jews from Israel — how touching and thoughtful.

You might be about to visit an area where there are shrines and significant and sacred ancient sites. Find out. Read about the region you are to visit before you go — which branch of Islam or

TO IGNORE HOW PEOPLE FEEL, and misjudge the depths of their feelings, about their faith is thoughtless and ignorant, possibly dangerous. To criticize the Prophet, one Palestinian told me, is like criticising 'my wife'. This might not mean a Salman Rushdie style fatwa, but put this way, the reasons for the response become more understandable. How would you feel about a stranger criticising your parents for the way they raised you?



Hinduism is practised? Why? How recent an import is this? There is a rock pool on the reef off Mangaia that was used to wash the corpses of human sacrifices. Practised until 1810, the last alleged 'battle' between Christian and non-Christian Mangaian's was in 1828. Islanders might offer to show you archaeological remains — bones left to dry on cliff faces of indeterminate age. This does not mean they are not 'really' Christian, just Christians who still hold these areas sacred or taboo and think you might be interested for scientific reasons as part of your research.

There is nothing new in this ambiguity and acceptance of a range of beliefs. For you, the terms of reference might be more significant. I defy anyone who is not, for example, Yazedi — a group found in the border areas of what is now Iran, Iraq, Armenia and Syria — to understand what the Yazedi are truly about — Christian, Moslem, Jewish, Zoroastrian? Only a scholar conversant with the religious beliefs of the region as well as the languages, written and spoken, could grasp the complexities. Tragically, this ambiguity and confusion has led to Yazedi being mistrusted, as well as accusations of devil worshipping. During the compilation of this publication, the Yazedi have been victims of genocide. Explanations provided by Yazedi themselves as regards for example, their food taboos, reveal more the modern impact of hygiene and scientific understanding. Yazedi prohibit the eating of Cos lettuce heads possibly because it has been observed that vegetables that contain a lot of water can become contaminated if their manure is 'night soil' or human waste. But why not melons or cucumbers? Perhaps an explanation lies in the Greek or Roman belief that the sap, similar to male sperm, was an aphrodisiac and 'dangerous'. Speculation, yes, but being armed with this sort of knowledge might save you from looking stupid when interrogated by a scholar acquainted with the Classics. In the early nineties, it was patently obvious to me that (some of) the 'Gypsy' languages of Hungary and Romania were infused with Latin, but this was not an explanation provided by the peoples them-

selves or Gypsy 'specialists' because the languages of the Classics as understood by me, an Oxbridge scholar — Latin and Ancient and Biblical Greek, as well as Old Church Slavonic — had been almost abandoned by the Soviet controlled education system.

Many terms accepted as belonging to one language and culture, actually originate from another. For example, the term 'Mandarin', now a generic for civil servant 'intermediary' and widely understood as a rank in the Chinese Imperial Court civil servant system, is actually a term that arrived with Portuguese missionaries. There is not space here to explore the etymology, but be aware of how a term might have surfaced, resurfaced and been circulated. This can be a matter of imagination and speculation as much as historical record. Use and meaning, as Raymond Williams in **Keywords** (1976) argued, differ.

The Soviet world abandoned Classical languages as it rejected the past of the Church and other world religions that had been responsible for education for centuries. Claims of a unique Romany language and of terms identified as 'Romany' can be easily disproved with a school Latin and Ancient Greek dictionary. This does not mean you need to frantically learn 'dead' languages, but you need to understand the impact of these worlds and words on all aspects of

One woman shared with me that her family was 'protected' by a spirit lobster and this had once saved them from a perilous boat journey. This was my first experience of someone for whom the boundaries between humans and animals were very different from mine, the 'Polynesian Totemism' discusses in **We, the Tikopia** (1936). She saw herself as Christian and saw no contradiction in holding a range of beliefs, although she was aware this might be seen as strange by non-Mangaian's. I had said I was not Christian (I did not want to deceive anyone), but equally people did not seem to find any contradiction in my attending church but not being Christian.



current social, political and economic life.

According to Islamic Sharia Law, to 'prove' rape, a woman requires four male witnesses. If she is married, she will be accused of being an adulterer and can receive punishment such as stoning, flogging and jail. If single, she is 'guilty' of having pre-marital sex. Rape is considered to be in the same category as adultery. There is not the room here to explain the details of Sharia Law, nor is the objective of this manual to discuss theological interpretations and discourse, but a quick trawl of the Internet will enlighten you to, for example, the joys of the 'Offence of Zina', or the 'Hudood Ordinance'. Not that the peoples of those countries that admire or adhere to Shariah Law will have read the Koran (literacy rates, especially amongst women, are pitifully low, and Koranic Arabic is not intelligible to speakers and readers of the range of contemporary spoken Arabics). The Bible and the Torah, too, have prohibitions and punishments that will shock and repulse a secular woman from a modern, democratic society. The Bible's view on homosexuality, for example, is pretty clear (hence the extraordinary list of countries where it is illegal). The issue for this manual is not to agree or disagree, or go into details, much of which revolves around semantic and theological interpretations beyond the scope of this publication (or the author, or possibly anyone). But it is essential you realise that a basic understanding of these sorts of laws and the conditions in which they are exercised will help you understand the culture and peoples you are about to live amongst and the impact on you as a woman.

Besides reading the holy texts, historical accounts can be fascinating and shed light on the present as much as the past (consider Evelyn Waugh's description of the Coronation of the last Emperor of Ethiopia, **Remote People**. (1931)). This might also mean fiction, newspapers and magazines, locally produced, as well as foreign. I still have women's magazines produced in Farsi and English from Iran in 1987. They are a curious mixture of recipes and fanatical religion. In the early days of post Ceausescu Romania, material connected with the regime and its impact on the personal as well as political was essential reading if you were to survive. This was indigenous oppression, after all.

What is being suggested is not the same as pouring over everything that was ever written about your fieldwork site and potentially colouring, or discolouring, your impression before you arrive so that you are not open to the new and the previously unexplained or unobserved. This would be like watching the film before reading the book. But it may stop you stumbling into an area that you would have no place to be as a woman, as a non-believer, as an infidel, or one where you simply might not want to be. I can remember being asked to leave several areas where we had set up camp for the night in the bush near Bangui, Central African Republic. Not because they were sacred places or we had not asked permission from the local Big Man: but because the villagers used the area as their loo.

If the religion is an 'ideology', there is no shortage of English language versions of **Das Kapital** or Quotations from Chairman **Mao Tse-Tung**. And if that seems all too dreary, try Dostoevsky's **Demons** (1872, p.371) Nechaev wrote in his first publication of his new society — *'if we come from the people, with hides bitten through by the teeth of the present day set up, guided by hatred for everything not of the people, having no idea of moral obligation or honour with regard to the world that we hate, and from which we expect nothing but evil'*

Dostoevsky's 'Right to Dishonour' in his **A Writer's Diary** (March 1876, Ch2., part4) *"For the Russian, honour is simply a superfluous burden, and it has always been a burden, throughout his history. He can all the sooner be carried away by an open 'right to dishonour' .. the whole essence of the Russian revolutionary idea consists in a denial of honour"*



Registering with your Embassy — Some practical measures

Always register with an embassy or consulate or representative office. If you go missing, who else is to know or care? Look on your embassy website and heed their advice. If you are imprisoned, your embassy can help you find a lawyer or interpreter, but you have to abide by other countries' rules and they cannot buy or argue your way out of jail for you.

Overseas diplomatic staff can be spectacularly helpful, especially in remote or 'difficult' postings. Budapest was considered a great first posting or a comfortable final, pre-retirement one, even during the wars of the former Yugoslavia. More than 25 years later, I am still in contact with what were at the time younger and enthusiastic staff interested in my research on the Gypsy populations of the post-Soviet Union Warsaw Pact. However, you might receive a more distant and jaded reception from staff in Spain, which detains the highest number of British passport holders, closely followed by the USA. Unsurprisingly, this relates to tourism. Alcohol-fuelled incidents account for many arrests — you need to remember your travel insurance may not be valid if you are seen as liable for an injury or delay etc. as a result of drugs or alcohol.

Make sure someone has all your details before you leave — passport numbers, ID etc. including details of any medication you routinely take. That customs official on the border of Thailand may not recognise the capsules in your bag are for diabetes. The person to whom you give your details should be someone who cares about you and can be bothered with the trouble if they are called upon to vouch for you, or complete lengthy administration on your behalf, and possibly pay for an expensive hotel or flight. This won't be an academic supervisor or tutor. They are responsible for your academic output only. Mary Douglas famously sent the Pacific Island specialist, Christian Clerk (her doctoral student at the time), a copy of Wittgenstein's autobiography during his stay on Mangaia with a note commenting simply that she had heard from the departmental secretary he had Dengue Fever and that she understood that if 'Dengue doesn't kill you, it leaves you with suicidal depression' (according to his private, unpublished correspondence). While expressing sympathy, she then continues to enquire as to the progress of his research.

Be aware how you might be seen by the authorities of your receiving country. For the most part, you have chosen to go to your new location, and you have not necessarily been invited. If you are there to 'help', are you providing help that cannot be refused? Are you intervening or interfering? Nobody wants trouble, especially if it caused by someone they might not have wanted in the first place, but felt reluctant or unable to reject. Any time spent in the certain embassies or high commissions in London will alert you to the dilemma some countries face. Dangerous and unstable places attract dangerous and unstable people who want to do good, liberate, rescue, find themselves, find the meaning of life, communicate with an 'untouched' and / or 'undiscovered' tribe etc. War zones are littered with people like this — Israelis and Palestinians, in a rare show of unity, groan in equal measures about having to take responsibility for 'activists' of one sort or another. Are you one of them? How to tell?

Small gifts such as international branded cigarettes might get you out of a tricky situation, but an emergency credit card with sufficient credit might be more useful. This might mean a guarantee from a parent, sibling or (very) good friend who has a high credit limit. Take the universal language of cold hard cash: US\$500 in tens and twenties can get you out of most situations. Split the money up, and if you have to, keep some wrapped in plastic where the sun don't shine. If your money is still found? Well you are probably in more trouble than US dollars can buy you out of. Embassies are not there to mollycoddle gormless women who have not prepared for their expedition properly and I don't pay my taxes for embassy officials to act as surrogate parents to recalcitrant tweenagers.

RECOMMENDED READING

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Chapter 2

Health and Well-Being

You should be fit and healthy prior to travel. If necessary, have this confirmed by a doctor, as your insurance may not cover existing conditions or conditions you have not been (or will not be able to) adequately manage and control, such as HIV or epilepsy that flare up overseas where the healthcare is incomparable to what is available at home, or not available at all.

Women's healthcare is big business as any pharmacy or (private) clinic will confirm. Any condition that if left untreated might result in infertility should be addressed prior to travel. Women's reproductive systems and sexual organs are more susceptible to infection than men's. Menstruation or menopause, pregnancy, chlamydia, cervical cancer, or cystitis — the list of issues for women is endless. For some, including me, these are a fact of life to be dealt with quietly and stoically. Other women suffer and not in silence — and some would argue, why should they? There is a wealth of literature connected to the silent conspiracy of women with regards their health, the impact of pregnancy and the shame associated with any condition or illness connected to reproduction. At one stage, it is argued, cancer was a condition mentioned in hushed tones, as if someone suffering from cancer were morally responsible for their illness. Reject the social prohibitions and taboos around the public discussion of menstruation! But do not expect others, including other women, to share your frankness. No manual for women could exclude healthcare because the taboos around men and women might mean you are unable to find a clinic or qualified physician to treat you because of the religious or social prohibitions preventing (especially internal) examination.

Healthcare also involves not being seriously underweight or overweight. In addition, there are other practical considerations relating to weight. Size matters and given increased obesity rates in the affluent west (but also countries such as Mexico) — consider how much larger some women are than others and how this might impact your ability to buy or replace clothing and footwear, as much as restrict mobility. The seriously underweight and overweight will invariably have circulatory problems and perhaps be adversely affected by insect bites, cuts etc.

This is not the publication for a list of health conditions associated with extremes of weight. However I would remind the reader that these, along with a number of other aspects of physical appearance can also affect the way that people respond to you in countries where you will differ from the indigenous population. This might be in Eastern and Central Europe, or Central Africa. As a woman, you could be ridiculed and shunned in a way men will not. This might be amusing — my long, narrow and spectacularly white feet and toes (likened to the fingers of an Aye-aye), were the subject of not unkind amusement at a Hindu Temple in a remote part of India, where I was welcomed and invited to observe the locals in ritual, only to find all eyes on my feet. But in the local Hamams of Morocco and Algeria the attention was not entirely kind — my skinny form likened to a boy's. Clearly I had not experienced childbirth as the

other, much younger women had, given their shape. All eyes were also trained on my pubic hair — not shaved or sugared as would be the norm in the Arab world for hygiene, not fashion, considerations. Where washing facilities are restricted, not available in the home, keeping clean and fragrant can be a battle and body lice a problem. Removal of the body hair is a pre-wedding ritual continued regularly after marriage. Having body hair is an obvious sign of being an adult (woman and man), and an unshaved pubis considered unhygienic and dirty, something no woman would want to be. Small wonder I was viewed with a curious distaste. I was at the time, a natural blond, a rarity in much of the world. This also seemed a focus of attention. A lack of underarm hair is also questionable. It was not too long ago that European women did not remove their underarm hair and in southern Europe, Sicily and parts of Greece, only prostitutes shaved their legs.

On the other hand, women in Eastern and Central Europe and much of the former Soviet sphere spend a fortune on personal grooming in comparison to their UK sisters. This can be fun. As a woman, no field research and ethnography would be complete without a beauticians, hair salon or nail bar as a fieldwork site. In many countries, men are barred from salons and therefore these are safe spaces to gossip, share information and discuss women's 'things', including health and where you might go for advice if your long periods of dehydration in a hot climate with limited clean water result in a bout of cystitis.

Feet

This might seem a flippant choice when discussing health issues, but sadly I was motivated to include this section at the beginning because several writers who have experience of extreme conditions, surviving incarceration (notably J. G. Ballard in a Japanese Prisoner of War Camp as a child and Primo Levi in a Nazi concentration camp), cite feet and shoes as part of the induction given by experienced inmates. The newly arrived Levi's 'mentor' describes how lawyers and their lawyers' intelligence were worth nothing in the camp, and soon they would perish. What new inmates needed to acquire was good boots, quickly and as a priority. If not, their feet would blister and bleed and rapidly rot. Either the inmate would be beaten to death by guards or sent to the gas chamber because they would not be able to work, as movement becomes painful and difficult, or the wounds festered resulting in gangrene and a slow, agonising death.

Feet seemed to be taken seriously in the Soviet world. It was not uncommon to see huge bear-like men in overalls having their corns removed in ice-cream pink beauty salons, even in 1990s Hungary. Podiatric Scholl unbranded shoes were de rigeur, especially for waitresses and workers who spent long periods standing. Boots did not always come in the range of widths and fittings they do now, and women all over Europe (including my mother), continue to suffer the misery of distorted feet in their old age. During the Second World War, there was a shortage of footwear in the UK, while Soviet soldiers were notorious for removing boots and shoes, even of dead comrades. At different places and times shoes have been for the rich, as they were about style not endurance. Many children went barefoot. The importance of footwear and foot care is a pearl of wisdom, indeed, transmitted by Levi.

Think carefully about the footwear you take and the options that you will find wherever you are working. If you are about to embark on an excursion to somewhere women are smaller and daintier, or conversely larger-footed, will you be able to find shoes that fit you? Or will there be shoes at all, as opposed to flimsy, plastic, flipflops? Do the peoples you live amongst go barefoot? The soles of peoples living a life without footwear often resemble horses' hooves. I prepare my feet before a trip by bathing them regularly in surgical spirit to toughen them up.

LOOK AFTER YOUR FEET.

Blisters can turn into ulcers very easily in the heat. Uncomfortable shoes and sore feet are hell. Make sure your feet are in good condition before you go and that you have the right type of footwear. Forget fashion.

Tropical ulcers, too, can develop with remarkable speed, but are notoriously difficult to eliminate and can cause septicaemia. Like bed sores, an ulcer can rot the skin to the bone and attract flies and other insects that enjoy eating flesh. I recall one poor colleague being horrified when a fly emerged from her warm, moist and probably not very clean, sock where a mosquito bite had festered and provided a home for maggots. Yuk! If not doused in disinfectant, she could well have lost her foot. Once gangrene sets in, the only option is the nearest modern hospital and if that happens to be at home, better to lose a few weeks from your schedule than your leg.

On the other hand, in very cold climates it is equally important to ensure that your clothing, including footwear, is adequate to avoid the possibility of frostbite. The polar explorer, Sir Ranulph Fiennes, goes into great detail in publications such as his autobiography **Mad, Bad, and Dangerous to Know** (2007), and lectures as to how his frostbitten fingers began to resemble decayed baby carrots, until one day after he returned home, he simply snapped one off. This may relate to very extreme conditions, and he has admitted some of his description are embellished and designed to amuse and entertain what might otherwise be dry accounts of his expeditions that have serious scientific intent — all the same.

Weight and Fitness

If you suffer from poor circulation, as many women do, then tackle the issue before travelling. Make sure you are as healthy as you can be before you go. Lose or put on weight as expedient.

If you are morbidly obese, why? For emotional reasons, or poor physical health? For the first time in history, in certain countries such as the USA and UK, people in the lowest socio-economic groups are the fattest. The better educated you are, the less likely you are to be obese. But given sedentary lifestyles, you may not be fully fit, even if you are not overweight. Consider whether you are up to physical rigours of fieldwork? Don't wait to find out while you are on the trip.



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Of course, you may have deliberately gained weight in advance, knowing that if, for example, you are to spend long periods in sub-zero temperatures, you will need to have some spare weight on you. I don't think I have ever craved pasta and carbohydrates as much as when I was in midwinter, minus 17 degrees. Romania. One athlete who kayaked from the Australian coast to Tasmania intentionally put on several stone in anticipation of the harsh weather and physical output, and English Channel swimmers, if they can avoid what is one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world, are not dainty and petite. But I have also shed enormous amounts of weight during the monsoon season in India, and a two month stint in the remoter Pacific Islands where heat, humidity and the lack of availability of staples such as bread and rice made for a very peculiar (to me) diet indeed. If your food source is an unknown, then take vitamin pills. It is very easy to become run down and lacklustre.



You might also lose weight rapidly if you have diarrhoea or contract an intestinal parasite such as giardia. Consider, if this is the case, whether any medication you are taking or contraceptive pill might not remain long enough in your system to be effective. A standard medical kit should include water sterilizing tablets (these last forever and are just as useful in countries where the water supply is not life threatening, but threatens a romantic weekend break simply because the germs are different from the ones you are accustomed to), diarrhoea capsules (super-market own brand are just as good as branded) rehydrating sachets, and stock cubes, that will help you rehydrate and replace the salt and fluid you will undoubtedly lose.

The only country visitors seem to return from fatter than when they arrived is America. However, if you are unaccustomed to heat and humidity, you may leave considerably less fit than when you arrive to some countries, because you are not able to walk around easily, let alone jog, and find yourself confined to air conditioned transport, apartments and offices.

Your appearance as a woman will be commented upon everywhere you go — the way you walk, carry yourself and conduct yourself in public will be a matter of scrutiny. In societies of plenty (and too much), many women restrict their food intake, using one rationale or another. In societies where there is famine, or memory of real starvation, being overweight is a sign of wealth and well-being.



Travel insurers will not pay out if you are somewhere your government has advised you not to go or if you have not been correctly vaccinated. If you contract a tropical disease, but did not receive the advised inoculations before travelling, then you will find your insurance company unwilling to pay out.



Insurance

If you are an employee, your employer should insure you. Make sure it is comprehensive and they have not bought cheap. Will the insurer pay out when needed? This is the question you need to ask, not 'how much' will it cost before the trip.

If you are insuring yourself, you need to scrutinise the contract. Will they evacuate if you are sick and need to be hospitalised? If you need costly, private healthcare, will they provide? They will always ask 'why' particular things are claimed for, and why indeed? Travel insurers will not pay out if you are somewhere your government has advised you not to go or if you have not been correctly vaccinated. If you contract a tropical disease, but did not receive the advised inoculations before travelling, then you will find your insurance company unwilling to pay out.

Make sure the range of female only conditions, such as endometriosis are covered, examinations included. Will you be covered when all you want to do is go home? Pregnancy, miscarriage, termination, sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV or chlamydia — these conditions might not be life threatening, but are not necessarily something you want to deal with on your

own. Will your future fertility be compromised if a condition is not identified and dealt with quickly and expertly? If you are living in a country where women routinely die in, or because of complications in, childbirth, you can assume gynaecology and obstetrics are areas you would prefer to seek alternative health centres for. Rich people won't die of these conditions because they will travel to rich countries such as the UK, US, or the Gulf for treatment. Health tourism is a developing industry.

Will you be fully insured? Or will you disappear owing money to local health care providers, thus placing future travellers, researchers and project workers at risk because health and hospital staff refuse to treat you unless you can pay in advance? I was shocked to learn a researcher from a prestigious London university had left her research site in the Pacific without paying her significant hospital bills for a serious gynaecological problem. I wondered how she was permitted to travel without adequate insurance. If an employee, she could have been legitimately sacked since not only was her project incomplete, but future researchers were unwelcome. Morally and ethically, this was unacceptable — a woman from a powerful, wealthy nation state, exploiting poor and powerless islanders to satisfy her own curiosity and making them pay for the privilege.

Vaccinations and Medications

Not vaccinating is not an option. Millions of people all over the world, and especially children, continue to die because they do not have access to even basic healthcare, so take advantage of all that science offers. The options are many and this publication would be immediately dated if I were to list all the vaccinations available. It might also open the way to legal action to argue for or against one particular type of vaccination — rather I will just say I am a fan of vaccinations.

There is always an element of personal risk with any vaccination. Like food 'intolerances' women seem especially vulnerable to Middle Class Mum Syndrome (surely a comedy character) and refuse vaccinations on the basis of an alleged allergy to alfalfa sprouts or prefer homeopathic options. Age sometimes comes into it. Recently a 60-something friend was warned about the possible side effects of a Yellow Fever jab. Apparently she would know within days if she were allergic because 'it will kill you'. Better to die in the safety and comfort of your own home, I would have thought, than in your camp bed in Guinea. Better flu-like symptoms from your Hepatitis vaccination, than a bloated liver and eventual organ failure while you are in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea.

You should consider ensuring a supply of preventative medication for conditions such as malaria. There are, however, legitimate concerns, for example, about the side-effects of some malaria pills. More and more people claim that certain malaria pills may induce mental health conditions, including depression, and possibly psychosis. There are leaflets easily available from the pharmaceutical companies advising, for example, people who have, or have had, any sort of mental health condition, depression, suicidal thoughts, not to take Lariam. You need to investigate these claims and make a personal decision.

Because a medication is controversial or should be taken under limited circumstances, does not mean it will not be offered or that it will be all that is available. Certainly these are strong drugs which can make you feel peculiar, but it is more likely people pre-disposed to certain conditions, have a (possibly undisclosed or undiagnosed) history of depression or mental illness find the whole experience, including the malaria pills triggers a psychotic attack. malaria pills cannot be taken for long periods. Old hands living in Papua New Guinea said they do not (and cannot) take malaria pills, so when they get an attack (note the 'when'), the 'strand' of

malaria is identified immediately and they can be medicated appropriately. People die of malaria with alarming regularity and experiencing or witnessing an attack will put you in no doubt why the graveyards of India and Africa are full of enthusiastic young colonials who died after five years or so. Check out the figures on the World Health Organisation website.

You might also want to find out if your colleagues or companion are vaccinated and insured appropriately. Unless you are completely heartless, you will not want to leave behind someone who has fallen ill. You will be involved in their situation. Possibly it will be you looking to find a solution. In which case, what to do if they are not appropriately insured? Or not insured at all? If you are travelling together, sharing an apartment, an adventure or a workplace, you may have to take responsibility for this person. It had never occurred to me to ask if a travelling companion had adequate insurance until I found myself in a position relatively recently of having to delay the last stretch of a long haul journey because the long-time friend and veteran traveller informed me she was not insured and I was reluctant to abandon her because of her obvious distress and discomfort. We managed to negotiate another flight without additional cost to either of us, but these sorts of revelations can be unwelcome and illuminating. It seemed she was unable to obtain insurance (at a reasonable price) because she had left her last place of work in Libya for health reasons, though I was not aware of these details at the time, being accustomed to her peripatetic lifestyle. Now in her 50s, her eccentricity and 'character' no longer charming or entertaining, she was unemployed, rapidly becoming unemployable, a risk to herself and others.

Perhaps your companion or colleague does not have insurance because they have a pre-existing medical condition, physical or mental, that means they are not insurable or the rates are so high, they have decided to take the risk but have kept the information secret for fear of being prevented from making the trip or not being recruited for the project or expedition. People with enduring mental health condition on medication find it difficult to obtain insurance. One colleague told me IF she is taken ill, the funds she would require would be no more than if she had taken out insurance for the last ten years. I suppose that is one way of looking at it. But will the burden of organisation, repatriation and responsibility fall on you, your companions, or the Embassy? Will you suffer for someone else's risk mismanagement?

Menstruation

You might want to take with you some sort of medication that will prevent you menstruating and conceiving, or make sure you receive a contraceptive injection before you leave possibly being an option. Menstruation is not an illness or a condition (such as endometriosis) but can be debilitating and prevent you from at best, enjoying yourself, and at worst — completing a task, a journey, keeping an appointment etc.

Contraceptive injections can prevent you menstruating for three months. After all, what are you going to do with your used sanitary towels or tampons in the bush? If you prefer to menstruate, find out your options, but consider, for a long overseas trip and stay, how can you possibly carry sufficient supply in your luggage? Consider an irregular diet and lifestyle, changes in temperature and time can trigger menstruation. You may not be able to buy tampons in many countries that consider them 'inappropriate' because they need to be inserted internally. You may not find the sanitary products you are used to or prefer, or at a price you are accustomed to. There are other options available — in the UK, the 'mooncup' has been suggested to me, but I do not know if this is available widely or overseas, and I have not personally used this device under fieldtrip conditions. Ask advice and try and test prior to our trip, not before.

In many societies, menstruation is a shame and a taboo and women are segregated when they are menstruating. Readers of Mary Douglas's **Purity and Danger** (1966) will understand that menstruation is considered polluting by most peoples. Schoolgirls throughout the so-called modern, Western world are still routinely excused from games, swimming and activities, despite the widespread use of tampons and sophisticated sanitary 'equipment'. Certainly, the fear of 'leaking' in public never leaves most women. Certainly many adult men discuss menstruation with disgust and relish — as Margaret Thatcher once said, there is no female equivalent of 'puerile schoolboy'. Accusing a woman of having 'PMT' (pre-menstrual tension)



Of course, in tropical heat or the desert, with water rationed and for drinking only, having your period can be a hygiene problem. Menstrual blood is still blood and will attract nasties above and below water. Avoid bleeding if you can. There are a range of terms and euphemisms for menstruation, but whatever you want to call it, you are still bleeding.

is still a popular form of abuse. I worked in the media in the harsh, hire and fire, 1980s world of London advertising. After one heated exchange, I was once asked accusingly from across a large, and largely male, sales and marketing floor, if it was my 'time of the month'. 'No' I replied 'but remind me to come and sit on your face next time it is.'



In some societies, menstruating women are considered dangerous, not just polluting and infecting. Amongst Kurds of Turkey — even those who have lived for decades in London — menstrual blood is regarded as contaminating. If a man comes into contact with menstrual blood, he will demand antibiotics (an interesting combination of the old and the new). Menstruation may be relatively rare in societies where girls are immediately considered women following the first period and would be married off as soon as possible to reduce the possibility of childbirth out of wedlock. Before sophisticated contraception and legal abortion, continual pregnancies — only some of which reach full term — was the lot of our grandmothers and is still the fate of women where contraception is abstinence, and fertility and fecundity is your function and desired goal in life. Many women are constantly pregnant or lactating and rarely have periods. If you are around the age of the menopause, do not assume your irregular lifestyle will not unexpectedly trigger menstruation, as was the case to her horror of Ingrid Bettencourt — detained by the Columbian FARC for six years. She describes the despair she felt when she realised she was bleeding in her account of her kidnapping in **Even Silence has an End** (2010).

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Contraception

An injection won't prevent disease, so if you are intending to embark on sexual relationships with someone not already a partner, or with whom you are in a regular relationship — then bring condoms.

The contraceptive pill might not be reliable if you experience diarrhoea and several packets are even more to carry (especially if you are taking daily malaria pills), so the morning after pill might be a good option. Consider, however, that a single woman found by immigration or other official with contraception in her bag may be labelled a prostitute and this in itself, given the threat, bribery and corruption of officials in many countries, might pose a danger. The choice is yours. Find out before you travel how being found with contraception and condoms in your bags might impact your travels and experience. Attitudes to contraception do vary considerably, and even in modern and allegedly enlightened 'western' democracies it has been argued that sex education and information about contraception 'encourages' early experimentation, and parents can opt their offspring out of such classes.

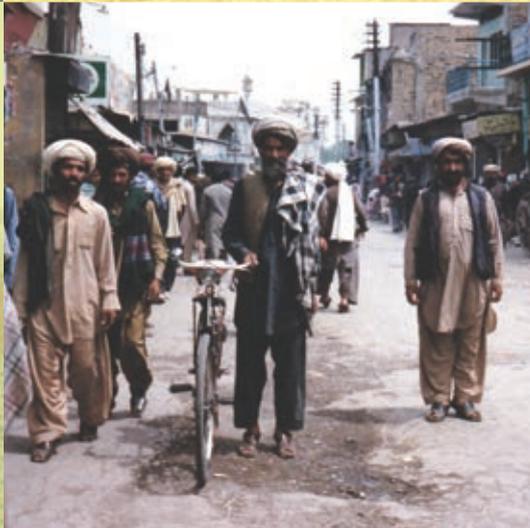
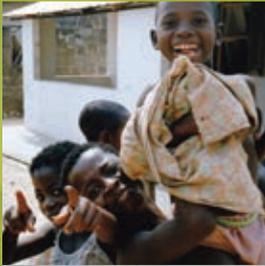
P.S. — Remember the Dentist

People tend to forget about going to their dentist before they leave. Given that extraction is the answer to most of the world's dental problems, not necessarily with anaesthetic or sterilised equipment, then you would be advised to pre-empt such problems.

RECOMMENDED READING

Basic Medical Anthropology and Non Fiction

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PART 2

Working and Making It Work in the Field





Chapter 3

Arrival and Orientation

Pilot Study

Possibly the best technique for long term field research is a pilot study: this means when you arrive, you already have contacts, and already know your way around. A pilot study means you can visit the location and establish who and what you need to conduct your research, where the best place to conduct the research is, where to live/stay, what you might need to bring/ what you should leave behind and how your life might be for the forthcoming months or years. What clothes, equipment, treats? For a field research period of two years, three months will be ample. Consider this a reconnaissance trip — significantly this will allow you to predict and pre-empt problems that might prevent you from conducting your research. It is only when you arrive that you find out you need more up-to-date maps and information, that your language of communication will be for example, French, not English, that there have been plenty of people before you, but that your mobile phone is useless, etc.

This might also prove useful with funding applications. If you demonstrate you have bothered to investigate the country and conditions you are committing to, and asking for money to live and work in, prior to the bigger, more comprehensive trip, you not only establish IF it is somewhere you can live and work for an extended period, but also that you are willing to invest your own time and money in the endeavour. Should you fail to obtain significant funds, and this prevents you from carrying out the research or continuing study, then, at least, you will have had a good trip.

The experiences of a pilot study can lead you to many different questions. Do they mean that you cannot conduct the research, or just not conduct research according to the methodology and line of enquiry of for example, anthropology or human geography? Are the questions and approaches of your chosen discipline or profession the ones you know you can commit to? Anthropology and archaeology provide the opportunity for all different kinds of engagement across communities, and if this is important to you, these might be your disciplines. But are you a people person? Do you like, let alone mind, travelling and being amongst people who at best might ignore you, at worst actively dislike you? How do you feel about spending long periods in cheap or poor quality accommodation? Will you like the 'peoples' you are studying and living amongst, and more importantly — will they like you?

A pilot study is a taster of things to come. Immersion in a society fundamentally different from your own carries many perils. What if you do not consider the implications of being rejected by your chosen 'peoples'? A more fragile personality might crumble.

More than one person has returned from the field damaged by the experience. Someone emotionally vulnerable before fieldwork might find the isolation and loneliness long periods of field-

work in a culture and country fundamentally different from their own can trigger mental illness, possibly a psychosis, especially if accompanied by physical illness and medication for malaria etc. Should students or researchers be advised against working under certain circumstances and amongst certain sorts of people? Or are some experiences not so very different from holiday romances that have outlived their shelf life and the summer season? Does anyone have a moral or legal obligation to ‘warn’ researchers about to embark on a long period of study in the field? At the time of writing, I am not aware of anyone successfully taking legal action against an employer, a university, or academic supervisor for ‘allowing’ or ‘encouraging’ fieldwork in a particular area, but then it is unlikely we would ever hear about such a case, given confidentiality clauses are usually attached to court cases involving compensation of some sort.

For insurance reasons, employers prevent staff members from conducting research in areas government websites advise against travelling to. But what of students? Doctoral research candidates are adults presumed capable of making their own decisions. But what are the decisions made about fieldwork based on? Are there some categories of staff member or student, such as those with a physical or mental health diagnosis, who should be discouraged — at least from conducting fieldwork? Or is that infantilising and disempowering, and possibly illegal, given some countries’ discrimination and diversity laws?

Getting There and Getting Out

Do you go by air, by land or by sea? Is cheapest safest or quickest? Do you have a return ticket? Will you be accompanied, or are you alone? Until recently, Timisoara in Romania was a long, miserable, and dangerous eight hour plus train journey from Budapest. Pre E.U, I would find myself on the Hungarian-Romanian border, continuing the journey into Arad, Banat and Transylvania alone. Perhaps the Romanian border guards would try and obtain bribes for alleged irregularities with my paperwork? Having sufficient Romanian to understand their discussion about me could be disconcerting and frightening. Where was I coming from or going to? Was I a Christian missionary? Was I ‘really’ coming from Istanbul (this suggestion was rejected, since apparently I looked ‘too healthy’ to be someone smuggling drugs). But this journey was easier and faster than trying to travel to and fly from Bucharest. For many years, flying to Budapest was preferable to negotiating Romanian roads and rail from Bucharest airport. Roads were dangerous — poorly maintained and with few petrol stations. A ‘trick’ of the time was to stop a vehicle, especially if it contained a foreigner (with my colouring I have never been mistaken for a Romanian) by pretending to be a police officer, and then robbing the occupants.

On the other hand, if I was worried about arriving at my destination by taxi (or several taxis) from Budapest, I could send ahead to let people know how I was coming. Many drivers would be nervous of driving through what would be understood as ‘Gypsy’ villages, but these offered an element of safety for me if I was able to find a personal connection. In this way, it would be more dangerous for the taxi driver to not arrive at a particular village or point in time, since his family home or workplace would be known and many people were afraid (sometimes justifiably) of harming or offending someone known to be ‘friends’ with Gypsies.

On the train, I would hope to strike up conversations with Gypsy musicians travelling to and from performances in the clubs and bars of the region’s cities — safer and more amusing, despite second class being considerably less comfortable and clean, in the 1990s. However, though accustomed to buying first class in the UK, I looked sufficiently uncomfortable and unusual in the second class waiting room in 1999 Arad, Romania, that I was invited to first class by a concerned passenger and station master. This was a salient reminder, too, that in many countries, you are merely depriving a poorer person of a seat buying anything but first

class, which is invariably a fraction of the cost in somewhere like the UK. In the same way, couchettes are an unaffordable luxury for many locals, despite sometimes having a reputation for theft and drugging the occupants. A Romanian swore she was gassed and her money stolen by colluding rail staff while journeying overnight through Hungary and Slovakia. I have heard similar tales in Poland and Thailand. Perhaps these are travellers' tales and the modern equivalent of the headless highwaymen, ghosts and ghouls. However, they serve to remind us that travelling alone as a woman is not for the faint-hearted.

Emergency Planning

Plan emergency numbers and think about what your needs might be in an emergency situation. Always keep a card of 'vital information' that can be accessed easily by someone else. You need personal information such as next of kin, a 'home' phone number, any significant health records, blood group etc. and whether you are diabetic or on any particular medication. Besides the number of a hospital, you will need your insurer's phone number and your Embassy's — with that of a bank or a hotel. If you have registered your details with an Embassy or Consulate, your contact won't be a surprise. (Apart from registering, if you get the chance, pop in and say hello — especially if you are to be in the field for long periods). Embassies and Consulates not only help you get in, but they can help you with getting out. Depending upon where you are based, an Embassy posting might be a starter pack, or a nice pre-retirement position. I am indebted to the British Embassy's Nick Leake, and the European Union's Ron Korvar, both based in Budapest in the early stages of all our careers in the early 1990s. Their interest and support was invaluable and meant someone in an official position knew where I was and what I was doing if official identification or support were ever needed.

The more contacts and connections you have, the better. You never know when and why you might need them.

Getting Out in an Emergency

Vaccination, or Evacuation? If you require an emergency evacuation, this will probably be because of illness or injury. Are you fully insured?

Wars and civil unrest do not suddenly break out. If you are living and working in an unstable, volatile country you and your companions should receive an appropriate brief, or perhaps this manual has made you aware of the importance of finding out the situation for yourself. There may be sudden, unexpected situations that could trigger violence, in which case your mobile phone company, provided you can get a signal, might send out an alert (as British Telecom did when Benazir Bhutto was murdered while I was in an India-Pakistan border region). This is not the publication to deal with cases of organised conflict and militarised situations. If for no other reason than your insurance company or workplace should not permit you to go there.

Getting out in an emergency might begin with a trivial situation. Consider the implication of a minor injury. Will that sore heal, and if so, when? Will you develop a tropical ulcer and might you lose your leg? In that case, at what stage do you decide you must go home or be transported to a clean, safe hospital environment?

Camping in Bangui, Central African Republic, one companion was told by a French pharmacist that the conditions were so poor, with hot, humid open latrines and a seething mass of cockroaches and flies, that he was in danger of requiring an amputation if he did not return home, since there was no possibility of improvement in his leg, or the environment, in the foreseeable

future. His embassy would not allow him the luxury of a few days clean sheets and antiseptic soap at their residency (so he alleged). The flight was costly, but he was lucky enough to be offered a lift home by the French Air Force who operated in the area. It was rumoured his girlfriend was not allowed to accompany him because she was German. This may only be hearsay, but is an indication of the suspicion and hostility, or simply restrictions, that may result from having a passport from one nation state rather than another. It can be difficult to know in these situations if it is personality or nationality that is the most significant. Or could it be a pretty face? Will old scores be settled? How will you know unless loyalty is tested? Attempting to drive through the Algerian border in 1989, I was refused entry and had to return and fly instead to a city further north while Irish, Australian and New Zealand passport holders walked through. It seemed that this was retaliation for British restrictions placed on Algerian students' visas. While they did not want to have an impact on travel for business, they reasoned that overland journeys by individuals or small groups of young people were an appropriate target for reprisal.

You also need to know what your definition of an emergency is, and if this differs from your insurance company, as well as from that of anyone you might be travelling with. When to bail out and where to? Does your Embassy in the neighbouring country know of your existence? In

2005, when planning a potential evacuation route from Erbil, Northern Iraq, it was the British Embassy in Amman Jordan I contacted. Baghdad, I was told, was too far away and too busy, while Jordan, at the time, was considered by me and others in the region a model of good practice, and remains so. The local police and Sandhurst trained military, as well as Embassy and aid staff, were known to me and more importantly, knew of me, since I had worked in the region and my former employer, the United Nations, has refugee camps in Jordan, where an estimated 70 per cent of Jordanian passport holders claim Palestinian heritage.

In an emergency, find a connection fast and do not be surprised if cold, hard cash talks more than honour or ancient notions of hospitality. So a plan, including your definition of a crisis, needs to be given some prior consideration. Not to frighten you into not going, but to be fully aware of the risks involved. Predicting and pre-empting problems, knowing the extent of the risk and the impact on you, your companions and the project, can mean the difference between success and failure.

Emergency numbers should include people who will help, including an expensive international hotel whose income is derived from international personnel on leave from a mine, oil rig or war zone. It may be the case that they collude with warring factions who might have a vested financial interest in their remaining a 'safe haven', although

there is also the possibility that they could become a target. The ever hospitable, delightful and charming staff of the American Colony Hotel in East Jerusalem, while generous with free coffee in the wee small hours, once warned me to wait for my car into Gaza inside their grounds in case I was the target of a drive-by shooting. This seemed unlikely and as a tactic, had not been heard of in Jerusalem, but I was not about to argue with them or take the risk.

RECOMMENDED READING

- > Blommaert, J. & Jie Dong, 2010. **Ethnographic Fieldwork: A beginner's guide.** Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
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- > DeWalt, K.M. & DeWalt, B.R., 2002. **Participant Observation: A guide for fieldworkers.** Oxford: Altamira Press.
- > Dresch, P. 2000. 'Wilderness of Mirrors: Truth and vulnerability in Middle Eastern fieldwork' in **Anthropologists in a Wider World.** P. Dresch, W. James and D. Parkin (eds.). pp109-127. New York & Oxford: Bergham
- > Ingold, T. and Vergunst, J. 2008. **Ways of Walking: Ethnography and practice on foot.** Aldershot: Ashgate.



Chapter 4

Working Identities

Tourist, Resident or Researcher?

Are you a tourist on a long stay visa, or a researcher? Given the bureaucracy of many countries, a three month tourist visa or some such might be the easiest way of remaining in another country if you are to conduct research and not working. You might find you need the break every three months anyway, although certainly your entries and exits, if regular enough, will be questioned by sharper agents of border control and, of course, if you have set up home in anticipation of a more substantial stay, you won't want to find yourself deported or refused entry.

Given how little real overseas experience so much research can be based on, however, do not expect your findings to be taken as seriously as other more substantial study, especially if the discipline is one such as anthropology with a methodology that requires the researcher to reside for the long term embedded within a group.

One anthropology veteran I met with recently — a student of anthropological 'royalty', Rodney Needham — questioned the possibility of doing fieldwork at all any more in the conventional, anthropological sense, because she said there are no longer 'undiscovered, isolated' peoples. Anthropological fieldwork emerged at a time when this phenomenon was disappearing, or thought to be. Perhaps she is right, although there certainly still remains an appetite for (invariably male and macho) explorers' accounts on television.

Many younger students, fresh from undergraduate courses, are now discouraged from conducting fieldwork, if it is not a pilot study, because so many intellectualise their gap year and select a field site on the basis of their first holiday without their parents. A fling with a Turkish waiter in Bodrum does not make you an expert on the Ottoman Empire. Women are just as keen players in the sex industry as men. Does your 'boyfriend' understand you as a 'sugar mummie' as described by Glen Bowman's 'Passion, Power and Politics in a Palestinian tourist market' in **The Tourist Image: Myths and Myth Making in Tourism** (Selwyn, T. (ed.), 1996). A holiday fling might make fieldwork and a longer, more substantial relationship with the peoples and places you need to research impossible if you are disapproved of (or worse, considered a prostitute if the society you are amongst considers sexual relations outside marriage a 'transaction') from the outset.

Is There a Tourist Industry in Your Fieldwork Location?

With the ease of cheap and easy travel, too many students and university staff seem to produce not anthropological accounts, but 'what I did on my last vacation' more suited to

I visited the mountains of what was Zaire (but now the DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo), not long after Dian Fossey's murder. Her work had an enormous impact on the younger and more impressionable me, and I struggled with the burning curiosity to visit the area where 'her' mountain gorillas lived, but resisted the urge to trek to what had allegedly been her camp in Rwanda on the other side of the mountain. I say allegedly, because by then she had become famous in her own right and ironically a focus of tourism of a sort herself. She was vindicated. The wildlife and local economy would not benefit from the tourist industry and the gorillas were being endangered by close contact with humans because of disease. Exposure of their location meant they were also a target for poachers, local and global. At the time — pre Rwanda massacres and when Mobutu was still in power in Zaire — it seemed someone had created the infrastructure necessary to accommodate expensive helicopter rides for rich tourists staying in luxury lodges in the more developed safari resorts. These sorts of "someones" are not about to have their income put at risk by women with big mouths creating noise about the impact of tourism and poaching.

Tragically, Dian's murderers were never found and speculation is still rife about exactly why and who killed her.

glossy Sunday supplement magazines. This is not the publication to discuss these issues, but of course an interest in anthropology, a location or a people undeniably so often begins with tourism and long haul expeditions, as did mine.

The tourist industry as a form of employment attracts, and is attractive to, similar sorts all over the world. They may not necessarily be appealing characters, nonetheless many countries are dependent on the income and you will not be popular if you challenge aspects of the industry in a way that might jeopardise the cash flow. You may not consider yourself a tourist, but this is how you might be viewed. How are female tourists understood? Cash cows to be protected and nurtured? Or cash cows to be contemptuously exploited? I was struck how women who had formed relationships with Cuban men while on package tours described themselves as 'girlfriends', while the locals (especially the contemptuous, local Cuban women) invariably referred to them as 'tourists.' It seemed to me to be sex tourism no different to the sort men pursue in countries like Thailand or the Philippines. Being tall, blond and blue eyed, for Cubans, I could only ever be a 'tourist', never a 'researcher': I was not happy about this, but had to accept I was labelled and categorised according to aspects I could do nothing about, as might you. Be aware of the factors in your control and in your favour as much as those out of your control and not in your favour. Sex tourism is not confined to the heterosexual and given same sex marriage is now legal in some countries, this might be more of an option in the future for those wishing to exploit changes in immigration laws. Cubans are forced to accept sex tourism because tourism is a major source of income now that the Soviet Union has collapsed and there is no other market. Anything that jeopardises this income will be fiercely resisted. But don't expect them to be happy about it, or you, if you participate in what they view as the sex trade.

For some people the attraction of foreign travel — the Grand Tour, Gap Year, the Second-ment, or package holiday — remains that people do overseas what they dare not do at home, which is why some foreign countries win reputations for sexual deviancy and debauchery. The French considered England as debauched as the English visitor to Bois de Boulogne imagined the French to be. But France is no longer a dangerous adventure — international uniformity exists in so many of the goods and services that the tourist or traveller encounters, that the question becomes one of where to find excitement and new discoveries? The interest in travel must surely be in meeting people one would not meet at home. But given, in so many parts of the globe, that a woman's world consists of the home, the domestic, and is confined to family and filial, however broad the definition of these terms, a woman must proceed with a caution a

man, not restricted to kith and kin, will never need to heed.

Representing, or Representative of?

Are you representing your institution or company brand, in which case, does the brand have greater kudos than you? Or does it have a bad reputation? Is your university or NGO a toxic brand? Will you and your experiences be affected by previous consultants or researchers? You are representing your employer, your country remember — what sort of legacy have the previous crowd left? How will you fit in, and how will you be remembered? Will you have research or administrative assistants, translators and interpreters, and if so, who are they and why do they want to work with you? Will it be for money, because it is their job, because they are hospitable, or to influence your outcomes?

If there is sufficient contact with peoples from overseas, you may be considered representative of a certain type of person and not a 'guest'. This rests more easily with those who consider themselves 'individuals'. However, if you are amongst peoples who consider women as representatives of family honour, pride and decency, and where a woman's relationship with the world is only ever as a representative of a man — 'her father, son, brother, uncle, husband', you — might struggle being thought of as an 'individual' in the same way a man might.

A woman working in a society where friendships between unrelated men and women are unknown must be very careful indeed if people are not to assume your relationship is not entirely professional. In my early days, a Palestinian work colleague in Gaza took me for a coffee in a very prominent part of Gaza City. We were very visible. Later, I learnt this was totally socially unacceptable, but he had a reputation for approaching new, foreign female workers to strike up a relationship that might otherwise be seem to be entirely innocent and friendly in another world. Not a bad person, he none the less was taking advantage of my naiveté and politeness. Such men are to be avoided. My female colleagues advised me how to dress, what to say when approached 'inappropriately' or if someone asked me personal questions to respond 'this is not your business,' in a haughty manner that conveyed to the man that I knew according to his culture and values (and we were, after all, in his home patch, not mine), he was being too familiar.

This inquisition into, or, sometimes, interrogation of, women's private lives is not confined to overseas settings. Women in the corporate world often complain their private lives are under scrutiny in a way their male colleagues' are not. Single, engaged, married, widowed, divorced, separated, (same sex) partner, boyfriend, girlfriend, single mother — an endless list is a basis for direct questions designed to elicit personal information you might not want to divulge and which certainly is not relevant to your performance at work. This might be entirely innocent and no offence intended — perhaps they just don't know what else to say and are making small talk to try and make you feel comfortable. And don't women like to talk about their families and personal life? Or at least their wives do. Or perhaps this is about giving the enquirer the competitive edge and ammunition should it be required. Unsettling the new girl? As a local politician, I was asked about personal matters more by women, who often did not seem to understand my lifestyle and life choices — in other words, we in the UK have a choice — and especially by those who blamed their children for 'preventing' them from a range of activities, from obtaining an education, to having a career. Fishing for weaknesses and a chink in your perceived armour is not the prerogative of men. Of course, some female politicians like to share cosy homilies to bridge the gap between their own, often extraordinary lives, and their residents if there are votes to be harnessed. Margaret Thatcher was an exceptional and extraordinary woman and politician, who sometimes liked to portray herself as an ordinary housewife balancing the books.

One Vice President of a large, male-dominated international organisation shared with me, shortly after arrival in the UK, that she had been ‘accused’ of withholding information that might be beneficial to her team. She had no idea what her accuser was talking about. She remained silent during meetings partly because she was listening and understanding her new role and circumstances, and partly because she was nervous about working in another language, English not being her mother tongue. I wondered if the accuser was attempting to manipulate her into divulging information not necessarily hers to share. I suggested that she respond by acknowledging his comment, but not responding other than to reply ‘I am sorry if you feel information is being withheld from you’. This repositions the focus of the conversation on her accuser and, while acknowledging a ‘feeling’, does not do or say more than that. ‘Really — do you think so?’ has a similar effect. Do not feel forced to fill uncomfortable silences and gaps in conversations. You are your own boss and mistress of your own ship, and do not need to respond to others.

Perhaps a colleague finds you attractive and wants to know if you are available. Enormous numbers of people meet their life partners at work or in a professional capacity (including me), so this might not be unreasonable. Office affairs are also a fact of life. But if you don’t want to answer or find the line of questioning intrusive, say so. Do not feel obliged to answer, even if you are put on the spot and made to feel even further uncomfortable by ‘I am sorry if I have made you uncomfortable.’ ‘I am sorry if you are offended’. All responses designed to make you look, sound and feel defensive by putting the onus on you to respond and reassure ‘no, I am not offended’. Respond, with a laugh or light heartedly if you prefer, to their questions with a question of your own — ‘how about you?’ ‘Is it important to you if I am married?’ ‘It sounds as if it is important to you to know about my personal life’. ‘Would you like me to feel uncomfortable?’ ‘Do you think I might be offended?’ ‘I wonder if you are intending to offend me’. etc. etc. Take back the power!

If you are to recruit and work with local guides and workers, and perhaps you have ‘inherited’ someone from a previous colleague or researcher — then make discreet enquiries prior to travelling, to decide if you wish to continue the arrangement or not. For research purposes, you might want a fresh pair of eyes, although if the ‘inherited’ person is an employee, you may not have a choice. Male workers rarely discuss their personal lives and do not expect other male workers to do

so either. However, as a woman you might be expected to enquire after a co-worker’s family or children. Make sure you are acquainted with their wife or wives, and their home — a sign of respectability in most societies — yours and theirs. Asking about family at the beginning of an introduction suggests you have done your pre trip homework and cannot be deceived, misled or misinformed. Better to be too strict than too relaxed — much more difficult to pull up the drawbridge later on. This is not necessarily a cross cultural issue — the same might apply if you are the new girl at the office and a target for the office lothario. Also universities all over the world have their fair share of male and female staff whose reputations for sleeping with students makes them unpopular with the very peoples, industries and organisations they allegedly specialise in. It only recently, however, that these cases have made the news, if not

Lucy Kellaway — a journalist with the Financial Times — wrote **In Office Hours** (2011), a novel about women and their office affairs. A quick read for the tube or plane ride, nonetheless, if not Zola, wisdom lies therein, and might be of more use than Facebook CEO Sheryl Sandberg’s **Lean in: Women, Work and the Will to Lead** (2013). Infinitely richer and more famous than I, she counsels the use of the personal ‘I’ (p81) and shares with us that Mark Zuckerberg asked her if she wanted a ‘hug’ (p88). I have never aspired to be the CEO of a multinational conglomerate, but if you do, perhaps you might wish to purchase her biography.



exactly the headlines. Most men smirk knowingly when the cases are revealed — they would probably find the situation less funny if it was their son or daughter being cajoled and pressurised into sex for a better grade or a much sought after scholarship.

I wondered why the external examiner for one Viva I participated in, well known in anthropological circuits, was strangely quiet during the process. I read in a newspaper a few days later he had been sacked for unequivocally harassing young, female students. The evidence was easily available in writing and in emails. Perhaps he should have been sacked for stupidity. Given that a university lecturer is recruited for their knowledge, not their skills, and the pressure universities are under to 'publish', it was not long before he was snapped up elsewhere, albeit without direct teaching responsibilities and student contact. This behaviour is not confined to the education sector as any tabloid newspaper will reveal. Politics and politicians are also notorious for ignoring the peccadillos and illegal activities of those who can draw in the voter or donate funds to silence dissent amongst the poorer, less influential party members. Times may have changed — a more recent and similar situation to my Viva examiner resulted in the culprit not only being sacked, but leaving the education sector altogether. This may have been due to a more robust human resource department (relatively unknown 25 or 30 years ago in universities); or perhaps he had not published sufficiently, or widely enough, to have developed a reputation for anything other than seducing students. His 'brand' was insufficient to navigate him successfully through these well chartered waters. If someone like this is your employer or supervisor, you may be tarnished by their reputation. If you behave like this, others will be.

Are You a Lone-Worker, or Part of a Group?

If you are alone, what are you going there for? What is the purpose of your trip or journey — pleasure, research, the experience? Are you an employee, or independent researcher? If the burden of responsibility and costs fall entirely on you, but the intended outcomes benefit a university or workplace (!), then you may not be discouraged from your expedition. Do not be flattered, however, by 'I can rely on you', 'I know you are up to the job', 'I know you will take care'. This places the responsibility for any failure on your shoulders. Although any credit for success will be shared, of course.

However, if the burden of managing, funding and insuring you falls on someone else, an organisation or employer, then you might be prevented from travelling. Find out where it is not advisable to travel alone as a woman. Look on websites and judge accordingly. If lone or 'independent' travelling is seen as not advisable by your foreign office (foreign ministry/State Department), you may not be insured if something goes wrong. On the other hand is some web-based advice meant to encourage you to use costly guides and package tours, and should it be heeded? Who will help if you get into trouble? And what is your definition of trouble? I don't think I knew what trouble was until I lived in Romania, a country even in 2001 and ten years after the fall of the Ceausescu regime, full of vengeful, angry, hate-filled and resentful men, some wearing police uniforms.

Lone working is an area of work experience that can cause women considerable stress and anxiety. This is particularly the case if you have not considered the potential of the situation in a rational way, and have not received appropriate or sufficient training and guidance. You might want to define 'lone working' yourself, or there may be institutional guidelines, which may be the responsibility of the individual, the employer or the employee or student to interpret and follow. You will need to agree on, and adopt, a series of safe working practices and procedures that you will stick to, such as texting an agreed person when you leave a location, never entering a premises with a man alone, and always making sure you notify someone of your

whereabouts and an estimated departure or arrival time. This should be someone who cares, and can do something about an unexplained absence or prolonged period away from your accommodation or workplace. Other factors, of great importance to the lone worker include able to recognise obvious and early warnings of a problem, be the problem bad weather or demonstrators who plan to turn violent (usually the women disappear first). If you are with a group, you could set up a message board and a timetable so that everyone is confident they know where everyone else is when and with whom. Lone working means a level of self-sufficiency you may not have previously required, including understanding how to diffuse a potentially explosive situation and knowing when to go.

Boredom and loneliness can also be a problem, so make sure you have something meaningful to occupy your possibly long, dark evenings with, reading, constructing a project, writing a book, learning a language, recording otherwise unknown dialects, anything that keeps you busy and is purposeful. I have included a list of novels in the 'Recommended Reading' list that I devoured on long, dark and empty nights in Central Africa, Hungary and Romania. With so many distractions at home in London, it is difficult to concentrate on dense classics such as 'War and Peace', 'Vanity Fair', 'Les Miserables' or 'Middlemarch', let alone enjoy them. Many first appeared in journals that would be devoured by the anticipating public much as the next instalment and cliff hanger of today's TV soap operas. I remember waking up and wanting to read the next chapter of 'Vanity Fair' or 'Great Expectations', in much the same way the first reader's would have experienced, such was my boredom and isolation. Romanian women in the 1990s, deprived of so much during the brutal, bleak Ceausescu regime, visually, intellectually and without access to mass media, told me they fell in love with the character Rodolphe Boulanger in Flaubert's 'Madam Bovary' because during the regime, these classics were encouraged as set texts in school and university.

If you are not self-assured, self-sufficient and selfish, lone working might not be for you. Or you might acquire all of those qualities, making being part of team later on in life difficult for you as part of a team, but an excellent leader. Think how the skills you can and will acquire can be transferrable in other contexts. This might be the only substantial period of fieldwork you do, so make work work for you.

If you are part of a group, consider the age, sex, and experience of your colleagues and co-workers. Are they fit for purpose, or as one veteran academic on Rarotonga complained to me of a young team of researchers, 'useless and unfit, demanding days off after three days when they are only here for a week'? (He sent them home, so he claimed, and 'ordered' a new set). Do you know them, know of them, or will you all be complete strangers? Will your group dynamics become the centre of attention — yours and the peoples you are working with? Will they hinder or help, enhance the experience, or turn your expedition into an endurance test? If you form a (sexual) relationship with another member of the group, how will this alter dynamics and will it send out a message to your fieldwork 'subjects' you are 'available'?

There are many others like these who disappear unnoticed. For those women who do not come from loving, concerned families, we do not know their fate. Will this be you?

Recently I spent a long weekend with a group of people I first met 30 years ago on my first long trip overland and overseas alone. We had been complete strangers, as I did not know anyone in my social circle at the time who wanted to travel, and I answered a small ad in the back of the UK satirical magazine 'Private Eye' for someone to travel with. We spent months travelling together through what was understood as a "hippy trail" from Istanbul to Kathmandu. We then set up home together to live and work in Australia. We were not as pioneering as we thought, this being a well-trodden path of sorts in the 1970s, albeit impossible today. I do not romanticise this expedition. There was never a time all of us were speaking to one another,

A tragic mistake young women make when teaching English in Japan (but this might not be exclusive to Japan) is that a married businessmen does not see you as only 'his' mistress, but someone to be shared amongst his friends and colleagues. Sex before marriage is rarer than one might think in Japan and being a 'modern' technological society does not mean the majority of society shares your so called 'modern' values. The UK's Lucy Blackman Trust was established after the tragic murder in 2000 of a young woman who had been an air hostess for British Airways, and began working in a hostess bar in Tokyo. Her case lasted ten years. In rather different circumstances another young woman — Julie Ward — was murdered in 1988 in the Masai Mara game reservation. In both cases, it was their fathers who relentlessly pursued investigations and justice. Both these cases are significant personally to me — as someone who worked and works in corporate training, but also as a young woman travelling through Central Africa, Zaire and Kenya shortly after Julie Ward, albeit in a group and with a boyfriend. Both families claimed the British Embassy could have done more and that their investigations were hindered in the interests of business and diplomacy. This seems likely — certainly the case of Helen Smith, a British nurse working in Saudi Arabia and allegedly murdered at an illegal drinks party in 1979 suggests blaming the victim is still very much the modus operandi for dealing with inconvenient truths. In the UK — the Suzy Lamplugh Trust was established to promote safety at work for women. Suzy — an estate agent — disappeared in 1986 while showing a client around a property. Her body was never found. Again, the efforts of a family (and fantastic free press) doggedly pursuing the truth allows me to use the case as an example in this manual. Their names and faces are imprinted on my mind because such cases are rare in the UK. I urge you to look them up and similar cases in your own countries.



never a time one of us was not ill, and not all of us remain in touch. But clearly we all shared some values and principles and this expedition was positively life enhancing and changing for all of us in some way. I would always choose to travel accompanied or with a group. Even if we wanted to throttle one another at regular intervals at the time, this would be my choice, although I am aware of the difficulties it presents. For me, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages, in the same way I would never, and have almost never, lived alone. Others differ, and lone travelling and working are now very common, and seen as desirable even. Women have always travelled alone, but not always unaccompanied. Know the difference.

The disciplines, explanations or perspectives may differ, but analysing group dynamics is big business. Your analyses might be anthropological, psychoanalytic or psychological. Observing and recording the dynamic might be your objective or essential if you are to achieve your objective. 'Know yourself and love yourself' before you focus on others might be a trite truism a hairdresser could deliver, but could save you, your organisation, colleagues or family, a lot of trouble.

Age

Your age will impact your experience enormously as a woman. If wisdom comes with age, not all older people are wise. Moreover different expectations are connected to different age groups in different societies. Lone women under the age of 30 years are simply not understood in most societies and cultures, where at this age you will be married and with children. Of course, to many peoples, you may appear younger (and possibly uglier and stupider) because you are not married and are not accompanied by children. If you are in a conventional 'woman's role', then you have a niche, an understandable purpose. If you are a nurse, teacher,

or some sort of aid worker then your aims might be shared and supported. I was glad I had not travelled to Sicily as a young woman. Travelling through Turkey, the Near and Middle East could be hell when I was a 20 something, despite rarely being without male companions. I experienced constant remarks and stares, and sometimes touching, if the opportunity arose. This is not necessarily reserved for foreigners and is not necessarily seen as insulting by local women. I was astounded by a Malay colleague who commented that catcalling, whistling etc. were a feature of her Kuala Lumpur youth. She advised that a modest girl would ignore and lower her gaze, but implied she was flattered. This was because she was beautiful, you understand. Uglier girls presumably would not receive this sort of attention. Hurting years ahead, this belief was repeated at a supervisor's meeting at a clinic where I worked with torture victims. An Iranian woman, herself once a client, commented that she thought her client had lied about being raped because she was 'too old and not attractive.' Perhaps she was lucky enough to be beautiful enough to be raped? Ironically, many of my clients were male Kurds, and many had been raped and sexually assaulted, rape and sexual assault being a common feature of detention in many regimes.

Age is a principle of social organisation in most societies. Roles are assigned according to perceived age. We talk about age appropriateness — doing the right things and being the right sort of person depending on age are common markers of status. Organisations, associations, groups all recruit according to age. The idea of 'life-long learning', a term now used to encourage people who are in, or have been in the work place (i.e. retired or unemployed) to study again and continue formal education, is very new. (This is also to encourage babyboomers to part with their pension pot.) In societies where the majority of people are not literate, or have no history of literacy or numeracy, older people are revered because it is they who transmit knowledge, information and wisdom essential for the survival of future generations. In an IT literate world, where the skill is to filter information fit for purpose, an older person who has not grown up with the internet and associated technology, might be disregarded — their experience considered anachronistic, and not relevant or important.

Once you reach mid-thirties you will not be subject in the same way to the sleazy and hostile attention reserved for what will invariably be viewed as young, rich, bold and easy women. In ALL countries, cultures and societies a woman assaulted or raped at night by a stranger can be blamed for her situation. Many will absorb the shame and blame. Yet stranger rape remains rare and not the norm. People will ask 'what was she doing out at that time'? What does she expect? This should not stop you from being adventurous, but do not expect people to respond and react in the way you would like, and expect to have to defend yourself, your action and the impact of your actions on you and others.

Sexuality

It may be that your presence — an unconventional woman who is not a role model — raises eyebrows and questions. If you are not a camp follower, are you a woman doubtful about your own sexuality or orientation? Will you be seen as a 'slag or a dyke' as one soldier described to me the women working on the US base in Sinai. Being gay or transsexual can prove difficult, if not dangerous, anywhere in the world. No one should underestimate the difficulties people experience, with themselves, their family and friends and others, when disclosing their sexuality openly in any society. Being gay and/or being thought to be gay can be life threatening. A former colleague who has set up an enormously successful NGO with divisions in South America and Eastern Europe opened an office in Chile, but left for home after a couple of years because he said, as a 30 something New Yorker, it got tiresome (at best) not to be able to be gay. Not to be able to hold hands with his partner or be honest with the people he formed friendships with.

It is not for me, not a gay, bisexual or transgendered person, to advise for or against disclosing this sort of information, nor suggest how to 'manage' being not heterosexual, but to urge caution as a form of risk management. Perhaps it is for others to contribute their own experiences.

Marital Status / Dependents

I have never travelled with children, nor worked and travelled with someone who has children with them. But it should not and cannot be assumed an undergraduate, postgraduate or post doctorate researcher does not have dependents. The terms 'partner' and 'boy/girlfriend' are not universally understood, although the terms might be utilised to describe a relationship prior to marriage, as a signifier of ownership, status or statement of intent. Many languages, including French, do not recognise different partnership status. Mademoiselle or Madam? Hungarian, or Magyar, does not recognise gender. The English 'Ms' is rarely understood outside the English speaking world, and even less used, interpreted or translated correctly. I have encountered many people who married so that their girlfriend or boyfriend could accompany them on an official posting overseas. This might be for financial reasons — your organisation requires proof and certification of the status of your relationship if it is to fund a relocation, flights or school fees. Even in the UK, being married still legitimises a relationship, including now a same sex relationship. This is about pragmatism: who should, could or would be responsible for you — who can officials share information with? In relation to inheritance — who should be contacted in the event of your death?

If you travel with children, it will need to be obvious what the relationship to your children and your travel companions is. This means sharing the same family name, and/or having the 'paperwork', (divorce, marriage, birth certificates) that links you all. I do not use the same family name as my husband and therefore we carry a copy of our marriage certificate with us when travelling to prevent misunderstandings, or if something goes wrong and we are separated. This does not prevent him from being called 'Dr Carr' when he accompanies me on official business. You will need a recent photograph. Expect problems if the photo is out of date or a child's appearance has changed in any way. The need for correct and up-to-date documentation reflects the fact that trafficking of children is a lucrative business for sex, as bonded labour. There may also be issues of custody, as in the case where you have been in a relationship with someone who is from a country or culture that will always award custody of children to the father in divorce. The common definition of a child in most countries and cultures is physical: one who is not sexually mature and cannot reproduce. Legal definitions vary enormously.

Your children are your responsibility. In many places I would not want the added risk and complications of children or dependents on site. You can choose to have children and choose not to go, or go elsewhere. But they did not choose to go with you, even if you can convince them the experience is 'for their own good.' I would not choose to go with you or them. I have only worked on 'non family' stations where spouses and children are not allowed. If it is safe enough for your family of small children, no need for the UN or aid workers or possibly you, then?

Men have children too. Children are not the sole responsibility of their mother or other women. Make men part of the process. But children are arguably a woman's life style choice if you are from a society where contraception and abortion is widely and perhaps freely, available. 'A woman's right to choose' is a mantra of the pro-abortion lobby. Do not burden others with your lifestyle choices.

Identifying Difference: Ethnicity, Language, Ability, Disability

All of the above categories may be familiar to us. In the European Union they are categories that it is illegal to discriminate against in employment law. These categories are linked to the terms ‘equal opportunities’ and ‘managing diversity,’ concepts link to principles which mean you cannot be prevented from conducting fieldwork or joining an expedition because of your ‘gender’, age etc. Equal opportunities measures have historically been about guarding against discrimination and treating people equally under the law, irrespective of their individual characteristics. Managing diversity is about recognising people’s individual characteristics and treating people according to their own needs and values. For example, job applicants may have different styles of communication, norms and values (based on gender, culture etc.). Some may not be familiar with interviews, for example, and having to ‘sell themselves’, especially if they come from a more self-effacing culture. Perhaps there are different physical needs because of a disability, or they are working in a second language. In another set of circumstances, if you are an expedition leader, you may have a management style based on your ‘class.’



Laws, policies and procedures are designed to ensure that no employee, full or part time, temporary or permanent, is treated less favourably than others. Such laws, policies and procedures, however, are the stuff of civilian life and lives in liberal and wealthy democracies. All laws

For much of the world, bigger, better, harder, nastier, tougher, the list is inexhaustible, are comparatives and superlatives to use under the ‘to be admired’ category and goals to be worked towards — bigger, better guns; more beautiful women who are more modest.



governing discrimination are complex and it is generally difficult, time consuming, and costly to prove they have been transgressed. I offer this information not prescriptively, but descriptively to elicit thought about the issues. How and whether these sorts of policies and procedures are enforced, or are, indeed, enforceable, is debatable.

If the idea of these sorts of policies and procedures, values and customs are clear and familiar to you, whether or not you agree or disagree with them, you are probably from a society that recognises and understands the terms ‘equal opportunity’ or ‘managing diversity’ in the first place. Perhaps you have never had to think about the impact of being a woman might have on your life opportunities and the manner in which you are treated. Well think now. Do not imagine many countries or cultures care about the above — even some of those within the European Union. Hungary has fantastic maternity leave regulations — two years per child. A legacy of Soviet times when populations were so decimated by war that women had to be encouraged to reproduce, this has rendered women of a certain age virtually unemployable. The public sector might be more open to complying with the above rules and regulations. Since it is a service funded by taxpayers and has a variety of aims and objectives, providing employment for women or groups who might otherwise not be employed by the private sector, so it should. The public sector has an entirely different agenda to a company or corporation with an obligation to shareholders to provide profit. Profit is the motive — in this sense, some can be

less discriminatory — if you can bring in the money, great. If not? This is how a private company measures success. This is the objective of the private sector after all. Not being nice. Not changing the world. Not ‘feelings’. It is making money for the owners or shareholders. In the same way, to fund a university research project, the donors will ask its relevance and about any savings optimisation or income generation, including student recruitment and retention. In other words, they will look to the commercial argument and economic rationale. If you can pay for yourself, then you can study who, what, how, where and for as long as you like.

For much of the world, bigger, better, harder, nastier, tougher, the list is inexhaustible, are comparatives and superlatives to use under the ‘to be admired’ category and goals to be worked towards — bigger, better guns; more beautiful women who are more modest. Other peoples’ women are always uglier sluts, bad cooks and poorer housewives. That might mean you.

All of the above will unquestionably be used against you, can disadvantage you. But can also, however, give you an advantage. You just have to learn how. Do not fool yourself your appearance does not count. It does and will, all over the world, despite ideas of beauty not being universal.

What if you are not an employee? What if you are a student? How recently did universities such as Oxford and Cambridge accept women? How recently was unequal pay made illegal? — not that there is not unequal pay and not that discrimination does not exist, just that it is not legal in certain circumstances. Some industries — often the poorly paid and poorest conditions — are overwhelmingly female. This includes the education industry. Others struggle to recruit female undergraduates. Is this out of choice, and if so, whose choice?

I went to a boy’s school in the 1970s, when public and private schools spotted an opportunity in the market once discrimination laws prevented what are now called ‘Russell Group’ universities from excluding women. Gradually many schools became co-educational, since private girls schools were seen to be more about educating a girl to make her marriageable, than making her employable (see Judith Okely’s piece on boarding schools in **Own or Other Culture** (1996)). But I was stunned recently by the comment of an old male school friend — now a director of a large international advertising agency — that another female director in her mid-40s (and presumably in last chance saloon for childbearing), was not putting her children first, but insisted on returning to work shortly after giving birth, and employed a nanny (like his mother, I might add — once a well-known journalist). This sort of blatant sexism is rife and rampant amongst the political parties in the UK, hence the low participation rate of women in all levels of political life, despite lip service to the contrary. Political parties, like voluntary groups, are not subject to the same laws as employers meaning sexism, racism and other prejudices are practiced and vocalised in a way that could not or would not be tolerated in another form of organisation. What are your colleagues are thinking? Are they wondering why you are not married? Or at least don’t have a boyfriend? Is this why you are doing a doctorate? Because you can’t get a man. I received more than once the comment that now I had completed my doctorate, I would get married. And received more than once the response of ‘I got married’ to my question to female Oxford Anthropology and Museum Ethnography Alumni about what they had done once they had completed their research and studies.

Legalising homosexuality in the UK was re-active. Existing law against homosexuality was understood to be unenforceable — the wider society did not consider relationships between consenting adults to be an area they wanted the law to control. This is not the place to discuss this issue, other than to remind you that there are few countries as tolerant of same sex relationships as the UK, and then probably only in the larger cities. This does not mean to say there are no same sex relationships outside London or Sydney or San Francisco, but there is a reason why these become focus for what are considered ‘alternative lifestyles’ (alternative to

what being another line of enquiry). But you might find your colleagues are less tolerant than they allegedly were, or were 'obliged' to be, back home when you are confined to a small camp and shared sleeping facilities. Will your behaviour or appearance pose a risk — to you, to them, and ultimately the project? In which case, don't be surprised to find yourself ostracised and forced to return home.

Disability Ability

If you have a disability — is it physical? In that case, will you be (in their eyes) a burden on your colleagues or the people you have chosen to live amongst? And if it is a mental health or learning disability, what then? Will you be understood as mad, bad, sad or all combination of all three? If you find yourself in a society where a connection, or correlation, is made between physical and mental disability and 'evil', or these are seen as a consequence of punishment for a wrongdoing, what then?

People have lives, not lifestyles and for many, especially if they are religiously observant (in many religions), a woman's life is firmly placed at hearth and home, pregnant and barefoot in the kitchen. So why, people might ask, isn't yours? What is wrong with you? Where is your father? Brother? Husband? Are you unwanted, unstable, or just unattractive? Is this your 'disability'? Unloved and unlovely? Will your 'disability' in their eyes be that you are not married and not a mother?

Disability legislation is a category of E.U. and UK law in its own right. The distinctions between able bodied and disabled is blurred in all societies. Human resource forms ask 'do you consider yourself to have a disability?' 'Which category to you identify with?' This implies an element of choice. In the UK, a chronic alcoholic or substance misuser might be eligible for 'disability allowance'. This enrages some people who claim they had no choice about losing their eyesight, a limb or being born deaf. This manual is not about disability rights, but certainly the term 'disabled' is translated and interpreted widely as 'disadvantaged' in some way.

A lone woman traveller is often seen as disadvantaged, or at the very least, at a disadvantage. In some countries and cultures, vulnerability is to be exploited, not protected. Be mindful of the type of place you are living, working or travelling in. This does not mean to say you will be treated unkindly. Intent is everything. In Jaipur, India, I was kindly warned by local Indians to avoid other Westerners. 'Hippies' they were called contemptuously. 'You don't have to be careful of us, they are hippies and drug addicts and more likely to steal from you than one of us' — and they were right. Although it is best to assume that it will be a case of when, not if, you are the victim of theft, don't assume that the thief is not from your own group, or someone attached to your expedition, research group or workplace. I have been the victim of theft in the workplace twice — on both occasions we were all temps living overseas and the perpetrators if not transparently obvious, were more than likely the guilty party. One I challenged and reported to internal security, albeit it with a

It was often explained to me by well-intentioned Hungarians, that Gypsy children are 'disabled'. In Hungary, Gypsy (or Cigany), are notoriously over-represented in schools intended for the 'mentally disabled'. Segregation is the method that now characterises the approach of the Hungarian school system and the experience of Cigany students in mainstream education provides endless tales of segregation and marginalisation. These are not just semantic issues, and given the relationship between language and culture, are illuminating. Of course, this is not unique to Hungary, as statistics and demographic analyses of schools in London will testify.



heavy heart. The security officer shared my concerns, and I wondered if this had not been the first time this has happened. The agency was very angry with me for publicly, as they saw it, arguing with another temp, bringing the agency into disrepute, and placing their substantial contract at risk. But I was in a position of power — aware I had a permanent job waiting in a few weeks. Go with your instinct. No one makes accusations of theft lightly. If you suspect someone, then report the incident with evidence and your suspicions. You may not be right — it is not your responsibility to investigate. But you may find you are not the only person to fall victim. Does instinct come with age? Possibly not. People can and do change over time, but they have to want to, and have to be in an environment that requires and allows them to change.

People who find themselves in a situation of anomy behave anomalously and not always in a way we would like, or commensurate with the morals, ethics and values they, or we, are brought up with. This might mean they behave in a way you consider sexist, racist, immoral, and misogynist even. With no prohibitions, no penalties, no stigma, nobody to know or care, and far from home, what are you going to do about it?

The most obvious differences between you and the peoples you will be living and working with will be apparent, as well as the similarities. You might want to find out how THEY explain the differences rather than providing answers for them.

One war veteran tells this anecdote: while in Afghanistan, he questioned why women walked one or two steps behind the male. The male could be her young son, or husband, or grandfather. One widely recounted explanation was status: women are inferior to men. But when asked, one woman responded 'landmines'. Walking ahead or aside of a woman can be about protection. Only one generation ago, English men walked to the road side of a woman to protect her clothing from being splashed and soiled by passing carriages and later, cars. In 1980s New York, a male companion of mine walked to the side closest to the buildings to protect me from being dragged into an alleyway and mugged. To this day, if a street is desolate and dimly lit — this can be a village, the inner city or a suburb — I will walk in the middle of the road to prevent myself being dragged into a dark corner, preferring to be run over than raped.

RECOMMENDED READING

Non-Fiction

- > Bowman, G., 1996. 'Passion, Power and Politics in a Palestinian Tourist Market' in **The Tourist Image: Myths and myth making in tourism T. Selwyn (ed.)**. Chichester & New York: Wiley.
- > Collins, P. and Gallinat, A. (eds.) 2010. **The Ethnographic Self as Resource: Writing memory and experience into ethnography**. New York and Oxford: Berghahn.
- > Davies, C. A., 1999. **Reflexive Ethnography: A guide to researching selves and others**. London: Routledge.
- > Fossey, D., 1983. **Gorillas in the Mist**. London: Hodder & Stoughton
- > Okely, J., 1996. **Own or Other**. Culture London: Routledge.
- > Sandberg, S., 2013. **Lean in: Women, work and the will to lead**. London: W.H. Allen

Fiction

- > Kellaway, L., 2011. **In Office Hours**. London: Penguin





Chapter 5

Working in a New Setting

Task or Relationship Based Culture?

Before delving into the too deep and too personal views on ‘animals’ are a good place to begin exploring difference and similarity. The English are famously sentimental about animals and I am no exception. A Palestinian colleague of mine recently laughed at how he was inducted into English culture and values when staying with an elderly couple for a year as a student. ‘The Christmas presents for the dog!’ Others listened incredulously. How disgusting and uncivilised! Years earlier, I indeed had to explain to a group of incredulous and horrified Palestinians that yes, the rumours are true and in England, dogs are part of the family. In Islam, dogs are reviled for being unclean and much as I love dogs, perhaps they have a point — there is nothing dogs love more than running around the park, sniffing each others’ bums and rolling in fox poo. I don’t want them on the sofa or on my bed. For the majority, animals are food and to be worked into the ground until they die. In Papua New Guinea, I was distraught by the sight of an emaciated puppy, not long for the world and dismissed by villagers as the runt of the litter. In contrast, there seemed to be a bouncy, shiny dog who escorted us through the swamps and clearly loved boat rides, but when I asked if this was the ‘favourite’ dog, I was met with baffled silence by the male villagers and curious stares as if I were the stupidest woman in the world. Why would anyone have a favourite dog? It’s a dog!

Be mindful of how your own attitudes and values affect your behaviour and anticipate how these may be regarded by others. Listen and observe carefully what people of your own culture say and do, and then consider others. Being sensitive is obviously a key requirement. Being aware of differences in attitudes, values and behaviour might make the difference between achieving your project or research goals and coming home empty handed. This means being ready to take the initiative, ask questions and suggest solutions. Most of all, people need to understand WHY you are there — discuss and clarify purpose, expectations, and outcomes of any interaction.

Communication and interpersonal skills are crucial. Consider how your way of communicating may differ from others. This might be a male female issue, or it might be a cultural issue, or both. Learn to recognise the distinctions between reserve and warmth, informality and formality, modesty and arrogance. The English are understood to be indirect and diplomatic. However, the English are also understood (by some Poles for example) to be devious, tricky and sneaky, and manipulators of language to their advantage — obviously, since others are forced to learn English as an international world language (also true). This is based as much on history as personal experience. Many Poles say that the English abandoned the Poles to the Nazis and the Soviets. Do not assume your intentions are understood to be good or honest. Expect to suffer for the sins of your fathers and manage accordingly.

If you are reading this publication in the original English you might be from a task based culture, such as is found in the US. This will differ enormously from 'relationship' based cultures. Task based cultures focus on the immediate objective, i.e. getting things done according to deadline and budget. You develop a relationship as a means to an end and to get the job done. The work is more important than developing a long-term relationship. Task based cultures do not tend to like interruptions, adopt a linear approach and consider written contracts essential. Since the task is the focus of the communication, gift giving and nepotism may be seen as corrupting, although individuals and organisations will not be beyond using this approach

surreptitiously if this enables their aims and objectives to be fulfilled. Many companies say they could not do business in the Arab world, for example, if they did not provide sweeteners. This suggests that one culture holds an ideal that it cannot fulfil, or that it is hypocritical, or maybe that it prefers to be thought of in one way, while furtively and clandestinely behaving in another but laying the blame and responsibility on others. Hypocrisy does seem to be a universal human trait.

However, your objectives might benefit from you identifying if they are best achieved by forming relationships or by taking a task based approach. A long-term stay differs from a short trip triggered by a natural disaster or war and the need for emergency healthcare or rescue. Perhaps you have to close down a regional office or sack a staff member, or you have chosen to move overseas for personal reasons — a divorce or bereavement — and you want to a change of lifestyle. Do you want to enjoy the experience or are you focusing on an objective at the expense of socialising and having fun? An Induction if you are posted overseas amidst a new culture, ideology and language should involve socialisation. How to make friends with your new colleagues, neighbours, shopkeepers, and socialise in cafes and bars. If a long-term stay, it is in you and your employer's interests that you enjoy the

experience and are happy. If your visit is short-term, with a particular and specific agenda, then completion of a given task will be your focus, not finding the best restaurant.

You may find that your colleagues or new compatriots make a fuss of you because you are their guest and a change from the norm, or they might be accustomed to overseas visitors and ignore you, especially if you are seen as a threat or an unwelcome intrusion. They might feel awkward because you are a woman and they are not used to women at work, or they might resent you. Some have no experience of living or working overseas and cannot understand your situation. Others are more empathetic. An incentive to write this manual is to share with other women, possibly younger than me, my experiences and transmit solutions so your path is easier and you do not have to face the same problems ill-equipped or uncertain of how to respond.

Literate societies that are task based respect achievement and merit is not based on age or seniority. In societies with highly restricted literacy, or societies with no history of literacy, such as in sub-Saharan Africa or some Pacific Islands, age is respected as a beaker and beacon, of knowledge. By who else and how else can ideas and information be transmitted but orally, through someone experienced — someone experienced is inevitably older. Modern technology, including the printing press (a quick trawl through the literacy rates of many countries can

Anthropologically speaking, there is no such thing as a free lunch and all exchanges come at a price. Marcel Mauss' classic **The Gift** (1925) demonstrates a view shared by many irrespective of culture or ideology, and could be seen to rationalise selfish or self-serving behaviour. Many of the classic texts are listed in the 'Recommended Reading' lists. I have only included those I have read and are readable and relevant to this publication. I urge the reading of primary texts. Given the age of some and the likelihood of copyright expiring, many can be downloaded for free on the Internet so there is no excuse for shortcuts.



be illuminating) is still a luxury— and in a society where the written word is expressed through a complex character set not designed for mass use, and which requires memory not application of a formula such as the Latin alphabet, a child will inevitably be ten years or so before they can read a book. The impact of literacy is explored in Jack Goody's easily digestible works.

If you are not literate, inevitably communication will include body language. You will spend much more time on personal relationship building with a view to the benefits of a longer-term relationship. Inevitably, in a society based on personal relationships and connections, a verbal agreement may be sufficient or indeed fundamental, and gift-giving expected. Family-Friend obligations are not just important; they are the only route to success. Therefore, you need to learn that genuine friendship, warmth and hospitality from those whose gestures and helpfulness are unsolicited may nevertheless create a dependency or obligation you might find yourself powerless to resist.

It might be easy to (patronisingly) assume that it is primarily smaller 'less developed' societies which function with this kind of communication and inter-personal skills. Clearly in densely populated, highly developed, post-industrial societies and cities, many people would not know family members beyond the first cousin, let alone several generations beyond. Connections with the villages and countryside will have been severed hundreds of years ago in a metropolis like London, the UK being the first nation state to experience an industrial revolution. With the internet, the ability to maintain longer-distance connections is changing. But it does seem to be a general tendency that humans regroup in small, manageable numbers and identify according



With the internet, the ability to maintain longer-distance connections is changing. But it does seem to be a general tendency that humans regroup in small, manageable numbers and identify according to what and who they know.

to what and who they know. The 'old boy network', for example, in the UK, which means that men who attended the same exclusive (private) public school will continue those relationships throughout their lives — marrying within each other's families and employing each other in preference to the unknown. Unsurprisingly, women, relatively new to certain employment markets, might find themselves at a disadvantage, as much as those who did not attend the same school or university. Moreover, where a university, such as Oxford or Cambridge, recruits from the rich, educated and powerful elites of the world, then it is difficult to penetrate those elites. Relatively recent attempts to break this situation in the UK by opening up university and tertiary education to almost anyone who wants to go have backfired. The currency of tertiary qualifications has reduced in value and I have heard more than one employer admit that since everyone has a degree, or some sort of MBA acquired on line, they can only eliminate the sheer volume of applications according to who and what they know — thus the re-emergence old criteria of school, accent, connections, sport, Daddy (rarely Mummy). This applies not just to the UK. The vast populations of emerging economies such as Brazil, Russia, India and China find themselves in societies based on relationships and family, not merit, despite Imperial China pioneering the concept of the ultimate meritocratic civil service exam.



I was shocked recently to be part of a discussion about potential job candidates for a large international financial consultancy in India, which revolved around the occupation of the family of the potential recruits. It was explained that it was important to know if the candidates' family were in commerce and if so, what type of business activity the family were involved with. The rationale was related to understanding of emerging markets, but I detected interest in occupation-based caste, as well as connections. Would the chosen candidate be useful? I too, however, in class-riddled England, have been discreetly asked about my father's 'profession', the assumption being he had one, when in fact he had left school at 14 years of age, and white collar management was a long time in coming.

Arguably, 'task based' culture' is U.S. corporate culture and confined to international consultancies and multi-conglomerates (the new nation states). This approach certainly gets things done, and of course, is an ideal and principle of the American people. It is what the United States of is criticised for, but also what people are escaping to. But principles, while admirable, are not always practiced. If you are to succeed in getting the task completed, be 'the job' to build a hospital, collect samples of different types of frog, understand why cholera is rife so you can develop a sewage system, or create a school curriculum, then you might have to consider the professional and personal boundaries between principles and pragmatism. Of course, being a woman you will be expected to favour the personal over the rational, but these subtle nuances can be a question of cultural competence. I was amused to be asked by a warm, animated and sociable Brazilian mining engineer how he could approach the subject of his 'relationship' with his boss, which he felt was not sufficiently close. Given his boss was a South African, Afrikaans speaking, Boer with no noticeable diplomatic or empathetic skills, I counselled against the conversation. It seemed unlikely his boss had ever discussed his relationship with his wife, let alone with what he clearly viewed as an over-emotional subordinate 'Latin'. These are stereotypes, yes, but also reflect very real and obvious differences and difficulties within a multi-national office.

Customs and Etiquette

Customs and etiquette are dependent on location, religion, your sex, age, your social status — the combinations of which can clearly lead to a great variety of conventions, many of which can be very different from your own.. There is not room in this publication to go into detail about the vast range of possibilities. Wherever you are working, the important thing to remember is to observe and listen, and to ask other women what they are doing and why. Do not think of yourself as somehow exempt from local rules and regulations, as a woman, or as a foreigner. It is often women who are considered 'responsible' for ensuring customs, festivals, etiquette and social niceties are maintained and managed through the generations. This is frequently by choice, since etiquette can also be about marking social boundaries.

There are conventions of language to consider. Will a certain turn of phrase, form of address or suffix mark you as someone who is patronising or 'superior'? Without gender, but like Japanese, Magyar or Hungarian, has three forms of address indicating the relationship between speakers. In contrast, the English language does not rely on prefixes or suffixes to communicate status and relationships, but vocabulary. Living and working amongst Gypsy peoples, I was advised the form of address I was using — the more (but not most) formal was too formal and might suggest a snobbishness not welcome amongst 'leftists', who rejected what they saw as antiquated forms of speech. It was assumed I, mixing with Gypsy populations, was of the left politically.

On the other hand, your behaviour and forms of speech might be interpreted as uncouth and mark you as a 'wayward' woman not worthy of respect. Later in London, as I struggled to recall my Hungarian to speak with an émigré poet (whose English, admittedly was better than

my Hungarian), he contemptuously asked me where I had learnt to speak Hungarian because I 'sounded like a Gypsy'. Similarly, a colleague at Oxford snootily informed me I spoke 'cant' Arabic.

Accustomed to the rigorous sexual boundaries between men and women amongst Kurdish peoples in Turkey, I was asked by a curious merchant at the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul if I lived in Turkey. Speaking English, clothed modestly (but not veiled) in a conventional English mackintosh, he noticed I was maintaining a distance verbally and physically and not returning his flirting, as I had been instructed by Kurdish mothers. 'Polite, but firm' had been drilled into me. I am not a Kurdish or Turkish woman, but certain behaviours would mark me out as someone who knew how social relations between the sexes and social hierarchies were conducted in a marketplace. A merchant would respond accordingly if he knows what is good for him, I was told.



There are conventions of language to consider. Will a certain turn of phrase, form of address or suffix mark you as someone who is patronising or 'superior'?

This is not a book about dating or developing romantic relationships. That is a whole genre in its own right. But it is important to consider how the connections you make with others are to be read. Is the custom of 'dating' understood anywhere outside America? I have been asked on more than one occasion by American women if it was true that English men expected sex on the third date. This might be news to the French, who seem to think English men peculiarly unattractive, largely effete and closet homosexuals. A Turkish woman confided similar 'fears', since in London she had not been approached with the ardour and silver tongue she was accustomed to in Istanbul — and so on. These are clichés, sweeping generalisations, stereotypes and the stuff of on-line jokes, but with more than a modicum of truth. IF you are to form a relationship with a foreign national in their neighbourhood, make sure you understand what their terms and conditions are and IF you want to abide by them — and, more importantly, IF they are aware of, and want to abide by, yours. Are invitations casual and not intended to be taken literally (as I have been advised is the case in Brazil), or serious indications of intent? If serious, is the intention honourable or dishonourable? Will you be alone or amongst family and friends? If you are from a society where women are not attached to the family (and not many are) socially, an invitation to meet family is an honour and to be taken with good grace, especially if it takes place within the home, be the host male or female. If the society you are living amongst confines women to the domestic sphere, an invitation to the home is respectful and appropriate. But an invitation by a man in this sort of society to a public venue should be viewed with suspicion. Ask the local women what you should do and the reputation of the man involved. Take their advice.



Tipping may seem a trivial and unrelated sub-category, but tipping or gratuities are always tricky. You might insult someone because the amount is too little or because you tipped the wrong person, or are you — a woman — the wrong person to tip, because a woman will always be a social inferior? Try and imagine a world where women do not earn a salary and are not responsible for their own finances. They might be working for the family business and not awarded a salary as such, meaning they cannot be independent of the family. Or they might be a housewife with only limited funds available for household necessities. They might not even have a bank account. Do

not imagine this does not apply to someone you know, nor that they have chosen and allowed a man — a husband or father, to manage their finances. Divorce courts — London is allegedly the divorce capital of the world — are full of such women. Many are not much older than you. A woman may be permitted sufficient funds to run a household, but not know how much her husband earns, where he has squirreled away his surplus, nor have access to his bank account. She might not be particularly interested. This will change when they divorce or if they go bankrupt because of his gambling addiction, by which time it will be too late.

Attitudes to money — who earns it, who spends it, how, on what, and where — illuminate relationships. Relationships between men and women, between generations, between social or ethnic groups, and between siblings or other kith and kin, all demonstrate a power differential. Many men will adopt a protective, paternal/fraternal role and the offer of money would be insulting for acts considered a duty as a host or an elder. I only recently unwittingly insulted a senior gentleman of Indian heritage in London, by paying him for tickets to a fundraising event he had invited me to. Perhaps I was suggesting I considered him a social inferior because I thought he was economically poorer, or perhaps he did not like his gesture of kindness interpreted as a financial transaction. Perhaps age and seniority was the issue. Too old to be a 'little Miss', but not old enough to be a 'Madam', I was struck how Palestinian male colleagues said they considered me a 'daughter' while I considered them peers and of a similar age. Parents in their late teens and early twenties and worn by a combination of the sun and a hard life, of course I, a 'fair' skinned, single, childless woman of 30, could only ever be viewed as 'younger' — and indeed, I would have been unworldly and inexperienced in comparison to my war-weary Palestinian contemporaries, male and female.



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Timing too can involve differences between sexes. When I complained about the bad time-keeping of a British Bangladeshi man born and raised in Bolton, England, I was told by his female friends in no uncertain terms that an 'Asian man is not accustomed to justifying to a woman where he is, or when he will be there'. Again, very recently I playfully rebuked a male colleague for his timekeeping and he responded he kept 'Asian time.' But some cultures do keep time very differently. The English seem to have a reputation for exact timekeeping. As with our money, we are considered to be too careful and too uptight. Other cultures are much vaguer. You could find historical rationales for this, such as delayed or non-existent industrialisation, and a dependence on nature's clock. Concepts of time reflect patterns of work and relationships with the environment, as well as religious and ideological concerns. Keeping time is a control issue and some people and peoples need, or have created a need, to control more than others.

Timekeeping might also reflect money and social status, hence the link here between the categories. You do not need to be on time when others have less power (invariably money) than

you and will have to acquiesce to your commands and demands. In many societies, including in the UK, young women can be indulged if they are 'dizzy' and disorganised. It is considered by some, or they consider it, part of their charm. But by thirty years, those who maintain this 'dizziness' might find their relationships are affected. No one likes repeatedly waiting for someone. It becomes less charming and endearing. It says 'I am more important than you'. 'My time is more important than yours.'

I once worked all night with an Eritrean woman to help her complete a project proposal, only to receive a letter a few days later explaining her application would not be considered because it was submitted past the deadline. I was not aware we had been working past a deadline and was furious at her for wasting my time, while she seemed genuinely puzzled to receive the letter. What was going on here? Eritrean time keeping, or a young, attractive female member of a social elite accustomed to being indulged? Or was it simple inefficiency?

In the UK, it might be interpreted as a sign of mental ill health if someone is repeatedly disadvantaged by poor timekeeping, yet fails to change or notice this is negatively impacting their life (no job for example). If you really need the job, you will make sure you arrive in time, not just on time. If you really need to catch that flight because you are on a cheap non-refundable or transferrable ticket, you will ensure you are well ahead of schedule. You will predict and pre-empt any problems that might prevent you from arriving at your destination. Business class has the luxury of poorer timekeeping because the airline is obliged to find, or will oblige by finding, an alternative.

Of course, in the mobile phone era, timekeeping has become more flexible because we can text and warn the person we are about to meet that we will be late. However, if this becomes a habit, or an excuse for tardiness, then it is not unreasonable to object and respond you will only wait ten minutes, for example. I am always happy to meet socially in a coffee shop because this offers a certain amount of flexibility and means you are not standing around publicly on a street corner. But more than one cup, and I will leave unless there are exceptional circumstances and the person is normally reliable. Do not absorb the responsibility of a broken appointment by accepting blame because you have left. Be firm and state you have other appointments and are leaving. Do not make excuses for the other person, especially if you do not know them or know them well. You do not owe anyone anything. You do not owe them a second chance unless there is something significant in the situation for you. Do not set a precedent (i.e. I can be treated shoddily) and do not be dismissed with a 'if this does not work for you'. This phrase implies you are the one with the problem and places the responsibility for arranging another meeting, or interview, or even recruiting another employee, on you. Respond with 'this situation would not work for anyone'. Be firm.

Arrange to meet peoples in closed yet 'public' places such as hotel receptions, cafes or restaurants, a library or even a bank. This can also act as a safety measure. You can avoid prying eyes or unwanted and unwelcome attempts to strike up a conversation. You will also have somewhere to sit and something to do — take a book, magazine or newspaper — while you wait. In all societies, to a greater or lesser degree, men are understood to be the initiators of meetings and conversations and general social interaction. All over the world, in all social and professional capacities, it is largely men who arrange and fix the world of the public. If you are arranging to meet a man, albeit for professional purposes, understand how this might be interpreted by him, his wife or his colleagues, even the waiters in the café.

If you are working with peoples who do not share the same concept of time as you, think why this might be and how you will manage the situation and the person you are waiting for. This might be someone challenging your authority because you are a woman. Will you gradually relax and adapt, or is this patronising and lowering the bar? People are always happy to meet

IN THE RECOMMENDED READING LIST there are references relating to time, space and gender. The most readable and digestible works are those of the prolific, pioneering and indefatigable **Shirley Ardner**.

low expectations. If you all have a job to do, it is not unreasonable to expect others to take you and the task seriously. Observe others. Compromise is key, but not if it places you or your project in jeopardy. You do not want a reputation for being someone who does not deliver because of other peoples' shortcomings, especially if you have selected the team, in which case, this is your shortcoming.

Photography, Film, and Video

Much has been made of local interpretations of cameras and photography. You need to ask permission to take people's photographs or record them on phone or camera and accept a refusal, as you would anywhere. You must be sensitive to local prohibitions regarding women. Men and women alike might not approve of the female form, their daughter or wife, being reproduced. It might be easy to photograph people and places today, through advances in technology, but this does not mean you should. You might be asking for trouble if you are in an area deemed 'security sensitive'. This might mean a building such as a prison, courts, anything connected to the military, but also bridges, airports and bus and train stations. Train and plane spotting are not hobbies much understood internationally. Invariably a male interest, in 2001 English plane spotters in Greece soon found themselves accused of spying by the female judge, incredulous that anyone should spend their free time and not inconsiderable money, on such as activity. You may be a rail enthusiast, but you might want to curb your enthusiasm overseas and avoid the urge to photograph anything that might suggest 'military.'

Of course, you may be a documentary film maker, broadcast journalist, or visual anthropologist, in which case you will abide by your employer's rules and regulations. But what if you are freelance, as so many are? Recently, I was recruited by a media company hoping to create a series of documentaries for one of the international news channels about the persecution of Dom, a group of so called 'Gypsies' in the Syrian refugee camps of Jordan and Turkey. I was, as always, happy to oblige with information, advice and support, especially if those asking for it are young and enthusiastic. Of course, journalists enlist the help of experts partly because they do not have the knowledge required, and partly because they are looking to legitimise their findings. In this case, I was concerned that the female team seemed blissfully unaware of the impact their interviewing and filming of this particular group might have on the Dom themselves, as well as the implications for those working with them, especially women. In the Near East, the Dom are associated by others with drugs and prostitution, and female genital mutilation, and are accused of being informers. Groups such as the Dom marginalized by nation state organisations, historically on the basis of mobility and/or being outside religious, sexual or social mores, are often subject to accusations of witchcraft, human sacrifice, or even terrorism and a range of criminalised offences such as prostitution, trafficking, and petty theft. In a refugee camp, lawless, miserable and tense at best, such peoples are not tolerated.

For similar reasons, it was not possible for me to visit and conduct research alone with the Zot of Gaza. I would be considered guilty by association. It is only recently the risk female journalists face of rape and sexual assault has been highlighted and acknowledged. I do not suppose that CBS's Lara Logan's experience of physical and sexual assault while covering the Egyptian uprising in Cairo in 2011 was the first, or will be the last, example of a journalist being targeted because she was female. But if anything good has come of her attack, it is how the assault was acknowledged, condemned and broadcast internationally. Journalists always have, and always will put their lives on the line, but it is no longer a 'professional' secret that female journalists are targeted in a way men are not. Lara Logan was with her film crew and there could have been no doubt why she was in Cairo at that time. The presence of what is obviously professional recording equipment is no longer sufficient protection.

This should not deter women from becoming journalists, nor deter news agencies from employing them, although I do not doubt many pulled their female staff from Egypt after this incident. Do not be discouraged or daunted by the prospect of risks, but predict and pre-empt them. Take calculated risks, not just risks.

Food

Health fads, dieting and preoccupation with ‘allergies’, ‘intolerances’ etc. are not shared by peoples in countries where their undernourishment or malnourishment is due to environmental issues, poverty and a simple lack of food. Tragically far more women than men fall prey to the diet industry and I have yet to meet a man with a list of alleged food ‘intolerances’ (as opposed to life threatening allergies, such as the increasing number of people with nut allergies). If you press such “dietary requirements” people will just think you are rude or weird. They might be offended if your avoidance of meat is noted and believe that this is because you think their kitchen is not clean. I was vegetarian for a number of years and only reverted to meat eating when invited by a Palestinian to her home. She said they had observed that I did not eat meat at work, but that her kitchen was ‘clean’. It was, as far as I was concerned, out of the question to refuse her meal and I have remained a fan of meat ever since (which says something about her cooking and the earth oven prepared dish ‘maqluba’ especially).

Obviously enormous numbers of people in India and the rest of the sub-continent are vegetarian or vegan. But if you are not living amongst peoples who understand this concept or do not share this belief, it can be interpreted as personally insulting. That is not to say some groups do not observe a whole range of restrictive food practices. Practising Ethiopian Orthodox Christians and Orthodox Romanians seem to be fasting and avoiding one food group or another for much of the time. It might seem to the non-religious or the not religiously observant, that some individuals have an eating disorder and ‘fasting’ became an excuse to limit intake. Certainly this was my suspicion with a Romanian colleague who accepted a dinner invitation and then refused to eat most of the meal, despite the fact it was vegan themed and avoided meat and dairy, as she had advised me before coming. But this would not have been her explanation. For others, this is an observance you must respect and abide by.

If the inclusion of ‘food’ in this manual strays into general guide book territory, then I would remind women of wealthy, albeit not always healthy, societies of surplus, that food, the purchase, preparation, sharing and serving of, are widely considered part of a woman’s domain. This can be a convenient point of entry into another world — a public (i.e. safe) and uncontroversial way of engaging with others. Food markets can be fun and a socially acceptable means for a woman to interact and socialise with people she might not otherwise come into contact with. You may find that other women bond and support you in finding the best cut of meat, the favourite baker. Most markets the world over sell fruit ‘n veg, household items and cloth-

Obtaining, preparing and consuming food is hugely significant in all societies, not just reflecting practical or biological necessity. Food as metaphor is worthy of study in its own right. The most readable and comprehensive academic, Mary Douglas, explored and explained in her **Purity and Danger** (1966) the rules generating food behaviour, linking food taboos to social organisation and structural categories, while Jack Goody’s **Cooking, Cuisine and Class** (1982) provides an invaluable historical perspective. Read and digest these publications. There is more material in the Recommended Reading List.

READ ALL ABOUT IT



Working in a New Setting

RECOMMENDED READING

Non-Fiction

- > Ardener, S., 1993. **Women and Space: Ground rules and social maps.** Oxford: Berg.
- > Atlee, J., 2007. **Isolarion: A different Oxford journey.** Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- > Bourdieu, P., 1984. **Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste.** Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.
- > Davies, J. and Spencer, D., 2010. **Emotions in the Field: the psychology and anthropology of fieldwork experience.** Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- > Culhane, D. and Elliott, D., 2016. **A Different Kind of Ethnography: Imaginative practices and creative methodologies.** Toronto: University of Toronto Press
- > Faubion, J. D. and Marcus, G.E., 2009. **Fieldwork is Not What it Used to Be: learning anthropology's method in a time of transition.** Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.
- > Goody, J., 1982. **Cooking, Cuisine and Class.** Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press
- > Goody, J. and Watt, I., 1963. 'The Consequences of Literacy.', in **Comparative Studies in Society and History.** Vol.5:3, pp.304-345.
- > Ingold, T. and Vergunst, J. 2008. **Ways of Walking: Ethnography and practice on foot.** Aldershot: Ashgate
- > Madison, D. S., 2011. **Critical Ethnography: method, ethics, and performance.** Thousand Oaks, CA & London: Sage.
- > Mauss, M., 2001 (1925). **The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies.** London: Routledge.
- > Morreira, S., 2012. 'Anthropological Futures?: Thoughts on social research and the ethics of engagement.' **Anthropology of Southern Africa.** Vol.35:3-4, pp.100-104.
- > Pink, S., 2015. **Doing Sensory Ethnography.** Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- > Taussig, Michael T., 2011. **I Swear I Saw This: Drawings in fieldwork notebooks, namely my own.** Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

ing of varying quality. It will always be much cheaper to buy fruit 'n veg in a market, but some people are more wary of buying meat and fish. Supermarkets can be out of reach financially and socially for peoples in countries where the indigenous population is considerably poorer than the expatriates, such as in sub-Saharan Africa or South America. In many countries, there remains a very obvious social apartheid practiced by supermarkets which may prevent all but the wealthiest indigenous customer from entering, as they are seen to favour the obviously rich (and often white). Your visit to local markets will invariably be noted and approved of — you are mixing with the indigenous population on their terms. You are sending a message to other women that you are 'like them' and do not consider yourself superior. If you are visibly keen to try new foodstuffs, ask advice, recruit others to assist — you will make friends and this will ease your entry into and life within a different world.

Of course, in many societies, including the one you may live in, a wealthy woman does not shop for food and household items herself. She has a maid or staff. You might be expected to 'fund' a poorer person (and her family) in this way because you are so obviously richer. If you do not 'share' your good fortune in being born wealthy, you might be disapproved of and considered selfish or mean. You will have to decide how to respond to this. You might find you strike up a mutually beneficial relationship and perhaps a genuine friendship of sorts. Or you might feel uncomfortable, unaccustomed to being the 'mistress' of a 'household'. Offers of support are rarely without obligations to reciprocate in some way, if not actually in terms of cold hard cash. Sharing food is one form of social exchange we all understand and benefit from.

Food taboos and the moral and symbolic value of food have been a focus for social scientists and anthropologists since the inception of their academic disciplines. You will be judged if you seem ignorant or ignore this aspect of the life of your own society, never mind others'. Of course, an awareness of food conventions will not necessarily prevent other people from rejecting your offerings. Wealthy Arab visitors to London from the Gulf States have been known to only stay in hotels fully trusted to accept and understand the restriction of halal, and only shop for snacks in stores such as Marks and Spencer, a familiar favourite as much in the UK as the shopping malls of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, having trusted halal signs on some of their snacks and ready-made meals.



Chapter 6

Some Practicalities

Getting Around

Driving

As a woman in one society, you may not question your right hire, own or drive a car. But do not assume this is always the case. Given Saudi Arabia has only recently 'permitted' women to drive, do not assume that a right that you take for granted is recognised by all. I was warned by a nun in the early, post Ceausescu days in Romania, where a four-wheel drive and a fair amount of nous was essential to survive, that a woman driving would be subject to envy and resentment amongst a male population who saw car-owning as a status denied to all but the very rich. Do not assume a woman behind the wheel is a sight appreciated by impoverished, powerless men who connect car ownership and the ability to drive with wealth, power and the size of their penis. An expensive four-wheel drive with a 'UN' acronym emblazoned all over the bonnet can be a target especially. Aid workers are not necessarily seen as the good guys. Many international organisations, including the Red Cross, are now viewed with suspicion and resentment. Too political, not neutral, whores of America and Israel etc. The days when these sorts of organisations were viewed as being morally superior and non-partisan, if they ever were, are over. Being in their vehicles may not offer additional security.

Car hire and leasing

This may or may not be an option, with availability and costs varying greatly with location. Be mindful of the fact that if you have a crash, and driving kills more people overseas than anything else, you may need blood and sophisticated medical care. You need to be insured and you need to be vaccinated against Hepatitis, Tetanus etc. to prevent all the infections transmitted via blood, dirty needles, dirty water et al. Vaccinations for Hepatitis are a must, in case you are exposed to infected blood if you are in a road accident. There are lots of strains of Hepatitis and vaccines are constantly being updated and refined. Here also, health should be part of your risk management strategy.

Trouble spots

There will be areas notorious for crashes, hold ups, drive-by shootings etc. Know where they are and make sure and how to avoid or deal with them, so you are not one of the trouble spot victims. Do not assume other people keep to the rules of the road, or indeed, there are any rules. In many countries, including rural Eastern and Central Europe, tourists are advised not to stop for any alleged 'checkpoints' or 'accidents' in remoter areas because they can be a ruse to rob. In many countries, police and the military are barely paid a living wage and top up their salaries with bribes. The local population might take this in its stride, but will you? Driving through Nigeria, avoid Lagos

because as white women, we had been told by rural Nigerians, it would be too dangerous. Perhaps this was a city/country, male/female prejudice, I will never know. It seemed in one district we barely crawled a few miles the whole morning before various uniformed officials would extract from us small, petty items as a penalty (it was 'National Hygiene Day' and the bus was dirty, so we were told — which, admittedly, was true.). Bribery and corruption is a way of life in the majority of the world at one level or another, including the world you come from, albeit the prices might differ. You may have a choice about contributing to this economy or you may not. Certainly, parking and driving penalties, legal and illegal, seem to be the most popular way of extorting money, from London to Lagos. Most men, local taxi drivers, for example, will be happy to enlighten you.

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In many countries, to be a woman driving alone at night does not seem advisable. You are at best an object of curiosity, at worst a target. I don't know if urban areas are any more threatening than rural ones. This would depend on the city and attitudes to women and women drivers. London for a metropolis of its size and population density is remarkably safe and with

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24 hour public transport that I would use by my late teens. But we do not have guns, so hold ups and drive by shootings are a rarity, and certainly not random in the way you might experience in a comparable South American or sub-Saharan city. If owning and driving a car means wealth, liberty and freedom, you will be the subject of envy and resentment. Would being a woman make you more of a target than being a rich foreigner? In the Near East we would always partner each other in vehicles, always ensuring there was someone to accompany a late night trip to the airport or early morning expedition.

Do not underestimate how disconcerting driving on a side of the road you are not accustomed can be. There is a reason so many of the cyclists killed in London are from European countries unaccustomed to riding or driving on the left hand side of the road and unfamiliar with signs, routes and roundabouts.

Breakdowns

It should go without saying that as a woman, if you can drive a car you should be able to carry out elementary repairs, identify worn tyres, change a wheel, check the oil etc. Make sure that your boot has equipment sufficient to haul you out of quicksand or mud. Ensure that you can manipulate the central locking system if you get locked out, but also that you can be locked in for safety.

Know where, and how long it will be, before you can fill up. Where are services and how much will they cost? Can you get repairs and spare parts easily, and the mechanical expertise? You may find gentlemen (and sometimes ladies) of the road will help, but you may not. Not being interested in mechanical engineering or plumbing or IT is not the same as having no interest in knowing how to identify and repair faults. Predict and pre-empt and do not assume someone else will do it for you. Learn before you go.

Car Insurance

Consider the relationship between transport, road accidents and insurance. If you have a car accident or the vehicle you are travelling in crashes, will you be insured? If so, insured for what? Hospital bills or repatriation? If you die, who pays for your body to be flown home (no small bill).

You may not be covered if you were not wearing a seatbelt or you were in the back of a truck, as is common in the parts of the world that do not have public transport and where most people will not have cars or their own means of transport. Will you be accused, by insurers, of exposing yourself to risk or 'needless peril'?

Bikes/motorbikes/public transport

If you are considering these kinds of transport, are you sufficiently insured? You may be the most responsible cyclist in the world, but with a car, you have a small protective box around you to absorb a crash. Bikes offer you no protection from wild and careless drivers. For some reason, possibly because of the relative ease westerners could travel there in Soviet times, 1970s Yugoslavia was always central to stories about bikers waking up minus a leg or arm etc., despite their injury being of the sort that might be considered minor in more medically 'advanced' countries. This was said to be due to lack of equipment and medication, not knowledge. Certainly, in countries where running water or electricity is a problem, medical facilities might be limited; and if being able to read and write makes you an intellectual and you can easily bribe your way into university, you are not necessarily a doctor because you are the intellectual *crème de la crème*.

In some countries, amputation is a necessary evil because gangrene all too easily sets in. In moist, humid and bug infested environments the smallest scratch can fester. Think what the elbows of some evangelical cyclists in cities like London look like in favourable conditions. This is not about 'the right' to cycle or motorbike, who wouldn't want to travel overland along the Silk route on a Harley Davison? Some do travel long distances on motorbikes — it is certainly possible — but better to be a Lucy Jordon and travel through Paris with the wind through your hair because the French health system is one of the best in the world and your insurance company is more likely pay up, than if you have to be flown home by air ambulance from an obscure island in the Pacific ('The Ballad of Lucy Jordon' is a poignant song describing the regrets of a housewife who at the age of 37 lists what she will never do or experience. Marianne Faithfull recorded the song in her 1979 album 'Broken English, although it was originally composed by Shel Silverstein and first recorded by Dr Hook and the Medicine Show).

In many parts of Asia, Africa and the Pacific, public transport is a rarity and private trucks are the most popular and accessible form of traveling around the country, especially long-distance on difficult roads that will easily destroy the chassis of cars. These will be crammed as full as possible with people and animals. Fun, yes, if this is a choice. You will strike up conversations, create contacts and obtain useful information. Tasty snacks and titbits will be offered through the window at pit stops. The occasional rifle too, although a machete might also be the weapon of choice. You might as a foreign women, be privileged to ride in the front cab with driver. Accept the offer for your bum's sake and accept the offer in the spirit it will be probably be made (you are gentler and not used to such discomfort, which you won't be). They might also see you as a potential target attracting unwanted attention bringing trouble for them as much as you.

In Papua New Guinea, the communal Public Motor Vehicles (PMVs) are the only way to travel to and from many places. Boat and dugout canoe having limited capacity, and planes too expensive. The roads are so poor, only tough and expensive four by fours can compete. Travelling in the front cab of a PMV gave me the opportunity to witness the driver's spectacular driving skills, as well as the equally spectacular near misses. But meant also I was safely tucked away when the police and 'raskols' (rascals — a PNG term for extremely violent and pervasive gangs of men) became too nosy.

However, do always consider if you taking up the place of someone who cannot afford any other means of travel, or if this is the only possible means of arriving at your destination. If this is the only form of transport, how long will it take to reach you, or for you to return to a town or city, in a medical emergency?

Taxis

Some societies use taxis all the time. If most people don't have cars, and public transport is poor or non-existent, these are the only way to get around. However, public transport might be viewed as an unsavoury and unsafe option for a 'lady' or young woman. As a child of eleven years travelling long distances by bus to school, we were always told to sit close to the bus conductor and not to travel by train, since at the time (1970s), carriages could be single and isolated compartments. Many young women in the UK, once of an age to socialise independently, use private cabs, not public transport, and even I, a veteran Londoner, might catch a cab the last phase of a journey, if not the whole journey, if the walk from the bus stop or tube/train station is too lonely and isolating. This is despite the fact I live in London relatively centrally and on a tube (underground train) line that is 24-hours over the weekend.

If you are living overseas for a long period of time, better to strike up a mutually beneficial arrangement than risk a bidding war that could result in all the drivers refusing to take you. Your driver may be genuinely helpful and informative, or may be informing on you. How to tell? You can't. Will he (usually a he) be a careful driver? Probably not. Driving tests and licences are not the rigorous systems they can, should or used to be. Will he have insurance? Probably not — so make sure yours covers situations such as a car crash in an unlicensed vehicle.

In many countries, you share a taxi — a sherut, a bimo, or a truck — there are various terms. They leave when they are full — you don't know who your fellow passengers are, so be careful what sort of information you divulge. They may be overloaded with people and luggage and even animals, so again crashes are a possibility — even a probability. A woman should not sit next to, or find herself sandwiched

between, two or more men. Choose to sit next to a woman, on the front seat or the seat with a door for easy exit if need be. This is also understood to be 'correct' behaviour by men of all ages, all over the world. If they do not behave appropriately — they touch you, let their bodies press against you — then indicate loudly that you don't like it and that you are not comfortable with the situation or the questions that they may be asking. It is nobody's business if you are married, what your name is, or your age — this is overly intrusive and overly inquisitive.

And if you get into a truly frightening situation, don't be afraid to grab the wheel and force the car to crash. A few cuts and bruises might be preferable to being sexually assaulted, raped, robbed or murdered. If the penalty for rape is as severe as murder, you might just as well be murdered to eliminate the evidence.

If you make a fuss, call someone over, a traffic police officer or some such if possible, as you will attract the sort of attention your driver or other passengers will not want. Take back the power! A foreign woman noisily arguing over a fare or a route will often draw a crowd keen to resolve your situation and impress upon you that the country and peoples you are amongst are generally honest, so make a fuss while you can and there is someone to listen.

Do not let yourself be driven to remote areas, especially in the dark. If you feel nervous, listen to your instincts and ask the driver to turn around. Say you do not feel comfortable. If his

Be friendly to the driver, but remember he is not necessarily your friend. Sit in the back seat diagonal to him. This is a security precaution all over the world. Taxi drivers can be friend or foe, registered and part of a regulated company, or rogue, unsavoury, predatory and mercenary. In a positive case, they may have a wife or daughter and treat you with courtesy. I was at twenty one years of age rebuked by a driver for getting off the last train at a suburban London station and getting into his car in the early hours of the morning without, he noted, checking if he had a radio or identity card or permit. "I could have been anyone." He was right.



intentions are honourable, he might not like having to retrace his steps, and you may have to pay the additional fare, but he will understand (if not be exactly understanding). Do not let anyone make you feel as if you are being silly, or neurotic or childish. This is their problem, not yours. Men who sexually abuse small children invariably tell them to be 'grown up' when the child objects. Parents who prefer not to parent their small children will say 'he is very grown up for his age' 'she can look after herself'. No, looking after children is their parents' job and the responsibility of all adults. Children like to be called 'a big girl' and 'sensible'. They hate being told they are being silly. Nobody likes to be told they are being silly as this implies your feelings are trivial, juvenile, do not matter and are not relevant. Do not tell yourself you are 'just being silly'. You matter, your feelings matter and your safety matters.

A grown up woman is sure of herself, and puts her safety first, even if she inconveniences others. You do not owe anyone anything. A lone woman driver travelling through Turkey told me a café owner woke his wife up and they and his young son travelled with her so she would not have to travel far to the next village alone. Do not allow yourself to be driven to a remote and isolated house with someone you do not know, no matter what his age or alleged profession and professional standing, including a clergy and religious figures such as Roman Catholic priests unless you know that there are separate female quarters (which there will be if he is accustomed to visitors). This is a normal safety precaution, wherever you are.

Clothing and Luggage

As a security tactic travelling deepest, darkest Eastern and Central Europe, I wore a very visible, long, bright red coat. This attracted invariably good attention. I was called 'Piroska' (Little Red) — ensuring I struck up conversations with women, especially Cigany women, who also like the colour red. I was also easy to identify if I was meeting someone I had never met. It would not be easy for me to disappear unnoticed. Be mindful of what you are wearing, even in summer. If you are travelling alone keep covered everywhere. Better to be hot but modest, than cool and groped. You should be able to wear what you want, but the harsh reality is you cannot. As a Juror on a relatively recent sexual assault trial, I was appalled that the Jurors' private discussion prior to reaching a (thankfully guilty) verdict about the victim's culpability centred on what she was wearing, since despite being sexually assaulted in a tube station in the early evening, it was summer and she might have been wearing a skimpy dress. These sorts of attitudes have not disappeared.

When using a taxi make sure that the driver does not drive off with your luggage. Ensure that the driver takes your entire set of luggage out of the boot or from the roof in front of you. Do not let the driver remain in the car while you get out with the excuse that he (always a 'he') has released the boot button. Do not let 'helpful' porters or other travellers place your luggage 'safely' out of your sight. Do not place your bags out of sight anywhere, whether on a local underground train or bus, the Trans-Siberian railway, or at Heathrow airport. People earn a living from relieving passengers of their belongings at all major transport termini, and can spot a distracted, nervous or confused novice very easily. In the same way, do not bring brand new luggage on wheels that can break, since this screams 'new and uninitiated.' What will you do when the wheels buckle and you cannot carry the contents? Of what use is a guarantee thousands of miles from home? Will you bring the faulty trunk back with you six months later for a refund? Use old, worn bags with shoulder straps you can easily carry and easily identify and that do not suggest the contents are of much value. Also recall that, if you do not let your bags out of sight, no one can slip that extra kilo of cocaine or worse still, a bomb, into the side pocket.

Again, this is advice for all, but as a woman you are more likely to be targeted by someone seemingly helpful, and less likely to protest when your luggage is taken off you because this is seen in so many parts of the world as the chivalrous, gentlemanly thing to do. It can seem

churlish to refuse. And as a woman, you may have been brought up to expect this type of behaviour. London transport terminals are full of young women laden with bags they could not possibly carry; seemingly arriving with the assumption a man will assist. There can be a class, wealth or age component to this. I have assisted an elderly lady at Victoria Station in London when it seemed she would not be able to enlist the support of others to catch a cab. In other countries, porters — male and female — are a part of the travel experience and the assumption that there will be someone prepared to carry your load will be correct. But helpless maidens waiting for knights in shining armour will wait a long time in London.

Communication

Phones & Equipment

This section might seem unnecessary and will inevitably be out of date if I mention a particular form of equipment. However, it is worthwhile mentioning ICT companies make their profits from your dependency on them. ICT companies create an attachment that it is difficult to fulfil. They make their profits from you wanting more, and never quite getting enough of what you want, so you feel cut off, isolated, hungry for contact and a connection. As a trained Psychotherapist, I can say without fear of contradiction that dependency and attachment theories are utilised and exploited by unscrupulous companies who make their money out of you being dependent and attached to your phone, computer etc. Be prepared to be cut off. But also consider that your 'peoples' and the places they live in might have their own connections tucked away in an Internet café somewhere (perhaps the one you use) and can check you out. Might they be less hospitable, protective and respectful if they see the pictures of you drunk with your friends the night before you left? Might they not appreciate the personal comments you made about them and their customs and religion to your friends? Don't assume your accounts cannot be easily hacked into. Anything and everything you post on line can be exposed and used against you if it suits somebody's purpose.

If you lose your equipment, or it is stolen, you are liable for the costs until you can report it stolen to the police. Assuming you are even aware your equipment is no longer in your possession, where are the police? Will you be able to report the missing item directly to the provider and your insurance company? Private companies are about private profit and are not inclined to track their customers. As with on line banking, the burden of proof will be on you to demonstrate you were the victim of fraud or theft. This may not be so quickly or easily if you are overseas in a remote area.

Do not advertise yourself and your wares. You are a valuable commodity to someone, especially if you will be travelling to a country or region where kidnapping is a business and part of the local economy. The boundaries between what were once individual items of equipment — phone, internet, radio and camera — now all blurred, and with multi-function items costing hundreds of dollars, if not thousands Do not assume one piece of equipment will be sufficient. You might drop your mobile in the latrine — horrid, nasty bluebottle-and-cockroach infested places — your hand might not survive, let alone your phone. Nonetheless, aim to minimise gadgets as they attract unwanted attention, and without them you are forced to use your ingenuity and you will quickly learn the ways of seeing and doing other, poorer peoples require if they have to survive. The less you depend on others and on equipment, the more you are forced back on your own resources. Hone your observation skills. Think Graham Green and George Orwell. You will be twice as cautious if you haven't the feeling you can always call on others to help you out of trouble. Learn to rely on yourself and know your limits. You might also learn how to function in a world without intrusion.

Post

Use the old faithful, Post Restante (the arrangement by which you can pick up mail from a chosen Post Office), or at least be aware of its existence in all major cities all over the world. This probably sounds ridiculous to people under a certain age, but if you lose your phone, iPad or other item that acts as an umbilical cord to home, this is a backup plan. Post Restante is the international postal system successfully uniting friends and family for centuries — you can have mail directed to anywhere in the world. With one exception (Cyprus, where I suspect the local shopkeeper stuffed my postcards in the waste bin once I had paid for him to frank them and left his shop), ALL my letters and postcards have reached their destination — from India, Nepal, the Congo. One helpful postal worker returned a letter I had sent from Gaza to Ukraine with a note to say he could not read my handwriting and could I rewrite the address more clearly? He used the international language of the postal service, French. This used to be a matter of pride, and although I was advised to ‘mark’ the stamps so they could not be stolen, my experience has been overwhelmingly positive in the UK and overseas. Postmen and women are generally to be trusted and still, even in London, the Royal Mail fulfils a social function. In remoter areas, such as outback Australia and the disparate towns and settlements of New Zealand, where co-operation is a matter of survival, postal staff, like bus and coach drivers, are still an essential part of the life blood of the nation.

Accommodation, Location And Relocation

Where to look

How long are you staying for? It might be better to stay in a hotel and negotiate a cheaper rate — the definition of ‘better’ being safer and simpler. Or you could live with a family or share an apartment, or a compound of self-contained apartments where you are housed together with expats and other foreigners. There is always safety in numbers, especially if you need to be evacuated quickly in an emergency, and you could be a target for thieves and easier to kidnap if you are living alone and in an isolated area.

You might ‘inherit’ an apartment or a family from another worker. If so, you will have to consider if it is wise, the source of your recommendation, and if you might want to make a fresh start.

When choosing a neighbourhood, should you be close to other foreigners, in a comfortable, suburban neighbourhood, or on a busy street? You might not be able to apply the same approach as you would at home. It might be safer to be visible and close to public transport, or if you depend on a car, a gated, secure area. Secure for you and the car.

The benefits of being with other foreigners might also include higher standards (for which you pay for, naturally) of hygiene, and less frequent water and electricity cuts. The disadvantages might be that while you live in their country your contact with the local population is limited. In addition, if you are all foreigners together, that might also make you a target for thieves.

As a woman, it might be seen as appropriate for you to lodge with a family because that is what ‘decent’ single women do before they marry and go to live with their husband’s family in most parts of the world, including the UK until relatively recently. But if you consider yourself an adult and independent woman, this could be a struggle — like being in your teens and living with your parents again.

Women, by and large, have historically moved from being the responsibility of their fathers and brothers and uncles, to being the responsibility of their husbands, fathers and mothers in law, brother in law, and any son. Amongst certain socio-economic groups in all societies, where

WOMEN SHOULD ALWAYS SHARE an apartment with other women. Mixed sex friendships are seldom understood and this could prove a problem for you, rarely the man.



unmarried women give birth without the recognition or perhaps support of men, the father or their fathers and brothers, the State, the Temple, the Church or the Mosque becomes ultimately responsible, for good and bad. Not so much nanny state, than daddy state. If you are rich, you can play your own symphony, but if you are poor, who pays? And why should they? In return for submitting to his authority, a man will protect you, financially and physically. Morality is putting your family first for the majority of the world. If you are living in a society that does not have independent, third party protection (i.e. the police, 'blue light' services, social services and a welfare state), then who will care and take responsibility for you? And why would they want to? Even those countries who have some organised infrastructure designed to deal with the burden of unwanted children or those in need of protection from their parents, struggle to provide the sort of care a loving mother or father or family member might provide.

The 'formula' may change and not be instantly recognisable. In Hungary and Romania, Cigany or Gypsy peoples are matrilineal and matriarchal. Women are expected to be tough, stand their own and protect and support their families. It is the mother's family — her brothers and uncles, however, who play the more important role as they are 'blood' relatives. A Cigany man will always protect and fight for another Cigany woman in trouble with non-Cigany. A Kurd will always protect another Kurd, especially a woman ('their own') from a non-Kurd. In disasters, such as an earthquake which struck in the Van area of Turkey in 2011, emergency aid and relief workers reported how men take control of situations that are endangering their families, especially women and children, who are sent to relatives if possible, in safer regions. The men might remain to protect property, livelihoods such as surviving crops, and to rebuild if and where possible.



If you are a guest in a household, then you are the responsibility of the Master. This seems pretty universal, even if you are a paying guest.



This is not such an unusual pattern. In the UK in the Second World War, millions of children from cities such as London were evacuated to the safer countryside. However, unless very young and still breastfeeding, the women remained to work, run and protect the city with available men. My grandmother was a fire warden during the Blitz in London. Women in the UK had been required to take over male occupations as part of the war effort in World War One also. It would be stupid not to utilise half of the population physically and intellectually, since you would be halving your chances of success and survival. But this is just one way of interpreting segregation in a disaster or emergency like an earthquake. For sure, friendless and defenceless is no place to be in a harsh world. If you are genuinely afraid you might not survive, and are offered the hand of protection and security, accept an exit. Remain if you are emotionally, physically and intellectually equipped to manage the situation and could be of genuine and vital assistance. If you find yourself in such a disaster, and can be helpful, stay. It might be the making of you. But if not, do not add to peoples' burdens.

If you are a guest in a household, then you are the responsibility of the Master. This seems pretty universal, even if you are a paying guest. If you are a servant in a household, then you are the responsibility of your Master. You are under his authority. Literally you are 'in service' — this English Edwardian term became redundant after World War One in England as by and large, those landowning classes were wiped out in battle, their huge stately homes and country estates requisitioned by the state, their heirs confined to small wings or outhouses.

In many societies, I mention Palestinian, but this practice is widespread, a widow will be, if not expected to marry her husband's brother, required to consider this an option, so that any children 'remain' within the family. Of course, they may all be cousins. I recall a 30 something Palestinian widow explaining to me that she married her dead husband's brother because she was lonely and liked to have a man to cook for. He already had a wife and children, and she confided that although at first she resisted, after a couple of years, she relented because it was easier and better for the children that they would not be subject another man's authority. Remaining single did not seem an option.

You might struggle to convince your hosts that you would like to make your own arrangements. Their anxiety might be well-intended and you may need to be cautious. It may not be safe for you, or even several women, to lodge alone. You will be targets for ne'er do wells and will certainly have to contend with unexpected night time visitors. Thirty years ago, even in London, the custom of living alone understood as 'being independent' in the U.S. was rare. Women lodged together or stayed in women only hostels. Even if you could afford it, we thought 'why would you want to?' Living alone might be interpreted as a symptom of anti-socialness, not independence. No one chose to live with you. You would be certainly the object of pity if nothing else in most societies.

In the twenty-first century, however, the singleton household is very much the trend in London. Lone living is something to be aspired to and suggests a woman who can afford to live independently (or have rich parents). But you will still have safety concerns — not living in an apartment on the ground floor, for example. If you are residing in a society where it is not appropriate for women to be out unaccompanied after dark, you will be confined to the home. You must not receive male visitors unless they are accompanied by female relatives, even if they are work colleagues.

A German journalist writing about women of the Palestinian Authority was isolated and ostracized, partly because she was already in her mid-30s and thought to be recently divorced from a Palestinian (not confirmed), but also because she chose to share an apartment with a younger Palestinian man. Blond and pretty, she thought living with a local in Gaza was key to improving her spoken Arabic. She thought their relationship was platonic, even that she was doing him a favour because his accommodation in one of the huge refugee camps was overcrowded and noisy and there was no privacy. He was known locally as a chancer and disapproved of for many reasons, including (in their eyes) abandoning his family to live with a foreigner, an *aznabia* and an 'indecent' woman. She paid the rent. Not only was she living as if she was a prostitute, but she was paying for the pleasure. In Islamic, Hamas-run Gaza, it was murmured, what else could you expect from someone who associated with the Palestinian Authority, communists, thieves and whores, and not believers of any faith? Being secular meant you were 'in the sea' (as I was told, not without concern), with no spiritual direction or destination. Ignoring local morality and convention, if the journalist had wanted to improve her Arabic, certainly living with a family would have been a successful and acceptable method. But as it was, we, the international non-Palestinian staff, too, thinking her at best unbelievably stupid and naïve, at worst showing an arrogant disregard for local customs and beliefs, also avoided her, since we did not want to be guilty by association.

Your locally employed staff or projects manager might not be happy about you being alone. He (nearly always a he) might fail to understand that you are an independent woman, and not subject to his authority outside 'work' hours. His authority and standing might be intrinsically connected to yours in his eyes, and the eyes of the local community. If you 'behave' badly, this reflects badly on him as he feels shamed. I was unable to convince a university principal who had recruited me to work in Northern Iraq (the Autonomous Kurdish region) that I was not about to be settled in a local hotel with other female staff and had obviously researched

the price, availability and standard of local accommodation. He genuinely did not see that I would, could or should make my own arrangements. I would come under his authority, since I would be alone and he would be my boss. He was staggered that I had other connections and other offers of accommodation prior to departure. Presumably he was not aware, or did not approve of, these. Perhaps he or his family owned the hotel I was to stay in. But this was not to be a short trip, and I did not want to stay in a hotel without being able to cook for myself or surround myself with at least some of my belongings. Perhaps he was keeping me away from prying eyes or perhaps his eyes would be doing the prying. Who knows? I never went.

You might have to make those sorts of decisions. Depending on your age and experience, this could be easy or difficult. If you are young with no dependents and responsibilities other than for yourself, then go. You can always go home, after all, if things don't work out.

It can be extremely difficult for a woman to be in a position of authority, however well qualified. Undermining a woman in authority, especially if she is young and unmarried, can be a male, or female, pursuit. Not all women are sisters. Female medical students are often warned about female nurses in accident and emergency departments, since these thought to be the most intelligent and more likely to 'compete' with the female doctors, while flirting with the male. This can feel demoralising and disempowering. It is intended to. But it can also be dangerous and confusing for patients and subordinates who might need to look to your experience and expertise in a crisis. This can amount to bullying, but it is probably better not to focus on the impact on you (don't give them the satisfaction), but the impact on subordinates, students or colleagues for example, who need to have faith in your judgement, skills, knowledge and expertise. All of these you have lots of. That is why you are more qualified than they, and you are in charge. Do not personalise the issue, but focus on the impact on achieving your organisation's objectives. Be cool, professional, reasoned and reasonable. Perhaps there is no ill intent, but preconceptions and assumptions other than the ones you are accustomed to in your culture. With a man, you might be able to collude and collaborate. You have different areas of expertise to offer, different roles and services. Complement his, do not compete. You are not there to prove a point or strike a blow for women's rights. If proving a point of principle means you place achieving your goals and objectives, as well as your organisations', your project's and your colleagues in jeopardy, then choose another battle.

But these games can all become rather tiresome. I used to be on the World Health Organisation's Disaster and Preparedness Response Roster. But in truth, once you are experienced enough to be asked to take on those sorts of assignments, you are experienced enough to not want to go.

Short term

For the short term, a hotel, bed and breakfast, pension etc. or even a YMCA is the easiest option. It might be the only option if you are a woman. Renting an apartment is usually reserved for families. In cities all over the world, where low or no-skilled men come to work casually — labourers and day wagers that work on the building sites of London, Istanbul, Rio, Calcutta, Budapest, 'worker's hostels', or 'multiple occupancy' accommodation.. Inexpensive and poor quality, there will be a complementary industry of cheap cafes and places to hang out as an option prior to returning to what essentially is a bed and, if you are lucky, a bathroom you share with ten others. Women do not seem to have a place in this sector of society. Low and no-skilled women often clean, look after richer peoples' children, and can be accommodated in the hotels and households they work in. A man of any age could be interpreted as a threat and an intruder to a household. Any social worker will tell you it is very difficult to find homes for even young boys of nine or ten years because they are seen as potentially trouble makers. The situation is reversed for women, who might need protecting from someone in the household, neighbour, friend or acquaintance, from unwanted sexual attention. In bodice and bonnet dra-

mas and literature, maidservants are portrayed as prey to the unwanted attention of the Masters of the household. If they become pregnant, they will be evicted and receive some sort of payment only if they are lucky. In contrast, a good looking and charming valet or manservant will prey on the pretty young mistress of the household in the hope of getting her pregnant, and either be paid to marry her, or paid to disappear and take the child with him. Men, rightly or wrongly, are universally viewed as predators, women their prey.

Religious missions

In a remote location a mission or religious compound would offer protection, company and security (psychological as well as physical). The local population would 'understand' you in terms of this connection. You might not share their beliefs, but most missions are long-established and have a recognisable position and respect in the society within which they live. They provide rudimentary schooling and health services. They understand the local population and the local population will understand them in ways you will not understand either. In some areas of Papua New Guinea, Brazil, Columbia, sub Saharan Africa, they are the only option. Not forming some sort of relationship with the local mission could be a big mistake because it might send out the wrong signal to the local population that you are there to assist. You might be perceived as a non-believer, not worthy of protection. Perhaps, people might wonder if the mission has rejected you for some reason. And if you have no religious or ideological conviction to serve the poor, why are you there in the first place?

Most peoples understand and value the concept of 'science' and a simple explanation such as looking for herbs or antidote to a particular disease or condition will be valued. The humanities are less understood because there is no obvious gain for the peoples being studied. You might, of course, pose a risk. Perhaps you are secretly looking for gold, or there are oil and minerals in the vicinity. Consider the previous experiences of the peoples whom you choose to live amongst. If they have they been exploited and colonised, their caution might be justified.

All major religions have international networks providing the traveller with a place to rest, I use the Christian example because this is the one I am most familiar with. I am eternally indebted to the Salvation Army in Wellington, New Zealand, for (more than thirty years ago) allowing me and three other young women to stay in what was a newly opened hostel for homeless men. We had not realised it was not a backpackers', and had followed directions to a 'hostel' late one dark and rainy night. The manager relocated one 'guest' so we could use a dormitory as a female only floor and it was not until breakfast the next morning we learnt the true nature of our accommodation. Obviously, we seemed desperate and presumably desperately naïve, but since the hostel was new, there were few beds taken, and we could afford to make a donation that others might not have the funds for, this suited everyone.

Islam has a great tradition of hospitality to travellers. That is not to say there are no inhospitable Muslims who will take advantage of a stranger, especially in larger, more anonymous cities, but the tendency seems to be to extend a warm hand of welcome. Likewise, Israelis seem happy to accommodate complete strangers on their floors provided they have some sort of 'reference' or a connection can be made (not too difficult, given how small the Jewish population of Israel is). The English do not tend to throw open their homes to strangers. Our (I am English) homes are our castles. The English, according to many peoples, are mean. I recall being told confidently by one Palestinian (who had never left his refugee camp) that the English were so mean, 'they do not even offer you a cup of tea'. Since I was probably the only English person he had met, he could only have meant me. Now this is absolutely untrue. A cup of tea (and a biscuit) is all you will probably be offered, but not when visiting the bank, the local store, your office, as is the custom in much of provincial Orient. But he was right. Compared to many peoples, we are mean.

Long term stays

Arranging accommodation for long-term stays can be tiresome and there are no hard and fast rules. I have never had to use the services of an agent in the UK or overseas, which speaks volumes about me or the cities I have lived in. Connections are everything. Often someone, somewhere will be taking a share of the proceeds. In Romania, I rented a desperately awful room from a woman who was an accountant, and known by someone who knew someone. I was lucky, as this sort of accommodation would house a family of four, and at least I had a kitchen, bathroom and my own balcony where I could hang my washing. For me, the condition of the room was something I had previously only seen in photographs of nineteenth century slums, but unless I wanted to stay in an equally miserable hotel without being able to cook or clean my clothes independently, with my activities constantly monitored by security services of some sort or another, I had no choice. In the early 1990s, private accommodation was not a feature of Romanian housing.

Afterwards, I was warned about talking with hairdressers or accountants ‘they know everyone’s business’ I was counselled. Romania’s own brand of indigenous oppression and extensive network of informants (estimated to be one in 30 people in the 1980s) meant this was not an unfounded accusation, but a statement of fact born of bitter experience.

YOUR GAS MIGHT COME FROM bottles delivered monthly. Switch on and off and keep off when not in use. Be very careful with gas. Switching on an electric light can ignite a room filled with gas.

What to look for: Responding to Risks

Local accommodation and neighbourhoods might include the sort of fire hazards you are not accustomed to. The electricity and water supply might not be connected properly. In Gaza, we would hang pictures wearing rubber gloves in case the wiring was perilously close to the hammer and nail we were using. The only time I have been electrocuted was in Gaza using a kettle that leaked. I was thrown away from the work top and my arm felt as if I had been punched.

This sort of advice might be greeted with snorts of derision for being obvious. But it may not be so obvious if you are from a relatively safe and secure home, and have never had to think about your how and where your utilities are from, merely how to pay for them. Know how you can shut down your gas, electricity and water supply, and if this cannot be done in your apartment, who is responsible. If there is a meter, and bills are separate, find out how much it is usual to pay on a monthly or quarterly cycle. You don’t want to pay for the entire building.

In your accommodation you also might want to fit an additional lock, because you don’t know who else has a key, why they might want it, and when they might use it. I received a very late night visit by my landlord in Romania demanding additional payments. Luckily, I had an additional lock and chain and did not let him in, but it was a frightening experience because he knew I was alone and given the experience of the majority of the population with police and security, cries for help were unlikely to be answered. In many parts of the world, including parts of Europe, you do not involve the police in your problems because the police are considered untrustworthy and corrupt and will add to the problem, not solve it. So who is there to help if you are a victim of crime? Your neighbours may have a policy of ‘hear no evil, speak no evil, see no evil.’ Working in London with women trafficked from sub-Saharan Africa and Moldova into Western Europe for prostitution, all claimed the police from their point of exit and entry collude and co-operate with the industry, not investigating with an aim of preventing.

Negotiating

You may or may not be able or expected to negotiate. As a woman, you may be expected to be shrewd. In cultures where being a housewife is a respected, full time job, women are expected to drive a hard bargain where the family budget is concerned. Be firm and polite and do not be embarrassed about discussing money. But you may not receive a written contract and,

invariably, you will be asked to pay in cash. Paying the household bills may be complicated and time consuming, so insist, when possible, they are included as part of the rent. Don't expect a refund for erratic water or electricity supplies. Paying well in advance might not be a good idea. You won't know what you are getting and what the 'norm' is until you have been around for two or three months. Be scrupulously honest, even if people are not honest with you.

Finances and Money

You might be a long way from a bank and find that your salary, if it is paid in an international currency and paid into a bank account, could be of little immediate use. You will need 'hard' currency — dollars, pounds, euros etc. in cash. Do not rely on any mobile devices. You may not be able to use them outside the more developed urban areas or capital cities. Even cash might be of little interest. In the remoter areas of sub-Saharan Africa, Brazil, the Indian sub-continent or Papua New Guinea, cash is only needed for specific needs such as fuel, so it is far better to trade goods. For example, throughout the Pacific Melanesia and Polynesia, Chinese supermarkets have recently sprung up. Packet noodles can then be purchased in impromptu roadside stalls from locals hoping to make a small profit. Rice, cooking oil, tea, coffee, powdered milk, sugar, salt; all manner of staples are appreciated by villagers unable to afford the fare into larger towns and harbours, or who might not be able to physically carry much back into the bush with them. If electricity is in short supply (assuming it exists at all), candles, paraffin, matches, lighters, batteries are all valued provisions. Think your local hardware store. In the Gulf of Papua some items called 'European' food were not of interest. In the coastal areas, 'European' food included bananas and pawpaw, however tinned fish and corned beef, i.e. protein that could be stored, was an essential item of any larder or food storage area, and a desired commodity.

You might be obliged to exchange goods for lodging. Confirm beforehand what contribution or compensation is suitable. In some situations, it might be refined white sugar, alcohol, tobacco or cigarettes. You will have to decide if you are happy about this.

The further away from major towns and cities, the more valuable mechanical goods (not necessarily electrical), tools and hardware became. All of these are tradable. What might not be of much use on a day to day basis is a credit card, although this and cash will get you out of many emergencies when an international hotel with an international reputation to protect that can arrange a flight urgently. Their income depends on protecting you, a rich foreigner, after all.

Personal Finance

Many people do internet banking, but if there is no reliable internet access where you are, you might want to think about having your mail directed to somewhere safe at home, where someone you trust can keep an eye on your bank balance. Even if you can find internet access, will it be secure? The lengthy 'no responsibility' clauses you have to agree to before accessing Hong Kong airport's free internet service suggest even the airport authorities are not entirely sure your privacy will not be breached. The sneakiest internet hackers can be found in the poorest countries, since needs must.

Notify your bank of your whereabouts. As with your smartphone or other mobile, iPad etc. if you lose your card or are robbed, you will be liable for payments until the theft is reported. But if there is no one to report to? Or you do not realise for a while that the card is missing? Then the burden of proof will be on you to prove the card was lost or stolen, and that might not be so easy. Some banks will be helpful, others not. Shortly before one Christmas, I found a wallet on the bus in London with several bank cards inside. It was not the bank that was concerned

when I reported I had found the owner's debit card. They refused to respond or even take my details, other than to 'monitor unusual activity' even though it seemed the owner had not yet reported the card as stolen. Apparently this is procedure. No, it was the supermarket card call centre staff who were exceptionally helpful. Eventually, I took the wallet to the bus garage. Do not assume all people are dishonest or unhelpful, nor that bank staff will be the most helpful where your money is concerned.

Currency

It is tempting to say that US dollars are a universally welcome currency. This used to be the case, but now I am not sure. In areas of Africa, Euros are not greeted with the same enthusiasm as the Central African Franc, pegged to the French Franc, once was, and I am convinced that huge swathes of rural East and Central Europe are still squirreling away German Marks, oblivious to the grand European Union Euro Project. Being English, I would encourage the carrying of the UK pound, but this may not be useful outside Commonwealth countries. This is part of your homework. Check the currency of choice in the part of the world you are travelling to, not necessarily the same as the currency that will buy you a flight or an emergency exit. What people want and like to be paid with, in the remoter parts of the world is not always the same currency that the stock markets of London, New York, Frankfurt et al promote and trade in. Countries like Turkey are now stronger economically and politically surer of themselves and their place in the world than 30 or 40 years ago and the currency — rate and willingness to trade and use as a form of exchange — will reflect this.

Banks

Working in a bank is still a prestigious job in countries where people largely live from the land and schooling is a luxury. A quick glance at the suited and booted, pale and smooth skinned tellers will give you a fair indication of their social and economic status. In hot climates, being 'fair' can be desirable because this means you don't work in a field, hence marriage adverts in countries of the Indian sub-continent and the Gulf States claiming 'fair skinned' ladies and potential suitors. In the Arab world, a man may sport a long manicured nail on his small finger. This is designed to tell you he does not do a physical job for a living (although I have seen this finger nail feature on market stallholders, so perhaps this is wishful thinking).

Banking staff deliver a service, and expect their respect and courtesy to be reciprocated. In provincial towns of Eastern and Central Europe, Asia and the Near East, I have been served tea and received an ambassadorial style welcome from staff eager to practice their English and display hospitality towards an unaccompanied woman. Respond in kind and accept graciously and gratefully. This may be your only chance to relax in air-conditioned comfort, and if you are hoping to receive money from home, you may have a long wait. Accept generosity of spirit in the spirit it is intended.

Think also of possible personal risks. Using a bank marks you as someone who is rich enough to have a bank account or receive money from overseas. Be wary you are not being watched and careful not to go straight home if you are living independently. Drug addicts and drunks attack instinctively without thinking of the consequence for you and them. Clever thieves bide their time.

Black market

There is a moral issue here you may not have encountered before. Travelling through Eastern Turkey into Iran in 1987, my companions and I stuffed our dollars and black market Iranian currency into our tent poles. How gleeful we were that we had tricked the Iranians, although we were less smug as we unsuccessfully attempted to extract our stash later on.

YOU SHOULD BEAR IN MIND that all over the world banks will close over public holidays, even if local shops remain open. If you need their services, also remember that they may be impacted by strikes or civil unrest.

Later, I understood that Diyarbakir was, and remains, a hotbed of ne'er-do-wells, informers, infiltrators, Kurdish activists and revolutionaries, and the miserable flotsam of revolutions and wars, its prison notoriously awful. As a blond 21 year old 'girl' with her nose pierced, it was unlikely my presence would go unnoticed by the Iranians, Kurds, Turks or anyone else for that matter. That I wasn't arrested on one border or another is probably due to their benign amusement. It is amazing what a young 'girl' or woman can get away with in countries where you are 'indulged' as a flibbertigibbet. If they had thought I was really up to anything untoward, I would still be there now, but others have not been so lucky. In 2009, straying over the border into Iran, three American hikers served up to two years of an eight year jail sentence for spying. Were they guilty, or guilty of being naïve, arrogant or ignorant?

More significantly, you will be cheated by those more shrewd, cunning and with greater sleight of hand, as most professional black marketeers would be. The widespread use of credit cards and cash machines in tourist areas means you might not need to use the black market any more, although inevitably there will be a difference in the rates you obtain for cash. If you choose to exchange money on the black market, then exchange with a shopkeeper whom you can return to, and for whom there are more severe consequences if they are caught. You may never see the person on the street again and they may hurry the transaction claiming they are being watched or the police are about to come. This is usually a ruse to confuse you into handing over large sums of money in return for small or worthless ones. The police may be involved and take a share of the spoils if sufficient.

You may also be 'cheated', however, by very formal and respectable looking currency exchange offices, so check the rate, any commission and hidden fees. An Albanian colleague was charged £60 for exchanging money by what she had assumed was an official exchange on London's Oxford Street. She was reduced to tears, as this was more than the average monthly salary in Albania at the time.

International monetary systems are about international financial controls and the more the black market is pushed further into the black, i.e. the less ordinary people are involved because it is not financially worth their while taking the risk, the more the black market becomes inhabited by the sort of people you really would not want to have anything to do with, when dealing with sums of money most ordinary people could not afford to lose. You would have to be exchanging huge sums of cash to make it worthwhile for you or them to absorb the risk, and then the risk is mostly on your side. You are on their territory and you will be negotiating largely according to their rules. Do you really want to become involved with people like that? Will you be more or less likely to be cheated if you are a woman? Everything is in the perception. You can assume their perception would mostly be as a woman, you are weaker, less nasty, more vulnerable emotionally and physically and ergo, easier to cheat. And if you had been me on that Turkish Iranian border town in 1987, they would have been right, although thankfully this was not put to the test.

Shopping

Support your local economy and become a familiar face at the same time by shopping locally and in markets. Sometimes only, comforting familiar "home" commodities (such as Marmite or PG Tips tea from the UK) from the expensive, foreign-owned and foreign produce supermarket will do. But the best way to get to know other people, to learn and practice the local language, perhaps through growing familiarity with other women (we say 'mother tongue' after all) and to become acquainted with the lifestyles and foodstuffs of the peoples hosting you, is to shop in the local markets. How men trivialise shopping and demean and reduce the skill of the careful and cunning housewife. This involves finding the best cuts, the choicest meats and the freshest fruit. Housewifery is a skill women in other countries are still proud of and so, too, should

you be. The cheapest? The best value? The best quality? Jenna, Jerusalem, Kashgar, Timisoara, Etcetera, Kharkov to St Alban's to London's Cricklewood and Paddington Church St. I have shopped in them all. Women the world over will share their shopping tips — the stallholder who cheats, who and where are the pickpockets, the time to arrive, when products are being sold in bulk at the end of the day, when to stalk the price-reduction sticker man in the supermarket, the best tea stall or ice cream parlour when you are done. This gives you a competitive edge.

If, as a woman, you are an honoured guest with access to men's worlds, only a woman will have exclusive access to this particular world of trade and commerce. I have been invited for tea in Kashgar by Turkic women, unable to communicate other than the basics with us, but eager to learn where we were from, show us photos of their families, and be hospitable in a way jaded, cynical and suspicious Londoners and city folk might balk at. It is women you must listen to. What you should wear, where you should go and not go, who you can mix with and who you should be wary of. Men will always say 'oh, it is ok for you. We know you are not a local girl'. This invariably means wearing something or behaving in a way considered completely inappropriate if it were their sister. Watch what other women do and learn. Heed advice. It is true that in most societies, with the exception perhaps of Saudi Arabia or Iran, it is not compulsory for non-Muslims to veil. However, it is respectful of you to veil. It is their home. In doing so, you acknowledge their values, their customs, their conventions. This might also serve to hide and disguise your blond hair. Not always an asset, blond hair often acts as a magnet for men in societies where fairness is not the norm and pornographic films are viewed as documentaries.

All this information will be transmitted at a market. Young children who may be learning basic English or a world language such as Russian or Spanish in school, will be recruited to translate by a parent or older person less educated, with less opportunities, but eager to learn from you, as much as teach you, how to live as an adult woman in their culture. In societies where literacy is restricted, knowledge is transmitted orally, hence the superior status of the elderly. Without libraries or modern technology, who can you learn from if not your grandmother, your aunt, your school teacher? And that is what you have to do. Learn how to be a woman in the society you have chosen to live in from women.

Clothes and shoes, cosmetics and perfume, the hair and beauty salon — as a woman, you will be expected to be acquainted with those industries and professionals that 'pretty' women, as a Lithuanian beautician once called it. And why not? It can be fun and relaxing and the relationships you develop with other customers and the beauticians, as much as the information you obtain, put you at a competitive advantage. In worlds where relationships are everything, women's relationships are as significant as men's. And men cannot go into beauticians. Beauty Parlours are where the interesting stuff happens away from prying male eyes and unsympathetic ears.

Gold and Jewellery

Except for a wedding ring, conspicuous consumption, gold and silver, might be best left at home — particularly if your treasures have a sentimental value. However, if not something belonging to your deceased grandmother, gold is a great universal and easily recognisable trading commodity. In many countries of Asia and the Near and Middle East, craftsmanship is not a significant part of the expense, as gold is continually smelted down and reused as part of wedding dowries. Only the weight and purity is important. It is useful to have old gold rings to trade in emergencies, or as an exchange for fuel or transport costs, although the harder nine carat (red gold) that is common in the UK is not popular because it is less pure than softer, yellower, 22 or 24 carat that can be more easily smelted.

If you are especially knowledgeable and know what you are buying and selling, diamonds and precious stones are an untraceable form of exchange. Becky Sharpe in Thackeray's **Vanity Fair** sews diamonds into the hem of her dress as she flees Napoleon's army. This suggests she believed she would be less likely as a woman to be searched. A man might be searched and have the lining of his coat cut to see if he has any hidden letters or money stashed away. But this would seem indecent if a woman. Many Gypsy women traders in the markets of Eastern and Central Europe hide their purses in their bras, assuming this is a safe space and they are unlikely to be relieved of their wad of cash if it is tucked against their bosom. As a woman, you might be more likely approached to buy jewellery, especially by other women. I was amused to be approached by Romanian Gypsy women at the rear of Selfridges — a huge department store in London — using an old-established trick first used on me more than 20 years earlier in Transylvania. Aggressive attempts to persuade you to part with your cash by offering 'gold' rings or necklaces should be met with polite indifference. Given the timelessness of this ruse, it must work on someone otherwise it would have been abandoned. Do not be persuaded to buy precious stones and metal unless you are absolutely sure of their value and know what you are doing. Chances are, you won't.



A wedding ring is not a universal marker of attachment and a specific status, but is very widely recognisable: for most peoples it says I am 'taken', I am 'respectable', I am not 'fair game'. Wear a wedding ring if you want men to keep their distance, but do not deceive people once you are better acquainted. They will understand why you wear a ring if you are not married. If you do not want to play that sort of game, it is your choice. But be mindful rings can be dangerous. Jumping out of trucks, caught in bushes, there is the risk that your finger could be wrenched off.

Recreation

Cinema

When I lived in Gaza, the cinemas there had been fire-bombed. When I asked why I was told that people prefer to watch films at home. This seemed unlikely if 'home' was a one room refugee structure shared by 15 people. In extremely conservatively religious countries, a darkened, public space is seen to be fraught with dangers for a 'Lady'. Watching inappropriate films (read: foreign), might also be frowned upon, in favour of a film industry from a country such as Egypt or India where the values regarding sex, sexual relations, decency and modesty are shared.

In India, peoples of all layers of society are fanatical about film and film stars, and while a woman might not go alone, groups of women can be seen in shopping malls and food and retail outlets on a night out that will include a film. I am not sure how many women in countries like the UK or US go to the cinema alone, but they do have the option. I don't, but largely because I want to share the experience and enjoy a night out at the cinema as an event. Small, independent cinemas in cities like Oxford are cosy and inviting and unthreatening, while a multi-screen, cinema complex in London seems vast and characterless, and somehow a soulless experience. I have never been to such a cinema alone in London, so I am not about to start in Istanbul or Lagos.

I recall one late night trip to the cinema in Fez, Morocco. Camping on the outskirts, there was nothing to do in the evening, so we (I and two male friends) hitched a lift to town and went to the cinema. The eight o'clock showing turned out to be the nearest thing to a porn film the

cinema would run. Clearly the local men preferred big bottoms and the camera would gleefully zoom in on these, but no breasts or full frontal nudity. There seemed to be a fair amount of toe sucking. Puzzlingly the film that followed this was Michael Jackson's 'Moonwalker' which is actually aimed at a young teen market, but seemed to be considered racier by the audience. Only we could not take all his crotch grinding and grabbing seriously.

Going to the cinema on a small island can be the highlight of the week. 'Cinema' might be stretching the term a bit, as the screen could be a white board or even just a telly and an ancient video. In the 1970s, on Mangaia, the 'cinema' was run by the by a local shopkeeper with the assistance of the dental health officer, and since coins were in short supply on the island at the time, change was in toffees.



Most cultures do not recognise platonic 'friendships' between men and women are really possible. Men tend to occupy public social spaces, while women and 'their' children (placed in the same category) are confined to the domestic and private.



Restaurants and Cafes

Look around the café you are in. Are the customers mostly men, women or families? If exclusively the former, perhaps this is not the place for you. Your presence might be interpreted as intrusive (by the men), or inappropriate, or even 'asking for it'. 'It' being sex. Most cultures do not recognise platonic 'friendships' between men and women are really possible. Men tend to occupy public social spaces, while women and 'their' children (placed in the same category) are confined to the domestic and private.

Sometimes the type of café or restaurant is significant. Given women are infantilised, and infantilise, themselves, all over the world, it is no surprise ice cream parlours, patisseries and confectioners are deemed appropriate places for women (and their children, of course). In Eastern and Central Europe, cafes can be open from 6am till 10pm at night and these are understood as 'respectable' places for lone women to snack, read a book, even drink alcohol, and spend time in if they are reluctant to return to their accommodation for some reason. It would be assumed that the woman did not have a man or children to return to, or perhaps they could not afford to heat their apartment. Perhaps they are lonely, unattractive and unwanted. You would not be harassed. Men do not tend to hang out in these sorts of cafes, although they might take a female companion to one. When I was conducting research in Eastern and Central Europe, I frequented such cafes. I was obviously 'foreign' and thus excused from normal mores and values. I was a curiosity because I was foreign, but not necessarily because I was alone.

But in countries and amongst cultures where women are excluded from public life, where men live in dormitories or hostels without cooking facilities, cafes can be men only, smoking arenas where 'normal' men meet. In Greece, Turkey the Near and Middle East, if a café provides a very real practical function (food) as well as a social one, then be selective. You will not necessarily be welcome. You may be guided to a 'family' area at the rear or second level of the café or restaurant. This is politeness and good manners and should not always be interpreted as hostility, although misogyny may play a part. On one expedition along the Pakistan side of the

Karakorum Highway, my companion and I were left in no doubt as to the proprietor's views on women. We were not ejected, but directed with a surly finger and a nod (he did not speak) to a table above the eating area, and served coffee with a snarl. We were not veiled and presumably European women were not held in high regard. There did not seem any evidence of hospitality and we were not accorded any concessions for being overseas travellers. This may not be the usual case, but you need to be aware that your reception may not always be warm and enthusiastic. A waiter might be hoping to guide you to an area where he thinks you might be more comfortable, especially if the atmosphere is smokey — or he might think you are a slut.

Of course, there can be huge differences in the ways more cosmopolitan cities manage the sexes and overseas visitors to those found in a provincial town or village. The ever easy-going Turks of Istanbul were happy to play the game and guide what was obviously a transvestite to the 'family' area. No one seemed bothered. She/he was veiled and equally playing the game (or a game of some sort). At six foot or so and with enormous feet, there could be no doubt this was a man, but not a transvestite working in the sex industry as far as we could tell, otherwise the response might have been different. A sex worker would have frequented a different establishment anyway.

In Eastern Turkey, it is another story. While a male bank clerk will serve you tea as you wait for a transaction, women and family areas in cafes and public areas, including transport, indicate a sexual apartheid you had better abide by. Never sit next to a strange man on a night bus. It would not be seen as appropriate for him, and therefore a man who wants to sit next to you on a night bus should be viewed with suspicion. Older women will encourage you to sit amongst or next to them. This is public-spirited and you should accept this gesture as well-intentioned. I have been invited to sit with older women in taxis and on buses throughout the Near and Middle East, as well as eastern Hungary and Romania — historically considered 'Oriental', despite membership of the European Union, reflecting the similarities in cultures and sex segregation (in my perception as an English woman brought up in London). This is unsurprising, given at one stage regions of what is now Romania they were part of the Ottoman Empire. Eastern Orthodox Christian peoples have a lot more in common with Islamic peoples, as opposed to Western Christianity, than either would appreciate, recognise or acknowledge.

Expatriate and Other Clubs

Many people dismiss Expat Clubs as being remnants of class ridden, colonial times, But as a woman, these may be the only places you can relax, drink alcohol and mix feely with men. If the language you work in is not your mother tongue, an Embassy, nationality, or business related club such as the Rotary or Chamber of Commerce, might be the only place you get a chance to speak with other nationals. Besides, your Embassy needs to know you are there and what you are doing, if only in case of an emergency or evacuation. If English is your mother tongue, you can operate with ease in most places and make a wide range of friends.

Although the situation might be changing, more women than men working overseas seem to be single. Men do not follow women and support their careers in the way women do men. I only once came across a diplomatic househusband and he was considered a bit odd, lonely and self-conscious in relation to his position. He did not seem to have a network he could attach himself to. A man in a demanding career which requires overseas travel and extended periods of stay abroad expects, and by in large, receives the support of his wife or partner. Children do as they are told if they are not financially independent. Women in demanding careers requiring overseas travel and extended periods of stay abroad are few and far between.

Same sex relationships are easier to 'disguise' if you are women. Same sex marriage in the UK is too new for same sex relationships to be 'tested' overseas, i.e. the partnership receive the

same rights, privileges and status as male female marriages. And if the 'overseas' is somewhere that only recognises one form of sexual relationship as legitimate or acceptable, your organisation will not permit you to contravene local laws, cultural norms or sensibilities.

If you work largely with men, the only places you get to meet other women might be beauticians, embassies or expatriate clubs. If this is your situation, then think of joining an organisation such as the International Women's Association. You might think these are for 'wives', but you will always meet someone you get on with. I made two friends for life in the IWA in Budapest, at a time that I mostly worked with (married) men and was desperate for female company. Male colleagues tend not to stay in touch with their female colleagues as their wives don't like it. However, veteran wives, who see their role as a job with status, are not threatened by you (they might even feel sorry for you). I am indebted to British Embassy wives all over the world who offered scrambled eggs, a cosy bed and luxury smelly toiletries for the night when rough camp life got too much. Military and Corporate wives alike lead difficult lives too, only difficult in a different way to you. Many are independent and tough as you (they might have met their husbands serving together), and spend long periods running the household alone. It is the younger, more resentful women whom you might not be able to strike up a friendship with. Resentful if they believe that they abandoned a promising career to follow a man and feel inferior and uncomfortable in the presence of a woman who is mistress of her own ship. But this is their problem. They had a choice and if it was the wrong one for them, hard luck. Avoid dissatisfied, unhappy women especially overseas. You are not responsible for their well-being. Women have choices and women make mistakes the same as men, and need to take responsibility for them. There is nothing more boring than a bored woman moaning about the burdens of married life and children who is not taking responsibility for her situation or control of her life. You are not one of them. You are Fierce, Fearless and Fearsome.

Sport, Fun and Fitness

For your own well-being you need to do some sort of exercise if you are living overseas for longer periods; but as a woman this can be difficult because in the vast majority of the world, sport is a male-only zone. Aerobics and Pilates might be available in more urban areas and these will be segregated as they are, in fact, all over the world, since they are linked to beauty not fitness. This can place you at an advantage since men cannot enter these sacred areas.

Likewise Hamams, or baths, mineral or thermal, are ideal places to socialise and relax and gossip. As discussed under 'Health', you may find yourself the object of attention and curiosity. Are you a natural blond they will wonder as your pubic area is stared at, in part because in the Arab world pubic hair has always been removed for hygiene not beauty reasons. If you only get the chance to wash once a week, then it is cleaner and less smelly to remove hair. Young children might be discouraged from accompanying the women to mineral baths as they are considered too harsh or unhealthy, and anyway, the women want an excuse for a bit of 'me' time. Over the age of seven years or so, i.e. the age when a boy might experience erections and night time emissions, males will be excluded from the safety and warmth of the female world for the harshness of the male and become the responsibility of an older brother. This age segregation is practised all over the world — English Public Prep boarding schools admit boys as young as seven. Some girls also may be sent to school at an early age, but this tends to be disapproved of by all but the heartless, as if girls are 'more sensitive' than boys and should be retained in the domestic environment longer.

Consider also that many women over the age of 20 will be burdened by childcare responsibilities, their own and other peoples', leisure time without children would be considered unusual for women. Indeed, for the most part women from Italy, to the Arabian Peninsula,

and to the Indian and the Pacific Oceans would find the idea of not being accompanied by a gaggle of small children, their own and other peoples', strange and a bit sad. In Hungary, I would be asked in a concerned sort of way by my young Gypsy students when I would have children, since many of their mothers were younger than me and had had children in their mid and late teens.

Recently, a Brazilian client (male) confidently told me if a woman was not married and with a child by 30 years, 'she went a bit mad'. I would always encourage a woman to initiate a society or club or sport, but you might find you are thought of as mad, sad (you don't have any children to occupy your time with and this is some sort of substitute) or bad (for distracting women from their duties as wives and sisters and mothers), or a combination of all three.

Boating, Sailing, Windsurfing

If taking part in the sporting activities you should have safety concerns. Will there be life jackets? Is the boat as seaworthy as you would want, like and expect? Is there a Coastguard to call if you get in trouble? Is there a risk of being the victim of piracy? In many areas of the non-passenger, seafaring world, a woman on board is seen as unlucky, although historically this has not prevented sailors from bringing prostitutes on board. One Papua New Guinean woman told me as a young girl she got into trouble in her canoe, and was hauled aboard a professional trawler. She had to hide from her father for many days, as she was understood to have shamed him by being alone with strange men while on board, despite the fact she had been rescued.



You should, as always, consider what you will wear, where you will change, what you will change into, and even if a swimming costume or diving suit is considered appropriate attire.

You should, as always, consider what you will wear, where you will change, what you will change into, and even if a swimming costume or diving suit is considered appropriate attire. In many countries, and non-, women bathe fully clothed and a bikini is out of the question. However, this seems also to be the case for many Pacific Islanders, including Papua New Guinea, only relatively recently Christian and not. Observe local women, and wear as a minimum shorts and a t-shirt unless you are on one of the expensive package tour resorts. If so, keep to the resort and only venture out if you are sure of the local culture, language and sensitivities.



Cricket

Cricket speaks the language of the British Empire and any man can take part in a cricket match. Female cricket teams exist in all the countries that men's cricket is played, but in a diverse range of forms. If you want to take this form of exercise in a non-cricketing country or in a rural area, you might have to start up your own team. It can be good-natured and a great leveller. Appropriately dressed women, i.e. legs covered, would not be prevented from taking part.

Cycling

Cycling has an enormous evangelical following in many countries in the west these days, so I though it merited its own sub heading. But I am not sure about cycling if you are a woman. A bit like dancing, many societies enjoy dance, but are hypocritical, dancing being associated with prostitution. While feted on film, actresses, because of their alleged freedoms and lack of inhibition performing in front of others, their attention seeking — were assumed to be if not prostitutes, but 'free' with their affection. Cycling and any physical exercise that implies or indicates a woman is more relaxed about her body physically, suggests to many a relaxed attitude to sex.

I don't, of course, think bicycling is associated with prostitution. But in Islam, for example, there are great debates about women's modesty and cycling, and sport in general tends to be considered immodest. Debates can focus on the minutiae such as whether it modest to wear trousers? Should the shape of the leg be visible? This has given rise to what might be termed 'Turkish' or 'Harem' pants with a tunic disguising the body, especially the area around the bottom and sexual organs. Of course, the Qu'ran and Hadith describe the prohibitions. The details are a matter of translation and interpretation and beyond the scope of this publication (and me). What some passages seem to suggest is that women and men should not wear each other's clothing and that, mostly, a women's form should not be visible. A woman should not be adorned in public, i.e. not attract attention, hence the association with prostitution of dancing and public performance in general. You would certainly attract attention cycling. Playing a range of sports in public could be viewed as immodest and attention seeking. Horse riding, unless you ride side-saddle, would also be viewed with similar disdain. Recently, provinces of Indonesia have prohibited women from straddling motorbikes driven by men as 'un-Islamic'. Of course, a young girl may break her hymen and then what will her husband think on her wedding night? Sewing a hymen back in place is a 'luxury' surgery few can afford and fewer perform.

Most sport would, by and large, be the domain of men, not necessarily just in Islam, but because sport involves physical activity, association in public with non-family members, is seen as aggressive and assertive and requiring qualities not considered appropriately feminine. Cycling and running might attract the sort of attention you would not want. You may be escorted by large groups of unruly and excitable children who run the risk of being run over, or threaten your balance, or throw stones at you (always popular). Besides, in hot countries, walking for pleasure, or 'health and fitness,' is almost unknown. People, especially women, do not walk for health. They might stroll in the evening with girlfriends or on the arm of a husband, father or brother, to see and be seen. But this is not power walking, this is promenading, an entirely different activity and with a different agenda.

Islam, Christianity or other religious traditions may have nothing to do with such attitudes, but will be utilised as an excuse to control women and protect (invariably male) interests. Occupations and activities viewed as the exclusive preserve of men are jealously guarded, often for financial reasons, especially in remote and conservative areas. In Islamic north Nigeria, motorcyclists have been flogged for carrying female passengers. But social activities and sports such as darts, football, snooker, weightlifting in all cultures and societies are largely linked with men, not women. This can be rationalised in a number of ways. Obviously the clothing, or lack of it, might cause problems, although men wearing shorts can also be subject to complaints. The gym and weightlifting is seen in many societies as unnecessary vanity and linked with homosexuality, but often these are the exclusive preserves of rich peoples who do not discharge energy equal to their food intake. A peasant picking tea or cotton for 12 hours a day before a two hour walk home is unlikely to want or need a gym or do aerobics three times a week.

Most modern metropolis will have a YMCA/YWCA or private spa and 'fitness centre' that will be sex segregated, these might have swimming pools and exercise rooms safely and discreetly away from prying eyes. These hospitality centres are clean and affordable and available for couples and families too.

Dance

Dance can be an essential social activity or prohibited because it involves men and women having fun together. Women who dance in public receive attention and the sort of attention considered 'inappropriate' all over the world, especially if the performance is considered sexual or involves less clothing than might be usual. Dancers and actresses in the UK were considered until recently 'loose' women pursued by 'stage door Johnnies' (the male fans waiting at the Stage Door to wine and dine the performers in the early 20th century). A 'Chorus Girl' would be used as a term of contempt in much the same way 'Glamour Model' might be used as a euphemism for 'prostitute'. All roles and professions that involve scantily clad women appearing in public have been used interchangeably over the years in English with 'prostitute'.

Actress and model, Elizabeth Hurley's brief marriage to Arun Nayar, a son and heir of Indian heritage, was less well received in India, despite the 'arrangement' (a fabulously wealthy woman of a certain age marrying an eligible man with aspirations) being the stuff of celebrity magazines and recognisable to many across the world. India, and significantly his Indian Grandmother, were less impressed. Hurley's age, her single mother status, the disputed paternity of her son, her public affairs, all endlessly discussed in the media, contributed in the UK and Indian subcontinent to the terms 'model' and 'actress' being used with sniffy disdain. Actresses in the huge Indian and Egyptian film industries might chase column inches as any other, but they behave impeccably according to local religious and social sensibilities if they know what is good for them and their studio contracts.

It may be the case that, Egyptian dancers, of the kind found in local restaurants all over the Near and Middle East, are indeed prostitutes, as are certain 'Gypsy' dancers, i.e. they sell sex, not only sexuality. 'Belly' dancing originated in the haram, hence the term 'haram,' or 'forbidden'. Harams were private places and dancing was for a private audience only. That is not to say there are not famous and infamous Egyptian dancers with similar status to Flamenco Queens, but these are older (30 plus) women, dowagers and duchesses, reflecting the status of the married woman in those societies, not nubile, semi clad and unmarried young women. The dance may be a staple for tourists, if, however, a local man takes you to a restaurant where a dancer is performing, then you might want to ask if he would take his sister or mother to such a place — and if alcohol is being served, exit quickly.

Performance dances are, however, different from ritual dances and other forms of stylized movement which may or may not be considered dance in the West. Dance as ritual is also about action, not solely social or artistic symbolism. You had better decide you know which is which if you are not to quickly lose your status and reputation, especially if you are living and working in an environment that prohibits women from attending certain rituals for 'pollution' reasons. Equally there may be constraints on attending performance art or fraternising in public with 'bohemians'. The concept of the freely artistic 'Bohemian' might hold prestige for some, but the term is not really understood or used any more outside older, educated circles of Eastern and Central Europe and besides, does not imply a high rank of status in those countries.

Football

Might you be a player or a spectator? Since the 2012 London Olympics, women's sport, and especially football has gained more attention in the UK, and women have always been spectators, but significantly the term 'hooligan', widely used in an international context to describe forms of behaviour considered particularly aggressive and antisocial, as well as the people who commit these acts, is most often associated with football. This term is derived from a family/kin group who still define their relationship to each other in terms of their common descent as members of the Halligan (according to orthography) family, a notorious Roman Catholic Irish family who migrated to London at the turn of the twentieth century.

You would be well advised to find out how the country you are living in manages football and football hooliganism and if, as in the UK, football teams historically have religious connections and associations. In the UK, such team connections could be Roman Catholic or Protestant, or even Jewish. Despite the current international business nature of professional football, London's Tottenham Hotspur fans refer to the team as 'Yids' in a show of support, as much as rival fans use the term as abuse, Tottenham being once an area of London with a high percentage of Jews.

WHILE ANTISOCIAL behaviour is not a feature of all countries, teams, or events, avoid lone expeditions to football matches.

Most importantly, you might find yourself the only women in attendance. Will this be received benignly, with curiosity? Or will you be seen as an unwelcome intruder in much the same way a man might be received if he entered a beauty salon? How will you cope with less than benign police crowd management tactics? In 2000, two Leeds United fans were murdered in Turkey the night before a significant match in clashes with rival fans. Alighting at the wrong ferry stop in Istanbul, I was faced with lines of armed riot police and water cannon in anticipation of problems before and after a football match between extremely hostile teams. I lived for many years in West Ham in the 1980s, when organised violence was a feature of football matches and club membership, but had never encountered the sheer force and fear a wall of angry, drink and adrenalin fuelled men (police and spectators) generated in Istanbul.

Horse riding and other sports

Let me share with you a vignette. While I was living in the Near East, a middle aged woman I know who lives and works in a wealthy suburb of London, while holidaying at Sharm el Sheikh, the Egyptian Red Sea Resort (pre 'revolution') took an organised trip to Petra, Jordan.

Petra became a World Heritage Site in 1984. In 1987, when I first visited, it was still inhabited by Bedouin. But by 2000, it had become a major tourist attraction bereft of its inhabitants. However, it is still possible to ride or take a horse drawn carriage into the site, more than a kilometre away from the entrance, because vehicles are prohibited. Riding independently, if I recall, had been risky, because it is inappropriate for a woman to ride with a horse between her legs: shocking even. Arab men, especially Bedouin, do not like to see women in control of their horses. But at 21, I did not know this and would have been defiant (and arrogant), even if I had. A Shabab (youth) would jump onto the saddle behind you in the hope of grabbing your tits to demonstrate their contempt and disrespect. Of course, you pushed them off pretty sharply and swore at them and shouted loudly, leaving everyone in no doubt what had happened. But mass tourism changes everything. Tourists are customers and the customers are always right. "it is all right for you" you might be told, implying local values, customs, mores and morals do not apply to foreign women. No it is not, if you are living and working in the area or region.

"I was photographed by the locals because they had never seen a woman riding" said my friend proudly, an experienced country horsewoman.

No. She was photographed because a middle aged woman old enough to be their grandmother in shorts and a singlet, straddling a horse, tits and hair flying, was still unusual, still shocking, and possibly a bit ridiculous as far as they were concerned.

If you are tourist, you might not care about local opinion. But if you are living and working amongst peoples who disapprove of women taking part in active sports in public, you might want to reconsider whether even running would cause unwelcome attention. It goes without saying then, that swimming in a pool that is anything but single sex and secluded is out of the question. This might be a health issue, since contaminated water could infect the slightest cut or sore.

This cannot be an exhausted list of dos and don'ts of sport, but sport has only in the last 100 years been cited on the 'approved' list of activities for women in allegedly 'enlightened' countries that promote and legalise equality of opportunity. It is unlikely to be considered appropriate for a woman in a country where women struggle for the right even to learn to read and write.

Spotting and Dealing with Risks: Safety and Security

Honey Traps

If you embark on a relationship, what is the intention of the person you become involved with? Do they see it as a one night stand, short term for the duration of your stay, or an investment in the future? Are the motives emotional, financial, concerned with power, status or information?

Honey traps are as old as the hills. Favoured in espionage (corporate and international) and journalism, any profession or industry that in the near or distant future needs to obtain information that you might otherwise not impart willingly may use a honey trap. You might be a politician, an influential businessperson, or someone perceived as potentially useful in the future, like a research student from a prestigious university. Perhaps you have a wealthy family or your parents are powerful — or you have no family and no one to wonder and care about where you are and what you are up to. You may have a unique skill or access to records and other useful, influential people. The honey trap could involve a short term or a long term relationship and is different from connection with an informer, who might themselves be coerced or blackmailed into the arrangement. You may be hiding something — perhaps you like same sex experiences or are gay, but live in a country where homosexuality is illegal, and you are

When completing the revisions for this publication, a seasoned company director told me he had been honey-trapped within hours of checking into his hotel in China. He thought it important others know that so called 'date rape' drugs can be used against men, not always for sex, and so I am relating his experience.

Striking up a conversation with a helpful, English-speaking Chinese couple at Tiananmen Square, he was taken to the back room of a bar, and against his better judgement, had a drink with them. They too had studied philosophy, it seemed, and so had something in common. He hadn't wanted to be rude, of course, because they had been helpful. There was a sense of obligation, if only to spend a little more time with them so they could practise their English. He became aware that his actions were becoming disconnected from his will. He wanted to leave, but was struggling to get up and go. It would not be difficult to find out information about him once seemingly innocent and routine questions such as where you are from, why you are here and what company you work for have elicited sufficient details to look you up on the internet. On the other hand, maybe someone back at the hotel had accepted a small sum of money for the information — pointing out a lone, English businessman, his colleagues yet to arrive, taking a stroll after a long flight. Perhaps the agenda was only to extract money, take him to a cashpoint and obtain as many dollars as his bank would allow. Maybe it was to have included photographing him having sex with a male or female prostitute. Perhaps his wife had paid someone to 'test' him. The situations and scenarios are endless, and the stuff of John le Carré and Frederick Forsyth novels as much as Jackie Collins bonkbusters. Luckily, he sensed he was not in control of the situation and remained calm and rooted to the spot until he was (it took about 30 minutes for the effect of the drugs to wear off).



married anyway. Perhaps you think you can get away with experimenting far from home. Perhaps you are confused and confusing and wonder if you should be born the opposite sex?

“Chance meetings” may be designed to entice, lure and seduce the naïve, lonely, the vulnerable, the weak, and the strong caught off guard. The relationships will involve trickery, seduction, subterfuge and if all else fails, possibly violence. They can work on a seasoned traveller as well as the novice. Male and female are equally susceptible. Your failings and flaws exposed, recorded and used against you when the time is right.

Do not imagine you are immune from this sort of attention because you have insufficient money, power or influence. These sorts of traps are used widely and the older, wiser and more cautious are only slightly less likely to be ensnared than the younger, unworldly, and otherwise less vigilant. Men do not seem reluctant to admit to these sorts of experiences, and many men are happy to admit that sex is their vulnerability. Falling for a pretty face (but not falling in love) seems to be an accepted ‘male’ ‘weakness.’ Women seem less likely to admit to themselves, or others, they are victims of a ruse.

Personal safety

The experiences of your early years — whether you are from a city or small town, or village — will impact your understanding of ‘personal safety’, as much as your ability to remain safe. A city girl, brought up in London, I was terrified for a large part of my time in Central Africa. Afraid of the absolute dark (street lighting means you are never in the dark in a city), I realised that my alleged ability to talk my way out of anything was redundant where the biggest danger was wild animals (hyenas to be more specific). Others with whom I was travelling fared better. In particular, there was one woman who had been brought up on a farm and whose nearest neighbours, she said, were three miles away. For her, the idea of being afraid of the dark was ridiculous. She had a healthy respect for animals, but was not afraid of them, as such. I, of course, had never come face to face with anything bigger or wilder than an urban fox. Small wonder Gaza, the most overpopulated and crowded ‘prison’ in the world, held no worries for me, who flourishes in the densest metropolis of the world. For others, the idea of a city of the sort found in China or India, a seething mass of peoples and poverty, seethes also with potential problems not pleasures. If you are not savvy and street wise, how will you acquire the necessary survival skills to identify friend from foe, the virtuous from the villain?

Interpersonal and communication skills are survival skills for people who need to survive cities. But the bush, the jungle, or outback, living on an island or at sea; these require different sets of survival skills, and a different type of experience and expertise. A pilot study will establish what sort of skills you might need and how being a woman might affect you. In conditions where physical strength and resilience is important — carrying heavy equipment for long periods for example, or mechanical skills — suddenly sex differences make a difference. Women — poor women to be precise — have always been involved in heavy manual and industrial work. In 1842, they were prevented from mining in the UK for moral reasons — coal mines are hot and the work hotter, and men and women would be stripped to the waist. But any manual work that pays according to weight — bringing in the harvest or buckets of coal — places women at a disadvantage because, quite simply, they will not be strong or resilient enough compared to men. Women earn and continue to earn less especially (but not exclusively) where brawn not brain counts. This is simply explained in Zola’s *La Terre*. Of course, men also worried that women would undercut wages. Why shouldn’t women do heavy manual work? It is not uncommon to see women in manual labour — sweeping the streets, driving heavy goods vehicles and buses and trams — in counties of the former Soviet sphere, but I have never seen a woman drive or work on a dustcart in the UK (I am happy to be contradicted), nor sweep the streets at 6am on a winter morning.

HONE YOUR OBSERVATIONAL skills. Become sensitive to your surroundings. And always remember someone may be observing you — your comings and goings. Avoid routine and regularity. Make it easier for them to rob and rape someone else.

There is no reason you should not know how to drive a manual vehicle, change a tyre, check the oil and water, or change a battery. These skills may save your life and will always leave a favourable impression, that you are strong, resourceful and independent. Having said that, any time in the Near East, Ireland, Hungary and the UK — I have broken down or burst a tyre, a man has come to my rescue and swiftly taken charge of the situation — and I accepted gratefully. But you may not be so lucky, and gentlemen are not always Knights of the Road.

If you do not know how to carry out mechanical and engineering repairs, the “manly stuff”, will you be with someone who will? If not, be prepared to cook, clean and shop if you are in a group. Everyone needs to have a role, a function. In many societies, your role as a woman (besides cooking, cleaning and shopping) might be to be protected. Does the society you are about to enter see you as in need of protection because you are a woman, not ‘just’ because you are a guest? Might you need their protection? In which case, play the game and let them pick you up, collect you, and escort you. You will benefit and they do not run the risk of being viewed as careless or irresponsible if something happens to you.

I would advise any twenty-something woman, alone or with a group to be met from the airport, be escorted by a guide, take an organised tour, if a group, to stay together, and to accept the advice of the older and wiser and more benign locals about the ‘should nots’. Should not be out at this time; should not be in this area alone; should not be dressed like that and should not wear shorts — the ‘should nots’ that are the bane of women’s lives. You should take on this advice, not because you are lazy or scared, but because you don’t know what the repercussions might be of ignoring it.

On arrival, make sure you have enough local money to get you to a hotel — and if you arrive late, stay somewhere nice just this once. It won’t hurt to stay in a more expensive hotel till you find your bearings. It might hurt to stay somewhere cheap and cheerless with no security arrangements of its own. Rich locals can be just as at risk from poor locals as rich foreigners. Look like you know where you are going and what you are doing, and do not speak to strangers offering a cheap room or a bed for the night if you are on your own. Perhaps this is a well-trodden path for foreigners, but perhaps not. Perhaps this works in your favour, or perhaps not if you are seen as a rich, spoilt foreigner unlikely to put up much resistance when you are robbed of your mobile phone or overcharged by the taxi driver.

Gap year destinations have hostels and cheap hotels accustomed to recruiting for business at airports and bus and train stations. If you arrive late, this can be an option till morning when you can sort yourself out, but go for the known and the recommended, and watch your luggage and personal belongings at all times. These sorts of recommendations are not necessarily exclusively for women, and of course men as well as women can be robbed and relieved of their luggage — and men can be sexually assaulted and raped too. But as a woman the risks can be different and the impact different.

If these recommendations seem clichéd, tired and trite, so what? You may not have had to operate in a hostile, unfriendly and unknown environment before, or perhaps you have been lulled into a false sense of security. After some time living amongst Palestinians in the refugee camps of Gaza, I was very comfortable and accustomed to not having to worry about personal theft. Whatever their problems, theft was not one of them. Prior to a trip to Istanbul, one colleague advised me not leave any valuable items of money in the hotel room, as one of his more trusting colleagues had. She too, was unaccustomed to worrying about theft, especially as in her eyes, she was a guest, and guests are to be protected. She had all her cash stolen (more than one thousand dollars). How grateful was I to be reminded that large cities always pose a risk — sure enough, my toiletries bag had been rifled through on the last morning. I had checked out and left the luggage in an allegedly locked cupboard. Many

women keep small items of jewellery or money in makeup and toiletry bags, making these a favourite for petty thieves. I did not discover my bag had been opened until I returned home. Fortunately, the thief went empty-handed. This is the experience of other female travellers at hotels and some airports and airlines are notorious for luggage theft. Hotels are not necessarily safe places and spaces, merely safer.

Despite its melodramatic title, James Fergusson's **The World's Most Dangerous Place: inside the outlaw state of Somalia** (2013) describes in tragic detail the business of civil war. The 'business' might involve an international aid agency or the unique opportunities pirating provides. A good read, however, if not before bed time, what Fergusson manages to convey is how the ordinary sits alongside the extraordinary. If London Borough of Brent learning support worker, Mohammed Hajji Ibrahim, can make the leap from the Newman Catholic College, to Somali Cabinet Minister, so too, can you. (What this says about the London Borough of Brent — my constituency at the time of writing! Or Somalia, I am not sure.)

Kidnapping

Do you need to worry? Will kidnapping be an issue? If there is this possibility, consider ensuring that your arrival is carefully managed and that someone — a taxi or local contact — meets and greets you. Insurance companies have created a market for kidnapping by providing a fund, some around £15,000 — a huge sum of money in most parts of the world. In areas where kidnapping is an issue, you will usually be advised beforehand and possibly prevented from going if the risk is seen as too great and too costly (to your organisation inevitably). Recommendations such as taking different routes to and from home, or changing your timetable so that your steps are unpredictable, might work on the amateur kidnapper (if there is such a thing), but like as not they will have attended a similar survival training to you, albeit with a different objective in mind.

Many companies prefer not to send expensive human resources somewhere they are likely to be robbed and beaten. It has always been a puzzle why the young, intelligent, but naïve, and unworldly protagonist of Bram Stoker's **Dracula** (1897), solicitor Jonathan Harker, was sent to Transylvania when a local professional could have completed the task, perhaps less competently, but at less risk and cost. If you feel uncomfort-

able about a journey or a work trip, saying so is not a weakness. Do not be manipulated by a 'I know I can trust you' or 'I am sure you are up to the job'. This places the responsibility for things going right — and wrong — on your shoulders. YOU will be at fault if there is a problem and you may be blamed if something goes wrong because it will be said 'You knew what you signed up for', 'She wanted to go', 'She agreed to go', 'We could have or should have sent someone else'.

Hostage taking is big business in the form of piracy. As I write, Somalia is best known for this form of income generation, rendering the portions of the Indian Ocean now too dangerous for passengers. It is potentially too dangerous for the seafarers also, but those from desperately poor countries will always be prepared to shoulder risks those from the G8 nations do not have to. Contact your local navy base or maritime agency and ask around for their advice if you wish to engage with this sort of world. Piracy is less charm and Johnny Depp style 'Pirates of the Caribbean', and more machine guns and rocket propelled grenades. These are not Gentlemen of the High Seas.

The Night Witches allegedly, Soviet female fighter pilots, did not use parachutes, since survival would have led to a far longer, more painful death should they be captured and tortured first. Yet many accounts of English and German (male) pilots held as Prisoners of War during the Second World War suggest that there was genuine mutual respect and comradeship amongst

LEARN TO SAY NO.
Self-sufficiency is self-regulation. Nobody else will do it for you.

the men, as if the ability to fly a plane united men — but was against the natural order of things if you were a woman. Based in Budapest during the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s, I was ‘warned’ that a captured woman sniper had had her arm severed by a spade. Not a fate awarded male snipers, but a fate reserved for ‘women like me’. Women such as these — Fierce, Fearless and Fearsome — women like you — will always be condemned for being ‘too clever for their own good’ (as I was once accused of being by a (male) school teacher predicting trouble ahead). Written in 1987, Michael Lewis’ **Liar’s Poker** is the story of a young man’s initiation into a trading room prior to another financial crash. His observations about the women he works for, and the lack of them, reflect attitudes that are as apparent today, not just in this type of finance. The ‘survival’ skills you will need to acquire, the fine-tuned second guessing if you are to avoid being taken hostage (not a pleasant experience for anyone), and especially if you are to survive being kidnapped, are ones that many men would prefer that women did not have, lest you exercise them in other contexts and this puts you ahead of the game.

Robbery

Recently a Zimbabwean colleague of mine described the different types of crime you might experience in sub-Saharan Africa. He said one is born out of poverty. You might have a bag disappear, a pocket picked, but in Zimbabwe, for example, this is because there is desperate poverty. “People do not have enough to eat, though they share Christian values about stealing, hence try to ‘hide’ the crime, and not wishing to be confronted by the victim or anyone else. If you are white, you will be especially targeted because you will be richer.” This has been my experience in Africa, India and South East Asia. A large metropolis will always have a certain level of crime. In South Africa, suggested colleagues from Cape Town, people will kill you and then steal. This is about money, hatred, wealth, especially towards white people. They said, key social mores and norms no longer existed in huge swathes of the country. Certainly colleagues from Brazil, Argentina and Chile echo this belief. Heed their warnings.

You need to ask yourself ‘am I a target because I am white, for example, and especially because I am a woman?’ You need also to ask local staff about the risks and listen to the answer, even if it is one you won’t like. Do not shoot the messenger. If you have always considered yourself black, what of your status in a black, sub-Saharan country? Will you be considered ‘really’ black, or a coconut? A form of abuse reserved for those black on the outside, but what on the inside. Does this make you more or less likely to be robbed? Recently and at the time of writing, Jamaica has entered the news, not just because it is claimed to be the most homophobic country in the world, but because many Jamaicans who have lived and worked in the UK their whole adult lives, are returning home for what they hope is a comfortable retirement. They find Jamaica is no longer the island it used to be — and why should it not have changed? And alarmingly, they are considered easy pickings because they are richer, naiver, and no longer ‘really’ Jamaican. This might also include having married a white woman, although in countries of the Caribbean, given their history of slavery, colonialism and forced migration, the idea of ‘mixed race’ is widely understood and acknowledged in a way it is not in the allegedly enlightened UK: my father in law was Jamai-

To catch a thief, think like a thief, and if you are not naturally cunning, then a classic novel such as Defoe’s **Moll Flanders** (1722) will give you greater insight into the criminal mind. I recommend this especially for women. Moll wins and loses fortunes and husbands regularly with wit and ease. Since she is a woman, she explains, and being a poor one of low birth, she must use her wits and her sex to navigate the world. But is this not what male city traders and bankers do? A clever woman such as Moll is still condemned as ‘immoral’ as if women should somehow be ‘better’ than men — ‘better’ being naïve and innocent and unknowing.

READ ALL ABOUT IT



Some Practicalities



Many years ago, a colleague in Gaza had more than one thousand dollars stolen from his desk. It is not unusual in Gaza to hold your savings in cash, nor to feel that it was safe to place your stash at work, which was always guarded. A small, close society, honesty and integrity was, and is, a prized value and, whatever the problems in Gaza, theft was not generally one of them. Convinced it was a female junior, he felt he could not openly challenge or expose her, even publicise the theft in case suspicion fell upon the whole department. In a small society where theft might be punishable by death — the execution the responsibility of the youngest male family member who could not be imprisoned — he felt he had no option but to keep quiet. She, he was sure, was devious enough to be aware of this sort of dilemma. Though, being from a more powerful local family than the victim, she may also have assumed (correctly) he dare not accuse her.

can, black Jamaican. His family were the 'illegal' second family (i.e. black) of wealthy planters. In his youth, my then hippy husband looked like the devil love child of ZZ Top and Osama Bin Laden, but now, greying and pale, only Caribbean, and especially 'Aunties' (polite diminutive for an elderly woman) recognise his being of mixed heritage. Others, to my annoyance but his resignation, respond questioningly 'white plantation owners' because in the UK, to be Caribbean must mean African Caribbean, i.e. black, but not white, oriental, Spanish, Sephardi etc.. This phenomena is observable in other countries such as Poland, where the older, wealthier — possibly those who were forced migrants or refugees — return to find they are no longer 'one of us' and exploited or resented.

Chances are, however, a theft is just as likely committed by someone you know from your office, or someone you share your accommodation with. Can you report and make public in the way you could, would and should in the UK, for example? The victim of theft in this way, my purse has been stolen twice by other English temps, like me, working their way away around the world.

One student described to me a situation where her underwear was stolen from her bag while she was with a host family in New Caledonia. She cleverly had a quiet word with the suspected perpetrator's mother — although her underwear was never returned. This type of theft is by no means exclusive to New Caledonia. I have heard many similar accounts in the Near and Middle East. Besides the obvious annoyance and possible difficulty in replacing your underwear, what message is this sending to you? And how should or can you respond? Say nothing, or cause a fuss? A quiet word with whom? What will the impact be on you? Is this unusual behaviour? How would you know? Perhaps the motive is not what you might first assume, and the thief is a woman taking the underwear because it is a 'modern' luxury she cannot afford. Sometimes it is not all about you.

Rape and sexual assault

In societies and cultures that view a woman's sexuality as a 'possession' of her family, women who are alleged to have transcended the sexual mores of their society are sometimes murdered by family members because their behaviour is said to have shamed their families. This can be a feature of Catholic and Orthodox Christian groups in European countries such as Italy and Greece, as much as Turks, Kurds and peoples of Central Asia. Even if it is aware of these cases, the state rarely intervenes in what it perceives as domestic affairs only. This applies to rape and any assault, verbal or physical, upon the person that is considered of a sexual nature. Women are held responsible for protecting their own sexuality: it is believed a man is not in control of his sexual urges and therefore a woman should not put herself in a position whereby a man can take sexual advantage of her.

In many societies I have personally experienced — Palestinians and Kurds from Iraq and Turkey spring to mind — a woman should not be alone in the same room even with a man who is not mahram, a family member. At Palestinian work parties and ‘dos’ I would be guided to the women’s room by a Palestinian colleague and occasionally and thoughtfully, a male who I might know, would check that I was comfortable before returning to the male room. We were all aware this was their norm, not mine, and everyone was happy.

Again, in many societies, a woman who is sexually assaulted is said to have invited the attention. It is believed by many an assault will awaken her sexual appetite and make her sexually promiscuous (the term ‘prostitute’ having different and much wider implications in the Arabic, Farsi or Turkish languages for example). Many sex workers in Turkey claim they have been forced into the sex industry because they have been raped, assaulted and expelled by the family. Sometimes rape and gang rape are deliberate techniques of recruitment. However, a man who is attacked sexually can also be accused of inviting the ‘attention’. It is also believed a homosexual attack ‘makes’ the victim a homosexual, in the same way a woman who is raped develops a ‘taste’ for sex and becomes promiscuous, or that it would not have happened if he were not homosexual in the first place. In Eastern Turkey, long distance lorry drivers who are accompanied by small youths are said to ‘use’ them for sex, but only the ‘boy’ who ‘receives’ the penis is said to be homosexual because this is considered a ‘passive’ and ‘female’ position. There are many pejorative terms for undersized boys such as this, and it is possible a small, ‘pretty’ boy would be perceived in this way, i.e. one who is the passive recipient of male sexual attention. If a sexual assault is reported or admitted, the victim would be expelled or even killed if he ever disclosed, or was even suspected of being, a recipient of sexual attention of this nature.

Most of my clients at the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture had been raped and sexually assaulted. Many of them were Kurds from Turkey. It was commonly thought that men, but especially women, who went to ‘the woods’ or ‘mountains’ and fought with the armed resistance groups there had been shamed into doing so because they had been raped by Turkish forces. On the one hand, they were readdressing the power balance by fighting against their oppressor. On the other, especially as a women, they would find themselves rejected by their village or town if it became known they had been detained. It was assumed, not entirely incorrectly, if you were a woman you would be raped or sexually assaulted. One young Kurdish woman told me she had been puzzled when visiting friends in prison as to why she always received requests for knickers. Once being detained herself, she understood only too well why you might want a clean supply of knickers.

The explanations provided for certain sexual activities might differ, but the response and impact of sexual assault and rape are real and observable and seems to be the same all over the world at the point where all societies can agree (arguably) on the definition of rape and sexual assault. Some sex workers in all societies will claim that their first sexual experiences were forced and if same sex, this is what has ‘made’ them a prostitute (male and female) or ‘made’ them homosexual. Many male victims of sexualised torture say they can no longer have heterosexual relationships and respond sexually now to men. Someone who considers themselves LGBT would do well to understand these terms, categories and lifestyles are not widely recognised or understood outside urban areas of safe, democratic and liberal democracies.

Dealing with violence

IF you are a victim of rape, sexual assault and violence, your considerations should be simple: stay or go home?

STAY if you are not injured, do not need to be hospitalised, or require medical tests and there is no possibility of you being pregnant or having a sexually transmitted disease. If you believe

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GO if you need medical treatment, or tests for pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases, especially if you are in a country or region where HIV or Hepatitis is rife.



it worthwhile and it will help, report to the police. It may be that the police will help and arrest someone, but perhaps not. Perhaps they will arrest you if you do not describe a situation that fulfils their definition of rape or accuse someone richer, more powerful and well connected than you (or the police). Young women trafficked from Romania and Moldova to work in the brothels of the UK invariably cite local police as being involved in organised crime, at a level of collusion at the very least, if not on some sort of payroll, enjoying payment in kind.

You may, then, be forced to leave the project or your employment, but then return to a trial. Difficulties may arise for other project workers and staff, who could become involved in your situation in a way they might prefer to avoid. You may not be allowed to leave until you have completed paperwork and a medical examination, all of which can take some time. You, your personal integrity, honesty and honour may be on trial. Just like at home, I might add. If you feel strong enough and angry enough about the principle, you may want to stay and see the whole process through, but do not assume the outcome will be in your favour or in your control. You may want to stay, but say and do nothing and bide your time. Choose your moment.



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When working in Gaza, a member of the Palestinian Authority called me over to his car to show me he was masturbating. I know he was a member of the Palestinian Authority because his number plate was red. I still have the letter (with details of the number plate) that I sent to the UN security officer detailing the encounter. Normally confident and assertive, I was nonetheless unnerved and shocked. The correct assumption was I could not, and would not, do anything, and of course, the international security officer did nothing because no one, including me, wanted that sort of drama on their hands. Discussing the event later, old hands recalled similar situations where female workers had been molested or abused by local colleagues. Mostly they had left the Gaza Strip pretty quickly. Most Palestinians would be horrified to learn female aid workers were subject to this sort of treatment. If I had really wanted to cause trouble, I could have reported it to one of my colleagues, with whom I was particularly friendly, and who was also an especially observant member of a religious group considered more extreme than Hamas. But did I want the offender killed? This is the dilemma you may face.

Certainly, however, a Palestinian woman would be blamed and shamed if she were a victim and would not admit to such an experience. Some doubt would be cast as to your integrity and virtue by someone. Perhaps you are a troublemaker. The accused might feel he has to defend his and his family's honour. This might mean imprisonment for you, not him, if he is from a powerful family. Better in this situation to discreetly inform the office gossip or have a quiet word with his boss. After all, this is about principle, and you might find you are not the only one. I informed the owner of a local bank that one of his managers in the West Bank was behaving inappropriately by draping himself over his female subordinates. He was the defini-

tion of sleazy in any society. At the time, nothing more was said or done. Later, however, he confided he had received a similar complaint via an anonymous phone call from a local woman. It seemed this was a pattern and I had confirmed his suspicions. ‘You were right’. The man was ‘let go’.

Is this enough? You need to decide what you want to happen and if you have a moral obligation to inform someone so this does not happen to anyone else. IF you are to do and say something, what, to whom, how, when, and why? What principles do you seek to satisfy — revenge, righteous (and quite justified) indignation, fairness, or feminism? You need to think very carefully about the impact on you, other colleagues, and the accused— but mostly you. You don’t owe anyone anything.

GO if you need medical treatment, or tests for pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases, especially if you are in a country or region where HIV or Hepatitis is rife. Book yourself into the nearest luxury hotel and go home as quickly as possible, first class if you have to. A few thousand pounds won’t seem much later on. Who wants to argue with an insurance company who will inevitably instruct you to report to the police? What do you do if it is the police who have raped you? Report to your Embassy, your employer, your Line Manager, your Supervisor. But you have the right to make things better for YOU and no one else, fast. ‘Better’ being more comfortable, cleaner, safer, and familiar. Leave the problem behind if you can, life is not meant to be that hard.

Health

Finding a doctor, dentist, optician or pharmacist — knowing the risks

Your insurance company may have an approved list of physicians and will not accept a diagnosis from any other, if so, make sure you have a copy of their list and that the list includes a gynaecologist and a dentist and professionals who will work with women. Ask if there are any on the list who will not examine or treat women before you go.

There are no universal standards or requirements governing the pharmaceutical industry. If you have any sort of condition that requires repeat medication (including contraceptive pills or medication for a female-only condition such as endometriosis) you need to take sufficient supply to last the duration of your stay, and make sure they are not stolen or lost in your luggage. You have no idea what you are buying in many places overseas, since counterfeit drugs are a huge problem all over the world. Just because the logo on the packet looks the same, does not mean the contents are.

Professionals also compete and disagree. One UK specialist dismissed the medication a colleague had received in a French pharmacy in the Central African Republic. He said there had been insufficient testing and that we should not have purchased any sort of medication to relieve the symptoms of malaria. Not being medics, we could not and would not know. But if you are stuck in a remote area, feverish and delusional, you will do anything to relieve your temperature.

Be aware of increased risks. Many conditions would not necessarily kill a healthy adult with access to a modern healthcare system. If you are stung by a scorpion in London’s Cricklewood, you might not like it, but it is unlikely you will die. But in the Sahara, in the heat, dust and flies, miles from anywhere your arm might swell, split and burst, the blood and pus attracting flies. You will struggle to keep the wound clean and you are days or even weeks away from a bath and a bottle of antiseptic.

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Allergies, Intolerances, Preferences

It goes without saying that those with real allergies (not self-diagnosing 'intolerances') of some sort need to consider what will happen IF they inadvertently eat something they shouldn't. If you might require rapid response medication (such as epinephrine) for a serious allergy, can you carry this securely close enough to you and for long periods in hot and humid conditions without fridges? Will your allergy be understood by local health professionals (if there are any)? You may find you have reacted badly to flora or fauna that you have never come across before. After a trip into the bush on Mangaia, a small, remote Cook Island, my legs swelled up with a peculiar spotted rash, despite the fact I had been wearing trousers. Recently, (I was 48 when the original draft of this manual was written) I developed an allergy to Royal Jelly products, despite never experiencing allergic reactions before, even to hornet stings (press an onion on the wound and keep it there for 30 minutes or so, this has always prevented me from swelling). Just because you have never previously experienced an allergic reaction at home, does not mean you cannot or will not develop one later on in life, so take anti-histamine pills and take photographs of your reactions. You may have to prove to the insurance company why you needed that exorbitant helicopter flight to the nearest hospital.

All peoples have food preferences and food prohibitions — hygiene, sentiment, or religion being the rationale for the latter. If you are vegan, vegetarian or don't eat pork or certain seafood but will be living in a society where pig and shell fish form the staple diet, think ahead and take vitamin pills. Your health can quickly deteriorate if you are not receiving the right nutrition. In this way, you will be more vulnerable to disease. Don't expect lifestyle choices to be understood or even respected. Most people will understand a religious prohibition, but very few peoples more are sentimental about animals to the extent of the English. Your hosts, if not puzzled, may be insulted at your refusal to eat the chicken killed as a treat in front of you (to demonstrate it is fresh).

Of course, this will not be an issue if you are to live amongst peoples who are Hindu, Buddhist or Jain. Issues around food options are another reason to do your homework and at least, familiarise yourself with the cultures and customs of the peoples you are to live and work amongst. I have never eaten so many prawns as in the coastal area of Papua New Guinea because my colleague had a fish allergy and I gleefully ate his share. He struggled to find enough to eat and became intimately acquainted with Chinese imported packet noodles, tinned cheese and cabin bread that are available in even the remoter parts of Polynesia, but this is not a diet to be recommended and you would lose weight and become malnourished after any length of time, thus reducing your immunity and making you more vulnerable to infections.

Opticians and Eye-care

If you are dependent on glasses or contact lenses, then you need to predict and pre-empt breakages and loss of spares, and consider if you can function or carry out the job you are supposed to do without them. Your specs need to be robust and fashion a secondary consideration. No point in taking your Chanel specs with you. How far away are you from a qualified Optician if you do need one? Does your insurer cover you for the journey you may have to make to the nearest town or city as well as the cost of the examination and materials?

If, like me, you have glasses only to drive and have never had problems with your eyes, it can be a shock to realise how sensitive they are to dust, dirt, dirty water, pollen, wind, rain etc. You need to keep your eyes clean and keep your soiled hands away from your eyes. Consider if you are in a situation where you will be shaking lots of dirty, potentially infectious hands. Infectious, for example, because many peoples wipe their bum with their hands, do not use toilet paper and do not have sufficient resources or education to ensure their hands are cleaned afterwards. Even those who do have the resources and education, do not wash their hands

enough, after all. An English pub Landlady told me the majority of her male customers do not wash their hands after visiting the toilet and therefore glasses, the pint glasses especially, will have traces of urine or faeces on them and have to be sterilised with intensely hot industrial strength dishwashers. Forget the cumbersome and heavy hand sterilizers that seem an essential component of many handbags these days. How can you take sufficient supply anyway? Good old soap and water, short nails and a bottle of Listermint or some other basic, multi-purpose antiseptic go a long way. Keeping clean, especially in hot and humid areas, is essential to your health and well-being. You should build up immunity eventually, but you only have one pair of eyes.

This advice is not exclusive to women, and not exclusive to eyes. An Irish nurse working on a mission once told me after a particularly nasty infection ‘don’t put anything down there you wouldn’t put in your mouth or near your eye.’ Wise words, indeed!

RECOMMENDED READING

Non-Fiction

- > Borofsky, R., 2005. **Yanomami: the fierce controversy and what we can learn from it.** Berkeley: University of California Press.
- > Davies, J and Spencer, D., 2010. **Emotions in the Field: the psychology and anthropology of fieldwork experience.** Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- > Fergusson, J., 2013. **The World’s Most Dangerous Place: Inside the outlaw state of Somalia.** London: Bantam Press.
- > Jackson, M., 2002. **The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, transgression and intersubjectivity.** Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press.
- > Madison, D. S., 2011. **Critical Ethnography: method, ethics, and performance.** Thousand Oaks, CA & London: Sage.
- > Vigh, H.E., 2006. **Navigating terrains of war: Youth and soldiering in Guinea Bissau.** Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Fiction

- > Defoe, D., 1989 (1722). **Moll Flanders.** London: Penguin.
- > Lewis, M., 1989. **Liar’s Poker.** New York: W.W. Norton and Company
- > Stoker, B., 1993 (1897). **Dracula.** Ware: Wordsworth Classics.
- > Thackeray, W.M., 2003 (1847). **Vanity Fair.** London: Penguin.
- > Zola, E., 1980 (1887). **La Terre/The Earth.**





Chapter 7

Working Issues

This section of the manual differs in tone and style to the previous sections and there are fewer references, academic or literary. The discussions of work and debriefs are more suited to the strictly task oriented trip. If you are overseas for the experience, your experience will differ (and you will want it to) from that of someone drafted into an emergency situation such as an earthquake or epidemic. In that case, you are there so that someone may benefit from your expensive skills and education, not so you might benefit from, or exploit, their poverty, ignorance and unhappiness for your own end. According to rational choice theory, we all make choices according to the advantages a given situation might provide. If you are from a wealthy country and can choose to live overseas, how different is this from the 'grand tour' understood as an essential part of any enlightened seventeenth century aristocrat? In times past, would you have been a colonial wife, nun, or nurse? Is your two year secondment to a 'difficult' regional office or a prestigious city centre designed to polish you, to create a more worldly and sophisticated employee capable of running a department, an organisation or a household? The debates around ethics and overseas travel are endless and like all intellectualisms, could prevent you from leaving your front door if taken too literally. But assuming your intentions are not entirely selfish, and if not a benefit, your presence does not do any harm, go but consider your own motives carefully. Others will and you might not like their conclusions.

Record Keeping

You should always keep record records — develop your own form and format, what you can make sense of and is useful to you. A handwritten diary and an old fashioned notebook, with a different (dated) page per day might save a lot of grief and tears when your expensive ICT equipment fails or is lost. Travelling overland through central Africa, logs from previous trips were invaluable and reduced risk. Where is the nearest tea stand or market? Is the road particularly bad at one spot, will you make ground on one stretch only to lose time on another? Where can you stop for the night and how long will it take until you can stock up on supplies? Where is the nearest petrol station, pharmacy or clean running water?

Your records should include any specialised medical treatment you may require, with details of vaccinations and possible antidotes and anti-venom. Your administration should not just be clear and understandable to you, but others after you who are either following in your footsteps or attempting to rescue you.

When gathering information, confidentiality of sources can be key. The information should always be stored safely, if in any way compromising your sources places you and them at risk. Consider how your records might be useful in the wrong hands. Travelling through Iran during

the Iran Iraq war, I was advised to delete all place names and names of people I encountered from my diary in case it was confiscated. Despite the Revolutionary Guards not reading or writing English, they attempted to intimidate me by going through my belongings and flicking through my diary. If you need to circulate information, think about how records might be interpreted if they are lost or pass out of the control of the people who created them.

Accuracy in details is essential, however, in an emergency such as an evacuation, as there may only be one chance to interview or obtain information from those involved. If possible, record in the script and language of the peoples you are working with. A misspelt family or place name could create delays and confusion and place doubt on your legitimacy or the authenticity of your material. This could cast a shadow of doubt over your whole project and might mean a young child is never reunited with their parents or the wrong person is denied treatment.

Certainly 30 years ago the Lonely Planet was a bible for travellers and it was incredible how accurate the descriptions and observations were, as well as recommendations of places. At one stage, the creation of these publications was a source of pride for a select few. With mass tourism, the rush to publish a guide for just about anywhere has inevitably resulted in shoddy work and the development of the internet ensures there is no real money in writing guides unless the material is sponsored. By 1998, a guide to Lebanon I attempted to use (I forget which one, although for legal reasons that is probably just as well) seemed written not by people



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who lived in the country, but by someone who had recruited customers from his local bar. The Lebanese tend to underestimate journey times, possibly because as a local you know where you are going, know the short cuts and do not bother with trivialities such as speed limits. Any and every destination we enquired about seemed to be 20 or 30 minutes' drive, despite some towns being two hours apart on dimly lit and poorly managed mountain roads. That the guide book had not commented on this and accordingly suggested the author had not left the safety of his bar stool and merely recorded what other drinking buddies told him. This could be extremely dangerous if you underestimated how much water you should take for example, or how much fuel you would need, or if you should wait till the next day before embarking on the next leg of your journey.

These guide books continue to treat women as 'other.' And the publishers and publishing industry, despite editorial departments being heavily female, continue this façade. Possibly this is because women do not want to be thought of as troublemakers or a 'problem' or people treated differently from men. For some forms of feminism, being treated as men is being treated equally. But being different from men is not the same as unequal, subordinate or disadvantaged.

How you record is up to you, but simple pen and pad might be preferable to a fancy iPad that may run out of power, be stolen or broken very easily. Records should contain facts as far as possible. Date, place and time each 'page' or entry- a name, family history, findings of an

interview. Consider that sometimes there are political reasons why the collection of certain information is not expedient, or whether family secrets might be divulged. Predict and pre-empt problems that you or the people you interview and form relationships with might encounter if the material were to be exposed elsewhere or falls into the 'wrong' hands (whatever and whoever they might be). Do not place yourself your colleagues, their friends and family at risk. Replace names with initials or numbers, for example. You need to always gain permission for the information to be stored, transferred elsewhere or possibly published. Is this information confidential and if so, why? Again, accuracy is essential of course.

Professional Ethics

This is a fieldwork manual concerned with the 'doing' not the pontificating. However, an aim is to pose questions and demand that the reader consider options. For example, you may find that you are in the company of someone who is smuggling animals as a side line, as I once was. This is a big business — it may not necessarily be tigers and lions (not so easy to hide at customs), but can be turtles or birds — providing a small, but significant financial perk when they get home. The deeper you travel into and remoter you become in, for example, Central Africa or South America, the higher the price for rare animals of that region. I found myself in the situation of recognising a member of my party as an animal smuggler in Cameroon and reported the person to the wildlife station we were camped with. The animals — baby turtles and parrots of some sort — were removed and the person fined \$US50, if I recall. I also reported the incident and the individuals concerned when I returned to the UK, since it was a truck driver from the UK who seemed to be involved in the buying and selling and transportation. This could all have turned very nasty, but it didn't. It never occurred to me at the time that it would, such was my fury and indignation — fury that animals were being exported this way, and indignation that it was assumed I would keep quiet, as presumably others had and did. There was not much of an attempt to disguise what was going on. But a furious, indignant woman can be a powerful thing, not to be messed with. Presumably the spoils were insufficient to beat me up or dump me in the bush somewhere.

Do not assume the people you are working, studying or travelling with or living amongst share your values, morals aims and objectives just because they are from your country, or a familiar region of the world, or because they speak your language. Find out before about their perspectives you go and imagine worst case scenarios. Keep quiet or cause trouble. Some may be there with the understanding that in many countries, if you are white and European, you can buy who and what you want, and buy your way into and out of everything and anything. For the worst case you might think of William Golding's 'Lord of the Flies' a novel describing the experience of small boys descent into savagery when their plane crashes leaving them without adult supervision on a desert island.

Moral and Ethical Dilemmas

You may, then, be placed in some sort of moral and ethical dilemma, so consider the options and impacts of paths available to you before you leave. Do you learn that corruption is endemic? That bribery is commonplace and if you are to achieve anything at all, you too will have to provide sweeteners — as your fieldworkers before you? Or has prostitution successfully been used to manipulate the male fieldworkers or colleagues on previous expeditions?

In many parts of the world, from London's Canary Wharf to Moscow to Mali, prostitutes, male and female, are part of business deals and business woman learn to turn a blind eye and retire

gracefully to their hotel at the point where the men are taken to the local brothel. Will you be discreet and 'knowing', or a 'spoilsport'?

Of course, this can be a ruse and your male colleagues may find themselves minus thousands of dollars, or the stars of their own porn film and subject to blackmail. In which case, you can laugh long and loudly. But what are you going to do with this information? Who will you tell? Why? And how will this impact you? Will you have to leave your fieldwork site, or will you be ostracized by everyone — local and expat, making at best your life miserable and at worst, your work impossible? Will you lose your client or the company account? You might even lose your job — because of cuts, of course. Will your reference (the untraceable one supplied on the phone) say that you are 'difficult' and not a team player?

I discussed this issue with some young Japanese female clients working for a large corporation in London (although you don't have to be Japanese to experience the situation I describe). Of course, not all men visit prostitutes given half the chance and these women had observed that some men preferred socialising in mixed groups, to limit the chance of binge drinking or visiting 'titty' bars as one called them. Men also suffer from being accused of being spoilsports. Men have wives, partners, sisters, mothers and daughters and feel pressurised not to spoil the fun. Will your HR department support you in what you could describe as bullying of a sort? Or will you risk being ostracized by your team? Not all men want to behave like this, but many men (and some women) will collude with others by remaining silent. Women are supposed to be fun, right? (But not funny ..). Some are afraid of being accused of being gay — homophobia being as prevalent in business as anywhere else — and if you remain silent, you too are colluding. Of course, being a gay man or woman does not mean you will not visit sex clubs and sex workers either, nor that you will not exploit or be exploited for sexual gain. Being gay does not make you nice, and does not necessarily mean that you are a victim, or a perpetrator. Being gay just means that you are gay.

WHATEVER YOUR SEXUAL PREFERENCE or reference, do not be pressurised to not spoil the fun if it is not within your definition of fun. Leave. Say 'I am not comfortable here/with you/with this situation'.

Whatever your sexual preference or reference, do not be pressurised to not spoil the fun if it is not within your definition of fun. Leave. Say 'I am not comfortable here/with you/with this situation'. 'I don't want to drink,' or 'I don't want to drink any more'. 'I don't want to go to this club/pub/restaurant.' If you are younger, do not be manipulated into feeling naïve or gauche or unsophisticated. If you think prostitution is horrible, say so. This has nothing to do with age. Don't become involved in any arguments ('why not?' being a common retort). We could argue intellectually about what is, or is not, prostitution, as opposed to 'sex work'. (It is sometimes argued that being a housewife is a certain type of prostitution. In the former Soviet sphere, being a housewife was a remnant of the old order of things, and only an option if you were a member of the despised, parasitical bourgeoisie. Anne Oakley described a different status and function for women in her 1970s work that might be more useful in helping you understand why so many women choose not to be employed outside the home once they are married (let alone those who do not choose).

At a certain level, in a certain type of situation, under certain conditions, EVERYONE agrees prostitution is horrible, especially the prostitutes. Would it be acceptable for your sister, mother or daughter to work as a prostitute? How about your father, brother or son? More is to the point — and perhaps this is a question to ask your male colleague before he disappears to the local titty bar at lunch time — why would a man want to pay for sex unless he is so unattractive and socially inept he cannot obtain sex for free? Isn't having to pay for sex admitting you have been touched by the ugly stick? Ridicule is the greatest expression of contempt. If a colleague is not bothering to hide the fact that they are buying sex, and even if they are attempting to disguise their visits, do not bother to hide your contempt. Present them with an ugly stick the following morning and dance around the office with it raised above your head chanting 'ugly stick ugly stick' etc. Take back the power! On one (political) work trip overseas,

invariably I was the only woman amongst a small group of men, who shared with me the next morning they had ‘accidentally’ visited a topless bar or lap dancing club or some such after I had retired safely to bed. They claimed that they had left once they realised where they were. I told everyone and mocked them loudly and relentlessly for the remainder of the trip. ‘Next time bring your wives!’ Clichés such as ‘what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas’ have no currency when you are in Strasbourg.

If you don’t like a situation, say so and leave and don’t be placed on the defensive and side tracked into some sort of pseudo-intellectualised, relativized discussion ‘it depends what you mean by ...’ etc. Many men and some women, when they find themselves in a situation where familiar values, conventions and regulations are not applied — where they can watch and/or take part in a range of sexual activities for the price of a Big Mac — will participate as voyeurs if not actual participants. This is because they can. This satisfies their curiosity and no one need know when they return. They do not think about the situation, nor the circumstances whereby these men, women, children and animals came to be involved in the sex industry. Don’t be one of them and don’t be bullied into looking the other way. ‘Weakness invites and silence feasts oppression’ (John Donne ‘Of the Progress of the Soul’).

And if you are an older, more experienced woman, defend your younger colleagues. They might be afraid to jeopardise their careers. They might not know what to do, who to tell or how. Defend them in writing if necessary, to their line manager, their boss and the HR department describing your observations and requesting a response. Provide evidence of repeated behaviour, with times, dates. Create an ‘incident log’ if there is an habitual offender, recording the impact on you, your colleague, any outcome or action. Be methodical and detached. Avoid the personal in favour of the coldly clinical, measured and reasonable. Provide a defence on behalf of others. Those in stronger positions financially usually outrank and can therefore outmanoeuvre the devious and deceitful — those who would assail the weaker and less experienced woman. This could be your mother, daughter or sister, or perhaps it was once you.

The Thorn Birds author Colleen McCullough — married to a Pitcairn islander who was a descendent of Fletcher Christian and his Bounty Mutineers — defended the sexual exploitation of young women on the islands as a ‘cultural practise’. Many people’s radar becomes confused when finding themselves amongst peoples and in places where the attitude to sex, drugs, and power differs wildly from their own and where there is little fear of punishment or reprisal. Fortunately, in many countries, you can now be prosecuted for crimes such as child sex abuse and paedophilia committed overseas on other peoples’ children. But this speaks volumes about the wildly differing approaches to children and childrearing as much as sex. Paedophilia might be universally loathed, but paedophiles and child abusers are not universally condemned, criminalised or even policed.

If you are attached to an organisation of some sort, the organisation will usually insist you abide by the laws of the country that you are originally employed in, the country of your passport, as well as those of the country you are seconded or travel to. In many countries, where

In the 1982 documentary **First Contact**, original footage from the 1930s was used to describe the meeting of gold prospectors with a group in Papua New Guinea that allegedly were otherwise unknown (to Europeans, at least). The women, now elderly, recall having ‘no hair’ (i.e. pubic hair) but being offered to the white men. The children had been afraid because until they saw them defecating, and realised they were men, they had thought they were Gods. IF these men accepted the offer, as many have done before them, why are they celebrated when they should be shunned?

WATCH IT



Working Issues

homosexuality is disapproved of, even illegal, then if you are known to be homosexual, male or female, then you will bring your organisation into disrepute if you are openly gay. Given the legalities around discrimination and prejudice in many countries, this poses a dilemma for you and your organisation. You can be sued, sent home, or blacklisted, if your organisation loses a contract or a client because of your perceived lifestyle choice. You could sue the organisation for not alerting you to the realities of living in a country such as Dubai, where homosexuality is illegal and same sex marriage considered not just an impossibility, but an abomination.

If you form a relationship with a local man or woman, heterosexual or homosexual, this might not be approved of by local staff, creating problems for you and your partner, especially if a relationship of convenience. In many countries and cultures, if a couple live together, this is a statement of intent. If you walk away, without committing, then you shame yourself, the organisation you work with and most of all, the person you left behind. Somerset Maugham's **The Moon and Sixpence, Of Human Bondage, The Painted Veil** and **The Casuarina Tree** amongst others, do not describe a world entirely lost. Do not dismiss these novels as products of a colonial, bygone era — the descriptions of the characters, the comparisons between local and foreigner, male and female, have resonance today as much as Dickens, Zola et al. People, and the ways people behave, do not change as much as we like to think, or would like.

Of course, you might question all of the above. Good. Education is about how to think, not what to think. This manual is intended to be read prior to departure, but is also useful as a debrief. Perhaps you are a researcher and required to consider ethical issues before you receive funding or leave for the field, in which case, tick the 'yes' box. You cannot be expected to know everything about everyone, but you need to demonstrate that you understand that not everyone thinks as you do, and not everyone wants to live like you do, even if they have the option. How different is promoting democracy, civil participation in society, disseminating information about contraception, or women's emancipation (all of which I am unashamedly 'guilty' of) to converting the 'ignorant, heathen masses to Christianity or Islam?

Consent, Slander and Libel

If you are a researcher, people need to take part in your research with informed consent. Why do some researchers not seek consent for research that in other countries, and amongst other peoples, would be subject to a set of rigorous regulations — institutional and statutory? In such circumstances written consent needs to be acquired. In general, people need to know the whys and wherefores. Predict and pre-empt problems for the participants as well as you.

Consider this set of questions from the informants' or respondents' point of view:

- What will happen to me and the material IF I agree to take part?
- What will happen to the result?
- Will I be paid?
- What are the advantages of taking part? What are the disadvantages? Will my taking part be kept confidential? How are the results recorded?
- What happens if I change my mind or don't want to carry on?
- Who is funding and organising the project?
- Who is to review the research?
- Will taking part affect my legal rights? What are my legal rights?

It would and should be assumed that answers to the above are an essential component to any scientific research project, including anthropology. Several excellent contributions to one publication I was later to abandon had to be omitted because at a very late stage of the project, the authors refused to sign legal disclaimers and forms consenting to their work being used in the way originally agreed, possibly realising their work might be libellous and the peoples mentioned easily identifiable. But why did they think they could write about people and places in such a way without fear of contradiction or the consent of those named (and sometimes shamed) in their research in the first place? I wondered how much of some of the accounts, albeit they were well executed and a good read, were true at all. There is nothing new in fabricating research results, nor exaggerating adventures and hardships out of male and female bravado. But now that ‘our peoples’ can look us up on the internet, befriend us on Facebook and LinkedIn, consider the implications for you, your department or workplace, or the publisher.

Once involved in politics and at the political coalface, I noticed a trend amongst a certain type of academic — often of the political sciences, as well as research and broadcast journalists, to casually, but meaningfully, slip a consent form under my nose before an interview had begun. If you are put in this position, do not let them get away with this. Take the form, and agree to return it signed once you have copied and digested its contents. Don’t waste peoples’ time, but don’t be afraid of refusing permission if the interview has not gone the way you expected or wanted. They are simply covering their backs, so you cover yours. If you are recorded, demand to see how the material was used. I recently experienced a newspaper fabricating an interview with me. The article included nothing I had not said or written already, so I was not concerned. But I was surprised, since no attempt had been made to contact me and no effort was made to even confirm or elaborate a few points. I interpreted this as laziness and, in this instance, I could not be bothered to pursue the issue. Did Seierstad imagine her comments about the bookseller and his family — Shah Muhammed Rais — not all complementary — could, would or should go unchallenged? Will you?

Unaccompanied ‘Children’

In the past, people have called unaccompanied children ‘helpers.’ The only universal understanding of the term ‘child’ would be physical, pre- and post- puberty. What separates the child from the adult — teenage being a relatively newly invented interim period that emerged after WW2 in America — is the ability to reproduce. Someone becomes ‘adult’ by producing a child. You must abide by your own country’s laws as well as the country you are in. Be guided by them sexually, emotionally, and physically. Since you can now be prosecuted for breaking the laws of your own country as well as the country you reside in, assume this applies to women as well as men. Women are not more or less likely to exploit situations and children than men. The sex trade is one industry women dominate — as brothel madams, traffickers, procurers and customers. Women recruit and employ other men, women and children more

In a landmark case, Norwegian Asne Seierstad, author of best-selling and very readable, **The Bookseller of Kabul** (2003) was successfully prosecuted by the bookseller himself for breaching confidentiality. He had accepted the author into his home not just as a guest, but as a daughter living amongst his family. He offered her hospitality, safety, security and most of all, his trust, which she breached. There are arguments on both sides, but this case raises all sorts of ethical and moral dilemmas about confidentiality and the use of other peoples’ lives and loves for your own end.



easily than men do, because of the universal reluctance to acknowledge or recognise that women can be perpetrators of physical, emotional and sexual abuse as much as victims.

However, if you are a woman, you might be seen as in need of 'protection' by men who seem like boys to you, but will be considered young men in their own society. You may be treated as if you are a child — 'women and children' commonly considered one category. Many people, especially their mothers and aunts, will 'loan' younger brothers to a woman who they consider alone and vulnerable. From Southern Europe, Sicily, Palestine to Papua New Guinea, a single woman of any age will be assigned a young man to protect, run errands, interpret (a young man is more likely to speak English or a world language learnt at school, or received an education his mother and sisters have been denied). Accept this 'loan' in the spirit it is intended if you are twice his age or the same age as his mother (you will be laughably old). But beware if the age gap is not so great. In many parts of the world, a woman is a grandmother by the



Do not form sexual relationships with men younger than you. At best you will be pitied, at worst you will be condemned as a cash cow and ridiculed behind your back, your beau treated as a whore (although the money and gifts this may bring will be accepted). Wonder why his sister is not offered.



time she reaches her forties, but in the U.S. and Western Europe, women like to think 40 is the new 30. It isn't. Do not form sexual relationships with men younger than you. At best you will be pitied, at worst you will be condemned as a cash cow and ridiculed behind your back, your beau treated as a whore (although the money and gifts this may bring will be accepted). Wonder why his sister is not offered.

Observe these sorts of arrangements and what they might say about the relationships between the sexes and the roles they play — roles that you may be expected to fulfil. I commented at a workshop at one university that a middle aged, male botanist's 'helpers' were obviously not female. Embarrassed that he had not initially considered this, he hurriedly quipped these were the only photos he had brought, the 'girls' were in other photos. This is possible, but unlikely, in this society. As soon as they are old enough to carry an infant sibling, a young girl will be assigned childcare responsibility. In a society where the young mother will reproduce continually for many years, achieving perhaps eight full term births (10 or 12 will not be successfully completed), girls are introduced to their perceived primary role (childbirth and childrearing) as soon as they can walk properly. They will have to complete chores around the home, collect firewood, and light the fire for dinner as a form of training. There is no time to play or assist a male botanist. The older she becomes, the less appropriate this might be. In poor societies where literacy is restricted, thus limiting employment opportunities, a girl of 15 might marry a man of 40. She might not be his first or last wife. The link with literacy is key. If you are denied schooling (as a choice of your parents or because the state is not sufficiently organised to provide a building and a teacher), as soon as you are old enough to work and contribute to the family economy, you are obliged to do so. Filial piety is an explanation provided by child prostitutes in Thailand. According to work conducted by Heather Montgom-

ery, recorded in 'Modern Babylon', the children are glad, even proud, to be able to give their parents money, even if this means having sex with strange, foreign men. Indeed, money and a 'pension' is what these children are brought into this world for, and this might involve marrying and bringing in a bride price. If you ask someone what they have children for, you might find the answer surprisingly and tragically pragmatic.

Traditional Medicine and Healers

Traditional medicine and healers matter enormously. Anthropologists such as Mary Douglas and Evans Pritchard have written prolifically on the subject. They provide insight into the alternative ways of seeing, doing and understanding and how different systems can co-exist side by side with scientific healthcare. They are reminders that there are other ways of seeing and doing and other paths to follow. You may not be of the same class, religion, or culture as the people you work with, but you need to be tolerant of other religions, customs and beliefs. In difficult times especially, people cling to the emotional support their religion and customs provide. It is not for you to condemn these. Women, by and large, are more comfortable with the idea of traditional or 'alterative' healing and medicine, but will traditional healers be more comfortable with you, as a woman? Given the widespread taboos and pollution ideas around menstruation, they may not.

If scientific healthcare is not readily available, too expensive or does not exist at all, then the majority of people will use traditional medicine and traditional healers. Many people will never have had a medical examination and may not have received vaccinations. They may misunderstand Western medical care and misuse any medication available. For example, when a child has been vaccinated too late against measles and then gets measles and dies, they may think the death was caused by the vaccine and thus oppose any other vaccinations.

Going to hospital may not be an option. If you are working in some sort of medical organisation, or working with refugees, you must work with, and introduce yourself to, traditional healers. Co-operate and become their allies, not their enemies. If you are seen to trust traditional healers, people will trust you. Traditional healers can be quacks or they may provide a real service solving problems, emotional and physical. Recognise their value and work with it. A 'quack' might be a show person; all form and no content. In another epoch, perhaps he or she might have performed at a fairground. They can be today's advertising, sales and marketing execs selling dreams and promises and hope of better bodies or better bedrooms. They may be excellent psychotherapists who may provide a different explanation to human behaviour, but nonetheless, will have an acute understanding of the peoples they work with and, of course, the peoples YOU work and live with. Having trained as a Psychotherapist, and uniquely worked with Gypsies, Cigany, et al. of Eastern and Central Europe for many years, I can say without fear of contradiction that the techniques they/we all use to extract information are similar. The rationalisation and objective might differ, but the range of motives is spread as evenly. Rarely ill-intentioned, some are following the (tax free) money, some are slick and professional business women, and some are warm and well-meaning. You are no less likely to receive good and well-intentioned advice from a Gypsy as from a therapist, a role which in the UK is not an accredited or listed profession, such as being a nurse. They may cost the same and have life experience and wisdom. They will know how to listen and engage with people. A Gypsy woman, however, does not benefit financially from you not being 'cured', she does not create a dependency and attachment difficult to extract yourself from since she will never be short of customers and will be dispensing wisdom long after the trend for counselling and psychotherapy has reduced the price and quality of the experience, and thus the value, thereby limiting the appeal.

Certainly, medical anthropology is a growing discipline and increasingly popular in modern metropolises where public health officials must integrate new or newer immigrant populations into the existing healthcare systems. Of all branches of medicine, it is in psychiatry that illness is most closely tied to culture: to social organisation and values, and to popular notions of psychology and disease. Patterns of mental illness and abnormal psychology are not universal.

Find and select traditional practitioners within the population and, even if you believe someone is a quack, do not share these opinions unless the treatment is harmful and dangerous. Remember, long after you are gone, the people may only have their own form of medicine and healing. Traditional healers operate under a variety of names and guises, they may even deliver children. They will be particularly busy at the point of entry or exit of life.

Some healers listen and ask questions and prescribe a medication from plants in the same way a doctor might from a western bio-medical background. They can be extremely useful and interesting, with their profound knowledge of plants or other substances. Others diagnose the nature of the illness and its cure by meditating or going into a trance in order to get advice from a god or spirit. The treatment may be a certain kind of plant to be collected under certain circumstances, with the advice sourced from a divinity. It could also be an offering to a certain God or spirit, or a special diet. They might advise or predict an outcome.

You might find it difficult to work this type of healer, and they might not want to work with you, but you should at least try and always demonstrate some sort of respect. Never ridicule or show any sort of fear. The experience these healers offer can be very intense and emotional and not something you might have experienced or witnessed before. Respect their power and the power they might have over other people. Take anyone who has power over others seriously. Power can be used for good or ill, for the benefit of others, or for self-aggrandisement. Be wary of the powerful. A person who enjoys being feared is someone you should be fearful of.

The term 'shaman' is widely used and misused, but there are different types of shaman. Terms such as 'magic' and 'medium' are more easily understood if you are from a western culture. A shaman might go into a trance that could last hours, if not days. This might take place in the person's home, or the healer's house. The boundaries, in this case, between for example, a Christian exorcism performed by a Roman Catholic priest, and a shaman found in Indonesia might be blurred. In both cases, the person is spiritually sick, possessed, their 'soul' in peril. Shamans might take hallucinatory drugs in conjunction with bio western medication. If someone is really sick, it is all hands on deck, after all. Unless you think the shaman is dispensing poison, leave well alone.

But some healers use magic. These healers tend to be from societies or where the 'spiritual' world (they might be branches of the Christian, Hindu or other major religions) is malevolent and need to be appeased if the person is not to cause physical or mental illness. 'Black' magic is widely believed and practised in London as much as Lagos and Rio. Different rituals are involved, diagnosis and cure might be reached differently, but for the most part practitioners can be very powerful people in some cases best to avoid, provided your avoidance is not interpreted as an insult. If you avoid one, avoid all. Alternatively, associate with a range of healers. Do not open yourself to accusations of favouritism or collusion with one traditional healer or practitioner any more than one local politician. Turf wars abound and you may find yourself in the middle of a long standing feud that will hinder you, or your project's progress, or even make your place in the village or town uncomfortable.

And if you feel that traditional healers are competing with you? You need to be crafty and take back the power. Insist they fulfil their role as you see it. Do not let them take risks with people and insist, if possible, that people go to a hospital, especially if they might die of a particular



In London in 2001, the torso of a boy was found in the River Thames. Police believe he was the victim of black magic and forensic evidence suggests that he was originally from Benin City, Nigeria. The murderer has never been found, and the investigation is ongoing. This kind of discovery is not uncommon in sub-Saharan Africa and by historical association, South America. It is the power of the belief in black magic that is scary. You need to be afraid of those who hand over the power of life and death to someone who 'practices' black magic. Who knows if the finger of guilt might be pointed at you, an independent woman, as has so often been, and still is the case? We can easily theorise about the meaning of witchcraft accusations. Arthur Miller's 1953 play, **The Crucible** achieves this admirably. But post-modern or positivist theories and interpretations are not much good when you are being run out of town semi-naked with your head shaved.

illness or condition or is contagious. This way, other people do not catch the illness and if a person dies, the death is connected to the hospital. Suggest that if the person dies after having been treated, people might say the healers have killed them or their diagnosis was wrong, anything that might harm their reputation. Some healers will play dirty tricks if they feel you are a threat to their position and power, especially if you are a woman. Understand this and work with it.

Public acceptance of different forms of medicine and different types of practitioner will serve you well. The local population will understand you are open-minded, not critical of their ways, values and culture. Share your knowledge where possible. You will almost certainly learn something, and your association might save your life. After all, they may know the formulae for the only antidote for a particular spider or snake bite otherwise unknown outside the region.

Dangerous Healers

If you believe a healer is dangerous, ask about their reputation. Do they demand money or too much money? Many healers do not ask for money, but are paid in food or goods. They believe their 'gift' is either inherited or 'awarded' and that they should not benefit financially. Some healers are well-intentioned, but their methods might be harmful because of ignorance. Of course, mud or clay of sorts can have the same impact on a minor wound such as an insect bite or a boil as calamine lotion. I have happily exchanged 'lotions and potions' with peoples on Eua, a tiny island off Tonga Tapu. But neither form of medicine is effective if applied with unwashed fingers contaminated with faeces, yours and other peoples.'

Prisons and Prisoners

On my twenty-second birthday, I fled a Nepalese prison for the safety of India. On a long trip through Asia to Nepal, I visited European prisoners in Damascus and Kathmandu looking for stories to sell to the UK newspapers. Bizarrely, I encountered someone I had been at college with only a year earlier in prison in Kathmandu. At 37 years, he was ancient to us and ridiculed as the oldest swinger in town. The UK in 1980s was characterised by angry protests in support of the miners and against the politics of Thatcherism, and women were expected to be Fierce, Fearsome and Fearless (or at least we were at Livingstone House, North East London Poly-technic, my first Alma Mater), so we had no time for hippies. However, whatever his faults and shortcomings, he seemed to have been appallingly treated and could not have deserved to have been beaten and starved for the drug smuggling he claimed had been falsely charged with.

In prisons all over the world, it is the family who must feed and clothe the prisoner and provide essentials. Families in the ancient prison in Kathmandu, once royal stables, camped outside to ensure bribes were paid and prisoners fed and supplied with basic necessities. Foreign prisoners suffer enormously from only having embassy and consulate officials to support them. For weeks, I would bring food and pre-prepared meals to my college-mate, but young and naïve as I was, I rapidly realised that I was thought to be his girlfriend and that this did not bode well for me. His trial was to be on my twenty second birthday and he was eager I attend and vouch for him. Sixth sense told me I could well be joining him in prison since I would be considered guilty by association. I had no intention of acting as some sort of guarantee or reference. He may have been innocent of those particular charges, but he was a known drug taker and dealer at college. I decided a hasty exit would be prudent. I was lucky.

He was eventually released and we met back in London. Courtesy of the tireless UK organisation, Prisoners Abroad, he became acquainted with a prisoner I had met with in Damascus, who had also been released after serving some of his sentence for gun running.

I recount this exploit not with pride or nostalgia, but as a warning. I was lucky, possibly because I was understood as a young and naïve, if well-intentioned young woman; harmless. However, unless you are part of an internationally recognised religious, political or health organisation, or accompanied by an embassy or consulate official, avoid prisons and prisoners. 'Bad Boys' in need of rescuing seem to be particularly attractive to a certain type of needy woman. Prisoners awaiting execution are especially in demand in America's Death Rows, so I am told.

If you are part of an organisation that works with prisons and prisoners, nothing can prepare you for the squalor and sheer brutality of a male prison, anywhere in the world. But what of female prisons? If there is no female prison, why not? Does this suggest women are disciplined by the family? Will it be assumed, often correctly, that if a woman is incarcerated for any length of time she will be sexually assaulted or raped?

If a society can be judged by its prisons, then take note of countries where there are few or no female prisons.

Victims of Torture and Violence

There are definitions of torture provided by the Istanbul Protocol. If you are a medic or someone identifying and recording evidence of torture, then the Istanbul Protocol provides a 'manual' of sorts. You will receive, and should demand, special training if you are working in this area. The term 'torture' is now in the public arena. As a term, it is widely used and misused and is losing the impact to shock. There are separate publications for this specialism, but you might find yourself coming into contact unwillingly or unwittingly with victims and perpetrators. Torture works depending on your definition of 'works' and according to the objective. Not just intended to make victims expose others and disclose information, torture of an individual can be used to destroy a community, a family or a religious group.

Recognising the impact of torture and violence on you

You may not have chosen to work with people who have been victims or perpetrators of torture, but you need to understand the impact of their symptoms on you. People are very adaptive. It is a survival technique. But unfortunately, if you are working with people who have survived torture and organised violence (and random, disorganised violence and torture), you might find you have adapted a little too well and demonstrate similar but seemingly inexplicable, symptoms of fear, depression, nervousness, lack of concentration, sleeplessness, night-

mares and sudden outbursts of anger and misplaced rage. You may be a professional, a medic, a religious leader, or just someone who has not heard their stories before. People will want to tell you their stories. Sometimes because they believe you can do something, sometimes because of some anticipated gain, asylum or financial for example. Sometimes they just want to tell their story to fresh ears, because everyone they know has been through something similar and has had enough of their own problems without bothering with other peoples. Sometimes they want to tell you their story because they have no one else to tell. A man or woman who has been raped or sexually assaulted can be very isolated because the fear of the consequences of being found out, rejection, isolation and in women's cases, death, can be very real. People are always more comfortable talking to women than men. They may see this as your role as a woman, even though you are there to do the organisation's accounts. Perhaps you are sympathetic, kind and generous of spirit. Recognise the impact on you and manage your own emotional life before it has to be managed for you. If you are acting as a translator or interpreter or both, this is especially significant. Do not let yourself be exploited by someone who will use your skills to their advantage — a company director or academic supervisor, for example. Can something good come of this exchange that will benefit the victim? If the only benefit is to someone else's career back home, walk away.

Can you talk with someone else about what you are experiencing? Can you process what you are hearing with someone? Do you get the opportunity to relax, have free time, with friends, family or colleagues? Are all your senses balanced? If you spend your time writing and listening, then you will need visual stimulation in the form of art, looking and doing. Create something such as music or dance, so you release as well as absorb emotion. If you are 'on call' 24 hours a day, you need to take some time out. Prevention is better than cure.

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

Functional complaints

If you suffer from a litany of undiagnosed physical complaints, suspected food 'intolerances,' vague aches and pains that you cannot quite put your finger on and nor can the doctor diagnose, headaches, stomach aches, back aches and other vague symptoms such as 'stress', perhaps your complaint is what is now understood by physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists and psychotherapists as a 'functional complaint'. Its 'use' or 'function' is to provide you with a physical focus where in fact, the discomfort or problem is mental, social and/or emotional. The symptoms may be 'real' to you, but a doctor may struggle to find anything physically wrong with you.

There is a huge stigma around mental ill health. People prefer to talk about a bodily complaint rather than personal or emotional problem. Perhaps you are focusing on the physical, when it is the mental and emotional that is the problem. Most people choose to express their problems through the body rather than admit an emotional problem. These complaints might be a symptom of a more serious problem, such as depression, an anxiety disorder, or alcohol and drug abuse, or the consequence of serious violence and torture, or witnessing as well as being subject to extreme forms of violence such as rape.

Recognising serious, underlying psychological, or psychiatric, disorders

There is a huge range of 'normal'. After all, it is normal to find torture, war, and violence distressing. There would be something wrong with you if you ceased to be impacted by these experiences or find even thinking and reading about them not distressing. But beyond a 'normal' reaction? It is not for you to be an amateur sleuth, therapist, physician or psychiatrist. However, you might want to consider if changes in your behaviour and moods, or colleagues (notice-

IF YOU REACH THE STAGE WHERE you cannot concentrate, cannot listen any more, have become weary and cynical and jaded, then it is you who needs help. You can only help others if you have solved your own problems first. Charity begins at home, after all.





able to you or other people) are signs of something more serious. These may include extreme irritability, sadness, loss of energy, putting on or losing weight, sleeplessness or sleeping far longer than usual, as well as panic attacks, lack of concentration, extreme nervousness, unexplained angry outbursts, hyperventilation, sweating, night terrors. All these are more obvious signs there is something wrong. Seek help before help seeks you. Given the experiences of Eastern and Central Europeans (alone), among them Jews, Gypsies to name just two persecuted groups of the twentieth century, the appalling loss of life, gulags and gas chambers, it is a surprise anyone survived, let alone went on to lead happy, fulfilling lives or create functioning nation states. But they could and did, and so can you.

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Support groups

A support group is a vital tool in the battle against loneliness and depression in any society. Sharing your experiences with others is invaluable. You can start up your own support group and call it what you like. The objective is to exchange ideas, share experiences, find solutions and predict and pre-empt serious mental health problems in a sympathetic and confidential environment. With a mixed group, men who might otherwise not feel able to publicly admit despair or depression can feel it is acceptable to demonstrate vulnerability and 'weakness'. They might also exaggerate to demonstrate how tough they are and why their particular field location is no place for 'little lady' (especially their wife). Women who might be happier to 'download' their problems on others can be shown that humour is a great healer. A support group is not just for moaning, but finds solutions as well as diagnosing, detecting and distinguishing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from good old fashioned pre-menstrual tension (PMT).

Support groups can also be a great distraction and an excuse for meeting up, in work time. They are task oriented, but relationship based. You could meet weekly, monthly or even daily. The time, length, format and location should be basically the same. Continuity and consistency are vital if you are living and working in a chaotic environment and are not accustomed to an unregulated, pre-industrial, agricultural lifestyle (no clocks). Women might need the excuse to meet other women in a 'formal' structure otherwise denied. Book groups are support groups of a sort. Any topic or themed group is a support group. A team is a support group. A resident's association is a support group. Political parties and pressure groups are also support groups.

If you are joining an established project or mission, join a committee or society to get to know the people and places you will be living and working amongst, local and expatriates. This might be a theme based group or an 'entertainment' committee. If there aren't any, create one. By and large, as a woman, you should be involved in what your local community and culture considers sex-appropriate activities. Being 'one of the boys' is rarely appreciated, by the boys or girls.

And you might be deprived of female company. Many men, despite evidence to the contrary, believe the ‘theatre’ of war should be the domain of men and that women are victims, not victors. Stuff them! If you feel like putting your feet up and having a pedicure, head for a local beauty salon.

The role of religion and religious leaders

Perhaps your support group is based on religious affiliation. You may share the same religion as the peoples you are working with, albeit in different format. Even if you are secular, an atheist or an agnostic, understand that religion provides comfort and hope where there might otherwise be none. Religions can help people rationalise their experience for good. For instance, when someone is detained for a long period in solitary confinement, tortured and abused, a belief in God can provide solace and comfort (‘God has chosen me for this experience, but perhaps I do not know why’, for example). Within many religions, prayer can offer momentary respite and peace and a feeling that there are others out there praying at the same time as you. You are not alone and not forgotten and there is divine justice. The process of prayer, whatever the religion, is meditative and soothing. Even for those whose brand of religion might prefer a more punitive explanation (‘I am being punished’) there is the possibility of salvation for suffering in ‘good grace’.

Religious leaders (priests, nuns, mullahs, monks for example) vary in form and ‘content.’ The more established world religions, with holy books you will invariably be permitted to read even in the most deprived environment, will always provide some sort of support. In the most extreme circumstances, religion might be a panacea — and so what?, it will be a powerful one. If you are ever detained for a long period, and especially if in solitary confinement, demand a holy book and if necessary, a bilingual dictionary so you can translate and learn the contents. In this way, you will be occupied meaningfully for many hours. Structure your time and create a timetable to alleviate the boredom and frustration and state of anomy. The major religious text. Torah, the Bible (old and new versions), and the Koran, to name but a few, have theologians still arguing over their meaning millennia after their creation — so plenty to get going on.

I am sure his inner world differs from his public persona, but one of the gentlest people you will ever meet is Terry Waite. Despite more than four years held captive in Beirut in 1987 after failing to secure the release of another hostage, journalist John McCarthy, this one time Envoy for the Archbishop of Canterbury shows none of the symptoms of detention and confinement others demonstrate and fail to disguise, ‘cure’ or alleviate.

Of my clients at the Medical Foundation, those who did not believe, had no religious affiliation or inclination, nor could find one, rarely ‘survive’ torture because for them, there is no rationalisation or redemption. There is never any release from pain and torment and people are paralysed and damaged emotionally, spiritually and often physically. In these cases, torture has worked.

RECOMMENDED READING

Non-Fiction

- > Bourgois, P., 1995. **In Search of Respect: Selling crack in El Barrio.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- > Chernoff, J.M., 2003. **Hustling is Not Stealing: Stories of an African bar girl.** Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- > Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. and Shaw., L., 2011. **Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes.** Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- > Montgomery, H., 2001. **Modern Babylon? Prostituting young children in Thailand.** Oxford: Bergahn
- > Oakley, A., 1972. **Sex, Gender and Society.** London: Temple Smith
- > Pandian, A. and McLean,S., 2017. **Crumpled Paper Boat: Experiments in ethnographic writing.** Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Fiction

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PART 3

You Can Learn to See, Think and Act Like a Night Witch

Concluding Thoughts

What to do about your planned fieldwork? The core question is — ‘is this situation for me?’

The aim of this material is discussion and awareness-raising. Not to shock, but perhaps to shake the too comfortable and too complacent. You might find the contents simplistic, or you might find them illuminating, encouraging and exciting. Some of the suggestions might save your life. You must find your own solution, but certainly you need to consider what your responses might be to the issues raised in this manual as a form of risk management.

You might also want to think about your obligations and responsibilities, and the boundaries you might want, or need to place, between you, your colleagues, and the peoples you find yourself working and living amongst. Where does the personal end and the professional begin when you are ‘in the field’? Where you are not just working together, but living, eating and sleeping together for long periods in close confines; heavily scrutinised by those around you as much as those you leave behind.

It can sometimes be difficult to know when and where to draw the line between personal lives and work. Age and experience may be factors. You may feel young compared to your contemporaries — but you are a young woman, not a child. You can learn to see, think and act like a Night Witch. Vanity Fair’s young Becky Sharp is described as ‘precocious’ — the precociousness of poverty. Youth is no bar to extraordinary capability in the most difficult of circumstances. Violette Szabo was awarded the George Cross for her work as a secret agent in Nazi occupied France. Already a mother, she was captured, horribly tortured by the Gestapo, and shot before she could be gassed in the Ravensbruck concentration camp. She was 23 years of age.

Overseas, in the field, your colleagues are not employed as counsellors, therapists, carers or psychiatrists. If you are a student conducting research, tutors are paid as academics for their academic opinion and a university is an academic institution. Tutors are employed to mark essays and line managers are employed to evaluate and delegate work. However, these roles may be perceived and confused with other ‘nurturing roles’, especially by or towards someone younger and less experienced. The boundaries drawn and itemised within the contract of employment

For example, I experienced the following situation when working with a small group of Anthropologists. All had bonded well, except one young woman in her mid-twenties. She sent me a personally insulting e-mail in response to recommendations she focus on her English language skills which were causing her difficulties with her colleagues as well as the peoples she was working with, who spoke Pidgin English and found it difficult to communicate with her. This was causing the project problems as she seemed overwhelmed by the situation, although her colleagues were very supportive of her efforts. She did not seem to understand instructions and had difficulties with one to one communication. I had engaged a great deal with this woman by e-mail regarding this matter, but she seemed very confused and submitted a report one month prior to the deadline that was barely intelligible. When I recommended she re-write, she sent an abusive e-mail.

At no stage did she pose a ‘risk’, other than to cause worry and concern. Her colleagues were kind and thoughtful and tried to include her as much as possible, but she became isolated. She sadly failed to meet any deadlines, left the project and we did not hear from her again.





become blurred. If you are a university supervisor, the pressure to conform to nineteenth century ideals about lecturers in universities is powerful, but has to be managed. While school teachers are still required to function in loco parentis, university lecturers have no such emotional or legal obligations. Provided an academic fulfils the criteria agreed in their employment contract and dispenses 'knowledge' and does not break the law of the country they are employed by and in, they are no under obligation to be 'nice', paternal, maternal or even friendly. An older man or woman might not want to be placed in the paternal role. In fact, many women in the workplace, especially if they are more senior, actively resist being 'Mummy' lest it cloud judgements (theirs and others) and ultimately, promotion and 'getting the job done'.

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It might be useful to enquire as to the nature of a relationship with a particular organisation and likewise, request medical records to establish if the type and frequency of contact understood within the confines of fieldwork is appropriate for a particular fieldworker. Ultimately, concerns should be related to a person's ability to complete the task or project they have been assigned to. Can you or they get the job done and achieve the agreed goals and objectives? Beyond this boundary, if you or someone is experiencing difficulties that seem to be outside the professional remit, then as a last resort, go home, or send them home.

Useful Terms and Phrases for Managing Difficult Situations and People

If behaviour is personal and attacks personalised, you must be very firm and emphasise the impact on YOU:

- Stop sending me these horrible messages
- I want you to stop
- I don't like what you are doing / saying / the way you are behaving / the way you are treating me.
- Please stop or I will leave / report you to your line manager / family / wife etc.

You must also describe, report and record the situation to someone who does not have a vested interest in the outcome, such as someone outside the project or organisation, and who therefore can support you. HR departments are there to protect the organisation's interests, not yours. A project manager might be annoyed if your situation threatens to delay or disrupt an outcome.

Use the Royal We

This implies you are part of a group, have support and back up, and that there may be repercussions for you, and especially them, IF you do not achieve your task or something goes in a direction you do not like.

Creating boundaries and getting started

IF someone is avoiding answering your questions, attempting to flirt with you and otherwise treating you as a date not a professional, be firm and create boundaries. Emphasise:

- Shall we get started?
- Let me introduce myself ... and present are for the record :
- If you can let us know who is present for 'our' records .. (
- I am and I am going to manage our time like this: the agenda is ...
- The objective of today's meeting is .. and this is what we need to achieve by lunchtime .. and this is what we need to achieve by day's end at ...
- and we will divide the time up approximately like this .. [agenda]
- We need to discuss during this time ..

Clarification

IF you are confused or the conversation is going in a direction you do not want or like, 'rewind' by stopping and asking:

- For clarification, what do you mean by....
- Can we clarify the following points and emphasise the following changes ..
- Can we emphasise that the following changes will take place ..
- Can we ensure we have all understood correctly the following changes ..
- Can we ensure we have all understood correctly how the following will impact us / them ...
- Can we confirm the following changes will be in effect from ..
- Can we confirm that from the following periods, there will be

Checking agreement

Most cultures and languages focus on agreement not disagreement. IF you find yourself being pressurised and unsure as to exactly what has been agreed, or how, or are uncomfortable with any aspect of an agreement, stress the following and be very clear about your required outcomes. These terms and phrases invite consent, not dissent, and in relationship based cultures where verbal agreements are binding in a way written ones are not, you must walk away from the table being clear as to the expectations, actions and outcomes.

- The following changes have been agreed :
- Let us confirm the following:
- We would like to confirm the following
- 1. We'd like you .. to increase the discount
- 2. We'd like you to pay in .. dollars/Euro/
- 3. We'd like you to pay for
- 4. We'd like you to reduce the price from To
- 5. We'd like you to accept a penalty clause for cancellation.
- 6. We'd like you to accept a penalty clause for late delivery ...

- 7. We'd like you to pay by ... letter of credit.
- 8. We'd like you to ..

Disagreeing

Learn to say no and disagree politely, but firmly.

- I am afraid this is out of my/our remit
- I am afraid this area is not within our sphere of influence
- Unfortunately, we have to
- Unfortunately we need to
- Unfortunately we are advising
- These are your options ... I am afraid I cannot help
- It sounds as if you require additional input since this is not within our experience or expertise
- It seems that you might require someone experienced in the area of ..

Closing a meeting/deal/discussion etc.

In the absence of a written record, you must emphasise your word is your bond and stress you assume this is mutual.

- Can I confirm there is good will here .. we are all reasonable professionals ..
- It is reasonable to assume the good will of all parties ..
- We all want the situation resolved as smoothly and efficiently as possible ..
- We are agreed on the following ..
- We agreed before ... xxxx this is the best course of action and we will continue this course unless the situation changes, or there is any new information..
- Can we confirm ..
- I can confirm we have agreed ..

Diffusing a situation

If someone is angry or upset, acknowledge the feeling behind their behaviour, tone of voice, or choice of words, but be firm and do not react. Question tags are a form of response that keeps you engaged, but do not involve you in an argument.

- It sounds as if .. you are struggling to make a decision ..
- It sounds as if ... you might need more information ..
- It sounds as if you are angry/upset/puzzled/confused/ [insert emotion!]
- Perhaps we should all take a break at this point and resume in 10mins/20mins/after a cup of tea and a loo break?
- I hear you, however, this meeting is about
- We would need to arrange another meeting to prepare for and discuss the points you have just raised ..

- Does that sound a good idea?
- How does that sound?
- Really?
- Do you think so?

Points of Guidance for Employers and Employees

Areas where problems habitually occur

You need to be aware that there are pitfalls to meeting socially and/or continuing a friendship past the end of the professional relationship. Gifts might be understood as bribery and drinking alcohol, or being thought to be under the influence of alcohol while at work, can be especially risky if you are a woman, while being considered acceptable bonding behaviour of men. These seem to be issues that cause particular tension and problems; however you interpret, rationalise and justify.

Questions checklist

- In this vein, consider whose needs is my action really meeting? Will this action leave me or my organisation open to criticism or legal action? If so, why am I doing it?
- What role am I seen in? Am I seen in more than one role and will this cause confusion? Will this action lead to others accusing me of preferential treatment?
- Will this action undermine the work of other colleagues or projects?
- Am I prepared to record the action or have it recorded? If not, why not?

Common feelings

There are always positives and negatives to feelings. You might like feeling needed, but on the other hand, feel pressurised by too much responsibility.

You may enjoy feeling important, but do you or other people have an unrealistic view of you and your role?

If you feel liked, does this mean you collude with others and cannot challenge them about their behaviour or performance?

If your job meets your social and emotional needs, will your private life and personal relationships suffer?

Do you feel passionate and involved, or overwhelmed and burnt out?

You might be a hard worker and take pride in your resilience, but will this leave you feeling over-burdened and resentful?

What if you fall in love?

The last is tricky, since many people meet their partners and spouses at or through work, myself included. There are many 'anthropology' couples. 'In the field' war time romances flourish. But will this relationship help or hinder the project? Disrupt or interrupt? Will you, the woman, be the one to have to have to compromise? Or leave if it goes wrong?

Recently I was contacted by a young woman who has spent two years working unpaid for a refugee organisation founded by an elderly, but still formidable, woman. She was extremely distressed by her experience, having had to flee because of internal armed conflict. Her 'boss' had asked me to debrief her. Although in her late 20s, she gave the impression of someone much younger and disclosed very quickly she had been having an affair with one of her clients, a married man with two children. She said she would be following him to Canada once THEY had arranged refugee status for HIM and his family. This was a lonely, emotionally unfulfilled and unhappy woman exploited by a desperate man. If she thought the situation would go unnoticed by her colleagues and other clients, she would be wrong. And if she thought the situation would be interpreted according to her own narrative and rationalisation, she was deluded. But this could also be seen as someone exploited by a vain, controlling and more powerful older woman.

Further enquiries revealed both she and the organisation had a bad reputation amongst refugees, refugee groups (i.e. the very people she claimed to support) and, at the time, the UK Border Agency. The founder of the organisation was also alleged to have had relationships with clients, so she was hardly likely to censor such behaviour. This seemed a subsequent pattern with the Interns. The founder seemed quite confused at times, and if economically poorer, and of a different social class, would have doubtless benefited from a visit by social services. But she was not so distressed and confused that she could not obtain what she wanted; i.e. raise funds and recruit young, enthusiastic, but naive people to work for her for free in the hope of a job or at least a decent reference in the future. Sadly, they would all be 'guilty' by association and some would be damaged by the experience, not just in reputation, but emotionally.

Older, more experienced and more cynical people, male and female, will always exploit the younger, more enthusiastic, less worldly and less jaded. Don't you be one of those. Be Fierce, Fearless and Fearsome at home and overseas.

Principles to consider

- Knowledge, skills and experience used positively for the benefit of all
- Respect for all staff and colleagues, local and international, as individuals
- Be aware of your prejudices, control and monitor them
- Professional responsibility takes precedence over personal interest
- Responsibility for standards
- Collaboration with others in the group's or staff interests
- Confidentiality of information
- Pursuit of conditions of employment (compliance with your contractual obligations)

General Considerations for Personal Disclosure

- Do not compromise safety (consider the use of personal details).
- Do not compromise professional standing (stay within your role at work).
- Do not compromise legality.
- Do not compromise the organisation or colleagues
- Do not disclose personal issues.

- Do not allow yourself to feel pressurised to disclose personal information (be clear and assertive).
- Do not disclose anything related to financial value.

These principles are standard. Do not work for any organisation or undertake any sort of field trip if the organisers do not at least acknowledge the above.

How to interpret the situation as described in the last case study? Good intentions are not good enough. Perhaps the founder is the subject of jealousy and gossip. Would a man having relationships with clients be disapproved of in the same way? Powerful people, male and female, are subject to envy and malice. If you put your head above the parapet, as you already have or are expecting to (hence you are reading this manual), expect someone to try and shoot it off, especially if you are a woman.

Legally in the UK, suing for 'negligence' rests on the idea that a person has not fulfilled a 'duty of care' i.e. there is a breach or non-fulfilment of a contract. This depends, obviously, on the contract or disclaimer you have signed prior to engaging with anyone — such as counsellors and consultants, physicians, solicitors or other professionals — who provide you, not with 'care' but with 'support' and 'options'. Of course, there are all sorts of moral, ethical and legal aspects to this issue, 'informed consent' being one, and, not least, that we cannot always be sure that there is not some sort of financial or political advantage involved in, for example, referring a fieldworker or journalist to a particular organisation — or maybe the pursuit of a story or even a 'victim'. In addition, of course, we cannot be sure of the relationship between some of these universities, charities and organisations (or their paid/unpaid staff), the various



People abuse power and charities, 'humanitarian' organisations, universities and university staff, are no exception. Make sure people do not abuse you, undermine you, or belittle you.

branches of organised crime and countries with regimes your Foreign Office might otherwise advise you to avoid. People abuse power and charities, 'humanitarian' organisations, universities and university staff, are no exception.



Make sure people do not abuse you, undermine you, or belittle you — because you are a powerful woman. If you were not powerful already, then there would be no purpose or benefit in abusing, belittling and undermining you. A Fierce, Fearsome and Fearless woman is a powerful woman indeed. Keep your own council, know your power and make it serve you well. See, think and act like a Night Witch.

Recommended Reading

Some websites of use and interest

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- > https://www.anthro.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/anthro/documents/media/jaso7_1_2015_80_87.pdf
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- > <https://savageminds.org/2017/10/78/metoo-a-crescendo-in-the-discourse-about-sexual-harassment-fieldwork-and-the-academy-part-1/#more-22325>
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General Recommended Reading

General Recommended Reading for those interested in finding out more about the anthropological perspective.

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Addendum

Working Girl. Jane Bain.

I should have expected it. Being a woman obviously provokes certain types of response. In fact, I learned to turn it to my advantage. You have to put the female into fieldwork to achieve anything worthwhile. It may not be orthodox, but it certainly achieves results.

At school in England, we were taught that girls could do anything boys could do... and do it better. Our academic results seemed to bear this out. I was in the first comprehensive year at my school in Chester. When I won a place to read Psychology at Oxford, everyone was delighted that the big social experiment was working. I was in the first intake of women at Queen's College. There were fifteen of us in a college of about 280 men. Far too few females to be shared out equitably. Instead, the men decided to define us as a public good. We were treated like everyone's younger sisters, to be appreciated without physical interference. It was rather a privileged position to enjoy.

I learnt a lot of things during my time at Oxford. One of the most useful was how to hold any man's attention by discussing football, a topic about which I knew little and cared less. The technique was simple. Assuming the position of a wide-eyed acolyte, I would say, "So what did you think of the match?"... after eight minutes or so, when the monologue flagged, I'd add, "Mmm, but that last goal..." and they would be off again. Miraculously, this works on any member of the male species, even the weediest Northern chemist. And once you have their attention, all sorts of other persuasive possibilities open up. It is a tactic that has stood me in good stead ever since.

After graduating, I hit the hippy trail overland to India. Actually, I was rather too young for the real hippy trail. By the time I went, Lonely Planet was well established as a leading publisher of guide books. The one to India was particularly comprehensive and multifunctional. If you were ever suffering from severe native language deficiency (the symptoms are similar to scurvy), it sufficed to sit in a cafe mentioned in the Yellow Bible holding it prominently up. Within minutes, you would be joined by similarly linguistically starved expatriates. But despite these temporal constraints, I still aspired to the original hippy experience.

I tried very hard to be an authentic traveller (never a tourist). I wore a long shift and nappy trousers made by a Pakistani tailor. I learned a few words of the local language in each region I visited. I went to temples and ashrams and market places. Sometimes it all got to be too much, and I would retreat to the beach in Kovalam to hear Cat Stevens and eat banana pancakes. It did occur to me that the waiters and taxi drivers with whom I conversed were perhaps not totally representative of my counterparts in this host culture, but they were the nearest thing I could find to native people. Because middle class women were, of course, totally obscured from view.

And the people I met were kind, incredibly so. I remember a few incidents of sexism precisely because they were so rare. There was the time in Karachi that a friend and I were stoned. The stones were very small, pebbles really, and they were thrown by some weak-wristed old men with straggly beards. Still, it wasn't pleasant, especially as we were trying so hard to be unobjectionable by wearing our new shalwar kameez. And our only sin was being out without a male protector. Another time, further north, we tried to buy some meat for the evening meal. The

men in the butcher shop were not even trying to be unpleasant, but we could have starved before they would sell us any flesh. When we held out our money, they stared at us and laughed, exactly as if monkeys were trying to buy food. In the end we gave up, and had to send some male companions out to buy ingredients for supper. It was humiliating, and annoying, but not exactly life-endangering.

The only time I really felt threatened was in Khajuraho. The temples there are famous for their erotic carvings which are the basis for illustrations in the Kama Sutra. I arrived in the early evening, and to my horror, not a single hotelier would give a room price to a western woman travelling alone: payment of another sort, they implied, would be quite acceptable. Night was falling, and I was starting to feel desperate. In the end, my elderly rickshaw driver suggested he take me to the YMCA outside town. We cycled off into the darkness, for far longer than I was comfortable with, until we finally came to a lighted building full of kind welcoming people. So even that small adventure had a happy ending, due to someone's empathy and consideration.

When I returned to England, I was determined to help all these wonderful people I had met. I worked for a couple of years, studied economics at night school (so that I could argue with economists in their own language) and eventually got a grant to study anthropology at the London School of Economics. That was a wonderful place, although there was one particular instigator of institutional sexism. He was a mammary man, and made no secret of his predilection. The undergraduette involved during my time didn't even get a First, which we all felt was rather a poor return for her communings. After that, and a couple of jobs in NGOs, I was taken on as a Social Development Advisor (SDA) by the Overseas Development Administration (ODA, now DFID).

My mentor was the wonderful Rosalind Eyben. Here was a woman visionary enough to invent a whole new professional discipline; principled enough to eventually retire from the top of the tree and return to work in the field. She and her second-in-command, Pat Holden, were an inspiration to a whole generation of young female anthropologists. The departmental secretary, Sheila Hipwood, shielded us all under her competent wings. Of course, this put me in a terrible conundrum: I could no more ask this older woman to do anything for me, than I could have given orders to my own mother. (Come to think of it, I probably did boss my poor mother around as a teenager, but I had conveniently forgotten all about that).

Social Development Advisors are employed to comment on the social aspects of overseas aid projects. This includes consideration of such factors as caste, ethnicity and of course gender. Mostly this meant looking at project plans, but about one week a month, it involved trips to evaluate things on the ground. Were projects funded by the British taxpayer reaching our target vulnerable groups? In particular, were female concerns and responsibilities adequately covered? The key phrase here was 'Women in Development': every project document had to include a large section on WID. This became a slop bucket for all sorts of odds and ends and funding anomalies. It also became a handy label for all women in the world of development. At embassy cocktail parties, I would frequently be introduced to the wife of some local government minister with the words, "She's interested in Women in Development." The poor creature would gaze at me with frightened eyes — obviously thinking she was really going to be caught out now — and we'd have to engage in a diplomatic dance of political correctness before we could get on to some topic of genuine common concern.

A typical WID issue would look like this. ODA would give money to dig wells for poor villages in an arid area. A team would go out to evaluate the success of the programme. As they drove into the first village, they'd see a string of women sashaying off to the muddy river, balancing clay jars on their heads. Something had obviously gone amiss. That evening, the SDA would arrange to meet a group of women from the village. She had an interpreter, because

development professionals don't have time to learn the language of every country they work in. (SDAs were usually female, because a 'soft' role was the best way of getting a token woman on the evaluation team). Through her interpreter, the SDA would ask why they weren't using the new well. There would be an embarrassing silence, whilst everyone studied their hands. At last an older woman would tell a story about a village where a well was dug between the headman's hut and the mosque. The men used water from the well to wash their feet before going to prayer.

Fuelled by righteous indignation, the SDA would bring this up with the mission team. The chief engineer would get quite defensive. He would declare that the villagers had been consulted about the optimum location for their new water supply. On closer investigation, it would transpire that the digger-man had asked the chief where he wanted the well. The SDA would suggest that next time, the intended beneficiaries (also known as "end-users") be consulted about the best place for the village well. There would be an ugly pause: the f-word* would hang unspoken in the air (*feminist). Eventually the team leader would agree that this recommendation should be included in the mission report. Discrimination detected and honour satisfied, the SDA would look smugly self-righteous** for the rest of the trip. (**At least, this was the interpretation of other team members: the SDA herself usually reported feeling frustrated and slightly depressed).

On the basis of my experience, I decided to try a slightly different approach. There was no point in antagonizing senior members of the establishment: far more effective to use their own momentum to achieve what I wanted. Let's recall one visit to Ghana as an example. The lead agricultural expert was a grizzled old Africa hand, let's call him Smith, who thought he knew everything. He was not at all pleased to have a pesky woman in the boat. The economist, Jones, was a young Cambridge graduate who was trying to make his mark. It was a little hard for him to impress both the grizzly and the girl, but he did his best to please. We'd spent several days in the country, visiting farm improvement projects. We'd also made a fair number of visits to dilapidated government buildings which had obviously seen better days. In these, I'd experienced one of the major sources of discomfort to a female official. Under the vast mahogany tables, mosquitoes mooched in the moist heat. The men sported socks and sturdy shoes, which protected them from sanguinal assault. As a woman, I was expected to wear a skirt and sandals, and the bloodsuckers swarmed around my swollen ankles. I carried a citronella roll-on which I could lean down and apply discreetly beneath my chair.

Now it was obvious to me what needed to be done: but how to persuade the senior member of the team? Back to the old techniques to get a man's co-operation. In the hotel bar, Smith was settling in for a hard night's drinking. Jones was trying to keep up, but having trouble holding his beer. Besides, he was too smart for this old game: I needed him out of the way. I yawned, made my excuses and stood up. Jones looked relieved to have an excuse to leave too. He followed me to the lift, his eyes large and hopeful: but I'd worn horn-rimmed glasses and flat shoes as a prophylactic against the tropical heat. When we got to my floor I said a brisk good-night and shut the door. I gave it five minutes before I went back down. Smith was slumped in his chair, looking morose. Existential angst is all part of the territory for an old Africa hand. He hadn't seen my scarf, which was not surprising since I'd left it in my room. But he did offer to buy me another drink. I accepted a gin-and-tonic, and encouraged him to talk.

Over the next hour, we took the project to pieces. How I appreciated having this chance to benefit from his insight and experience. Gently guided, he came out with some very interesting comments. Admittedly they reflected my own prejudices, but they were really quite perceptive. He had some interesting proposals for the future, too. I praised him sycophantically for my best ideas. It was wonderful, I cooed, to have such wisdom combined with practical expertise. Smith was more of a revolutionary than he had ever realized. The dreaded WID

advisor had turned out to be a collaborator, not a competitor. By the time I went upstairs, he was feeling rather a fine fellow.

In the morning, I reminded Smith how much I had liked his suggestions. I confirmed that my section of the mission report would support his analysis of the situation. Young Jones looked confused at this volte face, but it would certainly make his life easier if we were all in accord. The rest of the visit went smoothly. Back in London, we presented our findings to the regional administrative team. The proposals were unanimously accepted and implemented. Life for a number of poor Ghanaian women got significantly better. Smith was a convert to the good cause: on his next mission, he actually requested social development input.

Was it wrong to use feminine wiles to achieve a worthwhile aim? It did mean that my contribution to the report was less obvious. If I'd used a conflict model, I could have pointed out everything that was wrong with the project. But I would have been unlikely to divert funds into the areas that needed improving. I'd learnt this both from experience, and from conversations with other women in the field. To achieve what we wanted, women still had to play patriarchal games. It was the best way of achieving the greatest good for the greatest number of beneficiaries. So from a utilitarian point of view, what I did was morally excusable.

But it got tiring, having to convert every male development professional over a certain age. In the end, the well ran dry: I stopped caring so much about what I could achieve. That's when I knew it was time to move on. I left practical development work. I've stopped meddling in other women's lives, and got on with my own. Like most people in West London, I live underneath the Heathrow flight path. Sometimes at night, I see the lights of the big jets going overhead, and I wonder where they're going. I remember my development days, and the old wanderlust starts to return. I find that a large gin-and-tonic usually dulls the itch. It must be the quinine: works against all sorts of fevers in the blood.