

**(i) Mechanics**

- Getting into the community: the necessity of a letter of introduction ('one of the cardinal rules of fieldwork procedure': Henry 1969:36).
- Finding someone to work with: I was told that finding consultants would not be a problem—that they would probably find me. This was in fact exactly what happened.
- Consultant compensation: is it necessary? If so, how much is required?

**(ii) Going alone vs. going with company.**

This is something that can only be decided on an individual basis. A prospective fieldworker should think carefully about their own personality—their feelings about being alone, their ability to deal with awkward social encounters and so on—and make a decision based on that.

*While a few standardized formulas for the success of a fieldwork project exist (the do's and don'ts of fieldwork), in the final analysis, the skills and experience of each researcher in relation to the situation in which he undertakes to work seem to be the more crucial factors. The success of fieldwork is largely the result of the unique interaction between the personality of the fieldworker, the nature of the research problem, and the socio-cultural environment in which research is undertaken. (Henry 1969: 46)*

*I realized how much the process of field work would be enriched, and the psychological health of the field worker supported by the opportunity of working in the field with another person who was undergoing parallel experiences. I would recommend that field work by solitary investigators of either sex be discouraged whenever possible. (Golde 1970: 78)*

*To minimize the distress, we can recognize that mental stress can be very great in the field, and that we will vary as individuals and at different times in our lives in our ability to accept and cope with these stresses. We need to entertain the possibilities of our own limits in deciding what fieldwork we can and cannot do. There is an endless array of researchable problems, and no one has to go work on leech-infested jungle trails, on high altitude mountains, or in urban slums if that is beyond their own psychic capacity. 'Know thyself', we are advised, and that seems to be particularly wise advice in the case of someone planning fieldwork. (Howell 1990: 162)*

p. 470 **(iii) Practical matters**

- Health and safety: note that the issue of going into the field alone arises under this heading as well, and should be considered carefully.
- Food: the anthropological literature on fieldwork tends to assume that food will be plentiful, and instead focuses on things like hiring someone to do shopping and food preparation. This was out of the question for me, since I had no access to cooking facilities, and was not in Chalcatongo long enough to make any such arrangements. The lack of cooking facilities also meant that I could only buy ready-to-eat foods, which severely limited the possibilities.