



## From the Editor

Dear colleagues and friends,

I am very glad to present the second issue of the ISA eSymposium for 2017. In this July issue, five papers have been lined up which address such topics as national development plans, research on criminology and on mysticism, as well as reflections on research positionality in ethnographic fieldwork, and the employment of big data. The last piece is an interview with Margaret Archer.

Charles Crothers from the Auckland University of Technology shares his reflections on the UN and national development plans in the first article. By examining the complexities of institutions and how survey data have been procured and analysed, Crothers encourages more active involvement among sociologists in engaging with development issues.

In the second paper written by Janet P. Stamatel who is based at the University of Kentucky, she notes that instead of paying attention only to high occurrence rates of social problems, it would also be pertinent to shed light on low rates of occurrences vis-à-vis examples drawn from cross-national criminology. This approach would then require a re-orientation of one's research problematic, methodology, and explanatory framework.

In a similar vein pertaining to research lacunae, Mike Sosteric (Athabasca University) argues in the third paper that mystical experiences seem to be sidelined in the field of sociology of religion. The author suggests that mysticism forms an important component of the fabric of religious life and should therefore be further pursued in sociological research.

The fourth article is a co-authored piece presented by Farah Purwaningrum (Universiti Brunei Darussalam) and Anastasiya Shtaltovna (University of Bonn). By reflecting upon their individual research experience in Southeast and Central Asia respectively, the authors highlight that one's positionality in the field, alongside gender and other biographical factors facilitate and/or impede the research process. The paper also prompts an evaluation of the insider/outsider binary, alongside reflections on methodological nationalism. The fifth paper in this issue features Dominique Boulhier's (Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne) thoughts on the challenges of big data and how it links up with digital platforms that require a process of reflexivity in the social sciences.

For our 'In Conversation With' segment of the eSymposium, we feature an interview with Margaret Archer, former editor (1972-1982) of *Current Sociology*, one of ISA's flagship journal, conducted by the current editor, Eloisa Martin. This is presented in conjunction with the journal's 'Sociologist of the Month' campaign for July 2017.

Here's a look at some of the articles that are currently being prepared for the December 2017 issue:

- *The Digital Revolution and its impact on jobs and skills*

Adam Gwiazda

- *Remaking Life in Neo-Liberal Times: Normalcy, conflict and displacement in Jammu and Kashmir*

Ankur Datta

- *On the Limits of Globalisation*

Victor Roudometof

As with usual practice, I extend a warm invitation to everyone who would like to contribute their papers for future issues and also very much welcome feedback on these articles. Please do email me if you have ideas, suggestions or queries about the eSymposium.

Thank you all for your support of the ISA eSymposium!

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