



SocrelNews

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Welcome

Dear All,

Welcome to our latest issue of Socrel News. At this time of the year, I usually look back on a series of engaging events led by the BSA and Socrel, such as our annual conference, and share fond memories with you in this newsletter. Instead, as you know, we have had to postpone all of our events until next year. In this issue, you will find out more about how the BSA and Socrel have adapted their events to make sure they'll run in 2021. While it was difficult to make the decision to move our events online instead of meeting in York in July 2021, we sincerely hope that this will make it easier for colleagues across the UK and beyond to join us.

2021 heralds further change, as some of our beloved Socrel committee members will be stepping down from their roles. This is the case for Rachael Shillitoe (events officer), Michael Munnik (publications and communication officer), Emily Lynn and Joanna Malone (PG/ECR officers), as well as our Chair, Sophie Gilliat-Ray. We will be circulating expressions of interest for each role early 2021, and welcome applications from all backgrounds.

We realise that this year may have been particularly challenging for many, and we are pleased to announce that the [PG/ECR fund](#) is still available. The scheme is designed to support and aid postgraduate students/early career researchers with the mechanics of academic research. Our [mentoring scheme](#) also remains active, with mentors ready to welcome new mentees. If you would like to find out more about it, do not hesitate to email me.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support during this challenging year, and I look forward to 'seeing' you again from 2021 onwards.

Céline Benoit (Convenor)
c.benoit@aston.ac.uk

Update on Events

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty over conferences and events next year, the committee in consultation with the BSA, have decided to move the Socrel annual conference online. Although we would have been thrilled to welcome you all to York next July, we are excited to welcome you back at the first ever virtual Socrel Annual Conference!

Please keep your eyes peeled for the Call for Papers. Due to the process of receiving and reviewing abstracts, we are unable to automatically accept those abstracts submitted and accepted for the 2020 conference. We warmly welcome all those who submitted abstracts for 2020 to resubmit your abstract for 2021.

The Socrel Annual Virtual Conference 2021 will take place online during the original dates from 13-15 July 2021 and we have a fantastic line up of keynote speakers and panels. We do hope you will be still able to join us for our first virtual event which we hope will maintain the high quality of research being presented and also the collegiality we've come to expect from our study group members. The call for papers will be circulated this week and should you have other questions about the conference please also contact me as conference organizer.

Rachael Shillitoe (Events Officer)
r.shillitoe@bham.ac.uk

Funding Opportunities through Socrel

BSA Socrel Support Fund

Don't forget there are funds available to provide support for postgraduate researchers (PGRs) and early career researchers (ECRs)!

We have available the BSA SocRel Support Fund – a support fund designed to support and aid PGR/ECR with the mechanics of academic research. The support fund can provide £500 annually each academic year. All applications will be considered on an individual basis, but ideally the support fund will be divided up to help as many scholars as possible, and applications can be made for smaller claims. The majority of the funds will be considered for but not limited to:

- ❖ Research and/or fieldwork, including travel costs.
- ❖ Thesis binding

We also have bursaries for to PGRs and ECRs to attend selected SocRel events, such as the annual conference (hopefully we are able to meet in person again soon!) Our conference bursaries are available to support postgraduate, early career, retired, low income or unwaged Socrel members to present at the conference.

If you would like any further information about our support funds, please email Postgraduate and Early Career Scholar Liaison Officers Joanna Malone (jl66@kent.ac.uk) and Emily Lynn (e.j.lynn@lancaster.ac.uk). More information can also be found online at: <https://www.britsoc.co.uk/groups/study-groups/sociology-of-religion-study-group/funding/>

Joanna Malone & Emily Lynn (Postgraduate & Early Career Scholar Officers)
jl66@kent.ac.uk | e.j.lynn@lancaster.ac.uk

Support Fund: Mapping the Sociology of Religion in Britain via the history and development of Socrel

The British Sociological Association supports the work of numerous 'Study Groups' which explore issues and research in specialist areas of the discipline. Our own Socrel is one such group. Over the last 45 years, it has flourished into a significant community of scholarship that welcomes researchers from a wide range of disciplines within and beyond Sociology. These include scholars in Theology and Religious Studies, Racial and Ethnic Studies, Gender Studies, and so on. It is likely that the events hosted by the Study Group have been an important catalyst for the discipline in Britain, not least by supporting the work of new scholars. Encouraging postgraduates has been integral to the ethos of the Study Group since its inception.

This Socrel-funded project seeks to map the history and development of the Sociology of Religion in Britain using the events, networks, and leading scholars associated with the Study Group as a lens through which to explore key moments in the discipline. On a somewhat smaller scale, this project mirrors in some way the publication of Jennifer Platt's book on the history of the BSA itself, published by Routledge in 2014 (A Sociological History of the British Sociological Association). This project will similarly attempt to map the history of Socrel, evaluating its role in the history of the discipline; the way in which

the Study Group has responded to internal and external dynamics and changing fields of interest; changes in the profile of members; and, its collaborations with other professional associations nationally and internationally within and outside the Sociology of Religion.

The project will be overseen by the Study Group Committee. It is expected that the work will begin in September 2021 and will be concluded over an 18-month period. The outcomes of the project will include: a journal article for submission to *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, subject to peer review; content (including a short video film) for the Socrel website; a blog piece for the Socrel website; convening a panel at a BSA conference; and, delivery of a paper about the project at the Study Group conference in 2025 (the 50th anniversary). The Study Group Committee have allocated up to £5,000 for the work.

We invite proposals to work on this project by **12th April 2021**. The proposal should include information under the following headings:

- ❖ Aims and objectives (500 words)
- ❖ Methodology and methods (1000 words)
- ❖ Timetable (250 words)
- ❖ Roles and responsibilities of those involved (250 words)
- ❖ Institutional approval for those involved (if required) – e.g. letter/email from line-manager
- ❖ Proposed budget (travel, subsistence, consumables, transcription, etc.)
- ❖ Contact details for x 2 referees

Applicants should append to their proposal a 2-page CV outlining their career history, a list of publications, and their grant capture track record. We will be using RCUK criteria to evaluate proposals. Lead applicants should be members of the BSA and Socrel (any co-investigator/s should also be BSA members), and should be affiliated with a University, or research centre / institute, or institution based in the UK. The successful applicant will be informed by 10th May 2021. Applications should be sent to the Study Group Convenor, Céline Benoit (c.benoit@aston.ac.uk).

Peter B. Clarke Memorial Essay Prize

We wish to congratulate Antonio Montañes Jiménez, winner of this year's Socrel Peter B Clarke Memorial Essay prize, for his essay on street preaching in Spain.

Antonio, a PhD student at the University of St Andrews, won for his essay 'Street preaching and the rise of Latin-American Christian heroes in Barcelona: a sociological approach.' The work is part of the research project, 'Religious expressions in the public space of Madrid and Barcelona'.

One judge described the piece as "an outstanding essay, well written, original in conception and well engaged, that explores an unfamiliar aspect of the sociology of religion with drive and initiative." Our other judge said the essay "does what good works in sociology do: it turns conventional wisdom about a social phenomenon on its head. Evangelical street preaching is often seen as an ineffective, even misguided, strategy for seeking converts. The essay argues that it is in fact effective for producing solidarity, giving street preachers the role of 'Christian heroes in the face of adversity'." You'll be able to read more about Antonio's research and essay in an upcoming Socrel blog.

The competition is open again for this coming year. Socrel invites essay submissions on any aspect of contemporary religion addressed from a sociological perspective for our annual postgraduate essay prize. This year's deadline is **30 April 2021**.

The winner of the essay prize will receive:

- ❖ a Full Pass for the Socrel Annual Conference – to be taken up by reimbursing fees for the 2021 Annual Virtual Conference or applying the prize to the following year's event
- ❖ a cheque for £100 (sponsored by Taylor & Francis)
- ❖ a £50 voucher for books from Taylor & Francis (sponsored by Routledge)
- ❖ a year's subscription to the *Journal of Contemporary Religion*
- ❖ an opportunity to get published in the *Journal of Contemporary Religion* (the winning essay is subject to JCR's normal peer review)

Submission Details:

- ❖ The essay should be between 6000 and 7000 words, **including footnotes and bibliography**, and must not be available in print/electronic format or submitted for publication elsewhere
- ❖ The essay should be single authored, written in English and submitted as a single MS Word document attachment, including bibliography and cover sheet. Please number your pages
- ❖ Submitting authors must follow the *JCR* style guide
- ❖ The winning essay must be submitted to *JCR* within 3 months of the prize having been awarded
- ❖ Submitting authors must be postgraduates and be/become members of Socrel to enter
- ❖ Application forms and further details are available from the [Socrel website](#)
- ❖ Electronic submissions with cover sheet downloaded from the Study Group website need to be sent to Dr Michael Munnik (munnikm@cardiff.ac.uk)

Socrel Blog Gets New Home

We have been in the process of moving the Socrel blog to a new home on the publishing platform Medium. The blog can now be found at <https://socrel.medium.com/> and we have more posts from Socrel members in the pipeline. The most recent contribution is from Laura Jones at Cardiff University, who writes about her use of visual methods in her fieldwork about Ramadan in the UK. Here's a sample from her blog:

“The loosely structured approach I took with the diaries meant I needed to ensure I could address my research questions using the data. This was why I undertook post-diary interviews with a sample of diarists. These interviews supplemented diary data by covering research topics that may have been missed from diaries and contextualising the ways participants produced diaries — Couldry et al (2010) talk further about contextualising diaries with interviews. Asking participants about the process of compiling the diary also revealed further insights on the research topic. The participant who used Instagram stories, for example, explained that she did this so others could read and reflect on her thoughts — it was an important part of her Ramadan experience that she could bring benefit to others during the month.

“Other challenges encountered were logistical — I had to find ways of converting data sent via various platforms into a form I could compare easily. I decided to save each participant's diary into a Word document (text and pictures) as well as saving photos as individual files. This was easier on some platforms than others — for Instagram posts, I screenshotted photographs since I could not copy them directly; Twitter posts involved formatting after copying; and WhatsApp images did not copy alongside the text but had to be inserted separately. This process was a bit of a ‘baptism of fire’ because as soon as Ramadan started I was inundated with diaries via WhatsApp, email etc and quickly had to start organising them. An Excel spreadsheet was essential in tracking entries I received and formatted.”

Read the whole piece at this link:

<https://socrel.medium.com/lockdown-ramadan-researching-religion-using-visual-methods-ee3153d90f81>

We hope that the site on Medium can act as a showcase for the research that we do as Socrel members and help promote our work in the sociology of religion to a wider audience.

This is where we need your help! We invite you to submit blog posts for Medium that can be published in the following months and beyond. They can be from 500 to 1,000 words and can be about any aspect of your current research and/or research practice.

If you would like to make a contribution to socrel.medium.com, please email me with an outline for your proposed blog post. Look forward to hearing from as many members as possible.

Kim Harding (Internet Officer)
Khardo01@gold.ac.uk

Religion or Belief Network Reforms

by Michael Munnik

Socrel members may be familiar with the Religion or Belief Network, an e-mail list compiled and published by David Perfect of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. It's a monthly round-up of publications, events, and other news, and it crosses the boundary of scholars and practitioners in various fields related to religion and belief in society. Recipients of the newsletter may have noticed that David is retiring from his position at the EHRC. However, he is setting up a new group to continue sharing information on the subject.

Those already on the list may have indicated their wish to subscribe to the new group or to cease, but we expect there are many members of our Study Group – especially doctoral and early career researchers – who may not know of it. David's retirement and the list's migration are a good opportunity to include a brief note about what the list is all about.

The Religion or Belief Network started 2010 by a colleague; David inherited it when she left. David attributes its success partly to his longevity in the role and also to his academic background. Early on, he contacted sociologists of religion to provide insight into the subject, helping the EHRC keep its ear to the ground and “find out what sorts of issues some of the key researchers on religion or belief felt were important for us to consider from an equality and human rights point of view.” He mentions Linda Woodhead and Rebecca Catto as timely figures: they were conducting the joint AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Programme and had outputs to share, events to publicise, and a good view of the shape of the field.

Another benefit of the network is that it serves as “a way of bringing people together”, says David. “People looking at religion or belief in a law department and a sociology department, even within the same university, wouldn't necessarily know each other, and they might actually be looking at quite similar areas or topics, from obviously a different starting point.”

The newsletter is not a high-production publication, according to David: “it's just an e-mail with links.” He has resisted urges from his son, Simon Perfect, a researcher at the think tank Theos, to make it glossier, since “people seem to like it.” It follows a standard format with recent publications, upcoming public events, and calls for papers. The membership keeps the newsletter sustainable: “I am dependent on what people send me.”

So if you have news that may be of interest to the network, you're welcome to send it his way. And if you want to receive his monthly list, you can contact him to be added to the subscriber list. Though David is retiring from the EHRC, he continues as a Visiting Professor at the University of Chester. The list will be managed from his personal e-mail address, so contact him at david.m.perfect@btinternet.com

Socrel Member Interviews



*Greg Smith
Associate Research Fellow
William Temple Foundation*

What role has Socrel played in the development of your career?

I have had an unusual working life since the 1970s with at least three distinct streams, working for churches and Christian organisations, community development and social activism and academic research. I have never held a teaching post in a university though I have on several occasions been a paid or honorary research fellow. My first degree and MPhil research was in linguistics and my first research post was from 1979 – 85 with the Linguistic Minorities Project researching the other languages of multicultural England. Living in the superdiversity of the London Borough of Newham and engaging with the emerging life of diaspora faith communities, in a period when the Faith in the City report was raising the profile of urban ministry, I began to turn my attention and use my research skills to document the religious activity of the community.

Thus I started to read lots of sociology of religion books and move into a new discipline, self-taught as even now I have never studied on any academic course in sociology. In 1986 someone introduced me to Socrel and I attended my first annual conference in a very rainy Preston – my first visit to the city where I have lived since we moved north in 2002. There I met and befriended some of the legendary founders of the group, Grace Davie, Mike Hornsby-Smith, Peter Gee and Eileen Barker. The personal warmth and supportive scholarly encouragement for newbie researchers attracted me then and continues to this day as a distinct ethos. Socrel conferences have often been the highlight of my year, where I have learned so much in terms of theory and research findings, enjoyed discussions and debates with leading thinkers and had many opportunities to present my current research, starting with mapping the religious scene in East London, moving through Joseph Rowntree Foundation-funded projects on faith communities and urban regeneration, and the religious life world of children in multifaith communities to my recent work on evangelicalism.

The most recent focus of your career has been a continuing snapshot of evangelical Christianity in Britain. What's the biggest thing that society has gotten wrong about evangelicals?

In the last 10 years, prior to and since my retirement I have been responsible for, and published extensively from, the Evangelical Alliance programme based on about 20

quarterly panel surveys of UK based evangelical Christians. The popular and media stereotype of Evangelicals is largely based on the political and religious excesses of those who self-identify as such in the USA. They are often seen as enthusiastic, happy-clappy, morally and politically conservative, science denying, racist and hypocritical. This is not even a fair description of the wide spectrum of evangelicals in the USA, while our data from the UK shows a much more nuanced picture. There is a wide and deep theological continuity with the main themes of the 18th Century Evangelical revival, and the Protestant Reformation, in terms of the authority of Scripture, the experience of and need for personal conversion, the centrality of salvation through the Cross of Christ, and the activist commitment to mission. To these the research adds an almost universal conviction that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation in the context of a multi-faith world.

While it is true that the majority of UK evangelicals remain conservative on issues of private morality, marriage, sexuality, abortion and euthanasia on most of these topics there is a degree of nuance, and some indications of generational change. On political party loyalties British evangelicals spread across the whole spectrum from UKIP to Green, while on key topics like welfare benefits, immigration and asylum seekers, racial justice and Brexit, the majority view appears to be progressive and centre left, particularly among the young, the women and the well-educated residents of metropolitan cities. Increasingly the evangelical community is multiethnic, with strong representation in diaspora communities from the global south. The idea of British evangelicalism, let alone of the global movement as a united group is erroneous. The definitions, the boundaries, and the essential elements of, and membership of evangelicalism, are contested and there are distinct internal streams, groupings and indeed factions. As increasing numbers of British evangelicals become embarrassed by the brand as a result of it's identification with Trumpite populism, it will be interesting to see if the "E" word will survive or be abandoned.

Social justice has been central to your work alongside your research. How have you navigated between your commitments and the idea of the removed, analytical academic researcher?

My personal commitment as a follower of Jesus Christ, and to the political values and social teachings I read in the Bible have meant that from the start of my career I have been committed to active involvement in issues of racial, social and environmental justice. This has lead me and my family to make our home in inner urban areas with high levels of deprivation and diversity, and to be actively involved in church and community life and in befriending, offering hospitality and caring for people who are marginalised and excluded. I have been involved in campaigning, community organizing and local politics on issues such as food poverty, welfare reform, homelessness, immigration and refugees, as sustainable urban transport through my love of cycling.



*Suzanne Newcombe
Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies
The Open University*

Your staff biography credits your upbringing in Kansas for your developing interest in the sociology of religion: the landscape and the people. Unpack that for me - what is (or was) Kansas like and how did it inform you and your work?

One of the things I miss most about where I grew up are the thunderstorms rolling in from a distance, the electric charge in the air, the amazing colours in the sky and fantastic lighting displays that one can see from miles away. These spectacular 'extreme weather events' punctuated a rather monotonous flat terrain, endless horizons and a feeling that not much was happening.

There was a clear parallel in my experience of religion and society. We didn't talk about religion or explore any diversity of beliefs and practices with our neighbours. It was not polite. But it was always on the edge of everything – like the humidity building up to a thunderstorm.

During my high school years, Fred Phelps of the Westboro Baptist Church was a local fixture at many cultural events. He and his large family would be there with placards, provoking slogans (e.g. "God Hates Fags") and video cameras ready to document any potential assault from an angered member of the public and support retaliatory litigation (or at least that was the 'word on the street'). My friends and I knew that we lived in Sodom, as decreed by the Rev. Phelps.

A few years after I left High School, the biology teacher there was pushed into early retirement. The rumour was that he had told a student (who happened to have a parent on the school board) that creationism was rubbish. I'm sure there was more to this particular story, but the tension created by a social pressure to view creationism and evolution as somehow equivalent matters of "belief" was palpable.

There was an undercurrent that we weren't talking about what was really going on. That we, as a community, were afraid to discuss or critically examine the beliefs and values that

motivated our behaviour. If I have a central motivating question, it has been “What’s going on here?” – and there was so much going on, so much unsaid in the environment where I grew up, that it instilled a lifelong curiosity in subjects relating to religion and culture.

Your research concerns yoga in Britain. How is it different from yoga at its source in South Asia?

For *Yoga in Britain*, my basic question was “How could something called yoga which obviously originated in South Asia become something so prosaic in Britain?” There are obvious and profound differences between the demographics of upper-middle class women in Britain wearing expensive Sweaty Beaty leggings, stretching to achieve a great body and reduce stress compared to an Indian ascetic engaging in a traditional *tapas* practice like holding an arm up until it atrophies.

But the answer I found looking at how yoga was popularised in Britain is that the assumptions behind this question are misleading in important ways. What yoga is has been profoundly transformed by the encounters of colonialism. Moreover, as more of my colleagues’ research in historical India has underlined, the techniques and practices associated with yoga have always been plural and associated with many competing understandings of salvation.

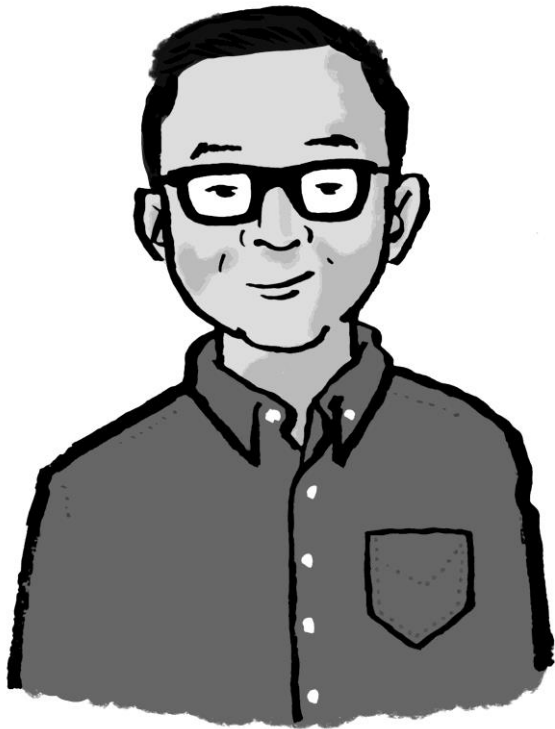
What I find most fascinating in yoga studies now revolves around further unpacking the colonial and post-colonial encounters and how these understandings are mutually constructed in complex ways.

With lockdown conditions and working from home, I'm hearing attentiveness to wellbeing at a social and institutional level than I ever have before. Yoga, and practices associated with it, are a part of those messages. What does this moment mean for your subject?

Between the pressures of a global pandemic, rapid climate change and political tensions driven by populism, we’re being told by our governments and employers to be responsible as *individuals* – for our own health and wellbeing. Exhortations to practice yoga and mindfulness are often part of this narrative. Yoga therapy is being increasingly recognised as a legitimate health care intervention by national governments and private insurers. Yoga practices certainly can have a role in supporting health, strength and the body’s ability to fight off infections like COVID. But more generally, the extent to which yoga usually supports rather than challenges neoliberal capitalist status-quo has been well analysed.

Yoga is a fascinating chimera of related beliefs and practices that can be applied to many different ends. The space created by practicing disciplines such as yoga and meditation potentially could play an important role in shifting our individual and collective priorities. There are interesting examples of yoga being used as liberatory discipline for counter-cultural movements in contemporary contexts.

However, the posture and meditation techniques we most closely associate as “yoga” today have always been part of more extensive soteriological structures. Traditional Indian health interventions are also typically multi-modal, seeing the individual’s health as a complex relationship with between systems operating both within and outside of any individual body. The extent to which yoga and meditation can actually shift an individual or group away from suffering in a meaningful way will be strongly influenced by the place these practices have within a particular social context.



*Xinan Li
Independent Scholar
PhD in Sociology from
Loughborough University*

You've just completed your PhD late last year - congratulations! What was your thesis about?

My thesis is about Christian conversion of new Chinese migrants in the UK. It is a rather 'conventional' sociological inquiry into the process of religious conversion through which I have attempted to document the socio-religious dynamics of the diasporic Chinese in the UK, an ethnic population of enormous size (fourth-largest ethnic minority group in the UK) but received little attention in the public arena (media, academia, and politics).

I've been studying the Chinese Christian community in the UK since 2014. Influenced by the 'believing-belonging' framework that some scholars have used to capture the British socio-religious landscape, my proposed my thesis as 'believing through belonging' to encapsulate the complex process of religious conversion. Simply, religious/Christian conversion can be construed as a sequential (sometimes iterative) process with different developmental stages, that of encounter, initiation, and commitment. By believing-through-belonging, I mean 1) the Chinese Christian conversion is not simply proclaiming some doctrinal propositions and holding them as self-evident truth or beliefs; 2) converting to a religion means more than believing something or joining some group, rather, it is a matter of cultivating senses of belonging to specific faith/religious/cultural traditions and to the affiliated communities; 3) encouraging commitment to the faith tradition as well as specific faith communities, which is the consequence of cultivating senses of belonging, lies at the centre of conversion of new Chinese migrants in the UK.

What was it like for you studying migrant Chinese populations in Britain when you are yourself native to mainland China?

The Chinese population in the UK is diversified in terms of sub-ethnicity, i.e., defined by places of origin/ancestry, language groups, as well as generations of immigration, and other socio-economic indicators such as education, occupation, gender, etc. My identity (or should I say my appearance) as a Chinese mainlander has to a great extent enabled me to

access the Chinese communities in the UK, however, with some defects - I could get either closer or alienated from the research participants. This largely depends on my relationship with the participants.

One thing I find interesting when doing research with the Chinese migrant Christians is their attitudes toward the researcher and their participation in social research. In general, I find the Chinese are rather reluctant to participate in social research though research ethics are promised by the researcher, particularly when researching subjects such as religion and politics that are deemed to be 'sensitive topics' in Chinese culture, especially among the senior Chinese mainlanders. This will become a bit easier if I develop a closer relationship with them; and thus, I have befriended with most of my research participants. And it is tricky to interview Chinese Christians when I revealed my identity as a Christian (somewhat nominal). Our conversations sometimes would slip to discussion of certain Christian doctrines and dogmas, which sometimes could be helpful for me to capture the religious stance of my participants, but sometimes could lead to the participants' suspicion of my 'theological correctness'. Fortunately, with my experience in journalism, I believe that I have kept my intellectual integrity all the way without offending my participants. I do think that trainings in interview techniques (or should I say the art of interview) are needed for qualitative social researchers, especially for those who use interview method as the main investigative tool.

You've returned to China at a time when there is a lot of global attention on the country. What are you seeing around you in terms of how people are managing with the ongoing presence of Covid-19? (And, is it inspiring any new research thoughts for you?)

Yes, I have returned to China with multiple failed attempts in job application at British universities, especially with the ongoing presence of Covid-19, there's a wide-spread recruitment freeze in junior research posts at the UK universities. I used to think about pushing my doctoral research a step forward by looking into the intersections of (digital) media and religion, and gender and religion among the Chinese Christians, which I have presented papers at the 2019 BSA Annual Conference and the 2019 SocRel Annual Conference. And I have published a journal article based on my doctoral thesis recently. However, upon my returning to China, it is almost impossible for me to carry on what I have been doing over the past 5 years. Sad...

I have to say that China has done a great job in containing the pandemic. Although I'm not much a fan of the authoritarian government, I have to acknowledge all the measures that they have implemented to prevent further outbreak of the virus (I'm not saying they are innocent of what they have reacted disastrously at the beginning). With the containment of Covid-19, most places in mainland China have resumed the normal pace. The universities are recruiting progressively all kinds of talents.

Prior to my arrival in China in mid-September, I have secured a junior lectureship post at a prestigious university in Southwest China. However, due to the post-pandemic situation, my employment procedures have been delayed. However, I am not in a hurry to start my new job immediately, as I just finished a translation project of 120,000-word research report over the past two months. And I will take this opportunity of minor career break to travel around in China, to re-adapt myself to my home country - I have spent the past eight years in the UK!

Presently, I am thinking whether it would be possible for me, a sociologist of religion, to have a transformation of career, from the academia to the industry. I am not sure to what extent that I may transfer what I have been trained in thinking, knowledge, and skills to the world beyond the academia. I was invited to a sharing meeting at an internet company in November recently. Hopefully, I will have better ideas by that time.

Socrel Committee

Chair: Sophie Gilliat-Ray

Convenor: Céline Benoit

Membership Officer: Caroline Starkey

Events Officer: Rachael Shillitoe

Publications and Communications Officer: Michael Munnik

Internet Officer: Kim Harding

Postgraduate Representatives: Emily Lynn and Joanna Malone

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Editor/Michael Munnik

munnikm@cardiff.ac.uk

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www.hugoyoshikawa.com