

DR. CRISTIANA ZARA

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PERSONAL PROFILE

I am a social and cultural geographer with a background in Indian studies. My work spans across urban studies; children's geographies and development geographies. I also have research experience in social and cultural geographies of tourism and heritage; landscape studies; postcolonial theory; religion and spiritual landscapes. I am particularly interested in questions of representation, practice and cultural negotiations, as well as issues of urban sustainability and everyday geographies, particularly in the context of mobilities. My main empirical focus is India.

I have highly developed skills in academic research, with an advanced knowledge of qualitative social research methodologies.

I have qualified experience of teaching in human geography.

CURRENT OCCUPATION

25 April 2016 – 17 March 2017 **Contracted professor** in social and cultural geography, Department of Philosophy, Education and Psychology, University of Verona, Italy.

24 November 2014 – 14 August 2016 **Research Associate**, School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Birmingham, UK (part time from 14 April 2016).

Current projects:

1) *New Urbanisms in India: Urban Living, Sustainability and Everyday Life* (ESRC 2013-2016);
Project Investigator: Dr. Sophie Hadfield-Hill.

Project website: <http://www.new-urbanism-india.com>

2) *'Map my Community: child-led participatory mapping of urban life in Delhi'* knowledge exchange project funded by the ESRC Follow-on Fund (ESRC Impact Acceleration scheme).
Project Investigator: Dr. Sophie Hadfield-Hill.

QUALIFICATIONS

2007 – 2011 **PhD Human Geography**, (thesis approved with no revisions) Royal Holloway, University of London, UK.

2007 – 2008 **InSTIL Certificate**, *Postgraduate Certificate in Skills of Teaching to Inspire Learning*, (accredited by The Higher Education Academy, UK) Royal Holloway, University of London, UK.

2006 – 2007 **MA Cultural Geography (Research)**, (Distinction) Royal Holloway, University of London, UK.

1993 – 2006 **BA (Laurea Magistrale) Oriental Languages and Literatures**, (110/110 with honours) Ca' Foscari, University of Venice, Italy.¹

ACADEMIC WORK HISTORY

2013 – 2014 **Teaching Associate in Human Geography**, Department of Geography, The University of Sheffield, UK.

Taught on the BA Geography and MA International Development degree programmes.

November 2014 **Guest Lecturer**, Department of Literary Studies, Philology and Linguistics, University of Milan, Italy.

'Sacred journeys and profane travellers: tourist imaginations and practices in India'. Guest lecture for the Indian Sacred Geographies workshop series.

February – June 2013 **Visiting Scholar**, Department of Time, Space, Image, Society, University of Verona, Italy.

Awarded the *CooperInt 2011* International Academic Mobility Programme Visiting Scholarship.
Subject matter: Cultural Geography and Tourism.

2004 – 2013 **Researcher**, Academic Institutions in Italy, India, United Kingdom.

Extensive fieldwork and research activities in India, Italy and the UK for my undergraduate, MA and PhD theses, and for postdoctoral activities.

2007 – 2012 **Teaching Assistant**, Department of Geography, Royal Holloway, University of London.

Taught on the BA Human Geography Programme.

April 2012 **Guest Lecturer**, Foreign Languages Faculty, University of Verona, Italy.

'Tourist Representations: A Critical Approach to Tourism Studies'. Guest lecture for the Tourism Geography Course.

2009 – 2010 **External Dissertation Mentor**, Department of Humanities, Ca'Foscari University of Venice, Italy.

Co-tutored dissertation student of the BA Humanities Programme (dissertation dealing with cultural geography, gender and migration studies).

November 2009 **Guest Lecturer**, Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Padua, Italy.

'The Concept of Place: Teaching Ideas for Primary School'. Guest lecture for the Primary Education Sciences Course.

2008 – 2009 **External Dissertation Mentor**, Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Padua, Italy.

Co-tutored dissertation student of the BA Primary Education Sciences Programme (dissertation dealing with cultural geography teaching in primary school)

¹ Seven-year study interruption for personal circumstances.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed journal articles

Zara, C (2016) Performing the Sacred: Varanasi, the city of living heritage, *International Journal of Tourism Anthropology*, Special Issue on: 'Sites of Religion, Sites of Heritage Exploring the Interface between Religion and Heritage in Tourist Destinations', Vol. 5, Nos. 1/2, pp. 116-137.

Zara, C. (2015) 'Rethinking the tourist gaze through the Hindu eyes: the Ganga Aarti celebration in Varanasi, India', *Tourist Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp.27–45.

Book chapters

Zara, C. and Minca, C. (2012) "Luogo", in C. Minca, and A. Colombino, *Breve Manuale di Geografia Umana*, Padua: Cedam, pp. 17-37. (Engl.: "Place", in: *A Short Handbook of Human Geography*).

Book reviews

Zara, C (2009) Landscape by John Wylie (London, Routledge, 2007, xii, 246 pp.), book review, *Rivista Geografica Italiana*, Vol. 116, No.3.

Conference proceedings

Zara, C. (2010) 'The seduction of the sacred: visual experiences and spatial practices in Varanasi (India)', in Picard, D. and Amaral, C. (eds) *Proceedings of the TOCOCU 1st Biannual Conference*, Sheffield (UK), TOCOCU – Tourism Contact Culture Research Network,, CD-ROM (ISBN 978-0-9567502-0-4).

In progress:

Hadfield-Hill, S. and Zara, C. Urban transformation in India: children and young people's everyday experiences of belonging. To be submitted to *Environment and Planning A* by June 2016.

Zara, C. and Hadfield-Hill, S. New cities, new aesthetics? Creating, governing and experiencing beauty. To be submitted to *Cultural Geographies* (Paper presented at the RC21 2015 International Conference on 'The Ideal City: between myth and reality', Urbino (Italy), 27-29 August 2015).

Zara, C. Decentring Western theories of landscape: other 'ways of seeing' beyond the material/representational boundary. To be submitted to *Progress in Human Geography*.

Zara, C. Bodies in the field: reflections on the researcher as an embodied subject, to be submitted to *Area*.

Planned:

Zara, C. and Hadfield-Hill, S. Narratives, emotions and encounters: shifting natures in the context of a new urban environment. Paper presented at the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference 2015, Exeter (UK), 1-4 September.

Hadfield-Hill, S. and Zara, C. Making and re-making space – everyday sites of multicultural and intergeneration? Paper presented at the RC21 2015 International Conference on 'The Ideal City: between myth and reality', Urbino (Italy), 27-29 August 2015.

Hadfield-Hill, S. and Zara, C. *Mobile Technologies in Social Research* (working title), invited book proposal, Routledge.

Zara, C. *Sacred Journeys and Profane Travellers: Representation and Spatial Practice in Varanasi, India*, (working title), invited book proposal, Anthropology of Tourism Series (Series Editors: Di Giovine, M. A, and Salazar, N.B), Lexington Books (Rowman and Littlefield), Lanham, MD USA

CONFERENCES

2015 - Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers (RGS-IBG) Annual International Conference

Session Chair: 'Children and Nature in the Anthropocene (1): Building and living with natures: more-than-human geographies of children, young people and families in urban environments'; session sponsored by the Geographies of Children, Youth and Families Research Group. Exeter, UK, September 1-4, 2015.

Presented paper in the same session (Zara, C. and Hadfield-Hill, S.A.): *Narratives, Emotions and Encounters: Shifting natures in the context of a new urban environment*.

2015 – *The Ideal City: between myth and reality*. International Sociological Association - Sociology of Urban and Regional Development Research Committee 21 (RC21) Annual International Conference.

Presented paper (Zara, C. and Hadfield-Hill, S.A.): *New cities, new aesthetics? Creating, governing and experiencing beauty* - 'Technologies of security: building safe clean and beautiful urban spaces' session, Urbino, Italy, August 27-29, 2015.

Presented paper (Hadfield-Hill, S.A. and Zara, C.): *Making and re-making space – everyday sites of multicultural and intergeneration?*- 'Multiculture, place and the everyday' session, Urbino, Italy, August 27-29, 2015.

2014 - Religion and Society seminar series, Durham University

Invited talk: *Hindu practices of vision and the construction of a 'spiritual' tourist gaze* - Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University, UK, 29th January, 2014.

2013 –Association of American Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting.

Presented paper: *Reframing landscape: Hindu practices of vision and the construction of a 'spiritual' tourist gaze* – 'Tourist Geographies I' session, Los Angeles, CA, April 9-13, 2013.

2012 – *Soundtracks: Music, Tourism and Travel*. International and Inter-disciplinary Conference. International Centre for Research in Events, Tourism and Hospitality (ICRETH), Leeds Metropolitan University.

Presented paper: *Tuning up with the cosmic vibration: tourism, music and the sonic geographies of Varanasi (India)* – ‘Travel and Music Fandom’ session, Liverpool, UK, July 6-9, 2012.

2010 – Tourism and Seductions of Difference. Tourism Contact Culture Research Network (TOCOCU) 1st Biannual Conference.

Presented paper: *The seduction of the sacred: visual experiences and spatial practices in Varanasi (India)* – ‘Rethinking Pilgrimage, Seduction, and Difference’ session, Lisbon, Portugal, September 9-12, 2010.

2010 – Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers (RGS-IBG) Annual International Conference.

Presented paper: *Spiritual Landscapes of India: visual experiences and spatial practices in Varanasi* – ‘Landscapes and the Visual Experience’ session, London, UK, September 1-3, 2010.

2010 – Association of American Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting.

Presented paper: *Performing the sacred: Varanasi, the city of ‘living heritage’* – ‘Critical Heritage I: Re-placing the Past’ session, Washington, DC, April 13-18, 2010.

OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

- Associate Fellow of The Higher Education Academy, UK.
- Honorary Fellow (Cultore della materia) in the Department of Time, Space, Image, Society (TeSIS) at the University of Verona, Italy.
- Peer reviewer for: i) *Children’s Geographies*, Routledge - Taylor and Francis Group; ii) *Tourist Studies: An International Journal*, Sage; iii) *Tourism: An International, Interdisciplinary Journal*, Institute for Tourism, Zagreb (Croatia).

NON ACADEMIC WORK HISTORY

2008–2009 **Project originator and manager**, “S.Eusebio” Primary School, Bassano del Grappa, Italy.

‘Assaggi di Geografia Culturale’ (Tastes of Cultural Geography), experimental didactic project on geography teaching in primary school.

2007–2009 **Tour leader**, ‘Viaggi di Cultura’ Cultural Travels Association, Bologna, Italy.

Technical assistance in package tours, and cultural adviser for India.

1998–2006 **Social worker**, ‘Adelante’ Social Cooperative, Bassano del Grappa, Italy.

Childcare and community work with children, young people and families

2003–2006 **Project coordinator**, ‘Questacittà’ Association, Bassano del Grappa, Italy.

‘The Lexicon of Young Volunteers’, regional project about youth, volunteering and social responsibility. Outputs: i) journal article published in *Animazione Sociale*, a renowned national social studies journal; ii) short film produced by the young participants involved in the project.

2000–2001 **Research assistant**, ‘La Zattera Blu’ Social Cooperative Bassano del Grappa, Italy.
‘Teenagers and Spare Time’ – Action research carried out in collaboration with the local Social Services.

1998–1999 **Project mentor**, ‘Anffas’ and ‘La Zattera Blu’ Vicenza province, Italy.
‘Più che Ca.Pa.Ce’ – Pilot project about disabilities carried out in several primary schools. ‘Anffas’ is a renowned Italian association supporting disabled people.

KEY SKILLS

Research skills:

- Ability to maintain and develop research of an international standard.
- Advanced knowledge of qualitative social research methodologies.
- Extensive experience of participatory research with children and young people in Majority World contexts.
- Knowledge and experience of app-based research.
- Experience of impact research and community engagement work.
- Ability to communicate and disseminate work at international academic conferences.

Teaching skills:

- Qualified knowledge and practice of problem-based and active learning methodologies.
- Ability to supervise project work in English, run tutorials and seminars, tutor students of all levels, design and deliver teaching modules, promote student-centered learning.

Transferable skills:

- Languages: Italian (native); English (excellent); Hindi (basic); currently learning Portuguese.
- Intercultural communication and ability to deal with diverse cultural contexts.
- Analytical skills and critical thinking.
- Willingness and ability to travel abroad on overseas fieldworks.
- Flexibility, and aptitude to team working.
- Ability to work independently
- Willingness to assume administrative responsibilities.
- Working knowledge of MS Office and E-Learning platforms (Moodle; Mole; Turnitin)
- Certified knowledge of First Aid (Emergency First Aid at Work; Wilderness First Aid)