

Prof. Maria Chiara Zerbi
Specialization: Landscape and Environmental Geography
Scientific Sector: M-GGR/01

Academic and Professional Background

Graduated from the "Politecnico di Milano" in 1969-1970 with a degree in Architecture. Defended a thesis entitled: *Mathematical Modeling and Spreadsheet Applications for Problems of Analysis and Spatial Planning*. (100/100).

Academic and Professional Activity

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| 1971-1975 | Collaboration with the "Center for Public Economics" and "Research Center of the Inter-communal Milan Plan". Responsibilities: Analysis of inter-communal spatial problems. |
| 1972 | Universita' Cattolica di Milano/ Faculty of Economics: Taught course on Urban Economy. |
| 1979-1980 | Universita' Cattolica di Milano/Faculty of Languages and Foreign Literature : Taught course of Geography. I continued this work for ten years becoming Associate Professor in 1986/1987. |
| 1992-1993 | Universita' degli Studi di Trento/Faculty of Arts and Literature: Became full Professor. |
| 1993-1995 | Universita' degli Studi di Milano/Faculty of Letters and Philosophy: Director of Department of Human Geography. |
| 1999-2000 | Universita' degli Studi di Milano/Faculty of Letters and Philosophy: Director of Department of Human Geography. |
| 1999 | Universita' degli Studi di Milano/Advance training course for experts in environmental policy and landscapes (ex l.r. 42/94). |
| 2001 | Universita' degli Studi di Milano: Director of course for "Experts in environmental policy and Landscapes". |
| 2001-2002 | Universita' degli Studi di Milano: Director of Masters Program (FSE) in "Management of the Environment and Landscape". |
| 2001-2002 | Universita' degli Studi di Milano: President of the Council of Coordinating Didactics for an Academic Degree in Human Sciences of the Environment, Territory and Landscape. |
| 2002-2005 | Universita' degli Studi di Milano: Director of Advanced Course for Management of the Environment and Landscape. (SUA) (Class XXX) and a Specialized Degree Course: "Science of the Culture of the Environment and Landscapes." (Class 21/S). |
| 2005-2008 | Councilor of the Italian Geographic Society |
| 2006..... | Universita' degli Studi di Milano - Full Professor of Landscape and Environmental Geography Degree Course "Cultural Heritage Science"- Department "Cultural Heritage and Environment" |

- (2003) - Director of *Quaderni*, a magazine about environmental management and landscapes, and of Human Science of the Environment published by Guerini e Associates Editore, Milano.
- 1993 to present - In collaboration with M. Tinacci and G. Scaramellini, I manage the scientific publications "Geographic Themes and Discussions" published by Giappichelli Editore, (Torino)
- Manage in collaboration with A. Trono, "An Environment for Mankind", a series published by Conte Editore, (Lecce).

- (1977) Responsible for scientific research regarding "Culture and rural areas used within a framework of tourism" in the context of the completed project.
- (1998) Scientific Manager of the Research Unit of the Università degli Studi di Milano – the PRIN "Sustainable Development on a Regional Scale:" Diseconomy and local competitive advantages in the context of globalization.
- (2000) Scientific Manager for the Research Unit of the Università degli Studi di Milano – the PRIN – Brownfield sites and urban green spaces: new landscapes in the metropolitan areas of Milan."
- (2002) Scientific Manager for the Research Unit of the Università degli Studi di Milano – the PRIN – "the landscape and cultural patrimony in the planning and the environmental evaluation procedure in the Lombardy Region.

- 1997-1999 – Collaborated with the Central Office for Environmental Heritage and Landscapes of the Ministry of Culture and Cultural Activities on the subject of Landscapes in the EIA.

Collaborated with the Agricultural Director General – Region of Lombardy on the Preservation and Enhancement of Rural Territories project.

Research Interests:

I have researched a variety of related topics, in a progressive expansion of the reflection of the organization of the territory. My initial interest focused on "spatial interaction" models which included empirical research on the problems of urban traffic and public transport in some European cities.

In order to enrich the above mentioned research, I broadened the base of my investigation to include economic factors of the central locations. On several occasions, my research brought me back to economic issues and required me to study first the phenomena of higher level service, the processes of design and decision making, and more recently to more thoroughly explore the retail aspects of business services and to examine some Italian cases of creating technology centers.

A second area of interest concerns urban and rural settlements. The study of minor urban realities and their influence on the organization of the territory focuses attention on the areas of transition between the city and semi-rural areas. Through a survey of the Pavese area of Lombardy has brought to light the primary phenomena of territorial and landscape mutation related to the process of peri-urbanization. An extension of this research is represented by the study of cultural identity and the characteristics of rural cultural landscapes.

A third area of interest relates to environmental issues. First of all we confronted the problem of the role of hard and soft indicators in geographic studies, and subsequently a study on environmental indicators, in particular landscape indicators. In this regard we made an empirical investigation focused on examining their

use in environmental impact studies. This study was part of a consultancy project for the Region of Lombardy with subsequently expanded to a larger national study (24 IS) for the Ministry of Heritage and Cultural Activities. Current studies are directed to the landscape theme, a theme in which a large part of the previous results point.

There are two preferred aspects: the landscape as a means of understanding the environment, and the landscape as a 'project'. The first aspect allows us to trace the evolution of this idea within the discipline, and today allows us to evaluate the latest developments. The second aspect led us to investigate the methods of geographical description and evaluation of the landscape which can now be applied to the preparation of policies ranging from conservation to the evaluation of touristic projects, and their planning.