



A GLOBAL  
TRANSFORMATIONS  
PROJECT

# Spaces and Places

1<sup>ST</sup> GLOBAL  
CONFERENCE

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2019 – Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2019  
Bruges



## Presenters, Key Words and Abstracts

### Saturday 13th April 2019 – Sunday 14th April 2019

---

#### Power, Cosmopolitanism and Socio-Spatial Division in the Commercial Area in Victorian and Edwardian London

*Elisabete Mendes Silva*

Polytechnic Institute of Bragança-Portugal

[esilva@ipb.pt](mailto:esilva@ipb.pt)

#### **Key Words:**

cultural identity, social inclusion, cosmopolitanism, power, gender, commercial arena, metropolis, commodities.

The developments of the English Revolution and of the British Empire expedited commerce and transformed the social and cultural status quo of Britain and the world. More specifically in London, the metropolis of the country, in the eighteenth century, there were already a sheer number of retail shops that would set forth an urban world of commerce and consumerism. Magnificent and wide-ranging shops served householders with commodities that mesmerized consumers, giving way to new traditions within the commercial and social fabric of London. Therefore, going shopping during the Victorian Age became mandatory in the middle and upper classes' social agendas. Harrods Department store opens in 1864, adding new elements to retailing by providing a sole space with a myriad of different commodities. In 1909, Gordon Selfridge opens Selfridge's, transforming the concept of urban commerce by imposing a more cosmopolitan outlook in the commercial arena.

Within this context, I intend to focus primarily on two of the largest department stores, Harrods and Selfridge's, drawing attention to the way these two spaces were perceived when they first opened to the public and the effect they had in the city of London and in its people. I shall discuss how these department stores rendered space for social inclusion and exclusion, gender and race under the spell of the Victorian ethos, national conservatism and imperialism. I shall also argue that they brought about new social, cultural and work space opportunities, transforming social and cultural dynamics and power, being nowadays considered undeniable heritage icons, as they became popular tourist attractions, of the Londoner culture and of the commercial sphere. Lastly, my research will concurrently provide insight into the social history of the Victorian age and the early decades of the twentieth century.





## A GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS PROJECT

Our spaces and places confine us, expand us and ultimately define us. They shape our moods and behaviour; they inhibit or encourage our feelings and actions through the presence of cameras, the laws of society, the unstated rules of propriety, standards of dress or the expectations of those around us.

The starting point for this inaugural inclusive interdisciplinary meeting takes as its point of departure the basic questions: how do we designate place and how do we delineate space? What is the difference between the two? The conference aims to examine the ways space is bounded or expanded to create place. We will begin to map how the concepts and experiences that make up our understanding of what spaces and places mean are political, social, and specific to our culture(s), and how space and place dance with each other in the middle of it all. Our discussions and reflections will take place with a view to forming an innovative publication to open the doors to engender further collaborations, research and discussions.

<http://www.progressiveconnexions.net/interdisciplinary-projects/global-transformations/spaces-and-places/conferences/>



**Progressive Connexions**  
*Interdisciplinary Life*

Priory House, 149B Wroslyn Road  
Freeland, Oxfordshire OX29 8HR  
United Kingdom

[www.progressiveconnexions.net](http://www.progressiveconnexions.net)  
email: [brugesspaces@progressiveconnexions.net](mailto:brugesspaces@progressiveconnexions.net)

A not-for-profit network. Registered in the United Kingdom: 10730804