

## **BORDER CITIES: URBAN SPACES OF PRODUCTION AND EXCHANGE, BETWEEN SEPARATENESS AND DIALOGUE**

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The session aims to delve into the mechanisms of exchange and mutual influence that took place between civil society and urban space in European cities which have experienced the status of border city since the end of the nineteenth century. Whether we talk about the cities on the edge of political and cultural debate, or about the places involved in remarkable relationship with the capital cities and other towns of major economic and political importance, it is the particular mix of cooperation and conflict between different ethnic groups to bring significant cultural changes or to stop any possible development in border towns (Marin 2007). The locations of production and exchange often embody these mechanisms. In general, these cities "on the edge", which are at the same time "threshold" between different cultures, have seen the economy and the politics making use of projects (architectural, infrastructural) to contrast - or to strengthen - identities and interests of different peoples and national groups. It was the case of peripheral Hapsburg cities, where the architecture became the representation of the central power as well as of the ambitions of unrecognised national groups. The same occurred in the Balkans, many times dramatically marked by wars and rebuilt in a diverse ways related to the dissimilar needs of the winners (Moravánszky 1998; Yerolympos 1996, Sørensen 2009). In this context, the examples of cities that experienced a sudden remarkable economic prosperity, and therefore a rapid growth, emerge particularly. In those places, the economic events that dictate ways, directions and growth rate, are often followed by an immature civic pride that brings an excesses of scale while dreaming of "metropolis" (Blau, Platzer 1999; Dogo, Pitassio, 2008). It's just relying on the importance of economy in the development of urban spaces and in their usage, that border cities and protagonists of their transformation on which this session will focus are linked to economic-productive factors. The study of phenomena like the change of places chosen by the industrial development, the "migration" to cities that are places of exchange and the transformation of urban spaces connected to the development of different productive "vocations", will permit us to identify moments, places and protagonists of processes and events considered in this session.