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AT THE CROSSROADS OF URBAN REFORM
[i] Plenary session of the International Town Planning Conference at the Palace on Dam Square, Amsterdam, 1924.
1.1 An international gathering in Amsterdam

In July 1924 town-planners and housing reformers from all parts of the world flocked to Amsterdam to attend the international town planning conference of the International Federation for Town and Country Planning and Garden Cities, in 1926 rebaptized as International Federation for Housing and Town Planning (IFHTP). About five hundred delegates registered for this event. This conference was more than just a meeting of professionals to discuss the expanding town planning profession and to exchange experiences. The programme of the conference was embellished with sumptuous luncheons and afternoon teas, banquets, official receptions, visiting tours and lavish evening entertainment. His Royal Highness the Prince of the Netherlands gave his patronage to the international meeting and the delegates were welcomed by the Prime Minister. Evidently every effort was made to boost the prestige of the event. During their stay in Holland the delegates were treated like kings.

The grand appearance of the receptions and festivities was matched by an equally impressive working programme. The conference’s main subject was “regional planning in relation to large cities.” The organization had managed to engage pioneering practitioners of regional planning to the conference. Every planner of international standing was either on the stage or in the audience. Renowned pioneers such as the Germans Robert Schmidt and Fritz Schumacher, the Englishmen Raymond Unwin, Patrick Abercrombie and C.B. Purdom, and Thomas Adams in charge of the Regional Plan of New York and its Environs, were among the lecturers. An elaborate International Town Planning Exhibition in the Stedelijk Museum was also part of the conference. Conference participants who wanted to learn more about the housing and town planning practice in the Netherlands could sign up for an extensive post-congress study tour, that visited the most important schemes in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and their suburbs. The conference resolutions would be well circulated and have a profound impact on the planning practice in the Netherlands and abroad. On the basis of the Amsterdam conference, one would expect an academic interest in international organisation behind his congress, the IFHTP. However, literature on the history of this organisation is scarce and fragmented.

1.2 The many faces of the IFHTP

What kind of organisation was the proprietor of the 1924 town planning conference in Amsterdam? A comprehensive monograph of the IFHTP, or International Federation for Town and Country Planning and Garden Cities as it was known at the time of the Amsterdam conference, is yet to be written. However, there are many publications referring to the IFHTP. The majority of them deal with (aspects of) the history of housing and town planning. Additionally, references can be found in literature concerned with transnational civil society and/or local governance. By far most of these publications refer to brief episodes of the history of the IFHTP, often single activities (congresses), insofar that they bear relevance to a
specific individual, institution, ‘movement’ or development. Literature that studies the structure and activities of the IFHTP during longer intervals are scarce. The overall picture of the IFHTP that arises from available literature is incomplete and at times contradictory. In the following text I will give a brief ‘taxonomy’ of the dominant characterisations of the IFHTP in relevant literature.

1.2.1 Ignored proprietor of congresses

The importance of the Amsterdam conference is undisputed in recent literature on planning in the Netherlands. The conference proved to be an important stimulus for the advance of regional planning in the Netherlands. Despite the importance attributed to this conference, Dutch town planning literature so far has marginalized the role of its official proprietor. The IFHTP is presented as a neutral, almost invisible, agent that unselfishly provided an opportunity to present the latest regional planning ideas and experiences. It is Dirk Hudig and his *Nederlandsch Instituut voor Volkshuisvesting en Stedebouw* (NIVS) that are credited for the Amsterdam conference. The NIVS was the main supplier of members of the local organizing committee of the conference. Hudig deliberately exerted the Amsterdam conference as a means to place regional planning on the (political) agenda in the Netherlands. As the spotlights were pointed at Hudig, the IFHTP faded into the background. Hudig certainly played a vital role in the drawing up of the conference programme, but the event was more than a mere NIVS conference under the aegis of the IFHTP. The network of the IFHTP and its international prestige were fully employed to lure esteemed town planners to Amsterdam. More importantly, it is very unlikely that the IFHTP gave Hudig a *carte blanche*. A consensus, based on conversion of interests of both the proprietor and local organisers is far more likely than exclusive local initiative. In fact, if we take the previous conference (Gothenburg 1923) of the event owner into account, it immediately becomes clear that the Amsterdam congress could have had no other thematic dedication than regional planning.\(^5\)

The way the Amsterdam conference is mentioned in Dutch planning literature is symptomatic for the way the IFHTP is generally treated in literature. Most authors focus on (single) congresses and only mention the proprietor in the passing. For example, Pieter Uyttenhove elaborates on the influence of the Belgium reconstruction campaign of the International Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, the earliest incarnation of the IFHTP, on the Belgian reconstruction efforts during and after the First World War.\(^6\) Peter Hall qualifies the arrival of the congress caravan of the IFHTP in New York in 1925 as a major opportunity to the recently established *Regional Planning Association of America* (RPAA).\(^7\) Ben-Joseph and Gordon describe how Canadian planning visionary Noulan Couchon used this 1925 New York congress to disseminate his planning concept of the hexagonal city.\(^8\) Eve Blau elaborates on the effects of the 1926 Vienna congress of the IFHTP on the municipal housing policy of ’Red Vienna.’\(^9\) Arturo Almandoz refers to the 1938 congress of the IFHTP in Mexico City in the context of the emancipation of a regional planning discipline in Latin
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America. Additionally, a vast offering of monographs provides information on congress attendance, (paper) contributions to the congresses and representation on the executive and governing bodies and committees of the IFHTP by specific individuals and or organisations, active in the field of housing and town planning. These publications tell us relatively little of the objectives, structure, membership and activities of the proprietor of these congresses, but they do reveal that it occasionally managed to affect the trajectory of housing and town planning practices of individuals, organisations, local authorities, nations and even whole continents.

1.2.2 Garden city militant

Authors that look beyond the (single) congresses and have made the IFHTP (part of) their object of research all agree that it initially was firmly rooted in the (British) garden city movement. Peter Batchelor was one of the very first authors to acknowledge the IFHTP as international rallying point for garden city militants. It was established in 1913 as International Garden Cities and Town Planning Association on the initiative of Ewart Culpin, the secretary of the British Garden Cities and Town Planning Association (GCTPA), aided by some befriended French and German garden city campaigners. Culpin presented the establishment of the international organisation as a logical next step in the evolution of the (British) garden city movement and a fitting answer to the growing volume of foreign contacts of the GCTPA, seeking information, advice and or support. At the founding meeting the proposed garden city focus was challenged by delegates who wanted a broader working sphere, covering the “whole scope of municipal organisation and general social and economic problems.” This wider scope was rejected and garden city propaganda was embraced as the main objective of the new association. The GCTPA more or less was given total control over its international offspring; Ebenezer Howard, Ewart Culpin and George Montagu Harris – all GCTPA officials - were chosen as respectively president, secretary and chairman and it was decided that the IFHTP should be conducted from GCTPA headquarters. Under this ‘British management’ the IFHTP organised its First International Garden Cities Congress, followed by a tour around England to offer examples of what was to be promoted. According to Hardy, this congress “transpired that although the new Association was by no means inactive, there were clearly limits as to what could be done to further its common cause [...].” The outbreak of World War I threatened to suspend the advance of the IFHTP. GCTPA control over the IFHTP enabled its survival during the war. In fact, Hardy has pointed out that the IFHTP could not have survived on its own. Despite the difficult circumstances, the IFHTP decided not to keep a low profile and abide better times. Instead, it embarked on a new campaign, dedicated to the reconstruction of Belgium, that had been severely hit by the War. Pieter Uyttenhove describes how the whole effort made it painfully clear that continental Europe was not planning to follow British garden city instructions indiscriminately. The Belgians felt British garden city experience was forced upon them,
[ii] Pamphlet for Welwyn summarizes the garden city argument (from Purdom 1925a)
[iii] Weissenhof-Siedlung (1929) in Stuttgart, showpiece development by new modernist architects and planners that challenged the garden city idea
without taking specific Belgian circumstances into consideration. They were susceptible to the idea of garden suburbs, but true (independent) garden cities were dismissed as too fanciful and impracticable.

According to Hardy, in many ways the IFHTP resorted to its pre-war outlook immediately after the War – the exclusion of the German and Austrian members being the main difference. All officers that were elected in 1920 were British and the international organisation was still administered from London. This served well enough to get the IFHTP quickly on its feet again, but it went down badly among the continental members. They wanted “a genuine international housing and town-planning body,” not a mere international extension of the GCTPA. As a result, the British leadership gradually loosened its hold over the international organisation. Thus in 1922, the IFHTP acquired its own office and recruited its own full-time organising secretary. The name of the organization was amended to that of International Federation for Garden Cities and Town Planning. Hardy claims that in the following year British chairman Montagu Harris was replaced by Frenchman Henri Sellier.  

According to Gerd Albers, by 1925 Germany provided the largest delegation for the Council with nine members – German and Austrian membership was reinstalled in late 1922 -, followed by France (eight members), Australia (five members) and Denmark (three members). This addition needs to be seen in perspective. The British representation is not mentioned, so probably Albers is only referring to foreign representation. Moreover, this addition relates solely to the council, not to the board that ran the daily affairs. In fact, Pierre Yves Saunier claims that the IFHTP had a distinct “British flavour” well into the second half of the 1930s. Nevertheless, these shifts in representation must have had an effect on the British hegemony of old.

Of course the initial naturalness of British leadership was closely tied up with the propagation of the garden city idea. Albers rightly remarks that the garden city idea dominated the first post-war congresses. However, this narrow garden city focus was soon abandoned. At the 1923 congress in Gothenburg ‘regional planning’ for the first time featured on the congress agenda in the final session, entitled “the development of new towns and industrial centres with special reference to regional planning [...].” This newfound interest in regional planning was taken up once more at the next congress in Amsterdam in 1924, which was dedicated to “regional planning in relation to large cities.” To express the reorientation in the field of interest the IFHTP renamed itself International Federation for Town and Country Planning and Garden Cities. For its 1926 congress in Vienna the IFHTP changed track once more. This time housing was prominently on the agenda, a decision that was undoubtedly inspired to mark the merger with the International Housing Congresses. To commemorate the reorientation of the thematic framework, the IFHTP settled for the name International Federation for Housing and Town Planning. According to Albers this change of name not only marked the inclusion of housing, but also a backing out of the garden city idea.
1.2.3 International study platform for housing and planning

In the course of the 1920s the IFHTP abandoned its exclusive garden city focus. It embraced a wider thematic horizon and presented itself as international platform for the study of housing and town and country planning. This reorientation seems to have come at a price. Anthony Sutcliffe has pointed out that the garden city idea at the turn of the century provided a common ground for the international trade of housing and planning thought and experience, that before had been sorely missed. Once the garden city umbrella was gradually traded in, professional consensus on what good housing and planning was and ought to be soon crumbled. Several authors refer to disagreements in the ranks of the IFHTP from the mid-1920s onwards. Special emphasis is put on the separation of dissatisfied housing reformers in 1928 who subsequently established their own International Housing Association, usually referred to as the Verband, with its headquarters in Frankfurt. The Verband would eventually rejoin the IFHTP in 1937.

Disagreements were not confined to the IFHTP. Albers argues that in the interwar period the (international) consensus among planners evaporated. There was a broad spectrum between radical innovators and evolutionary oriented reformers, characterised by Françoise Choay as respectively “progressistes” and “culturalistes.” According to Albers, it was the inclination towards revolution or reform, rather than national peculiarities, that defined town planning practice. Publications on the IFHTP struggle to provide an unequivocal interpretation of the thematic framework of the IFHTP as international study platform between the wars. It seems that the authors are just as divided as their object of research. Stanley Buder portrays the study platform of the IFHTP as a battlefield for garden city militants, insisting on decentralisation to new settlements of cottages, and an alliance of a growing group of housing and town planning officials and a new generation of rational (modernist) architects and planners, favouring high-rise inner-city development. According to Buder the housing controversy resulting in the establishment of the Verband was about more than a rejection of the garden city concept. The ‘housing people’ from the Continent regarded planners as theoretical and unrealistic. The Germans, priding themselves on their scientific and technical approach, demanded that the IFHTP would take the lead in developing a scientific approach to housing research. This demand was supported by Dutch and Scandinavian members. Additionally, officials of organizations merged into the IFHTP – first and foremost the International Housing Congresses - resented their loss of status. Buder concludes that as a (British) vehicle to propagate low-rise decentralisation, the IFHTP was a dinosaur, fighting a rearguard battle.

On the other hand, authors such as Gerd Albers, Joel Outtes, Renzo Riboldazzi and Stephen Ward insist on a vanguard position of the IFHTP in the international trade of housing and planning ideas and experiences. Ward identifies the IFHTP as one of the main international platforms to disseminate the latest housing and planning ideas and experiences. According to Albers the evolution of the programme of the congresses of the IFHTP kept pace with the
latest town planning reference books on national housing and town planning experiences.\textsuperscript{26}
This thesis is supported by planning historian Outtes, who points out that the congresses of
the IFHTP perfectly represent the developments in the field of housing and town planning.\textsuperscript{27}
Riboldazzi labels the body of ideas of the IFHTP as \textit{un’altra modernità}, a genuine alternative
conception of modern housing and planning, that was very influential in the Interbellum and
that so far has been unjustly overshadowed by the conception of modernity by CIAM.\textsuperscript{28}
These authors fairly easily step over the internal disagreements. Their focus is on town
planning ideas and they regard the internal disagreements primarily as an unfortunate, but
temporary controversy around the position of housing.

\textbf{1.2.4 Conduit for professional affiliation}

The IFHTP was not just an international platform to propagate garden cities and study
housing and planning experience. Affiliation to the IFHTP provided a sense of belonging – the
affiliated individuals and organisations became part of an international housing and planning
community – and enabled the affiliated parties to plug into the international trade of ideas
and experience. Buder labels the IFHTP as an important conduit for professional affiliation.\textsuperscript{29}
The rapid expansion of membership and attendance at the congresses in the 1920s can
serve as an indicator for the size of affiliation and the desirability to affiliate. According to
Van der Woud, the IFHTP was the most important platform for internationalisation to
(professional) town planners between the Wars.\textsuperscript{30}

In his article \textit{Atlantic crosser} Pierre-Yves Saunier provides a window through the
international activities of American planner John Nolen that enables us to grasp what
professional affiliation to the IFHTP was – or could be - all about.\textsuperscript{31} Nolen joined the IFHTP on
the occasion of the 1923 Gothenburg congress. As a member of the Council and Executive
Committee, before becoming president of the international organisation from 1931 to 1936,
he used the IFHTP as a cornerstone of his expanding international network. According to
Saunier this network both served ideological and practical ends: Nolen sincerely wanted to
contribute to the raising of international understanding and friendship, but at the same time
he wanted to boost his career. Nolen, like most of his foreign contacts seeking approval,
support or help, tried to promote himself as a planner by using foreign references, by
collecting information on planning abroad, by disseminating this information or by giving
lists of “things and people to see” to colleagues travelling abroad. Controlling international
fluxes of information did not only provide symbolic gains, such as fame and reputation.
Fame could be easily turned into contracts and deals at home and the international network
occasionally provided direct business opportunities as well. In the 1920s branding oneself as
a city planner also meant participation in the formation and institutionalisation of the new
town planning profession. Demonstrating to the United States that planning was not a
fallacy, but something trustworthy and efficient in Canada and Europe was not just
instrumental to promoting modern town planning principles, but ultimately to the invention
of the modern planning professional. Internationalisation was crucial to this scheme. It allowed to create a sense of an international professional community, to share the latest experiences, to try to set common professional standards and to build a network of advisors and supporters that could be called upon when necessary.

Caution is needed when we want to interpret the significance of the IFHTP as conduit for professional affiliation. First of all, available literature does not give an adequate assessment of the size of professional affiliation, nor does it provide a characterisation of the various affiliated individuals and organisations. More importantly, professional affiliation does not necessarily imply that the affiliated individuals and bodies supported the objectives of the international body. The IFHTP, especially its congresses, provided a physical intersection of (professional) networks. To many members access to these networks must have been a consideration on its own right to join. For instance, in his study of the Nederlandsch Instituut voor Volkshuisvesting en Stedebouw (NIVS) Peter de Ruijter points out that the intention to stay in touch with the latest town planning developments was the decisive consideration for the NIVS to join the IFHTP in 1922, although it explicitly dismissed the garden city idea – at that time propagation of the garden city idea still was the main objective of the IFHTP - as impracticable.32

1.2.5 An exponent of the Urban Internationale

The publications I have discussed so far, more or less treat the IFHTP as an isolated international organisation. Some comparisons are made with the CIAM, but the comparisons do not treat the relations with other international organizations with similar scopes, which must have had an effect on the operation of the IFHTP. Buder suggests that the IFHTP managed to expand its position as professional conduit, because it hardly had any competition.33 This suggestion cannot be right. Already at the founding meeting of the IFHTP, the positioning of the fresh international body in the existing ‘international milieu’ - the International Housing Congresses and the Union International des Villes (UIV) are explicitly referred to - was an important consideration.34

An international planning milieu
Giorgio Piccinato was one of the first historians to distinguish an ‘international milieu’ of town planners, embodied in international congresses, exhibitions, competitions, periodicals, translations of key publications, correspondences and (professional) friendships before World War I.35 Anthony Sutcliffe has provided a first outline of the town planning movement in four countries – England, France, Germany and the United States – in the period 1780-1914, demonstrating foreign ‘influence ’ and international exchanges that shaped national housing and town planning thought before World War I.36 Gerd Albers has provided an outline of “contacts, influences and interconnections” through an inventory of leading practitioners, key publications and translations, periodicals, exhibitions and congresses that constituted the foundation of a European town planning community in the
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nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Sutcliffe and Albers indicate that the international town planning society was part of a wider social reform movement and the international peace movement in particular. Daniel Rodgers has researched the intensity of transatlantic intellectual traffic in matters of city management, town planning and a plethora of other aspects of progressive politics from the Gilded Age through the New Deal. Rodgers evokes a transnational network of interconnections through multiple biographical narratives of idea and policy brokers: the human links that composed the transatlantic social politics cable. Moving in and out of government, between positions in the world of social reform, publishing, and academic life, they were "self-taught experts working on the intellectual margins of imperfectly professionalized fields." Saunier has labelled this international milieu the ‘Urban Internationale,’ an international sphere made of those who, from all the industrialized countries, paid interest to urbanism and all its related problems, as a universal spatial, social and political phenomenon.

Voluntary societies

In 2001 Saunier published a seminal article that provided a first comprehensive outline of the Urban Internationale. Meller has demonstrated that in relation to the town planning movement the early years of the twentieth century was characterized by a proliferation of occasions and institutions dedicated to the study of urban phenomena. According to Saunier, as this flowering progressed from 1910 onwards, the international sphere of the urban increasingly became organised. The structure of the Urban Internationale ceased to be primarily defined by personal networks or by national and local exhibitions and conferences. Instead, devotees of urban issues more often tended to meet regularly under the auspices of international specialist organisations, that gradually took the form of permanent associations. An exhaustive list of such organisations would be a long one. Therefore Saunier focuses on two representative organisations: the Union Internationale des Villes (UIV) and our IFHTP. He stresses that his choice should not be taken to imply an exclusive status, but as a convenient way of getting to the heart of the Urban Internationale, since both organisations fostered ambitions to define its structure. Nevertheless, this choice surely implies that we are not dealing with marginal players in the international arena.

The IFHTP and the UIV were both established in 1913, generating a steady flow of congresses, meetings and publications in the Interbellum. The congresses of the IFHTP covered a wider territory, moving twice within the American continent and also visiting Gothenburg, Vienna and Prague, whereas the UIV concentrated its operation in Western Europe. Besides congress documentation, the two societies also published reference works, technical reports and, of course, periodicals. According to Saunier the frequent changes of title and breaks in publication demonstrate how difficult it must have been to keep them in production. Perhaps the size of membership and subscriptions was insufficient to support these periodicals. Saunier argues that it is very hard to assess the size of membership and participation. The membership administration of both organizations is
[v] The gathering of modernist architects at La Sarraz in the castle of madame Mandrot in 1928 to launch the Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM). The IFHTP and UIV were not the only constituents of the Urban Internationale; the CIAM was a prominent constituent as well.
lost. The nature of membership – individuals, organizations and institutions were eligible for membership – makes estimates very difficult. Congress participation does not provide clear answers either. Usually attendance from the hosting country dominated at a congress. Additionally, it is questionable to what extent registered delegates actually attended the congresses. Still, it is certain that members and audiences steadily increased in the Interbellum. Remarkably, although on paper the two societies served different groups – the IFHTP was for garden city and town planning zealots and the UIV served elected politicians and civil servants – in reality they shared many members, including senior dignitaries, and essentially addressed the same audience. Because both organisations survived on a knife-edge and heavily depended on their congresses for revenue, coexistence inevitably was difficult. Consequently, their relation went through several forms. Sometimes it was cooperative, as can be witnessed at the linking of congresses in Amsterdam in 1924. By contrast, Saunier describes relations as vindictive concerning the role played by several senior dignitaries of the UIV in the serious internal conflict in the IFHTP that resulted in the establishment of the Verband.

According to Saunier difficult relations between the IFHTP and the UIV not just originated in overlapping ‘markets’, but were also affected by differences in organizational structures. The two associations used different forms of governance. The IFHTP functioned in a collegiate manner, while the UIV seemed to depend on the activity of one man – former secretary C.B. Purdom of the IFHTP called Emile Vinck the sole “proprietor” of the UIV.\(^43\) It also seems that the IFHTP based its process of decision-making on consensus-seeking, whereas the UIV resolved debates by majority-voting. Saunier thinks these differences originate in different roots. The UIV stemmed from sphere of local politics and was run by prominent figures in the European socialist movement. Even though the UIV recruited beyond the ranks of socialist sympathizers, it is important to note its links to the 1900 International Socialist Congress with its mission to achieve socialism and internationalism through local councils. Additionally, Meller has demonstrated that the creation of the UIV should be seen in the general context of the movement for peace and international cooperation. Although the IFHTP moved in the same international milieus, it very soon took on propagandist, scientific and didactic colours, strongly favouring architects, planners and other technical experts. Oscar Gaspari argues that the UIV later followed the lead of the IFHTP and adopted a more technical approach as well.\(^44\) Finally, the centres and circles of power in the two associations differed. The IFHTP had a strong British flavour because it was based in London – and daily affairs were run by British officers - whereas the UIV had its headquarters in Brussels and was based on a continental European network with anchor points in Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland and Germany. These differences not only fed national rivalries – the British domination in the IFHTP was one of the offences that prompted the separation of the Verband – but also constituted different concepts of what might be an area of discussion, divergence on the nature and role of various contributors to the urban scene and even on the definition of a city.
[vi] Oil magnate and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937) used his fortune to create a modern systematic approach of targeted philanthropy. He was able to do this through the creation of foundations that had a major effect on medicine, education, and scientific research.
American philanthropic foundations
Saunier’s Urban Internationale was not just populated by voluntary associations. The major American foundations also were a constituent to reckon with. Saunier argues that there was an American presence in the international voluntary associations just discussed by the mid-1920s – according to Buder the Americans actually already were present in the IFHTP before the War⁴⁵ - but it would be the intervention of the Rockefeller Foundation, and its Spellman Fund in particular, that, from the mid-1930s, gave this US presence a new consistency. At the heart of international project of the Spellman Fund was the Public Administration Clearing House (PACH), a Chicago-based organisation established in 1930 that aimed “to serve the exchange of information concerning administrative processes in government and to foster cooperation among organizations of operating officials, research units, technical experts and others, in the field of public administration.”⁴⁶ One of the ambitions of PACH was to bring together in Chicago the largest possible number of US professional societies active in this field. Thanks to the joint backing of the University of Chicago and the Spellman Fund the PACH succeeded in attracting existing organisations to Chicago and in creating there new organisations in the field of public administration. By 1935, 18 associations were all based at 850 E 58th Street, before moving to a new building financed by the Spellman Fund at 1313 E 60th Street in the early 1940s. While PACH was accomplishing its conquest of America, it was also “conquering the world on the wings of this ‘1313’ organization.”⁴⁷

The Urban Internationale was at the heart of this ‘global conquest’. On his first trip to Europe, Louis Brownlow, executive director of PACH, had identified the UIV, the IFHTP, the Verband and the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) as the main European links in the chain of a venture, starting in the United States, around the theme of public administration. At first, from 1930 to 1932, representatives from the ‘1313 circle’ joined these international societies, developed an American section, attended congresses and formed networks through intermediation of PACH, all thanks to the Spellman funds. After this initial phase, it was time to launch an initiative with one single goal: “to unify the work of European-based associations, instil in them American methods and concepts, promote a professional, expert view of local government, and spread these values throughout the world.”⁴⁸ This tactic did produce result: in 1938, the UIV, the IFHTP and the IIAS moved into a joint accommodation in Brussels.⁴⁹

International institutions
Saunier’s mosaic of the Urban Internationale is completed by a piece that entered the picture after the First World War: institutions created by a desire to see the world order governed by an authoritative international body. The Treaty of Versailles created the League of Nations. Saunier argues that the League of Nations shared several common points, but did not have an organic bond with the Urban Internationale. Rather, it had a series of fragmented relations with various other constituents of the Urban Internationale. The ‘urban issue’ as a coherent, universal phenomenon was not on the agenda of the first interstate organization. Essentially, the League of Nations was to develop these fragmented relations
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through the agency of the UIV. Although the UIV tried to get involved with the League’s services as early as 1922, the latter was not exactly forthcoming. The League had a fundamental reservation: as an interstate organization it could not provide local authorities a legitimacy that might compromise the sovereignty of nation-states. This primacy of states was reflected in the way the specialist services of the League functioned. They preferred to conduct surveys through governmental authorities of participating countries. The voluntary societies of the transnational civil society, including those of the Urban Internationale were not called upon to share their knowledge and present recommendations, but, at best, merely to provide data that the specialist services of the League would process into knowledge and recommendations.

Besides the League of Nations, the Treaty of Versailles constituted yet another organization: the International Labour Organization, with the Geneva-based International Labour Office (ILO) as its executive branch. The ILO specialized in a single theme, that of work, which related to city life from several angles. According to Saunier it is essential to take the closeness of the ILO to voluntary reform societies with an interest in housing and the city in general into consideration, when assessing the links of the ILO to the Urban Internationale. A large number of the ILO staff had personal contacts in this sphere. The relationship between the ILO and the major associations of the Urban Internationale were complex. It shared the ambiguous approach of the League of Nations to the transnational civil society. It made ‘strategic’ use of the international associations to obtain support and create a network of practitioners and experts. Thus in 1925 arrangements were made between the ILO and the UIV concerning documentation and scientific knowledge. The main objective was to achieve a uniform approach towards housing statistics to facilitate international comparison. The UIV would mobilize its networks, whereas the ILO would tackle the scientific side and produce all working documents.

Completely unlike the League of Nations, it was also considering more direct action on urban issues, especially that of housing. It desired the establishment of an international body specializing in housing, which could provide backing, contacts and information to the ILO. To this end the ILO got in contact with the Standing Committee of the International Housing Congresses that were trying to restore the housing congresses to their pre-war glory. However, the Standing Committee faltered and the ILO did not have the financial means to establish a new specialist housing organisation within the ILO. Thus, the ILO seized the opportunity offered by the transfer of the Standing Committee’s responsibilities to the IFHTP that was to create a special housing section. As discussed earlier, this marriage of housing and planning soon ended in divorce. Saunier claims that the ILO through the intervention of its officials, its close associates and its leadership deliberately steered towards this split, assuring the housing group of its interest and collaboration. Assessing the housing activities of the ILO in the 1920s, we must conclude that the ILO had a definite plan for a specific type of relationship between reformers and international officials, in which the objective was to set up research structures that would be flexible and close enough to meet the demands of
an international institution. This scheme had no real future. The International Labour Congresses did not renew the ILO’s brief to study housing, so the ILO had to relinquish its grand design for an affiliated international housing organisation.\footnote{National institutions}Saunier’s sketch of the Urban Internationale is not complete, if we want to include all agencies active in the international sphere of the urban. The Germans, priding themselves with their Städtebau, had been prominently present in the Urban Internationale since its birth in the nineteenth century, but by the mid-1930s a new German presence made itself felt in the Urban Internationale. This German presence shared the notions of increased efficiency with the international project of PACH and its affiliated societies, but its nature and rationale were totally different. Once the Gleichschaltung had started, the new Nazi leaders soon had their eyes on the Urban Internationale. They orchestrated an infiltration of the major international associations active in the field of governance, housing and planning through the agency of the Deutsche Gemeindetag, that was responsible for the coordination of the ‘nazification’ of the German section. Ultimately the Nazis wanted to assume control over these organisations to propagate Hitler’s new world order of Neues Europa, one united Europe under German leadership. The IFHTP was one of the first to succumb to Nazi pressure. In 1938, Karl Strölin, a devoted Nazi and rising star in the NSDAP, became its first German president. Once in power, the Germans gradually seized total control.\footnote{The UIV and the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) suffered similar fates.}The UIV and the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) suffered similar fates.\footnote{National institutions}
1.3 Towards a better understanding of the IFHTP and international town planning

The IFHTP and international town planning: a three level approach

It is hard to distil a unilateral interpretation of the role of the IFHTP in the international dissemination of housing and planning thought and experience in the first half of the twentieth century. The literature discussed in the previous paragraph approaches the IFHTP at different levels: some authors discuss (single) participants, either individual planners or (national) organisations (micro level); some authors treat the IFHTP at the level of single organisation (meso level); other authors elaborate on the IFHTP as part of a wider international or transnational network society (macro level). I would argue that these levels are interrelated and effect and affect each other (figure 1.2). The (national) members are the ‘building blocks’ of the (international) single network organisations and these networks organisations are constituents of the broader Urban Internationale and transnational civil society (the straight lines in figure 1.2). You cannot grasp the essence of the IFHTP at the level of single organization, without taking the levels of Urban Internationale and membership into account. Each level influences the other two levels (the curved lines in figure 1.2). However, available literature rarely offers an approach that seeks to connect all three levels.

The linking of the separate levels on the basis of available literature is far from straightforward. First of all, available literature does not offer a comprehensive history of the IFHTP. There are gaps – for example the context surrounding the establishment of the IFHTP in 1913 is still obscure –, contradictions – is the IFHTP in the 1930s still a major platform for the dissemination of new housing and planning ideas or was is a dated dinosaur? – and the
occasional wrong representation of facts – for example the supposed replacement of British chairman Montagu Harris by Frenchman Sellier in 1923. Further archival research is vital to cement the available fragmented and at times contradictory chronologies into a coherent history. Such a history is essential if we want to analyze the performance of the IFHTP in terms of interaction between micro, meso and macro levels.

More important, available studies that touch the IFHTP at the different levels not necessarily fit together, because as a rule they have a different focus. Literature exploring the micro and meso levels of international town planning usually conceptualizes the history of (international) twentieth century housing and planning as a history of (housing and planning) ideas. Researchers of the Urban Internationale and transnational civil society usually are concerned with (the history of) conceptualizations of international and transnational cooperation. At times, these histories are difficult to distinct as they are interrelated and share similar trends: professionalization, rationalization and ‘universalization.’

Although literature so far has a tendency to analyse the ideas and experiences in the field of housing and planning that circulated in the Urban Internationale and the structure and substance of this Urban Internationale and its constituents separately, these are closely related. You simply cannot analyse the agenda of the congresses of the IFHTP exclusively in terms of a history of ideas on housing and planning. If you insist to do so nonetheless, you must be well aware that this agenda represents a very restricted history of ideas. The IFHTP was not a neutral forum where the agenda was solely defined by the latest housing and planning ideas and achievements. Its agenda to a large extent was defined by its structure - objectives, organisation, membership requirements, (internal) power distribution, culture of decision-making, et cetera. Some individuals, organisations and even countries were not allowed to participate, or their participation was discouraged, regardless of their contribution to housing and planning thought and practice. Obvious examples are the exclusion of German and Austrian members immediately after World War I and the discouragement of Russian contributions. Additionally, concepts that were not on all fours with the objectives of the IFHTP or could not meet with the approval of a majority of the members were barred from the agenda as well, although ironically their propagators at times were allowed to participate. For example, the agenda of the IFHTP did not feature the planning concepts of the linear city and the hexagonal city, although some of their foremost advocates (for example Georges Benoît-Lévy and Nouran Couchon) are to be found among the congress delegates.

Membership
Membership is ‘the weakest link’ in literature on the IFHTP and the Urban Internationale. The historical membership administration of organisations such as the IFHTP is lost, making it impossible to determine who exactly participated in these organisations. Moreover, how should we assess national participation? The principal national representatives of the IFHTP were national (umbrella) organisations. Should we just count the national representatives,
or should we also include affiliated bodies? Should we count all individual members of these national organisations? On the basis of available literature and archival evidence it is impossible to assess the actual size of national participation. However, I do not think it is necessary to identify all national participants in the transnational trade of housing and planning ideas and experiences. It was a relatively small population of active members that partook in the policymaking of the IFHTP and contributed to its activities on a regular basis. I presuppose that these active members, not the passive masses that flocked to the congresses of the IFHTP, primarily defined the performance of the IFHTP. They can be identified by studying congress reports and the surviving minutes of the executive and governing bodies and the (sub)committees of the IFHTP.

Although literature usually elaborates on individual planners, when referring to national (active) participation, we must realize that national delegations in international organisations such as the IFHTP are not a loose population of individuals: they had a structure that effected and affected national participation. The principal members of the IFHTP were national societies, not individual planners. Therefore, if you wanted to join the IFHTP, you had to join a national organisation affiliated to the IFHTP. Such membership provided a ticket to (passive) participation at the congresses of the IFHTP. Active members (representatives in the governing body and paper presenters) as a rule were put forwards by the national societies. So the selection process of active members not only took place at the (international) level of the IFHTP – the governing body selected representatives for the board and working committees - but to a large extent was located at the national level. This national selection was more than just a formality; it was a means to serve the agenda of the national organizations concerned.

The agenda of the national societies brings us to their motivation to join the international trade of housing and planning ideas and experiences. Why did they engage in international activity? Anthony Sutcliffe has identified two considerations for the international trade of ideas and experiences: artistic inspiration and Schumpeter’s classic innovation diffusion theory. According to Saunier, the Urban Internationale was an arena for definition of the most appropriate objects, methods, tools and people to think about and act on the city. It was not just a stage to learn from each other’s experiences. It was a sphere where ‘what is being done’ was translated into ‘what ought to be done’. As such, it was a place of symbolic power. It was an international arena to gain standing and legitimacy for ideas, policies, movements, disciplines, et cetera. International endorsement could be used to further one’s goals at home. This dimension considerably raised the stakes. Of course, such endorsement only was a powerful argument at home if harvested international consensus had a broad backing. The size of participation did matter.

Stephen Ward identifies two types of international exchange of planning thought and experience: borrowing and imposition. I want to pose the thesis that these types of exchange are tied up with the agenda of national delegations and the form of participation
(passive or active membership) these delegations adopt. Passive membership provided a ticket to the congresses of the IFHTP, enabling members to digest the body of knowledge offered at these events and to maintain and expand personal and professional networks in corridor chats. The IFHTP was a place to produce and reproduce social and human capital. Passive membership is only adequate if the national delegates want to borrow circulating ideas and experiences or want to make new contacts. This type of borrowing can be laborious. Passive members have little to no influence on the drafting of the agenda of the constituents of the Urban Internationale. They will have to ‘shop’ at activities of different (inter)national organisations to acquire suitable solutions for their specific planning problems. As a consequence, passive members tend to be less loyal to a single organisation. They only turn up if the conference agenda is of interest to them – or if the congress attracts foreign delegates that are of interest to them.

If national delegates want to influence the international exchange, most of the times mere passive participation is insufficient. Active membership enables the national delegates to participate in the drafting of the agenda of the constituents of the Urban Internationale. I assume dominant active members – representatives of national factions that hold a majority in the executive and governing bodies of constituents of the Urban Internationale and/or influential individuals with authority based on human and social capital - can even ‘impose’ subjects for the agenda. Active members can place the problems they are confronted with at home on the agenda, thus facilitating focussed borrowing. Moreover, they can put their own ideas and experiences on the agenda to seek international acknowledgement and support (legitimacy), presenting a type of exchange that one could characterize as ‘imposition.’ If we accept the knowledge circulating in the Urban Internationale (housing and planning ideas and experiences) as symbolic power, it is but a small step to relate active membership to Michel Foucault’s conception of power-knowledge. Coining the phrase power-knowledge, Foucault stated knowledge is both the creator of power and creation of power. The fact that one is considered an expert or has a right to speak, is not just based on knowledge, but also on the power to determine what knowledge is or ought to be.

We must be careful not to confuse the considerations of national societies and individuals to engage in international activity with considerations to join a specific international organization such as the IFHTP, although the desire to become internationally active of course was part of the motivation to join a specific international organization. Saunier has demonstrated that the structure of the Urban Internationale was made up of numerous, sometimes competing, sometimes collaborating organizations. National participants did have a choice. They could select the organization(s) that answered their ambitions with regard to international activity in terms of knowledge and contacts. From the identified candidates the national participants could select those organizations that best suited them with regard to objectives, culture of decision-making, opportunities for active membership et cetera. It is not hard to imagine that, if the national participants had already joined an
international organization, issues such as competition between organizations and loyalty played a role as well.

**Single network organisation**

Most publications that discuss the IFHTP or (part of) its activities do not discuss the structure and substance of the organisation and their influence on its agenda. Many authors just analyse the programme of (single) congresses and relate them to a (national) housing and planning context or compare it to the programme of congresses of other organisations. Although relevant context must have had an effect on the agenda of the IFHTP and the programme of its congresses, I seriously doubt that changes can be solely explained by context. I assume that these changes were also affected and effected by the structure and substance of the organisation. Organisational circumstances – changes in membership (growth and exclusion), internal (re)distribution of power, (re)assessment of objectives, culture of decision-making, financial position et cetera – must have had a significant influence.

Very likely the trajectory of the IFHTP was (partly) path-dependent as well. Path dependence is a concept that is widely used within economics and the social sciences. In common interpretations, path dependence means that current and future states, actions or decisions depend on the path of previous states, actions or decisions. Previous circumstances may even no longer be relevant. Economists Massimo Egidi and Allesandro Narduzzo have demonstrated that in cooperative settings former strategies can persevere, even when the configurations could not be effectively played with the strategy adopted. To demonstrate this point: British leadership and the insistence on the garden city concept were legacies of the past that influenced the agenda of the IFHTP throughout the major part of the Interbellum.

Authors that do touch the structure of the IFHTP have a tendency to identify the organisation with its British leadership. The British leadership certainly wielded strong power in the IFHTP, but could it really define the course of the IFHTP by itself? Should the other (active) members not be taken into account as well? Exclusive domination by a single faction – British garden city militants – seems an unhealthy basis for the continuity of an association. If the other members do not support such a domination, it is likely they will cancel their membership and seek transnational participation elsewhere. Referring to the writings of Virginia Satir, many managerial handbooks state that internal congruence (and congruence with the external context) is essential for a vital organization. There is no denying that initially the British garden city militants had the upper hand in the IFHTP. However, this was not a usurpation of power. Reports on the founding meeting clearly reveal that the British garden city workers were handed control on a silver platter by the other members. British leadership rested on consensus among the members. This consensus crumbled in the 1920s and as a consequence the organisation changed. Hardy refers to the severing of ties with the British parental organisation and the nomination of non-British members. Leadership
changed, although the British retained a disproportionate influence. If we accept that (continental) discontent with British leadership was one of the causes prompting the housing controversy in the IFHTP, it becomes clear that the British could not have things their way without accounting for the opinion of the other members.

Assessing (active) membership is not just relevant to explain the structure of the IFHTP in terms of internal power balances. It is essential to grasp the very nature of the IFHTP as a physical intersection of the transnational networks of the members. It required these networks to disseminate the knowledge produced and reproduced at its congresses, in its periodical and publications and by its committees. Needless to say, it also needed members for the production process, not just for physical performance (papers, articles, lectures, discussions et cetera), but also for moral support (broad backing) and financial support. It was continuously striving to consolidate and even expand its membership. This meant it had to adapt its structure and agenda to accommodate the considerations of the members and potential new members to engage in transnational activity and to address the latest planning ideas and experiences (to prevent it from becoming outdated or even obsolete). This trajectory of evolution inevitably triggered friction between members in power and (new) members aspiring power, conservative members defending vested concepts and objectives and those urging the pursuit of new ideas and a new mission. The IFHTP continuously had to steer a middle course between these factions to maintain an internal peace and to appeal to a target group as broad as possible. Consensus seeking was the designated course. This consensus was not only effected by mechanisms of inclusion – the rules state what individuals and organisations are eligible for membership – but apparently also by mechanisms of exclusion. Hardy states that the Germans and Austrians were barred from membership immediately after World War I because of sentiments of the continental members, although the British leaders did favour an early return.  

The IFHTP was not just affected by the structure and mass of membership. Authors such as Saunier demonstrate that the IFHTP was not a isolated island in the international – the correct adjective would be transnational if we take the associative nature of the Federation into account - sea of housing and planning theory and practice. It was an exponent of a wider structure, an international network society composed of voluntary associations, philanthropic foundations and (inter)national institutions that Saunier has labelled the Urban Internationale (figure 1.1). These constituents of the Urban Internationale did not operate autonomously, but had complex relations that influenced their agendas. As such, the reality of the IFHTP can only be understood if we take the agendas of the other constituents of the Urban Internationale into account. In terms of social sciences, the activity of the IFHTP cannot be exclusively explained in terms of agency; we have to take structure into account as well. It shared members with these other constituents and roughly addressed the same issues, straining ‘neighbour relations’ and instigating a necessity to profile its agenda to distinct it from that of its neighbours.
Network society
Saunier has demonstrated that the IFHTP was part of a larger structure. The use of the concept Urban Internationale is not without risks. The tricky part is to define the borders of the Urban Internationale. In the twentieth century urbanizing world more or less everything became urban. As such, the adjective urban looses significance. There certainly was not an independent ‘Rural Internationale’ besides the Urban Internationale. In terms of objects, Saunier’s Internationale included the whole human habitat; not just as a physical structure, but also as social, economic, cultural, mental and symbolic construct. In terms of constituents and participants, it would include whole transnational civil society, plus all supranational and national institutions, active in the international trade of ideas and experiences. To avoid the trappings of ‘unlimitedness’ I propose a narrow interpretation of the Urban Internationale: the international sphere for the discussion of the ‘malleable’ city of the future. Malleable city I would define here as the notion that social, economic, and cultural life could be improved through (physical) intervention in the human habitat. The most relevant disciplines are public administration, planning and housing. Ironically, it is exactly this narrow interpretation that Saunier uses to analyse the structure and substance of his larger picture. This narrow operational definition of course does not imply that I deny the links of this narrow Urban Internationale with the wider transnational civil society. The city of the future rarely is an objective of its own; (physical and administrative) intervention in the human habitat usually serves to pursue ideas concerning an ‘achievable society.’ I assume that the constituents of the Urban Internationale did not just have a professional interest in the city; they were concerned with social change.

How to get a grip on the phenomenon labelled Urban Internationale? It is an abstract international network structure made up of societies like the IFHTP, philanthropic foundations and international and national institutions, bound by similar objectives and linked through overlapping membership and audiences. Saunier has provided a rough outline of its structure and substance. To enrich our understanding of the Urban Internationale we must analyse the performance of its single constituents and their mutual relations, which in turn will necessitate an analysis of the individuals and organisations joining these network societies. The IFHTP could serve as a case study. What was the trajectory of the international organisation in terms of membership, organisational structure, activities and agenda? To what extent was this trajectory influenced by the trajectories of the other constituents of the Urban Internationale. Was the trajectory of the IFHTP unique or was it similar to that of these other constituents? In other words, did the Urban Internationale have one distinct trajectory or was this trajectory the common denominator of diverging trajectories? How did the trajectory of the IFHTP and the voluntary societies in the Urban Internationale relate to the trajectory of transnational civil society? Are trajectories converging or diverging?
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1.4 Research design

1.4.1 Objectives and research questions

This thesis focuses on the International Federation for Housing and Town planning (IFHTP). Firstly, I want to reconstruct the history of this largely forgotten organization. Although in the last ten years it has received some attention from social historians with an interest in transnationalism and the international dimensions of municipalism, so far it has received even less interest from planning historians and architectural historians. A thorough study of the history of this international organization is long overdue. Not only was the IFHTP effectively the first international organization explicitly dedicated to town planning, it was also one of the most prominent international platforms to discuss housing and planning affairs in the Interbellum and it occasionally managed to affect the trajectory of housing and town planning practices of individuals, organisations, local authorities, nations and even whole continents. I do not just want to reconstruct the history of the organisation; my research focuses on the way the IFHTP performed at the meso level of a single network organisation and how this performance was effected and affected by (national) membership at the micro level and the international network society (Urban Internationale) at the macro level.

Secondly, I want to use this study of the IFHTP as a window to raise our understanding of the performance of the international network society for the definition of the universal city. Saunier has provided an outline of the structure of this international community, but he rightly states that we still know relatively little of its single constituents or who actually participated. The basic assumption is that the constituents did not act independently and make their own free choices (agency), but that their behavior to a large extent was defined by the structure of the social networks ties between the constituents of the Urban Internationale.

The research objectives are translated into a three research questions:

A. What kind of organisation was the IFHTP and what was its mission in its formative years and in the Interbellum?

B. How did the IFHTP function as an international platform for housing and town planning and how did it influence the transnational definition of the universal city?

C. How does the IFHTP relate to the Urban Internationale and transnational civil society; to what extent do they share a similar trajectory?
1.4.2 Methodology

Although there is an abundance of literature on single participants and congresses of the IFHTP, publications on the organisation itself are scarce. Literature that treats the organisation usually focuses on larger objects: movements - the planning movement; the garden city movement; the municipalist movement – or network structures – the Urban Internationale. On the basis of available literature it is not possible to reconstruct a coherent history of the IFHTP that provides answers to my research questions. Some episodes of this history are not covered at all; other episodes have received conflicting interpretations by different authors or have been studied from a perspective that bears little or no relevance for this research. Thus a major part of my research time was spent rummaging through primary sources: archives, congress documentation, periodicals, memoires and contemporary housing and town planning reference books. The localizing of relevant sources was far from straightforward.

Archives

My initial approach of gathering archival evidence from the collections of the IFHTP (located at the International Federation for Housing and Planning or IFHP, the continuation of the IFHTP) and the main national representatives (umbrella organisations) from its European core - Belgium, England, France, Germany and the Netherlands - was soon found wanting. Many of these national members have cleaned out their historical archives and have discarded all correspondence, minutes, drafts et cetera relating to their participation in the IFHTP. Most of them have only saved the ‘glossy’ congress reports. For example, the Town and Country Planning Association, the parental body of the IFHTP, has disposed all archival documentation relating to the IFHTP. Even the IFHP itself has dealt carelessly with its archives, resulting in a poor awareness of its own history. So I had to adjust my methodology. I turned my attention to personal archives of key individuals participating in the IFHTP. A lot of these personal records of key contributors only contain congress reports, (draft) articles and , paper cuttings – for example the Granpré Molière papers, the Prost papers and the Stübben papers - but some contain valuable notes and correspondence that shed a light on the performance of the IFHTP – for example the Pepler papers, the Strölin papers and the Wibaut papers. Additionally, I turned to archives of (international) organizations collecting documentation on the Urban Internationale – for example the International Labour Office (ILO). I also turned to contemporary periodicals to gather reports on the IFHTP and its activities. This time I managed to gather sufficient data to reconstruct a history of the IFHTP. This history is not the definite history of the IFHTP. It is a construct on the basis of scattered archival bits and pieces; facts have been ‘glued together’ by interpretation and hypothesis. Although I have had a vast amount of archival evidence in my hands, it is likely that there is still more available that could shed a new light on my interpretation.
Confronted with a vast corpus of documentation on the IFHTP, I have used a very basic research approach to analyze this material. Architectural historian Andrew Leach supposes that form and content of architectural history, its method and evidence, assume a dialectic relationship. One tests the other and vice versa. The relevance of a document depends on the questions asked of it. And the pertinence of the question will be judged by what is known or knowable of the subject at hand. According to Leach, the idea of ‘evidence’ invokes a courtroom setting and the question of ‘proof.’ It concerns analytic weight and judgement; cause, assessable effect and plausibility. Sometimes, the architectural historian adopts the role of advocate, presenting the available evidence in order to represent or reconstruct on the basis of ‘proof.’ As a judge, the architectural historian then weighs the balance of what we might reasonably deduce from the material and circumstances. The insistence of the historian’s conclusions will depend on the strength and weight of the evidence put forwards to defend his or her case. The historian plays both these roles, of advocate and judge, out of necessity. History can only represent the past, and no conclusions are definitive. New evidence comes to light, new conceptual perspective and analytical tools can change the significance of evidence.

My methodology consists of four basic questions: who, how, what and why? I have tried to keep an open mind in answering these questions. We cannot assume beforehand that the butler did it! This means that I have not just filled in gaps in existing literature and have formulated plausible interpretations where authors contradict each other. Verification of ‘material evidence’ and interpretations provided by existing literature was part of the research as well. It turned out that some ‘facts’ were not in concordance with primary sources. Several authors mix up dates and locations of the congresses of the IFHTP. I also had to reconsider some generally accepted interpretations, such as the idea that the IFHTP was established by the British Garden Cities and Town Planning Association to accommodate a growing foreign demand for the garden city idea. In the following text I will elaborate on my methodological questions.

**Who?**
Firstly, I wanted to analyze the nature of the IFHTP. Why was it established? How was it structured, what was the culture of decision making, what were the objectives and how was power distributed? Considering that an organisation is only a formal entity, I subsequently wanted to assess who were its members, what was their background, and what were their networks? Who were the rival organisations that were potentially influencing the organisation and membership of the IFHTP? What changes occurred in the history of the IFHTP in terms of organisation, internal power distribution, membership and external competition? Finally, I wanted to compare the IFHTP to the other exponents of the Urban Internationale – in the narrow sense as proposed in the previous paragraph – and transnational civil society at large. Was its course comparable to other international societies, or did it follow a unique trajectory?
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*How?*
Subsequently, I wanted to analyze what activities the IFHTP has devised to further its aims. Usually, the focus is exclusively on its congresses, but the IFHTP had more to offer.

*What?*
Thirdly, I want to analyze the agenda of the IFHTP. I will focus on the congresses, but will also take the other activities of the organisation into consideration. What housing and planning concepts were on the agenda and who were asked to deliver contributions? How did the agenda develop?

*Why?*
Finally, I want to find plausible explanations for the (changes in) organisational structure, internal power distribution, membership, networks, external rivalry, activities and the agenda of the IFHTP. To what extent was the IFHTP able to determine its path independently (agency) and to what extent was the IFHTP as a single international network organisation affected by the structure and critical mass of national participation and the international network societies in which it participated?

*Limitations in time and space*
The vastness of my research object and the necessity of extensive, time-consuming archival research made a clear delineation of the research object inevitable. Originally I planned to cover the entire history of the IFHTP, but this soon proved to be too extensive. So I decided to narrow the period under scrutiny. Although the period after the Second World War provided a different context for the Urban Internationale than the pre-war context – for instance the formation of supranational layers such as the United Nations and the European Union – it is impossible to adequately fathom the post-war IFHTP, without taking its pre-war existence into account. Therefore I decided to focus my research on the period 1913-1945. In this period the foundations for the coherent perception of a modern town planning were laid that are still relevant for the town planning profession today.

Additionally, geographical limitations were necessary as well. The core of the IFHTP clearly must be searched in north-western Europe, including (former) colonies, but national participation rapidly branched out. Australasia and Northern America almost immediately joined the European core, followed by Southern America in the 1930s. After the war participation from the Asian and African continents grew significantly. It is impossible to perform a profound study on the participation from all participating countries. I decided to concentrate on the most active national delegations, e.g. the countries that delivered officials, members of the executive committee and or key contributors to the activities of the IFHTP on a regular basis. As the IFHTP was located in north-western Europe – initially in London, subsequently in Brussels, to end in Stuttgart during World War II – and originated from this region, it is hardly surprising that the most active delegations were concentrated in this region.
1.4.3 Outline of the thesis

I have chosen for a chronological order of the chapters. My main motivation is that each interval in the period under scrutiny (1913-1945) provided its own context that the IFHTP had to react and or adapt to. Within each chapter I have chosen for a thematic structure that echoes my methodological questions. Each chapter starts with an analysis of the organisation and membership, followed by an analysis of the activities to end with an analysis of the agenda.

Chapter 2 covers the period 1913-1920. It analyzes the context of its inception in 1913 as international outlet for (British) garden city propaganda and reconstructs how the fresh organisation adapted to the new context imposed by the First World War. In chapter 3 I discuss how the IFHTP reinvented itself to make the best of the resurgence of the transnational trade of housing and planning ideas and experiences in the period 1920-1926. The chapter describes how the familiar garden city concept was revamped into a concept of regional planning based on decentralisation and how the IFHTP matured from a marginal player into one of the mainstream organisations of the Urban Internationale. Chapter 4 addresses the ‘housing controversy’ that shook the IFHTP to its core in the period 1926-1937. The rise of regional planning was not to the liking of all members. Dissatisfied housing reformers thought the housing issue was being overlooked and stepped outside the IFHTP to establish their own International Housing Association, splitting the membership of the organisation in two. One faction wanted to proceed with the set course and further explore the potential of an all-encompassing regional planning and eventually national planning, whereas others demanded attention for housing as an independent specialist discipline. This forced the IFHTP into splits. It took the better part of a decade to reconcile the two camps and pave the way for a reunion with the rogue housing reformers in 1937. Chapter 5 pays attention to a dark page in the history of the IFHTP during the years 1935-1945, that often is conveniently overlooked. In the 1930s the new Nazi regime in Germany stretched out its claws to the voluntary associations of the Urban Internationale to use them as a vehicle to propagate its vision of Neues Europa, one united Europe under German leadership. The IFHTP was infiltrated by the Nazis in 1935 and succumbed to their advances in 1938-1939. In chapter 6 I reflect on the outcomes of this study and possible future research.