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## **Defining the universal city. The International Federation for Housing and Town Planning and transnational planning dialogue 1913-1945**

Geertse, M.A.

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CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Introduction

This research contributes to scientific knowledge about the history of the IFHTP, the Urban Internationale, (international) planning history, (international) architectural history and transnationalism. Although the IFHTP has received substantial academic interest in the last decade, a comprehensive history of this organisation is yet to be written. This research provides such a history for the period 1913-1945. It fills the gaps in the scientific knowledge about the history of the IFHTP, especially its formative years (1913-1923) and its incarnation during World War II. Moreover, it has verified and expanded available scientific knowledge. Some archives – most notably the IFHTP archives in The Hague and the IVWS archives in Stuttgart – have been studied for the first time for IFHTP-research.

The chapters 2-5 discuss the performance of the IFHTP as international platform to define the universal city at a transnational level in the period 1913-1945. The evolution of the agenda of the IFHTP cannot be adequately explained exclusively in terms of a history of ideas. The IFHTP certainly was not a neutral stage where every participant and every conception of the universal city was welcome. It was an arena for the definition of the most appropriate concepts, methods and people to think about and act upon the city. National knowledge was (re)produced into international knowledge on the basis of consensus-seeking and, if consensus could not be reached, on the basis of compromise. This (re)production process was also about (symbolic) power. The evolution of the performance of the IFHTP cannot be adequately explained in terms of agency. This performance was largely defined by the structure and substance of (national) membership. Moreover, as a single network organisation, the performance of the IFHTP was also heavily affected by the structure and substance of the network societies it belonged to: the Urban Internationale and transnational civil society. Cross-membership and possible rivalry and collaboration were factors to reckon with. In this conclusion I will first evaluate the methodology of this research. Subsequently I will return to my research questions and provide direct answers. Finally, I will assess the scientific and social relevance of this research and reflect upon possible lines of future research.

### 6.2 Research methodology

My research started with a study of secondary literature on the IFHTP and the Urban Internationale to assess present (scientific) knowledge about the IFHTP and the Urban Internationale. Subsequently, I turned to primary sources (contemporary literature, periodicals and archives) to analyse the performance of the IFHTP and its relation to the Urban Internationale. This study of primary sources not only served to fill in gaps in existing literature and to formulate plausible interpretations where secondary publications contradict each other. Verification of facts and interpretations provided by existing literature was part of the research as well.

#### *Character and membership*

To find out more about the mission, structure, culture of decision-making and internal power distribution of the IFHTP I have analysed surviving archival evidence, reviews of IFHTP activity in housing and town planning periodicals and the congress reports of the IFHTP and compared the outcomes with available literature. Analysis of the character of the IFHTP in its formative years (1913-1920) proved difficult, because there are no surviving IFHTP-archives

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or congress reports for this period. For this period I analysed reviews of IFHTP activity in periodicals and compared the general characterization of the IFHTP that emerges from these reviews with the characterization of the British parental organization GCTPA (Hardy 1991a) and the outcomes of my analysis of the nature of the IFHTP for the period after 1920.

Then I analysed the membership of the IFHTP. It is impossible to assess total membership, because the historical membership administration of the IFHTP is lost. I have devised the concept of active membership to analyze the size, composure and background of the relatively small population of members that participated in the decision-making of the IFHTP (officers, members of the executive committee, council and committees and regular contributors to IFHTP activities). I presuppose that it were these active members that primarily defined the performance of the IFHTP. I have identified these active members by studying surviving minutes and congress reports. For the formative years of the IFHTP these sources are not available, so for this period I have identified active members by studying reviews and reports of IFHTP activity in periodicals, first and foremost *Garden cities and town planning*. Through literature study I have determined their backgrounds.

Through the identified active members, and the (national) organisations they represented, I made a rough sketch of the social networks that intersected at the IFHTP. Looking at the conferences of the IFHTP we can discern an international community of housing reformers and town planners from different countries, thus bringing together the social networks of the individual delegates and the organisations they represented. However, it is quite difficult to clarify the connections between them and to evaluate the unity of this community as a whole. A sort of looseness seems to surround the participating national societies and their ties, a looseness that was reflected in the participation in the IFHTP. I have used the concept of nebula, as introduced by Christian Topalov, to describe the social environment of the IFHTP. I have characterized the IFHTP as a density in the transnational nebula of the Urban Internationale, made up of interwoven national nebulas. To assess the position of the IFHTP in this transnational networked nebula, I have used the notion of centrality.

Finally, I compared the trajectory of the IFHTP as single network society in terms of organisation and membership with the trajectory of the contemporary network societies (Urban Internationale and transnational civil society). Did the IFHTP follow the evolution of the patterns of these network societies or did it follow a unique trajectory? I used literature study as designated methodology to compare the IFHTP with the Urban Internationale and transnational civil society.

### *Activities*

I made an inventory of the activities of the IFHTP in the period 1913-1945. Available literature usually exclusively focuses on (single) congresses. I also concentrated on the congresses of the IFHTP and used Ward Rennens' *CityEvents* concept to analyse the evolution of the IFHTP congresses. I also mapped the other activities of the IFHTP: its periodical and newsletter, other publications, (sub)committee work and special 'programmes' (the Belgium reconstruction campaign during and immediately after World War I and the protection of open cities campaign at the onset of World War II). I mainly studied the IFHTP-archives, the IFHTP Bulletin and the IFHTP congress reports to assess the activities of the IFHTP, complemented with literature study.

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I analysed the agenda of the IFHTP. Like most other authors touching the IFHTP, I focussed on the agenda of the congresses, but I took the other activities of the IFHTP into consideration as well. I resisted the temptation to produce a lengthy summary of all the paper presentations and discussions at the congresses. Readers who are interested in a comprehensive survey of the IFHTP congresses in the inter-bellum period can read the 2010 book by Renzo Riboldazzi.<sup>1</sup> Instead, I focussed on thematic trends. What were the dominant themes and who were the main contributors (paper presenters, national reporters, chairmen of sessions at the congresses, et cetera)? Which themes were introduced and which themes were abandoned? I mainly analyzed the congress reports of the IFHTP, its periodicals and the working papers and minutes of its subcommittees.

### *Network organisation and agenda*

I did not just want to analyse the performance of the IFHTP and the changes in its performance in the period 1913-1945. I also wanted to find plausible explanations. As a single network organisation the performance of the IFHTP cannot be explained in terms of agency. It was affected and effected by the structure and substance of its participants and the network society it was a part of. According to Saunier, the Urban Internationale was an arena for defining the most appropriate objects, methods, tools and people to think about and act upon the city. It was a place of symbolic power. I assumed this also applied to the IFHTP. Members joined the IFHTP with a purpose. They had an agenda, seeking acknowledgement, support, advice, inspiration et cetera. I reconstructed the agenda of the active members. Because the IFHTP archives do not tell us what the agenda of these active members was, I turned to other sources: archives and memoirs of some of the most prominent active members (for example Hudig, Pepler, Purdom, Strölin, and Wibaut) and literature (mainly monographs) on these active members and the (national) housing and town planning movements they belonged to.

Subsequently, I analysed the agendas of the active members: were these converging or diverging? How did they relate to the agenda of the IFHTP? Ideally, the agendas of the active members were converging and their shared agenda became the agenda of the IFHTP. When the agendas of the active members were diverging, some sort of conflict resolution was required to transform conflicting agendas into a shared IFHTP agenda. Conflict resolution methods ranged from ignoring differences to compromising and excluding individuals and organisations from (active) membership. Initially, agendas of the active members were converging. The British garden city workers launched the IFHTP to gain control of the international dissemination of the garden city idea to insist on a strict adherence to the interpretation of the GCTPA and they recruited foreign contacts from the networks of the GCTPA that had expressed an interest in British garden city experience. Thus it was fairly easy to agree on an appropriate (quintessentially British) framework and agenda for the IFHTP. However, this convergence was short-lived. During World War I the agendas of the active members started diverging, revealing friction between the British members and the continental members, between those in power and those aspiring (symbolic) power.

### *Convergence and divergence*

Confronted with diverging (national) agendas of the active members, I have researched why the initial convergence crumbled and why no continuous new consensus could be reached.

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Generally speaking, there are a limited number of explanations: the agenda of the active members in power evolved or the agenda of members aspiring power changed. Of course I also had to consider the possibility of mutations in (active) membership. The agendas of the active members did change and also the composition of membership altered significantly in the 1920s and 1930s. Why did these changes occur? National agendas reacted to various closely interrelated factors:

1. developments in the (national) housing and planning practice;
2. changing positions (of power) of the active members;
3. mutations in membership and internal power distribution in the IFHTP;
4. transformations in the structure and substance of the Urban Internationale;
5. opportunity.

Membership of the IFHTP was also influenced by several closely interrelated factors:

1. (changes in) the structure and substance of the IFHTP, such as new members ;
2. (transformations in) the structure and substance of the Urban Internationale;
3. The factors that Thomas Richard Davies holds responsible for the trajectory of transnational civic society: technological factors (for example innovations in mass communication and transportation), economic factors (economic interdependence of countries facilitated transnational collaboration), social factors (the advancing urbanization provided the *raison d'être* of the IFHTP) , internal political factors (for example the apparent success of transnational civic society inspired may to engage in transnational dialogue in the 1920s) and external political factors (both world wars are obvious examples of external political factors that affected membership).<sup>2</sup>

The analysis of these factors revealed complex relations between the performance of the IFHTP and the structure and substance of national participation (membership) and the structure and substance of the Urban Internationale.

### 6.3 Research questions

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

The IFHTP started as an international rallying point for garden city enthusiasts to propagate the garden city idea, transformed into an international platform for the (comparative) study of housing and planning issues in the 1920s and ended up as international extension of German Nazi propaganda during the Second World War. This evolution of the mission demonstrates the impossibility to capture the essence of the IFHTP in one unequivocal characterisation. These changes reflect changes in the factors that constituted the nature and objectives of the IFHTP, or, to be more precise, the interplay between these shifting factors: organisation, membership, (internal) power balances, networks, (external) rivalry and context. The IFHTP can be conceived as a platform where knowledge with regard to housing and planning was produced and reproduced. Relevant local and national knowledge (ideas and experiences) was selected, gathered, compared and synthesized into international knowledge (consensus).

However, it was not an open platform where everybody could participate and could present his ideas and experiences. Foucault's notion of the innate relation between knowledge and

power certainly seems to apply to the IFHTP. It was a place where symbolic power was produced and reproduced. Access to the transnational dialogue facilitated by the IFHTP could provide advice, acknowledgement, support, exposure, education, instruction et cetera. This considerably raised the stakes: all participants had something to gain. Potentially conflicting agendas of the members had to be matched and not all participants were willing to compromise. Thus the agenda of the IFHTP was not primarily informed by innovation (the latest ideas and experiences), but was essentially dictated by an ongoing struggle to define appropriateness. What methods and organisation were appropriate to facilitate transnational dialogue, who was allowed to participate, what were suitable subjects for discussion and what local knowledge was appropriate to discuss with regard to selected subjects? Obviously, knowledge provided (symbolic) power, but ultimately the real power in the IFHTP was concentrated in the authority to determine what appropriate knowledge was or ought to be.

### **II. 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?**

The IFHTP was a (physical) intersection of the transnational networks of its members. It required these networks to disseminate the knowledge it continuously produced and reproduced. Of course it also needed members for the (re)production process, not just for physical contributions, but also for moral and financial support. Therefore it had to adapt its agenda and activities to accommodate the transnational agenda of the members and potential new members. Potentially conflicting agendas had to be reconciled and not all participants were willing to compromise. Consensus-seeking was the designated course. Thus the agenda of the IFHTP was defined by an ongoing internal debate to define appropriateness. The performance of the IFHTP of course was not exclusively defined by internal factors. The IFHTP also had to reckon with influential external factors. Thomas Davies has identified five categories of main factors that affected the evolution of transnational civil society: technological, economic, social, external and internal political factors. Being a transnational nongovernmental organisation, these factors also influenced the performance of the IFHTP. Davies does not explicitly mention rivalry and collaboration from other transnational organisations, although they certainly were an important factor. The constituents of the Urban Internationale did not operate autonomously, but had complex relations that affected and effected their agendas.

The main activity of the IFHTP was the organizing of international congresses. These congresses offered a condensed overview of actual housing and town planning issues. More importantly, their physical performance facilitated face-to-face dialogue between peers. Thus the congresses of the IFHTP provided an excellent opportunity for networking. The congresses started as modest gatherings of garden city enthusiasts, but in the 1920s they matured into large *CityEvents*, drawing audiences of more than a thousand registered delegates and transforming the congresses of the IFHTP into one of the mainstream platforms for internationalization of the housing and planning professions. Whenever the organizing of congresses was impossible, the IFHTP sought alternatives to (physically) interact with its members. Additionally the IFHTP started its own periodical in 1923 to disseminate knowledge acquired on the basis of standardized questionnaires, thus facilitating international comparison. This quest for an international comparative town

planning discipline was further dressed by a range of subcommittees working on proposals for a universal town planning annotation, travelling town planning exhibitions and a trilingual town planning glossary.

### **III. How did the IFHTP relate to the Urban Internationale and transnational civic society; to what extent do they share a similar trajectory?**

As an international nongovernmental organisation, the IFHTP was part of transnational civil society. Its dedication to garden cities, housing and town and country planning also makes it a constituent of the Urban Internationale. Obviously, the path of the IFHTP displays similarities to the trajectories of these two larger entities, but there are also notable deviations. The establishment of the IFHTP in 1913 fits the pre-war upsurge of transnational activity. Similarly, the explosive expansion of the IFHTP in the 1920s corresponds with the spectacular growth of transnational civil society in the 1920s. But there are also differences. Although the IFHTP experienced restrictions imposed by World War I, its activity by no means collapsed. It even started a new activity, its Belgium reconstruction campaign. The 1930s were not as dramatic for the IFHTP as for transnational civil society at large. It was less active than before. The Great Depression and the rise of totalitarian regimes were inconvenient, but were not the main factors responsible for the decrease of activities. The faltering activity primarily originated in internal disagreements and negotiations with the International Housing Association. The onset of World War II did have dire consequences for the IFHTP, although, unlike most international, European-based nongovernmental organisations, it was not forced to close its doors. It was annexed by the Nazis and stopped being a part of transnational civil society.

The Urban Internationale followed the trajectory of transnational civil society more closely, but also here are notable divergences. The growth of the Urban Internationale from the mid-nineteenth century to the brink of World War I corresponds with the spectacular growth of transnational activity in the same interval. Not just IFHTP, but also organizations such as the International Housing Congresses (IHC) and the *Union Internationale des Villes* (UIV) were established in this period. The outbreak of World War I thwarted the advance of the Urban Internationale. Unlike the IFHTP, most of its constituents more or less were inactive during the armed conflict. The IFHTP was relatively better off, because it was (financially) dependent on the GCTPA and was located far from the front lines. After the War, the transnational trade of housing and planning ideas and experiences quickly resumed and increased in volume. The IFHTP greatly benefitted from this upsurge of international activity. So did the International Labour Office, the executive branch of the International Labour Organization, that entered the international housing scene in the 1920s. However, the IHC and the UIV experienced difficulties. Differences in the culture of decision-making and institutional character account for this deviation from the trajectory of the IFHTP. The Urban Internationale peaked in the late 1920s, with established platforms such as IFHTP and UIV drawing audiences of more than a thousand registered delegates and newcomers such as the *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM), the *Association Internationale des Cités Linéaires* (AICL) and the International Housing Association (*Verband*) entering the transnational urban scene. This peak coincides with a peak of transnational civil society in the same period. The factors that negatively affected transnational civil society in the 1930s affected the constituents of the Urban Internationale in different ways. Just like the Great

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Depression, the rise of authoritarian regimes did have some effect on the IFHTP, but this effect is hard to measure. These regimes were hostile towards the leftwing activists that flocked to the Urban Internationale, but they did not oppose the 'politically neutral' mainstream organisations of the Urban Internationale. Nazi Germany developed a strategy to infiltrate the mainstream platforms in the Urban International to gain control over them as a means to propagate the *Führerprinzip* on an international stage. The *Verband* was the first to succumb to the Nazi infiltration. Similarly, the IFHTP and the UIV were also infiltrated by the Nazis, but the Germans were unable to seize total control before the outbreak of World War II.

### 6.4 Scientific relevance

This research reasserts the generally accepted initial outlook of the IFHTP as British outlet for garden city propaganda, but provides new insights as well. I argue that the organisation was not established to accommodate a growing volume of enquiries received by the GCTPA, but that it was started by the GCTPA as a deliberate attempt to gain control over the international dissemination of the garden city idea, to exorcise counterfeit interpretations and to counter a growing competition from the sphere of the Urban Internationale. Moreover, its agenda cannot be conveniently identified with the agenda of the GCTPA officers that ran the IFHTP. This agenda was the result of converging agendas of the British initiators that wanted to disseminate British garden city experience and foreign members that wanted to learn from that experience and thus handed control to the GCTPA. This interdependency became evident in the 1920s as the agendas of the British members and the continental members clashed and the British members were forced to reassess the framework of the IFHTP and its agenda. The organisation transformed into an international study platform. I have analyzed this transformation on the basis of the surviving IFHTP-archives and come to the conclusion that this transformation was not instigated by old foreign members questioning the naturalness of British leadership and the superiority of British garden city experience, but by a tremendous influx of new members stemming from the expanding institutionalized national housing and town planning layers and inactive international rivals such as the International Housing Congresses and the *Union Internationale des Villes*.

Available literature disagrees on the position of the IFHTP as international study platform in the inter-war period. Some authors label it as one of the foremost platforms for the discussion and dissemination of the latest housing and planning ideas and experiences, whereas other authors label it as an outdated (British) vehicle to propagate decentralization to garden cities and garden suburbs, fighting a rearguard battle against advancing centralization and high-rise development. Through extensive study of archives – the archives of the IFHTP and some prominent active members – I have analyzed the performance of the IFHTP as international study platform in the Interbellum. I have come to the conclusion that it performed as a platform for mainstream planning: its agenda, its framework and the people invited to participate reflected a consensus among the majority of its members. The insistence on low-rise decentralization must not be interpreted as an indication for a lingering domination of British garden city workers, but was simply what the majority of the transnational society of planning professionals considered to be the best solution for the manifesting problems of urbanization. And it must be pointed out that the IFHTP did not

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ignore high-rise inner-city development, but instead sought new conceptions (re-centralization) to ameliorate it with the preferred low-rise decentralization. The desire to appeal to an audience as broad as possible instigated the IFHTP to define its agenda first and foremost by appropriateness. Sure, it did disseminate the latest ideas and experiences, but only if they were regarded appropriate.

Controversial decisions for the agenda were ignored or postponed. This mechanism could not cover up the disagreements among the members about the relation between the maturing housing and town planning professions, reflecting the disagreements in the international planning society at large. The episode of the housing controversy (1927-1937) in the history of the IFHTP perfectly illustrates this absence of unanimity. In the mid-1920s dissatisfied former dignitaries of the International Housing Congresses that had just merged into the IFHTP wanted to exclusively pursue state-sponsored housing, whereas the leadership of the IFHTP wanted to appeal to an audience as broad as possible and therefore was unwilling to narrow the housing scope to state-sponsored housing. Combined with different opinions about an appropriate framework for transnational dialogue and the relation between housing and an all-embracing regional planning discipline, the former dignitaries of the late International Housing Congresses resenting a loss of stature and personal disagreements, the principle question of the exclusivity of state-sponsored housing prompted an explosive conflict, resulting in the departure of the discontent housing reformers that subsequently started the *Verband*. However, the existence of two separate bodies was soon regarded inappropriate by a majority of the members both organisations, forcing the two to come to some kind of agreement and eventually conditions for reunion.

This research supports the thesis that the IFHTP was an important conduit for professional affiliation in the period before the Second World War. This aspect of its performance became dominant in the 1920s as housing and planning professionals constituted the majority of its membership and it transformed into an international study platform. The professional aspect amongst others manifested itself in the rather technical treatment of subjects at the congresses. In its formative years, the IFHTP was more a conduit for ideological affiliation, or to be more precise for affiliation to the garden city idea. The members of the earliest hour mainly were middleclass reformers stemming from the national garden city movements.

### *Urban Internationale*

Saunier's notion of the Urban Internationale proved to be a vital input for this research. This research demonstrates that the performance of the IFHTP cannot be adequately defined in terms of agency; its performance was effected and affected by the structure and substance of the network society or Urban Internationale of which it was one of the foremost constituents in the Interbellum. Saunier rightly states that we still know relatively little of the single constituents of this network society. How was it organized, who were its participants? This research provides a first comprehensive survey of the IFHTP in the period 1913-1945. It assesses its organisation, its culture of decision-making, its active membership and its agenda. Although Saunier does not linger on (the changes in the) agenda of the IFHTP in the inter-war period, this agenda was an important aspect defining the performance of the IFHTP and its relation to the other constituents of the Urban Internationale.

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This research on the IFHTP provides an interesting case study to increase our understanding of the performance of the Urban Internationale. Not only does it identify factors (cross-membership, agenda, culture of decision-making, et cetera) and mechanisms (rivalry, collaboration, in- and exclusion of members, et cetera) that defined the endeavours of the IFHTP to influence this network society and *vice versa*, but the comparison of the trajectories of the IFHTP and the (other main constituents of) the Urban Internationale and the larger entity of transnational civil society enables us to identify convergences and divergences in the paths of international organisations and analyse which factors are responsible for the directions of these paths.

### *International planning history and architectural history*

This research offers an alternative approach towards (international) town planning history and architectural history: international town planning and urban design as the result of a (re)production process by a transnational society of architects, planners, housing reformers, civil servants, administrators and interested laymen. International planning history and architectural history still predominantly are characterized as histories of visionaries, ideas and forms in which the nation state provides a natural framework for comparison. Planning history and architectural history urgently need to catch up with the rapid advance of transnationalism in the cultural, social and economic sciences in the past decades.<sup>3</sup> Dutch urban historian Ed Taverne in his review of Hans Ibeling's book *European Architecture since 1890* argues that it is futile to reconstruct a 'pan-European' historiography of architecture on the basis of a 'kinship of forms.' "If it is ultimately about the positioning of European architecture within a global perspective, then style is an inadequate category. And I would much sooner think of a more precise mapping of the dissemination and materiality of European architecture and of an analysis of the architectural dimension of migration and colonialism, historical processes in which Europe played, and still plays, a crucial role."<sup>4</sup> A thorough study of the Urban Internationale and its constituents would be a good starting point for the research proposed by Taverne. This research on the IFHTP renders interesting leads on the 'Europeaness' of early twentieth century town planning and urban design and their relation to 'global' planning and urban design. A research on the CIAM by German architectural historian Konstanze Domhardt for the period 1933-1951 offers similar leads.<sup>5</sup>

### *Transnationalism*

Transnationalism is a popular topic in present academia. One can witness a steady growing volume of publications, conferences and research projects relating to transnationalism and transnational themes within an array of scientific disciplines and interdisciplinary fields in the last two decades. Not surprisingly, this volume represents a wide variety of descriptions surrounding meanings, processes, scales and methods. It is no coincidence that the present scientific interest in transnationalism parallels a growing academic interest in globalization. Enhanced interconnectedness between people and institutions is regarded as one of the key characteristics of globalization. The adjective 'transnational' refers to sustained linkages and ongoing exchanges among non-state actors – multi-national corporations, non-governmental organizations and individuals sharing the same belief - based across national borders. The collective attributes of such connections, their processes of formation and maintenance, and their broader implications are referred to broadly as 'transnationalism.' According to social anthropologist Steven Vortovec the scales, spaces and mechanisms of globalization and transnationalism are just too entangled to allow clear abstractions.<sup>6</sup> There

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are many historical precedents for and parallels to transnational patterns.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, transnationalism (as long distance networks) certainly preceded the nation-state. Yet today, these systems of ties, interactions, exchange, and mobility function intensively and in real time while being spread throughout the world. New technologies such as information technology serve to connect these networks at staggering speed and efficiency. Transnationalism describes a state in which, despite great distances and notwithstanding the presence of international borders (and all the legislative, cultural and historical differences they represent) certain kinds of relationships have been globally intensified.<sup>8</sup>

Although this research does not focus on transnationalism as such, it does offer an analysis of the performance of the IFHTP as an international nongovernmental organization. The broader implications of the outcomes of this research can be used to study the structure and substance of other nongovernmental organizations. The identified complex relations of the IFHTP with the structure and substance of participation and affiliation of its national representatives and the structure and substance of the networked society to which it belongs, can be used to get a grip on the performance of other nongovernmental organizations that operate across nation-states. Similarly, this research can offer leads for researchers focusing on transnational dialogues. The notions that these dialogues are influenced by the structure and substance of the transnational network structures through which ideas and experiences are disseminated, that these transnational exchanges are often tied up with the (re)production of symbolic power and that this (re)production process is effected through mechanisms of in- and exclusion, might prove very valuable.

Although transnationalism emphasizes the interconnectedness of individuals and institutions across nation-states and as a consequence acknowledges a waning importance of state actors in crossing borders activity, ironically this research demonstrates that transnational exchange as facilitated by the IFHTP actually also re-affirms the role of the nation-state. Not only was the performance of the IFHTP and the other constituents of the Urban Internationale heavily affected by international politics – both world wars are obvious examples – but the nongovernmental organizations in the Urban Internationale, also the IFHTP, actively sought endorsement, support and collaboration from international organizations such as the League of Nations and the International Labour Office. The national state was not only re-affirmed through external (political) context and external relations. It also was a basic unit defining membership and representation in nongovernmental organizations such as the IFHTP.

### 6.5 Future research

#### *1. the post-war incarnation of the IFHTP*

The IFHTP did not fade into oblivion as it became isolated in Stuttgart at the end of the Second World War. At the other side of the Channel steps were undertaken to resurrect the IFHTP after the war. English planner George Pepler, former president of the IFHTP, set up a provisional committee in London in 1944, rallying IFHTP members from the allied world and refugees from the occupied territories. The activities of this allied committee enabled the Federation to hold its first post-war international congress in Hastings in 1946. The event showcased lectures and an international exhibition. Especially the new towns in Great Britain raised considerable interest. Although the topics of the conference were met with a

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sincere interest, the focus was clearly on the re-establishment of the International Federation. A provisional executive committee was elected and a council was formed from appointed members of the represented organizations at the congress. During a special Council Meeting in Paris in 1947 the provisional structure was consolidated. The Federation was ready to resume its position as prominent international platform.<sup>9</sup>

The outcomes of my research into the performance of the IFHTP in the period 1913-1945 can serve as a point of departure to study the performance of the IFHTP in the post-war period. How was the performance of the IFHTP affected and affected by the structure and substance of national participation and the Urban Internationale? Although I have pointed out in the first chapter that the post-war context differs from the inter-bellum context, the IFHTP immediately after the War at first sight bears striking similarities to the IFHTP immediately after World War I. Again it was one of the first transnational organizations to resume its trade of housing and planning experiences, offering an example to other transnational associations to follow. The lead was with the British members, conducting the IFHTP from London. The British parental body GCTPA, in 1941 renamed as Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), returned to the heart of the IFHTP. The renewed interest of the TCPA in the IFHTP was perfectly exemplified in the individual Frederic Osborn – the most prolific garden city campaigner of the (G)CTPA of the 1930s joined the executive committee of the IFHTP after the war – and the strong focus on the British new towns programme, a programme the TCPA had heavily campaigned for during the war, on the agenda of the first post-war congresses.<sup>10</sup> This was not to the liking of the American members belonging to the ‘1313 groups’ who feared a relapse into old behaviour. They relentlessly coerced the leadership in London to resort to the more internationally oriented outlook as adopted in 1937.<sup>11</sup> The Americans forced the IFHTP to relocate its central office to the joint secretariat with the UIV and the IAS in Brussels. In the 1950s the IFHTP followed the UIV, which was offered accommodation at the Association of Dutch Municipalities, to the Netherlands. The permanent relocation to the Netherlands and the employment of a Dutch staff would ultimately give the secretariat of the IFHTP a distinct Dutch flavour.

The IFHTP underwent some significant changes after World War II that distinct it from its incarnation between the Wars. Although the three tier structure of council, executive committee and bureau as inner executive was maintained, the organisational structure as a whole changed nevertheless. Before the Second World War the IFHTP had outgrown the initial predominant Anglo-Saxon outlook and had adopted a more international approach. However, in practice this new “international outlook” amounted to a European view on housing and planning, complemented with some North American experience. This lack of genuine internationalism was made painfully clear in the discussions on the reconstruction of the cities ravaged by the war. Some delegates pointed out that ruined cities were not a particular war phenomenon. In many countries the ruination of cities was a recurring problem, due to earthquakes, floods and other catastrophes. Only the scale of destruction, caused by World War II differed. Gradually the IFHTP opened up towards the largely ignored territories. A first step was made in 1952. The programme of the International Congress in Lisbon of that year featured the subject “Housing in tropical climates” to attract delegates from the underdeveloped countries. A second major step forwards was made with the establishment of regional chapters. An Indian member had referred to a growing interest and activities in the field of housing and planning in his part of the world. However,

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attending the Federation's World Congresses was not attractive for persons from that area due to "differences of vision and practice and the great travelling expenses". So he proposed the Federation to establish a South-East-Asian section. This proposal was met with enthusiasm and already in 1954 this new regional section of the Federation organised its first meeting in New Delhi. On the other side of the globe American and Canadian members worked hard to increase the membership on the American continent. Very probably, the focus on the underdeveloped countries in housing and planning affairs of United Nations and all its affiliated organisations, was a major impetus for the aforementioned advance.<sup>12</sup>

The introduction of the United Nations brings us to a major change in the post-war period. The period after the war witnessed a tremendous growth of transnational and supranational organisations; old organisations returned and were joined by a rapidly growing volume of new organisations.<sup>13</sup> These organisations provided and reflected a new *élan* to international collaboration and exchange of knowledge and experience. Thus the IFHTP was confronted with an unprecedented competition and opportunities for collaboration. As of old, the UIV was one of the foremost competitors, but the CIAM became a significant transnational rival as well, once it opened its doors for a broader audience at its congresses.<sup>14</sup> Of the supranational organisations, especially the United Nations (UN) and its affiliated organisations and the European Union and its forerunners must be mentioned. Not all these bodies were actively engaged in housing and planning affairs. The forerunners of the European Union largely ignored this field. However, the United Nations and some of its affiliated bodies became very active in this field. One of the reasons for the success of the IFHTP in the Interbellum was the absence of an active supranational governmental layer in its working sphere. The League of Nations existed in name, but was no force to be reckoned with regard to housing and planning. Because of this absence the Federation was able to present itself as *the* international forum for housing and planning, not only to relevant national organisations, but also to national governments. With the advance of the United Nations the IFHTP more and more had to settle for a secondary position in the international networks. The UN did not treat the IFHTP as the foremost body for the international trade of knowledge and experience in the field of housing and planning, but treated the 'grand lady' as an equal among the other existing bodies and the numerous newly established institutions. It took the IFHTP some time to adapt to this new situation, for it was not used to playing a second violin. Finally, in the 1950s a new *modus operandi* crystallized. It acquired consultative status at the UN and relevant affiliated bodies and matched the programme of its congresses and conferences to the UN agenda.

The sheer number of delegates attending the post-war congresses and the multitude and diversity of different aspects of housing and planning made it impossible to give all aspects an exhaustive treatment at the biannual international gatherings of the IFHTP. This problem was partly dealt with by holding "Council Conferences" in the years between the World Congresses. A Council Conference was basically a restricted working party for Council Members and invited professionals, organised around the annual Council Meeting. Additionally, restrictions on occasional working parties and standing committees within the Federation were eased to facilitate a much desired, more profound discussion on specific housing and planning subjects. The number of committees rapidly increased, moving the heart of international exchange from the overcrowded joint sessions of the International Congresses to these new working units within the IFHTP.<sup>15</sup> One of the more influential

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committees, the *Standing Committee of Professional Planners*, spawned a new international organisation in 1965: the *International Society of City and Regional Planners (IsoCaRP)*.<sup>16</sup>

Not only the organizational outlook and the international setting saw changes after the war. The housing and planning profession kept expanding into new adjacent fields and subsequently this progressive broadening of the working field was translated to the activities of the Federation. Initially the focus was primarily on the urgent task of reconstructing the urban fabric ravished by the war, but soon this tack changed. Urban renewal entered the programme of the congresses in the fifties and was to become an important issue for future discussions. In the thirties the first careful steps towards national planning regimes were made and after the war the national planning scale was more and more taken for granted. Moreover, planning gradually transcended the mere physical dimension to include “all human activity”. To express this expansion of the planning profession, the IFHTP decided to change its name at the Liège Congress of 1958 to *International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP)*, the name it still carries today.

### *II. The aspect of sociability*

The structure and substance of a single network organisation like the IFHTP is but one perspective to study the performance of the Urban Internationale. There are other possible perspectives. Of these possible perspectives the aspect of ‘sociability’ stands out. Although this research has identified the active members of the IFHTP in the period 1913-1945 and provides a rough outline of their backgrounds and connections, this research does not elaborate on the careers of individual members, the interactions with other members and the influence of these interactions on their careers. Through American planner John Nolen Saunier has demonstrated that a biographic narrative from a transnational perspective provides interesting insights into the performance of the Urban Internationale as a community and the added value for its participants.<sup>17</sup> A comparative analysis of such biographies and the connections between internationally active planners, both directly and indirectly, might prove to be an interesting approach to research the Urban Internationale. At the moment several PhD projects are researching the IFHTP from the perspective of sociability.<sup>18</sup> These projects might render valuable leads for further study of international housing and planning dialogue.

### *III. Other constituents of the Urban Internationale*

Although the IFHTP was a pivotal player in the Urban Internationale, it by no means was the sole organization defining the performance of this international planning society. The Urban Internationale was composed of a plethora of interrelated (inter)national organizations, conferences, exhibitions et cetera, thinking and acting upon (aspects of) the city. The performance of these single constituents and the Urban Internationale as a whole was defined by complex relations between these constituents (rivalry, collaboration, cross-membership). This research has identified some key organizations that (directly) influenced the IFHTP, or were (directly) influenced by the IFHTP: the *Union Internationale des Villes*, the International Housing Congresses, the *Verband* (International Housing Association), the *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM)*, the *Association Internationale des Cités Linéaires (AICL)*, the International Labour Office, the League of Nations and the International Road Congresses. This list is certainly not complete. For one thing, this research does not cover the post-WWII period. Moreover, the focus of this research was on the

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performance of the IFHTP as a case study to study the Urban Internationale: no attempt has been made to map the whole Urban Internationale in the period 1913-1945. This research has only identified relations with other organisations that represent a direct influence. Possible indirect influences from other organisations have not been assessed. Additional research on the performance of the other constituents of the Urban Internationale from a transnational perspective might considerably raise our understanding of the international (re)production and circulation of planning thought.

### *IV. Transnational dialogue through periodicals*

Participants of the Urban Internationale who wanted to acquaint themselves with the latest housing and planning ideas and experiences did not just depend on (international) congresses, meetings and exhibitions. Most of these events were organized at annual or bi-annual intervals. Therefore, participants of the Urban Internationale were dependent on other media to learn more about the latest achievements in between these intervals. This was exactly the reason why the IFHTP started issuing newsletters in 1938, as did some of its rivals, most notably the UIV. This research revealed that professional periodicals were an important medium for participants of the Urban Internationale to stay in touch with the latest developments in the field of housing and planning. In fact, these periodicals were an important source for this research. Not only did these periodicals report on the latest planning projects, legislation, publications, congresses and exhibitions, but these periodicals also offered an important forum to learn more about the international housing and planning agenda. What congresses, exhibitions and study tours were programmed, what were the subjects to be discussed and who were the keynote contributors? It would be interesting to study (internationally oriented) periodicals in the field of housing and planning from a transnational perspective. I assume that, just like the congresses of the IFHTP, most periodicals did not perform as a neutral platform where anybody with an interest in housing and or planning could participate. Periodicals were published by a proprietor with a mission; not all manuscript were accepted for publication, nor were all ideas and achievements covered. They presented an international platform where symbolic power was produced and reproduced. Who were the proprietors of these periodicals, why were these periodicals published, who was on the editing board, who were the main contributors and correspondents and what were there connections, who were the subscribers and their networks, how was the agenda of these periodicals affected and effected by structure and substance of both subscription and the Urban Internationale?

### **6.6 Social relevance**

This research poses a journey into the first half of the twentieth century. Critical readers might wonder what social relevance this sojourn in the past could have for the present. Such critical notions of course apply to most historical studies. Why should we study the history of the IFHTP, the Urban Internationale and planning history in general? The study of historical processes and trajectories enables us to better understand how the *status quo* has come about. It also enables us to identify factors and mechanisms that have influenced these processes and trajectories, factors and mechanisms that might still be active today. Moreover, history offers a vast resource of antecedents, similarities, variations and parallels that might prove valuable to understand the present or even predict the near future, although caution is in order. History rarely repeats itself.

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First of all, this research is relevant for the International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP), the present incarnation of the IFHTP. In the past decades, the IFHP had neglected its history and taken ill care of its historical archives, resulting in a poor historical awareness. Fortunately, this has changed in recent years. It is busy preparing its centenary and wants to celebrate and commemorate the fruits of its campaign for the improvement of housing and planning in the past century. But the results of this research not only add luster to the centenary celebration. They can be used to analyze and formulate answers to the present and future challenges the IFHTP faces and will face. How can it react to a changing context, keep members actively involved and effectively address new housing and planning issues? The IHTP has already dealt with such issues before.

Secondly, this research is relevant for today's practice of planners and architects. Most of these practitioners conceive planning history and architectural history exclusively in terms of a history of ideas. A lot of these designers still separate twentieth century (urban) designers in terms of modernists and traditionalists. The modernists are conceived as harbingers of the future, whereas the traditionalists hold on to the past and thus obstruct progress. This research reveals that the IFHTP as a 'traditionalist' camp was modern as well and that 'modernist' camps such as the CIAM were not that different from the 'traditionalists.' For example, the resolutions of the Athens charter (1933) of the CIAM were not that revolutionary at all. In fact, each and every one of these resolutions had already been voiced at IFHTP congresses in the preceding decade. The 'traditionalist' legacy of the twentieth century could offer ideas, leads and inspiration for actual design challenges. It is not always necessary to reinvent the wheel *de novo*.

This research does not primarily focus on planning history and architectural history as a conceptual history, a history of ideas. It mainly addresses the question how these ideas were disseminated on a global scale in the first half of the twentieth century. This thesis claims that planning knowledge was produced and reproduced by an international planning society, embodied in international organizations, conferences, exhibitions, publications and study tours. This research uses the IFHTP as a case study to analyze how this international planning society performed as a network society at the level of single network organization. Although the circulation of planning thought has changed in the past decades, think for example of the internet, the identified internal and external factors and mechanisms that influenced the production and reproduction of planning knowledge at the international level in the first half of the twentieth century, might still effect and affect international planning dialogue today or at the very least by means of comparison might help us to understand present international dissemination of planning ideas. Such an understanding does not just satisfy an academic interest, but could benefit today's planning practitioners as well.

Thirdly, this research is relevant to increase our understanding of the present information age.<sup>19</sup> As part of globalization transnational flows of information disseminated thought transnational network societies become more complex and move at staggering speed. This research studied the Urban Internationale in a restricted sense – basically only the transnational circulation of housing and town planning knowledge in the period 1913-1945 – but in our steadily urbanizing world every conceivable issue could be labeled 'urban.' As such, the universal city is being defined continuously all around us.