

1.5

RETHINKING URBAN EXTENSION AND INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES

Spain and the International Housing and Town Planning Congresses during the 1920s

María Castrillo Romón and Miguel Fernández-Maroto

International networks played a key role in the evolution of urban planning in the 20th century. In the first half of the century, competitions and exhibitions were important forums for the circulation of ideas (Bodenschatz *et al.* 2010; Freestone and Amati 2016), while congresses articulated an entire international movement around housing and urban planning.

Within this “Urban Internationale” (1910–1950), the “International Federation for Housing and Town Planning”—henceforth IFHTP¹—played an important role (Saunier 1999). The life of this institution, the importance of its congresses and the important performance of certain countries—United Kingdom, but also the United States, France, Germany and others—is well known (Riboldazzi 2010; Geertse 2012; Allan 2013). However, much less attention has been paid to the role of other secondary members and their relationships with the IFHTP.

Among them, Spain maintained a close link with this organization throughout the 1920s. Although its participation in the international congresses organized by the IFHTP was very discreet—it only presented six papers, like Belgium or Switzerland and similar to Denmark or Czechoslovakia—(Figure 1.5.1), the important influence that they had on Spanish housing legislation has been pointed out (Bassols Coma 1973), as well as their relevance in the penetration in Spain of the most innovative concepts of modern urban planning (Sambricio 1982; Terán 1999).

Recent research focusing on the Spanish participation in the international networks of the period has detailed the links established with the IFHTP (Castrillo Romón 2016; García González 2018; García González and Guerrero López 2018). All of them repeatedly mention a fact that, however, has never been specifically analyzed and is totally unknown in international research on planning communication (Wagner 2016): the translation into Spanish of the reports of the eight IFHTP congresses held between 1922 and 1929 by the “Sección de Casas baratas”—Section of Cheap Houses, hereinafter SCB²—a government body responsible for representing Spain at the IFHTP and also for preparing Spanish housing legislation (Instituto de Reformas Sociales 1922, 1923a, 1923b; López Valencia 1925, 1926, 1927, 1930; Crespo and López Valencia 1929). The SCB was part of the Spanish “Instituto de Reformas Sociales”—Institute for Social Reforms, hereinafter IRS—a government body that was created in 1903 to promote legislation on labor matters and social and government action for the benefit of the working classes, including the first Spanish Act on social housing—Act of June 12, 1911, on Cheap Houses—(Castrillo Romón 2003).

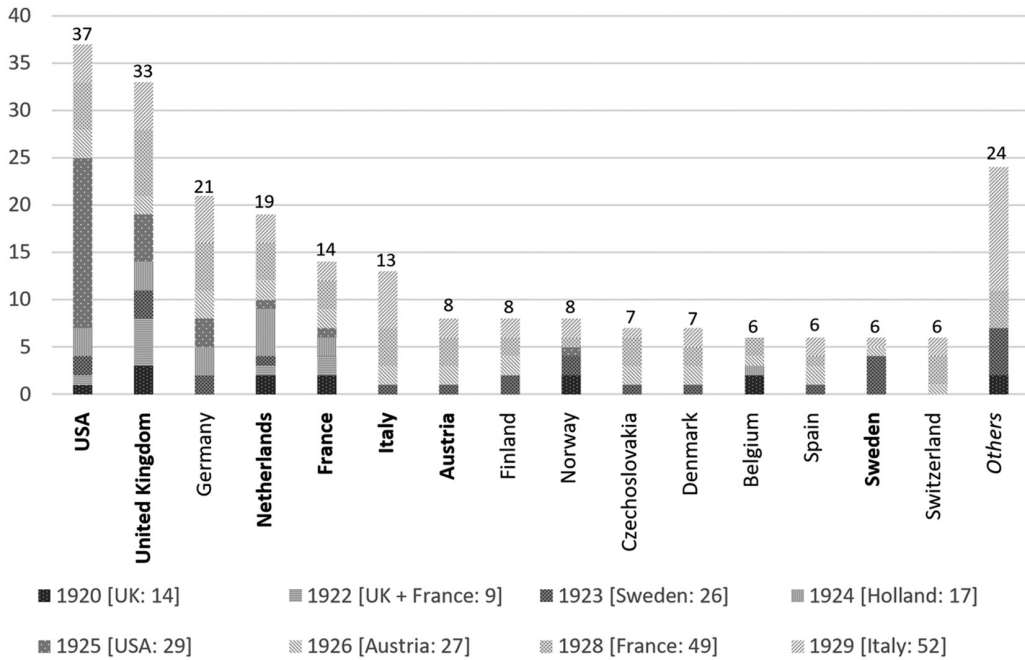


FIGURE 1.5.1 Lectures in the IFHTP congresses (1920–1929) according to the nationality of their authors. “Others” includes lectures from 14 countries with less than 5 contributions (Hungary, Romania, Australia, Estonia, Poland, Bulgaria, Canada, India, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, New Zealand and Yugoslavia). In bold, countries that hosted a conference.

Source: The authors, following IFHTP congresses reports.

The analysis of these eight publications in the context in which they were produced provides a new perspective on Spain’s insertion in the transnational history of urban planning and allows for a discussion of causality between the international congresses of the IFHTP and normative and institutional changes at the national level (Figure 1.5.2).

Spain and the IFHTP: Federico López Valencia and the Spanish Translations of the Reports of the Congresses

When the services within the IRS were reorganized in 1919, the abovementioned SCB was commissioned to disseminate and procure the implementation of the First Act on Cheap Houses and foster cooperatives for the construction of housing and garden-cities, in order to “grant these matters of cheap houses all the transcendence that they have regarding the physical and moral life of the worker” and put them in “the preeminent place that is currently granted to it in all countries”³. Shortly after, in 1920, the IRS was attached to the Ministry of Labour, Trade and Industry—hereinafter the Ministry of Labour—which commissioned a delegation of the SCB in the IFHTP congresses since 1922⁴.

Although it did not participate in 1920 at the conference in London—it coincided with the restructuring of the IRS—the SCB had two representatives at the conferences in London and Paris in 1922: Luis Pontes y de la Granja—head of the Construction Section—and Federico López Valencia—head of the Advertising and Statistics Section. The latter also attended the

IFHTP Congresses & Spanish participation	Year	Law, Planning Practice, Conferences and Publications on Housing and Town Planning in Spain
London (February 1920) [Report translated to Spanish: No] Main issues & lecturers: New problems in Town Planning (R. Unwin); The governmental problems in the creation of garden cities (C. B. Purdom)	1920	Royal Decree of May 8, 1920, creating the Ministry of Labour [The IRS was attached to it]
London (March 1922) [Report translated to Spanish: Yes, totally] Main issues & lecturers: How to get garden cities established throughout the world (T. Chambers; C. B. Purdom); Building costs (T. Chambers) Spanish attendees: F. López Valencia and L. Pontes y de la Granja (Ministry of Labour-IRS)	1921	Draft to reform the Act of June 12, 1911, on the construction of Cheap Houses (First Act on Cheap Houses) (The draft included a report on the Inter-allied Housing and Town Planning Congress of 1920) Act of December 10, 1921, on the construction of Cheap Houses [Second Act on Cheap Houses]
Paris (October 1922) [Report translated to Spanish: Yes, totally] Main issues & lecturers: Influence of the garden city movement on town planning (T. Chambers; C. B. Purdom; H. Chapman; H. Sellier) Spanish attendees: F. López Valencia and L. Pontes y de la Granja (Ministry of Labour-IRS)	1922	National Congress of Hygiene and Sanitation of dwellings (Barcelona, June 1922) Royal Decree of July 8, 1922, approving the provisional regulations for the application of the Cheap Houses Act of December 10, 1921 General Plan for the Extension of Madrid [Prepared by a municipal board, it was never passed but was presented in the exhibition that took place just before the IGCTPA Conference in Goteborg]
Gothenburg (August 1923) [Report translated to Spanish: Yes, totally] Main issues & lecturers: The movement of garden cities and town planning in relation to current economic conditions; The garden city and the city too large (R. Unwin) Spanish lecturers: F. López Valencia (Ministry of Labour-IRS) Spanish attendees: César Corti (Ministry of Public Education); Juan García Cascales (Madrid City Council); José Cabestany (Barcelona City Council)	1923	National Building Conference (Madrid, May-June 1923) Royal Order of August 9, 1923, approving the motion presented by Mr. Eduardo Gallego Ramos on hygienic conditions of the houses and technical-sanitary prescriptions for the widening and internal reform of the towns The housing problem in England, by F. López Valencia [With prologue by E. Howard]
Amsterdam (July 1924) [Report translated to Spanish: Yes, totally] Main issues & lecturers: Regional planning (R. Unwin; C. B. Purdom); Open spaces Spanish attendees: F. López Valencia (Ministry of Labour); Amós Salvador Carreras (Madrid City Council); José Cabestany (Barcelona City Council)	1924	General Extension Plan for Madrid and its distribution in zones [Neither passed] Royal Decree-Law of March 8, 1924, approving the Municipal Statute Royal Order of April 21, 1924, giving rules for the resolution of the housing problem Royal Decree of June 2, 1924, merging the IRS into the Ministry of Labour Royal Decree-Law of October 10, 1924, on Cheap Houses
New York (April 1925) [Report translated to Spanish: Yes, comprehensive summary] Main issues & lecturers: The Traffic Problem; Decentralization within Regions (R. Unwin); The New York Regional Plan (T. Adams); Planning Unbuilt Areas (J. Stubbins); Zoning in Practice	1925	Royal Decree-Law of July 28, 1925, on the construction of low-cost housing for the middle class Project of urbanization of lands and construction of Cheap Houses for Zaragoza
Vienna (September 1926) [Report translated to Spanish: Yes, comprehensive summary] Main issues & lecturers: Land Tenure in relation to Town and Regional Planning (T. Chambers; C. Chiodi; J. Nolen); Rational Distribution of Cottages and Tenements (H. Sellier; G. Benoit-Lévy; C. Albertini; H. Wright); Housing Situation with Special Reference to Public Utility Housing Spanish lecturers: F. López Valencia (Ministry of Labour); Arturo Soría Hernández (SC La Ciudad Jardín)	1926	First National Town Planning Congress (Madrid, November 1926) Competition for preliminary projects for the Reform and Extension Plan of Bilbao <i>The modern science of urbanism, by A. L. Peralta</i> <i>The future Madrid, by Compañía Madrileña de Urbanización</i>
Paris (July 1928) [Report translated to Spanish: Yes, partial summary] Main issues & lecturers: Housing of the very poor (H. Sellier); Rural housing; Building costs of houses Spanish lecturers: F. López Valencia (Ministry of Labour) Spanish attendees: S. Crespo (Ministry of Labour); César Corti	1927 1928	<i>The municipal corporations and the problem of Cheap Houses, by M. Saborido Soler</i>
Rome (September 1929) [Report translated to Spanish: Yes, partial summary] Main issues & lecturers: Financing Working Class and Middle Class Housing; Planning Apartment Housing Schemes in Large Towns; Replanning Old and Historic Towns to Meet Modern Conditions; Methods for Planning for the Expansion of Towns with Special Reference to Old and Historic Towns Spanish lecturers: S. Crespo and F. López Valencia (Ministry of Labour) Spanish attendees: Andrés Artago Hernáiz (Madrid City Council); César Corti; Bernardo Giner de los Ríos (Madrid City Council); Ricardo Giralt Casadesu (Barcelona City Council); Federico Mestre-Peón; Manuel Saborido Soler (Madrid City Council); José María Torroja; Secundino Zuazo Ugalde	1929	International competition for the Reform and Extension Plan for Madrid [No declared winners] The housing problem in Spain, by F. López Valencia <i>Urbanism in its historical and doctrinal aspects, by E. de la Vara Ortiz</i> <i>A theme of urbanism: the expansion of cities. The garden cities of the past and the crystallization of social forms. The garden city. The need for a collective spirit for today's city, by S. Rey Pedreira</i>

FIGURE 1.5.2 Timeline describing the main aspects of the IFHTP congresses in the 1920s and the Spanish participation in them, as well as the parallel evolution of Spanish law and debates on housing and town planning.

Source: The authors.

congress in Gothenburg in 1923, where he presented a paper and organized Spain’s participation in the parallel exhibition. At this congress, the incorporation of Salvador Crespo—head of the SCB—as one of the vice-presidents of the IFHTP, representing Spain, was also approved.

In June 1924, shortly before the congress in Amsterdam—which Federico López Valencia attended again—the IRS was merged within the Ministry of Labour and the garden cities disappeared from the SCB’s jurisdiction⁵, which did not prevent it from continuing to send a delegation to the IFHTP congresses in Vienna, Paris and Rome. In all three cases, this delegation was composed of Salvador Crespo—who presented a paper in Rome—and Federico López Valencia—who presented a paper in each case.

Salvador Crespo (1876–1961), a law graduate, was the head of the SCB between 1908 and 1930. He shared the position of vice-president of the IFHTP with such well-known figures as Eliel Saarinen, Louis Bonnier, H. P. Berlage and Clarence S. Stein, but only his presence at the congresses of Vienna, Paris and Rome is recorded. Therefore, it can be assumed that the person who really managed Spanish participation in the IFHTP congresses was his subordinate: Federico López Valencia, who participated in all the congresses—except the one in New York in 1925—and was responsible for the translation of all the reports into Spanish.

Federico López Valencia (1890–1974), also a law graduate, joined the SCB in 1920 and worked with Salvador Crespo until 1930, when he briefly replaced him. Further the attendance of the two IFHTP conferences in 1922, López Valencia had an active participation in Gothenburg in 1923—both in the congress and the exhibition—and he also joined the Executive Committee of the IFHTP, where he met with figures such as Marcel Poëte, John Nolen, C. B. Purdom, Henri

Sellier, Clarence S. Stein and Raymon Unwin, among others. That year he published *El problema de la vivienda en Inglaterra* (López Valencia 1923), with a prologue by Ebenezer Howard—president of the IFHTP—, and following he attended the congresses of Amsterdam, Vienna, Paris and Rome. Finally, he summarized his experience in this period, with a proactive approach, in the book *El problema de la vivienda en España* (López Valencia 1929).

In parallel to his participation in these congresses, López Valencia also translated the official reports into Spanish, which is undoubtedly the most important task among those he undertook within the IFHTP⁶. Until the congress of Gothenburg in 1923, that is, while he represented the IRS, his translations were integral. Subsequently, he translated the reports of the congresses of Amsterdam, New York—which he did not attend—and Vienna in summary format but including all the sessions.

However, in the translation of the congress of Paris, 1928 and Rome, 1929, López Valencia did not include the specific contents of planning, excepting the general conclusions of the corresponding Rome sessions. In all volumes, he did include the full version of the papers presented by the Spanish delegates.

The partiality of the summaries of these last two congresses shows that the Spanish delegation of the Ministry of Labour focused on housing issues and withdrew regarding urban issues, which could be explained by the national context in the years 1924–1926, more specifically by the dissolution of the IRS and, above all, by the approval of the so-called Municipal Statute (1924). This Act assigned the management of town planning to City Councils, which promoted the mobilization regarding this issue of the Central Society of Architects, a professional board. Two of its members attended the congresses in Gothenburg and Amsterdam in 1923 and 1924: Juan García Cascales and Amós Salvador Carreras, while the Society had a delegate on the IFHTP Council since 1924 onwards: Gustavo Fernández Balbuena. This double Spanish presence within the IFHTP could have resulted in a sort of distribution of functions between the public body in charge of housing legislation and the professional board interested in the practice of urbanism, which eventually emerged in the translations carried out by the SCB.

Moreover, the lack of new translations from 1930 onwards could be related to the changes in the Ministry of Labour after the proclamation of the Second Republic in 1931. Salvador Crespo and Federico López Valencia temporarily took a back seat within the Ministry, which seem to have cooled down the relationship with the IFHTP. Although both maintained—at least formally—their positions on the Council and the Executive Committee, there is not any record of their presence at the two congresses of the 1930s—Berlin, 1931 and London, 1935—nor of the translation of their reports into Spanish. Shortly afterwards, the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War completely cut Spain's institutional relationship with the IFHTP.

The publication of the Spanish summaries of the IFHTP congresses was relevant from a national perspective. On the one hand, specialized publications on modern urban planning techniques were relatively scarce in Spain at that time, and this series provided access to the most innovative debates worldwide⁷. On the other hand, these translations made visible the work of the Ministry of Labour regarding this issue, as well as its contribution in an important international forum—expressed in the full contributions of its delegates included in the reports—which might have also played a propagandistic role.

Moreover, as Wagner (2016) has pointed out, the international congresses at that time raised not a few linguistic issues. The possibility of adding a Spanish version to the official editions which, at the beginning, were only issued in English gave an extraordinary boost to their dissemination. When presenting the 1922 report in the annual meeting in Gothenburg, C. B. Purdom stated that the movement has been greatly helped by the publications of the reports and papers read at recent conferences and especially by the complete translations published by the Spanish

and French sections of the federation (Instituto de Reformas Sociales 1923b: 76). Furthermore, it is quite probable that the IRS disseminated these translations within the Spanish-speaking countries, as it kept regular corresponding with different Latin American nations⁸.

Satellite Cities and Other Measures to Promote the Construction of Cheap Houses: Influence of IFHTP Congresses on Housing Legislation in Spain?

In February 1920, the IRS did not commission a delegation to the IFHTP congress in London, but a few weeks later, from June 3 to 11, Salvador Crespo attended the “Inter-Allied Housing and Town Planning Congress” held in the same city. The conclusions drawn from this congress were one of the bases used by Crespo himself to prepare a preliminary project to reform the First Act on Cheap Houses⁹. The council of the IRS approved it unanimously in 1921 and send to the Deputy Secretary of Ministry of Labour together with the preliminary studies and the report of the inter-allied congress to serve as “background and illustration”¹⁰.

A few weeks later, the rise in building prices and the worsening of the housing problem led the Ministry of Labour to reform the regulation of the abovementioned act, referring again to the “agreements signed unanimously at the London congress of 1920”¹¹, while the Second Act on Cheap Houses was passed at the end of that year¹². Even though the garden cities were at that time explicitly within the jurisdiction of the IRS, they were not mentioned in this new act, but this did not prevent the IRS to send its first delegation to an IFTHP congress three months later, in March 1922.

On the one hand, the debate in this congress focused on promoting the construction of garden cities, but the decentralization of the growth of large cities does not appear expressly in the Spanish translation; it only included a review of the visit to Welwyn, the second garden city of England and the first based on a “plan of satellite cities” around London (Instituto de Reformas Sociales 1922: 23). A few weeks later, provisional regulations for the Second Act on Cheap Houses were passed and its most decisive contribution regarding urban planning was precisely the creation of “satellite cities of cheap houses”, which shows that “a much more complete idea of urban planning than that of the ‘ensanche’ was gaining ground” (Bassols Coma 1973: 455). However, this little time lapse shows that it is highly unlikely that, as traditionally assumed, the IFHTP congresses had a direct influence on the introduction of this interesting concept into Spanish legislation.

On the other hand, this congress held in London in 1922 discussed on building costs, which was also a big problem in Spain. In fact, the IRS worked on this issue between May and October of that year and eventually proposed the organization of a “National Building Congress” in which the various actors in this sector would discuss the possibility of innovative approaches such as the municipalization of housing, the construction of garden cities, the municipal planning, the planning of satellite cities, etc. (Instituto de Reformas Sociales 1924: 56–60). This proposal coincided with the IFHTP congress held in Paris in October 1922, but the issues related to construction costs were there no longer a matter of debate, even though building prices and housing costs were still a burning issue in many countries.

In contrast, in Spain, the proposal was accepted by the Ministry of Labour, and the so-called National Building Conference was held in Madrid from May 28 to June 4, 1923, organized by the IRS. The debate was organized through eight topics within four sections: legislative, financial, technical and social. Salvador Crespo was one of the speakers in the first section, referring to possible modifications to be introduced in the housing legislation, while Federico López Valencia and Luis Pontes served as secretaries of the sessions within the financial and technical sections, respectively. The results of the debates, and all the preparatory documentation,

were compiled in an extensive report (Instituto de Reformas Sociales 1924) and the conference reached a certain transcendence, although its actual effects were not so clear.

López Valencia's participation in this national conference was almost simultaneous with the preparation of the important presence of the IRS at the exhibition and congress of the IFHTP held in Gothenburg just a few weeks later, in July and August 1923. This event provided López Valencia with the opportunity for his first oral intervention to gloss over the Spanish legislation on cheap houses. After commenting on the first act of 1911, he detailed the advances of the second act of 1921, which "includes the latest and most scientific principles and gives important support to the construction of cheap houses [which] has continued to move forward despite the difficulties" (Instituto de Reformas Sociales 1923b: 45 and 47)¹³.

Barely a month later, a coup d'état accepted by the king took place in Spain. Taking the conclusions of the National Building Conference as a reference, the new dictatorial government approved in the following months several Royal Orders and Decrees aimed at "solving the housing problem" which reflect heterogeneous and fragmented approaches, without any ambition for doctrinal innovation and which even encourage the densification of the existing urban tissues—something opposed to the principles of the IFHTP¹⁴.

Later, after the merging of the IRS into the Ministry of Labour, the government enacted two Royal Decree-Acts that remained in force until 1939: on the one hand, the Royal Decree-Act of October 10, 1924, on cheap houses, which modified the Second Act—again according to the conclusions of the National Building Conference—and was drafted by Eduardo Aunós—Minister of Labour—with the direct advice of Salvador Crespo and Federico López Valencia (Arias González 2011: 263), who made a request for support to the IFHTP (Allan 2013: 70)¹⁵; on the other hand, the Royal Decree-Act of July 28, 1925, on the construction of low-cost housing for the middle class, which thus expanded the potential beneficiaries and led to the proliferation in many Spanish cities of projects of cottage estates, sometimes presented as "garden cities".

Returning to the IFHTP congresses, after the parenthesis of Amsterdam, 1924 and New York, 1925, where the debates on housing were absent, the participation of the Spanish delegates—now representing the Ministry of Labour—reactivated in 1926 at the congress in Vienna, where Federico López Valencia presented the paper "Cottage and Tenement in Spain". Overlooking these recent legal changes, López Valencia alluded to historical reasons to explain the prevalence of tenements and the high population densities in the large Spanish cities, and justified the demands made by Spanish law for the construction of cottages.

López Valencia again participated in the Paris congress in 1928, where he presented the paper "Housing of the Very Poor in Spain". Leaving aside his usual official position, he drew a very gloomy picture in Spain and showed, for the first time at an IFHTP meeting, a critical attitude towards the results of government action. Finally, at the 1929 congress in Rome, both Salvador Crespo and López Valencia spoke. Crespo presented the paper "Financing Working Class and Middle Class Housing in Spain" and publicize a recently created savings bank for housing, while López Valencia presented the paper "Planning Apartment Housing Schemes in Large Towns in Spain", showing a rather implausible vision of the future of new collective housing in Spain, although he did not hide the fact that the government had recently authorized "the increase in the number of flats while preserving the advantages of the acts" (López Valencia 1930: 26).

In short, despite the continuous presence of Spanish delegates at the IFHTP congresses in a period when housing legislation in Spain underwent numerous changes, and despite the certain coincidence on the topics, the direct influence that the proposals emanating from those congresses could have had in Spain, if it really existed, was very limited and faced with not a few contradictions.

The Inertia of the Existing Legal Framework for Urban Extension in Spain: The Central Society of Architects, the Municipal Statute and Planning Issues at IFHTP Congresses

In the exhibition parallel to the Gothenburg congress in 1923, the Spanish delegation—coordinated by López Valencia—presented the legal framework of town planning in Spain, identified with the acts on urban extension—“ensanches”—and the act on improvement, sanitation and inner expansion (Instituto de Reformas Sociales 1923b: 13–16)¹⁶. These tools, which had been in force for several decades were showing clear signs of insufficiency to deal with the urbanization tensions that were manifesting themselves in the largest Spanish cities.

In fact, during the 1920s, there were many attempts in Spain to transform or alleviate the deficits of this institutional framework which, however, showed an enormous inertia in the face of change. In this sense, the most ambitious initiatives ended up failing, while the progress made came through the partial modification of the existing legislation and also, as seen before, through the introduction of the satellite cities of cheap houses in the housing law.

These issues, along with public hygiene, articulated the debate in Spain and both converged in the influential, abovementioned National Building Conference. Following the same path as the IFHTP congresses between 1922 and 1923, this conference showed a shift in the focus of interest from housing problems to issues referring to the planning of urban growth beyond municipal boundaries, “including purely planning issues, such as the layout of the city and the construction of garden and satellite cities” (Terán 1999: 168). It should be noted that two architects from Madrid City Council—already mentioned for their links with the IFHTP—took an active part in this conference: Juan García Cascales, who attended the exhibition and congress in Gothenburg just a few days later, and Gustavo Fernández Balbuena, representative of the Central Society of Architects of Madrid in the IFHTP Council¹⁷. Although the conference raised the need for a new Urbanization Act that would provide a comprehensive response to the problems detected, such an initiative did not succeed¹⁸.

The following year, the IFHTP congress in Amsterdam focused mainly on the issues of regional planning and open spaces, while the 10th National Congress of Architects held in Santander decided that its 11th Congress should be considered as the First National Congress of Urban Planning. The Central Society of Architects—its organizer—appointed that same year a commission formed by César Cort, Juan García Cascales and Gustavo Fernández Balbuena to prepare the paper that would represent the Society at the congress, and later also appointed an Executive Committee in charge of the organization of the event, whose secretary was Gustavo Fernández Balbuena (Sánchez González 1999: 403–419).

A few weeks earlier, in March 1924, the so-called Municipal Statute had been approved, which turned the planning practices of urban expansion, sanitation and inner reform into ordinary municipal tasks. Although supra-municipal planning problems were left out of the provisions of this new legal framework—weakly innovative—the tools available for the City Councils made town planning for the entire municipality possible, which opened up great political and technical expectations (Bassols Coma 1973: 494–501).

The preparation of the First National Congress of Urban Planning advanced with difficulty and successive postponements, but it ended up getting governmental support, so it was finally held in Madrid from November 24 to 30, 1926¹⁹. Terán (1999: 171) points out that this congress took “the step from the vision of ‘extension’ to the ‘regional’ vision [...] in trying to understand and organise the future of the large city, introducing the notion of Regional Planning” and linked this to the debates held at the IFHTP congresses in Amsterdam in 1924—where a member of the Central Society of Architects was present: Amós Salvador Carreras—and in New York in 1925.

It should also be noted that the year 1926—when both this congress and the IFHTP one in Vienna were held—was a turning point, but in opposite directions: the IFHTP brought together again the issues of town planning and housing in its following congresses, while urban planning emerged in Spain as a renovated practice—separated from housing—that found its first field of experimentation in the plans that began to be drawn up after the approval of the Municipal Statute. In this context, the Spanish bibliographic production on urban planning became larger, just as these issues were left aside in the Spanish translations of the IFHTP congresses carried out by the SCB of the Ministry of Labour.

Conclusions—Influences from the IFHTP Congresses in Spanish Housing and Town Planning during the 1920s: Complex Causality and Institutions' Weight

The relationship that was established in the 1920s between the IFHTP and the Spanish delegations that participated in its bodies and above all in its congresses—mainly from the SCB of the IRS and the Ministry of Labour, which played an active role in their organization and diffusion—reflects a complexity that cannot be reduced to the simple scheme of international issuer and national receiver. Although the influences of the movement represented by the IFHTP in the debates that took place in Spain in this particularly dynamic period are evident, the analysis carried out shows that a direct, one-way link cannot be established between the IFHTP congresses and the legal changes in Spain. Thus, this case study invites to review the simple causality stated between the IFHTP congresses and the institutional or normative changes at national level in countries, such as Spain, not being able to play a clear dominant role in the “Urban Internationale”.

The main focus of the IFHTP congresses during the 1920s, housing and town planning, corresponded then in Spain to two very different areas of public competence. While the institutional framework of housing was very recent and, as we have seen, more malleable—open to multiple influences and interests, sometimes contradictory to each other—that corresponding to urban planning was much more established and, despite its situation of crisis, only incorporated modifications in a fragmentary and slow manner. In this sense, debates promoted by the IFHTP during the 1920s got a reflect on Spanish housing legal framework—such as the “satellite cities of cheap houses” creation—but, regarding town planning, concepts such as “decentralization” entered into Spain through planning practice. Within the same country, these divergent paths regarding ideas that were discussed in the same international forum suggest the great importance of national or, even, local institutional frameworks when assimilating ideas spreading at international level.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank the libraries of the School of Architecture of Valladolid, the Musée Social (CEDIAS) of Paris and the École d'Urbanisme de Paris (Bibliothèque Poëte et Sellier) for their help.

Notes

- 1 The IFHTP did not adopted that name until 1926, but it has been used all along the text because there is institutional continuity and to make reading easier.
- 2 It was also called “Servicio especial de Casas baratas” and “Sección de Casas baratas y económicas” in different periods.

- 3 Royal Decree of October 14, 1919: explanatory memorandum and Article 42.
- 4 There is evidence that the first contacts of the IRS with the British Garden Cities Association date back to 1907 (Castrillo Romón 2002).
- 5 Royal Decree of June 9, 1924.
- 6 Even though they had different printers, the eight publications were serialized and published in the same format, without colour nor illustrations. Only the volume corresponding to the Gothenburg congress had a higher quality edition.
- 7 This connotation of foreign innovation may have been particularly important. In this series, “town planning” is systematically translated as “trazado de poblaciones” until 1928, when it was replaced by “urbanismo” for the first time, while “urbanización”—the term that Cerdá coined in 1867—was not used.
- 8 A review of the monthly issues of the IRS Bulletin between 1920 and 1924 shows the attention that it paid to national housing reform movements in several Latin American countries, especially Argentina, but also Chile, Uruguay, Mexico and Peru.
- 9 Bulletin of the IRS, 200 (February 1921): 334–352.
- 10 Bulletin of the IRS, 200 (February 1921): 175.
- 11 Royal Decree of May 14, 1921.
- 12 Act of December 10, 1921.
- 13 López Valencia made no mention of the recent National Building Conference, nor of the accumulation of problems that had led to it.
- 14 Royal Order of October 31, 1923; Royal Order of November 3, 1923; Royal Decree of February 19, 1924; Royal Decree of February 23, 1924; and Royal Order of April 21, 1924. In the latter, the IRS was entrusted with the drafting of acts concerning “affordable housing”; “garden suburbs” and “city planning and extension”.
- 15 This modification eliminated the contents related to neighbourhood and housing sanitation, whose supervision was transferred to the City Councils shortly before.
- 16 Acts of December 22, 1876, and July 26, 1892; and Act of March 18, 1895.
- 17 Despite holding this position, there is no evidence that Fernández Balbuena ever attended any IFHTP congress.
- 18 The Minister of Labour Joaquín Chapaprieta presented this draft of an Urbanization Act of which Terán (1999: 168) underlines its “theoretical evolution”, but it was not approved.
- 19 The congress dealt with five topics: “The teaching of town planning”—presented by César Cort, “Laws regulating town planning and their exact application”—presented by Juan García Cascales, “Town planning in rural groups”, “Town planning in modern towns” and “Town planning in industrial towns”. Some visits were also organised, and some lectures were given, one of them by Salvador Crespo.

Bibliography

- Allan, G. (2013). *A Hundred Years at the Global Spearhead. A Century of IFHP 1913-2013*. Copenhagen: International Federation of Housing and Planning.
- Arias González, L. (2011). *Casas baratas, 1911. Centenario de la primera ley*. Madrid: Ministerio de Fomento.
- Bassols Coma, M. (1973). *Génesis y evolución del derecho urbanístico español (1812-1956)*. Barcelona: Montecorvo.
- Bodenschatz, H., Gräwe, C., Kegler, H., Nägelke, H.-D., and Sonne, W. (2010). *Stadtvisionen 1910 2010: Berlin, Paris, London, Chicago*. Berlin: DOM.
- Castrillo Romón, M. A. (2002). ‘Introducción: el ‘evangelio’ de la Ciudad-Jardín, algunas notas sobre su difusión en España’. *Ciudades*. 6, 127–149.
- Castrillo Romón, M. A. (2003). *Influencias europeas sobre la ‘Ley de Casas Baratas’ de 1911: el referente de la ‘Loi des Habitations à Bon Marché’ de 1894*. Madrid: Instituto Juan de Herrera.
- Castrillo Romón, M. (2016). ‘La participation espagnole aux réseaux urbanistiques internationaux 1910-1930’, in: Bertrand, F. et al. (eds.). *Inventer le Grand Paris. Relectures des travaux de la Commission d’extension de Paris. Rapport et concours 1911-1919. Actes du colloque des 5 et 6 décembre 2013, Cité de l’Architecture et du Patrimoine, Paris*. Bordeaux: Bière, 57–70. DOI: [10.25580/IGP.2013.0003](https://doi.org/10.25580/IGP.2013.0003).
- Crespo, S. and López Valencia, F. (1929). *Congreso internacional de la vivienda y del urbanismo (París, 1928). Memoria redactada por...* Madrid: Góngora.
- Freestone, R. and Amati, M. (2016). *Exhibitions and the Development of Modern Planning Culture*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

- García González, M. C. (2018) *César Cort [1893-1978] y la cultura urbanística de su tiempo*. Madrid: Abada.
- García González, M. C. and Guerrero López, Salvador (2018). 'Spain in the International Urban Networks around the First World War'. *International Planning History Society Proceedings*. 18, 898–908. DOI: [10.7480/iphs.2018.1.2738](https://doi.org/10.7480/iphs.2018.1.2738).
- Geertse, M. A. (2012). *Defining the universal city. The International Federation for Housing and Town Planning and transnational planning dialogue 1913-1945*. PhD Dissertation. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
- Instituto de Reformas Sociales (1922). *Conferencia internacional de ciudades jardines y trazado de ciudades (Londres, 1922)*. Madrid: Sobrinos de la sucesora de M. Minuesa de los Ríos.
- Instituto de Reformas Sociales (1923a). *Conferencia internacional de ciudades jardines y trazado de ciudades (Paris, 1922)*. Madrid: Editorial Ibérica.
- Instituto de Reformas Sociales (1923b). *Exposición y congreso internacional de trazado de poblaciones: Gotemburgo, 1923*. Madrid: José Góngora.
- Instituto de Reformas Sociales (1924). *Conferencia nacional de la edificación: Memoria*. Madrid: Sobrinos de la sucesora de M. Minuesa de los Ríos.
- López Valencia, F. (1923). *El problema de la vivienda en Inglaterra*. Madrid: Editorial Ibérica.
- López Valencia, F. (1925). *Congreso internacional de trazado de poblaciones (Amsterdam, 1924) Memoria redactada por...* Madrid: Sobrinos de la sucesora de M. Minuesa de los Ríos.
- López Valencia, F. (1926). *Congreso internacional de trazado de poblaciones (Nueva York, 1925) Memoria redactada por...* Madrid: José Góngora.
- López Valencia, F. (1927). *Congreso internacional de la vivienda y del trazado de poblaciones (Viena, 1926)*. Madrid: Zoila Ascasibar y Ca.
- López Valencia, F. (1929). *El problema de la vivienda en España*. Madrid: Gráfica Universal.
- López Valencia, F. (1930). *Congreso internacional de la vivienda y del urbanismo (Roma, 1929). Memoria redactada por...* Madrid: Gráfica Universal.
- Riboldazzi, R. (2010). *Un'altra modernità. L'Ifhtp e la cultura urbanistica tra le due guerre 1923-1939*. Roma: Gangemi.
- Sambricio, C. (1982). 'La política urbana de Primo de Rivera: del plan regional a la política de casas baratas'. *Ciudad y territorio*. 54, 33–54.
- Sánchez González, J. M. (1999). *Gustavo Fernández Balbuena en la cultura urbanística madrileña*. PhD Dissertation. Universidad Politécnica de Madrid.
- Saunier, P.-Y. (1999). 'Sketches from the Urban Internationale. Voluntary Societies, International Organizations and US Foundations at the City's Bedside 1900-1960'. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 25, 380–403.
- Terán, F. (1999). *Historia del urbanismo en España III: siglos XIX y XX*. Madrid: Cátedra.
- Wagner, P. (2016). 'Facilitating Planning Communication Across Borders: The International Federation for Housing and Town Planning in the Interwar Period'. *Planning Perspectives*. 31(2), 299–311. DOI: [10.1080/02665433.2015.1102643](https://doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2015.1102643).