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**Post-war planning and policy tourism: The international study  
tours of the Town and Country Planning Association 1947-1961**

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## **Abstract**

In light of the burgeoning academic interest in policy mobilities and policy tourism, this paper offers a critical insight into international planning study tours. Countering the contemporary focus of much of the research on these topics, this paper draws on archival research to explore the international study tours of the UK's Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) between 1947 and 1961. In doing this, the paper makes two wider arguments; first, that there remains significant mileage in bringing together the policy mobilities literature with the work on past exchanges and visits by architects, engineers and planners and, second, that greater awareness and appreciation of past examples of comparison and learning might allow contemporary studies to be situated in their longer historical trajectories.

Keywords:

post-war planning, policy mobilities, policy tourism, study tours, Town and Country Planning Association

## **Introduction**

At the time of his death in late July 2014, Sir Peter Hall, the eminent geographer and planner, was President of the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), a London-based planning organisation founded as the Garden City Association in 1899. In his role, Hall wrote many thoughtful articles in the TCPA's long-running monthly journal *Town and Country Planning*. In a piece from February 2008, entitled “Return to tradition to learn for tomorrow”, he announced that “We're meeting at the TCPA this month to try to kick-start a return to a very old TCPA tradition, which unaccountably disappeared from our agenda: the European study tour” (Hall, 2008, p. 60).

Sure enough, in September 2008 two short TCPA international study tours took place: the first to the Netherlands and the second to Germany and France. Subsequently, the TCPA visited Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland as well as returning to both Germany and the Netherlands. Moreover, inspired by these tours and influenced by talks with Nicholas Falk, the Director of the consultancy URBED and study tour co-organisier, Hall wrote his last book *Good Cities, Better Lives* (Hall, 2014). Inside it, Hall suggested a number of lessons British planners and policy-makers could learn from places visited by the TCPA international study tours (namely France, Germany, Netherlands and Sweden). These, Hall argued, were “the best places in Europe to live

in and work in” (Hall, 2014, p. i). They were “models of sustainable urban life”, having “created good jobs, built superb housing in fine natural settings, and generated rich urban lives”, and were therefore places from which others should learn.

In announcing the revival of international study tours, Hall (2008) recalled the prominence and prestige of the post-war TCPA tours – most of which were led by the TCPA's Chairman of the Executive, Frederic J. Osborn (known to many as F.J.O). While Hall did not participate in these tours – he did not take up his first academic post until 1957 – he appeared fascinated with them, paying particular attention to a photograph taken on a 1947 tour to Sweden and Denmark (reproduced as Figure 1):

there's a wonderful one reproduced in Dennis Hardy's history *From New Towns to Green Politics*, [Hardy, 1991b] showing FJO on a river boat in Gothenburg with a Swedish guide-commentator; and who's that across the gangway on the left – Arthur Ling of the LCC [London County Council] and then Runcorn new town architect-planner? And Colin Buchanan<sup>i</sup>, surely, towards the back? The movers and shakers of that heroic age of British planning certainly got together to a purpose then, half a century ago. We want to get their successors together, to create what we hope will be a second golden age. (Hardy, 1991b, p. 60)

The international study tour to Sweden and Denmark in 1947 marked the post-war re-emergence of a series of overseas tours organised by the TCPA. These would run regularly until 1961, during which they visited a number of countries in Europe (West and East) with the final study tour to the USA. What is perhaps surprising, given the esteem in which Hall held the post-war international study tours, is their relative absence in Hardy's two-volume history of the TCPA (Hardy, 1991a; Hardy, 1991b). Aside from the reproduction of the 1947 photograph (see Figure 1), tours by the TCPA after 1914 are hardly discussed. Instead, Hardy devotes substantial attention to the Ebenezer Howard-led tours that took place between 1904 and 1914 (Hardy, 1991a, pp. 94–101).



**Figure 1.** Photograph of Osborn (foreground, left) and his fellow delegates on a TCPA study tour of Gothenburg in 1947. Sat to the right of Osborn is Tage Wiliam-Olsson, planning director at Gothenburg City Hall who would once again guide a TCPA tour party around Gothenburg in 1954. Source: Osborn (1947a, p. 124).

In light of the influence of the post-war international study tours on Peter Hall and their relative absence from academic studies, this paper analyses the experiences, rationales and repercussions of the international study tours during this period. A focus on the TCPA international study tours is also timely given the increased academic interest in planning and related disciplines in policy tourism as part of a wider attention to the circulation of planning models and expertise (e.g. González, 2011; Healey & Upton, 2010; McCann, 2011; Wood, 2014). Methodologically then, the article is based on archival research, drawing from published announcements and reports in *Town and Country Planning* and in other journals, books, and newspapers. It also

draws upon unpublished records from the TCPA and the F.J.O. archives held at Hertfordshire County Council. There are well-documented challenges in using archives to recreate coherent and overarching accounts of the past (Ward, 2014). Given the constraints of using archives consisting of documents related to tours that took place over half a century ago, this paper is necessarily partial and selective. Nevertheless, it provides an important account of the post-war tours.

The paper is divided into the following five sections. The first explores the academic work on policy tourism. It positions this in a wider set of literature on contemporary policy mobilities and the more historical literature on the circulation of planning ideas. The second section sets the institutional context for the post-war tours by outlining the emergence of the Garden City Association/TCPA and the growth in its role as an actor in the circulation and translation of international planning knowledge. The third, fourth and fifth sections then explore in depth the organisation and planning of the 1947–1961 tours, and their role in shaping thinking amongst planners in the UK. The sixth and final section makes several conceptual and methodological points. Specifically, it argues for an appreciation of the longer history of professional exchanges and visits and of the potential role of archives in producing more historically nuanced and sensitive accounts of contemporary patterns of cross-national comparison and learning.

### **Policy mobilities, policy tourism and planning**

Wherever and whenever elites and activists have been concerned about the qualities of their cities and territories, they have looked about for ideas to help inspire their development programmes. (Healey, 2010, p. 1)

According to Temenos and McCann (2013, p. 345), “a research agenda has begun to emerge that offers a rich conceptualisation of ongoing practices, institutions and ideas that link global circuits of policy knowledge and local policy practice, politics and actors.” Increasingly interdisciplinary in nature (Cook, forthcoming), this work originates in human geography and now involves those in cognate disciplines such as architecture, anthropology, planning and political science. It has focused on a number of areas of urban policy: creativity (Peck, 2012; Prince, 2012, 2014), drugs (McCann, 2008), economic development (Cook & Ward, 2011, 2012a, 2012b), sustainability (McLean & Borén, 2014; Temenos & McCann, 2012), transportation (Wood, 2014) and welfare reform (Peck & Theodore, 2001, 2010b). Under the rubric of urban policy mobility studies, this set of literatures has explored how and why certain models have, in the words of Pow (2014, p.

288), been given a “license to travel’ that enables [them] to secure a pool of receptive audiences worldwide.” The empirical and conceptual focus, therefore, has been on the labour that goes into the construction, circulation and translation of these so-called “best practice” models.

In addition to understanding the roles and rationales of different branches and levels of government in the process, work has explored the involvement of others with a stake in the development of cities. These include academics (Jacobs & Lees, 2013), consultants (Prince, 2012, 2014; Ward, 2006), labour organisations (Theodore, 2014) and think tanks (Peck, 2006; Ward, 2006). Often these actors will perform the role of “transfer agents” (Stone, 2004) who “distil the essence of ... model[s] into easily digestible ‘bite-sized’ information” to be consumed by interested parties based elsewhere” (Pow, 2014, p. 296). The acknowledgement of the wide range of individual and institutional actors involved in the policy movement business, and the range of different economic and political environments in which they are situated, marks a relatively recent intellectual development. As does the focus on the spaces and technologies of comparison, learning and imitation involved in assembling, creating, circulating and translating policy models such as best practice guides and conference sessions, what McCann (2011) terms “informational infrastructures” (see, for example, Cook & Ward, 2011, 2012a; González, 2011; Ward, 2011). Emphasis here has been placed on the process of translation – in other words, how policies are made mobile, making them seem appropriate and transferable, and the processes through which policies are constituted and re-constituted as they move across space (Peck & Theodore, 2010a; Ward, 2012).

As Cook, Ward, and Ward (2014), Harris and Moore (2013) and Jacobs (2012) have recently argued, this “research agenda” is not entirely without intellectual precedent, however. Much of it shares important features, they argue, with an established and still expanding body of work on “the trans-national flow of knowledge and expertise in the planning field” (Healey, 2010, p. 1; see, for example, Almandoz, 1999; Banerjee, 2009; Friedman, 2012; Gurran, Austin, & Whitehead, 2014; King, 1980; Lieto, 2013; Rapoport, 2014; Sanyal, 1990; Ward, 2010a; 2012). With a particular emphasis on detailed empirical analysis, much of this literature has addressed the ways in which architecture, design and planning “ideas get re-shaped as they ‘travel’, losing some dimensions and accumulating others ... and what happens when they arrive in particular places” (Healey, 2010, pp. 10–11). These empirical studies have provided a useful insight into the longer-than-often-assumed histories of circulating planning ideas, the positions of mobile policies and ideas within wider processes of colonialism, post-colonialism and other state spatial strategies, and the power relations that shaped these circulations (e.g. Banerjee, 2009; Friedman,

2012; King, 1980; Ward, 2010a). This research has also sought to challenge assumptions about the “centres” and “peripheries” of planning expertise and knowledge and the assumed unilateral flows between them. It has done this by showing how cities and countries in seemingly marginal areas of the world have been looked to as generators of potentially transferable and translatable “models” (Friedman, 2012; Hein, 2014; Sanyal, 1990; Stanek & Avermaete, 2012).

As part of this work into the circulation of planning expertise and knowledge, research has explored the mobility of planners. Here, research has examined the experiences of mobile planning consultants (Cook & Ward, 2012b; Rapoport, 2014); planners on lecture tours (Amati & Freestone, 2009); and planners who have emigrated to work in different national contexts (Gregory, 2012). This focus on the mobility of both individual actors and of associated expertise has parallels with the literature on “policy tourism” which analyses a set of activities such as conferences, fact-finding trips and walking tours where “best practices” are presented, discussed and, in some cases, experienced first-hand and up-close (Cook & Ward, 2011, 2012a; Cook et al., 2014; González, 2011; Wagner, 2014; Ward, 2011). Studies of policy tourism have paid close attention to the mundane and ordinary aspects of learning, with an emphasis on the planning, performativity and, to a lesser extent, the repercussions of policy tourism for the participants, hosts and places involved. Within this, attention has been paid to the selectivity in the performance of policy tourism and the circulation of policies more widely. This is in terms of who is and is not involved and where is or is not discussed and visited (González, 2011; Pow, 2014; see also McCann & Ward, forthcoming).. Indeed, in his study of the construction and promotion of the “Singapore model”, and the accompanying policy tourism that comes to Singapore, Pow (2014, p. 296) notes that the incoming “policy tourists receive highly customized lessons based on a highly partial version of policy success stories constructed by local authorities with little engagement with critical alternative voices.”

Wood's recent work, meanwhile, highlights a number of the positive things associated with policy tourism (Wood, 2014). She uses the example of the policy-making surrounding the introduction of bus rapid transit in South African cities in which numerous delegations of public and private officials visited a number of cities in South America where bus rapid transit was operating and deemed to be thriving. On these trips, Wood reports that the visitors were able to get a first-hand experience of riding Bus Rapid Transit, to ask questions of those running the schemes, and to bond with those organising and participating on the tours. In many cases, these “adventures overseas” (Wood, 2014, p. 2655), despite their financial costs, added demonstrable value to the policy-making process.



Using the example of the international study tours organised by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) between 1947 and 1961, the rest of this paper will examine and give an insight into the nature of policy tourism in the post-war context. In so doing, this paper will provide a useful insight into the “continuities, genealogies and institutional legacies to contemporary urban policy circuits and pathways ... question[ing] what is particularly new, distinct and innovative about an intensification in the travel of urban ideas, plans and policies over the last decade – and the accompanying scholarly interest in them” (Harris & Moore, 2013, p. 1500).

### **From garden cities to new towns, the Garden City Association to the Town and Country Planning Association**

The Garden City Association was formed in 1899, following the publication of Ebenezer Howard's (1898) book, *To-morrow: A peaceful path to real reform*. Its original objectives were to promote Howard's ideas and to secure the early realisation of an actual garden city. From radical roots in the land reform movement, the new body's support base rapidly widened, attracting major industrialists, progressively-minded aristocratic landowners, major public and political figures, along with many interested professionals, local government councillors and officials.

This change in the Association's composition brought about the first broadening of its mission. A more popular version of Howard's book appeared in 1902 as *Garden cities of to-morrow*, effectively stressing the physical outcome – the garden city – rather than the underlying social reformist intent. Practical demonstration of the concept began at Letchworth in 1903, a relatively pure but painfully slow-growing expression of Howard's vision (Miller, 2002). Yet in practice, the idea of the garden city soon proved malleable (Watanabe, 1980), its constituent elements capable of being separated out and of being used, wholly or partially, in conjunction with other ideas (Sutcliffe, 1990). All this helped to re-position the Association within the mainstream of Edwardian liberal reformism. Increasingly it appealed to a wide spectrum of interests, particularly those seeking housing reform and the more ambitious idea which, from 1905, was called “town planning” (Hardy, 1991a, pp. 55–60).

Reflecting this new direction, the Association renamed itself the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association (GCTPA) in 1909. The emphasis also shifted to promoting town planning “on garden city lines” rather than necessarily developing “true” garden cities. This meant

encouraging garden suburbs or factory settlements that followed garden city design thinking on residential form and density, i.e. cottage-style housing with gardens (Culpin, 2015). Typically there would also be public open space and some integrated community facilities. Examples such as Hampstead Garden Suburb and the Rowntree's worker village at New Earswick in York established British international leadership of planning “on garden city lines.”

Hosted by the Association, many international visitors came to explore English exemplar sites during the first few decades of the twentieth century. They were often more impressed with the garden suburbs and factory villages than the rather hesitant development on view in Letchworth (Hardy, 1991a, pp. 94–101). Key figures in the Association also visited other countries to promote the garden city concept internationally and to learn from the places and planners encountered. So in 1911 the GCTPA organised the first international study tour open to its members (Ward, 2010b). Reflecting very much the prevailing object of British international planning admiration at that time, the destination was Germany. Here, 40 delegates went on a two-week visit, examining local garden-city-inspired developments, along with what at the time was seen as the exemplary German approach to planning the extension of existing towns and cities (Garden Cities and Town Planning, 1911). Study tours in the UK and abroad would subsequently become a regular feature of the Association.

By 1911, garden city societies existed in many other countries, with Germany the first in 1902 (Buder, 1990, pp. 133–142; Ward, 1992). Typically these societies were associated with actual projects labelled as “garden cities” (e.g. gartenstadt, cité-jardin, den-en-toshi, tuinstad). In fact, these too were usually garden suburbs or industrial villages. Some resembled even less the original “pure” Howardian vision of a collectively developed freestanding settlement of garden dwellings with its own employment and service provision. Several were simply residential developments for affluent commuters. Within the Association there were periodic attempts to re-assert the “true” vision. In practice, however, the malleability of the term “garden city” was accepted, even encouraged, within the movement as a price worth paying for wider influence.

An important consequence of this growing international salience was the formation of the International Garden Cities and Town Planning Association in 1913 (Geertse, 2012, pp. 35–39). London-based and British-led, it was initially little more than a vehicle for disseminating London-approved (though certainly not wholly purist) thinking about the garden city movement. Following a wartime break in its operations, however, it became increasingly open to much wider influences. The English garden city tradition remained important to the international body – indeed, it actively backed the GCTPA's second garden city demonstration project at Welwyn

Garden City begun in 1920 – but garden city ideas and demonstration projects were not their only reference points. In 1926 the international body was renamed as the International Federation of Housing and Town Planning (IFHTP). The disappearance of the words “garden cities” and the insertion of the word “housing” reflected a stronger continental interest in housing and forms of housing provision that moved even further from garden city “orthodoxy.”

Yet, even though it was being diluted, the British connection remained significant. Not until 1935 did control of the IFHTP begin to shift decisively, as it became increasingly dominated by German (increasingly Nazi) influences (Allan, 2013, 152–179; Geertse, 2012, 205–262). Even until the outbreak of war, however, internal relations within IFHTP remained quite cordial. These were relationships that had, in many cases, grown up over many years. Throughout the interwar years there was usually a strong British contingent at IFHTP conferences. The London GCTPA's own international study tours were typically (though not invariably) linked with attendance at these international events. Early examples included GCTPA visits to Sweden (1923), the Netherlands (1924) the USA (a rare shift to North America in 1925) and Austria (1926) (Geertse, 2012, pp. 98–149).

In Britain meanwhile, the GCTPA – under Frederic J. Osborn's growing influence – became a major force in the 1930s UK planning debate. It did this by linking increasingly recognised specific problems about British interwar development (Ward, 2004, pp. 36–73). The mass proliferation of low-density residential suburbia, partly encouraged by planning “on garden city lines”, was one such problem. This swallowed valuable farmland and attractive rural areas, creating sprawling cities that were seen as inherently inefficient. Scenic rural areas were simultaneously facing pressures of unsightly development, while cities confronted problems of the slums and the modernisation of their older cores. At the national level, the disparities between depressed and rapidly growing regions were raising new concerns. In response, the Association pressed for a truly comprehensive national planning approach, linking these concerns. It urged more decisive central government intervention to shape the spatial pattern of development (Hardy, 1991, pp. 171–211).

Older preoccupations with Howard's garden city were meanwhile substantially recast to move beyond planning “on garden city lines.” The old terminology was being jettisoned. New, self-contained settlements would be the alternative to endless suburban sprawl, but in the future these would be “satellite” or “new” towns, not garden cities. Unlike Howard's reliance on enlightened private and co-operative action to create a garden city, their delivery would now rely more on decisive local or central state intervention. The Association pressed this line consistently

throughout the 1940s and played a central role in framing the new post-war planning orthodoxy. In the course of this it became, in 1941, the TCPA (though its magazine had already been renamed *Town and Country Planning* nine years earlier).

While this was happening in the UK, the IFHTP temporarily became a wartime instrument promoting Hitler's "New Order" in Europe (Geertse, 2012, pp. 255–262). An embryonic "free" organisation was established in 1941 which gained in strength from 1944 to become again the legitimate, democratic organisation (Allan, 2013, pp. 176–179; UK NA HLG 102/65). Following moves to Brussels in 1938 and Stuttgart in 1941, its headquarters shifted back to London in 1944. This was not a reversion to the international body's original garden city mould or dominance of the British planning model, however. That is not to say that the content of British planning was reduced to insignificance. On the contrary, it remained important to the IFHTP with the first post-war IFHTP conference held in 1946 in the English seaside town of Hastings. With increased international attention, the TCPA was spending more and more time hosting visitors from abroad, showing them the plans and sites of post-war urban reconstruction and early new towns designated following the 1946 New Towns Act. So when the TCPA resurrected its international study tours in 1947, it came not from any sense that British planning was either superior to or weaker than elsewhere but in the spirit of genuinely mutual learning from other countries.

### **Organising the TCPA tours (1947-1961)**

Between 1947 and 1961 the TCPA successfully organised 21 international study tours, mainly visiting European countries. These culminated in a 17-day visit to the USA (see Table 1). Many European nations visited during this period had also been visited between 1911 and 1939 by earlier TCPA delegations. All had changed in the intervening years, of course. Initial post-war destinations for the TCPA international study tours included several countries that had been neutral during the war – Sweden (1947), Switzerland (1948) and Ireland (1949) – and whose built environment remained largely intact. The same cannot be said of many of the towns, cities and villages visited in both the once-occupied countries of Denmark (1947), Netherlands (1948) and France (1953), or those in Italy (1949) and West Germany (1955). Spain, furthermore, was still recovering and rebuilding following its Civil War (1936–1939) when the TCPA tour arrived in 1952. The destinations became even more varied by the end of the 1950s, with international

study tours visiting Communist states, notably the Soviet Union (1958, 1960), Poland (1958) and Czechoslovakia (1961), again rebuilding from the war, but under a planned economy.

Two of the 21 international study tours were part of exchange agreements – namely those to the Soviet Union (1958) and Poland (1958) – in which Soviet and Polish delegates took part in reciprocal tours in the UK guided by members of the TCPA (see Cook et al., 2014; Ward, Cook, & Ward, 2013). Similarly, the 1947 tour of Sweden eventually resulted in a return tour of England by 43 planners from Sweden, organised by the TCPA, in summer 1949 (UK NA FJO/H). Visits to Ireland in 1948 and 1960, furthermore, were part of international study tours that also visited other parts of the UK, namely Northern Ireland (on both occasions) and Scotland (in 1960). Here the domestic study tours – which continued throughout this period – were combined with visits to a neighbouring nation state.

The choice of international destinations and exchanges was influenced by numerous factors including personal contacts between the TCPA and officials abroad, the ability to obtain visas, transportation costs, and a desire for variety in destinations. The places visited often reflected the en vogue and politically acceptable places from which to learn – such as the 1961 trip to the USA at a time when turning Stateside for inspiration had become a common practice for many British planners (Ward, 2007). That said, selecting West Germany as a tour destination in 1950 and 1955 – with the former ultimately being cancelled and the latter also involving a tour of the Netherlands – went against the grain of thinking in British planning. Indeed, learning from Germany – previously a key source of inspiration for British planning before and after the First World War – was generally less appealing for 15 or so years after the Second World War (Ward, 2010b). To some degree, so too were the TCPA international study tours to Eastern Europe at the onset of the Cold War. Yet these did reflect both a small but significant interest in planning in the Soviet Union and its neighbours and a more general curiosity in the UK about life on the other side of the Iron Curtain at the time (Cook et al., 2014; Ward, 2012).

Year	Country	Cities and major towns visited	Tour duration (days)
1947	Sweden and Denmark	Copenhagen, Gävle, Gothenburg, Sandviken, Sigtuna, Stockholm, Uppsala	15
1948	Switzerland	Geneva	Not known
1948	Netherlands	Amsterdam, Arnhem, Den Helder, Hilversum, IJmuiden, Nijmegen, Rotterdam, The Hague	12
1948	Ireland and Northern Ireland	Belfast, Cork, Dublin, Londonderry	Not known
1949	Italy	Bologna, Genoa, Milan, Rome, Venice	16
1951	Austria	Graz, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, Linz, Salzburg, Vienna, Villach,	16
1952	Spain	Aranjuez, Barcelona, Irun, Madrid, San Sebastián, Segovia, Toledo, Zaragoza,	14
1953	France	Avignon, Dijon, Lyon, Grenoble, Marseilles, Nice, Paris	15
1954	Norway and Sweden	Bergen, Gothenburg, Kungälv, Oslo, Sigtuna, Stockholm, Uppsala, Västerås	20
1955	Netherlands and West Germany	Amersfoort, Amsterdam, Arnhem, Bochum, Bonn, Cologne, Coblenz, Delft, Essen, Hilversum, Rotterdam, The Hague, Wesel	19
1956	France and Andorra	Albi, Biarritz, Boudeaux, Carcassonne, Libourne, Lourdes, Pau, Périgueux, Tarbes	16
1957	Portugal and Spain	Córdoba, Granada, Lerida, Lisbon, Madrid, Seville	17
1958	Yugoslavia	Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Split	20
1958	Soviet Union*	Kiev, Leningrad, Moscow, Sochi, Stalingrad	22
1958	Poland*	Gdańsk, Lodz, Warsaw, Wrocław	Not known
1958	Netherlands and Belgium	Brussels, Rotterdam	4
1959	Austria	Eisenstadt, Kapfenberg, Klagenfurt, Innsbruck, Salzburg, Linz, Vienna, Wolfsburg	23
1960	Soviet Union	Kiev, Leningrad, Moscow	15
1960	Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland	Belfast, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow	17
1961	Czechoslovakia	Brno, Bratislava, Ostrava, Pilsen, Prague	15
1961	USA	Baltimore, New York City, Philadelphia, Washington	17

**Table 1:** The overseas study tours of the TCPA 1947-1961

Key: \* Invite-only tour as part of wider exchange arrangement

Source: Adapted from advertisements and reports in Town and Country Planning and material in the FJO archives at Hertfordshire County Council.

F.J.O. played a pivotal role in the international study tours. As well as authoring many post-study tour reports published in *Town and Country Planning*, he also led those tours he attended. He was usually accompanied by his wife, Margaret P. Osborn. Nicknamed M.P.O. by F.J.O. (and also here to avoid confusion between the two Osborns), she was a magistrate as well as a chair of the Matrimonial and Juvenile Court and Probation Committee (Whittick, 1987). M.P.O. was also actively interested in town planning and F.J.O. would consult with her on such matters (Whittick, 1987). The Osborns were even joined by their daughter, Margaret Leslie Osborn, then in her mid-twenties, on the 1949 international study tour of Italy. Assisting with the administrative duties were Elizabeth Baldwin, Business Secretary of the TCPA (before retiring in 1956 after 39 years), and later Hazel Evans (who was also Associate Editor of *Town and Country Planning* from 1952 before replacing F.J.O. as Editor in 1965).

In addition to these duties F.J.O. was also heavily involved in planning the tours, aided by TCPA officials. Together they drew on many of their contacts in the destination countries – developed through encounters at IFHTP meetings, previous TCPA international study tours, visits to the UK and so on – to develop itineraries. The tour accommodation and transportation, meanwhile, was arranged through a travel agency (Dean & Dawson initially and then in later tours the Wayfarers Travel Agency). Trips to Eastern Europe typically involved the British Council, which became increasingly proactive in shaping British and Eastern European (notably Soviet) cultural relations during the 1950s. To a large extent it took the place of the slightly ideologically suspect “friendship societies” (Ward, 2012). Within these countries equivalent monitoring occurred under the watchful eyes of guides and interpreters provided by the state cultural relations organisations and tourist agencies (Cook et al., 2014).

Most international study tours lasted over two weeks – including days travelling – sharply contrasting with the post-2008 “second golden age” tours that have tended to run for three or four days. Early post-war tours usually involved travelling by a combination of ferry and train, although delegates flew as part of later visits to Eastern Europe and to the USA. The groups – typically numbering somewhere between 15 and 40 delegates – would usually meet to depart at a London train station. This departure point reflected not only the London base of the TCPA but also the dominance of delegates from the south-east on the international study tours (and such travel arrangements, no doubt, influenced who participated in them). While the surviving tour delegation lists include some delegates from other parts of England, few based in Scotland, Wales, and especially Northern Ireland are listed. Even rarer are delegates based overseas,

although some did attend. One example is Richard Weaver, a city planner from the City of Long Beach in California, who took part in the tours to the Netherlands and Germany in 1955 and Yugoslavia in 1958, and who would also help host the 1961 TCPA international study tour to the USA.

An analysis of the delegation lists reveals several themes. First, it appears that Arthur Ling and Colin Buchanan were not part of the 54 delegates on the 1947 tour to Sweden and Denmark – with Hall (2008) mistaken in identifying them in the photograph (see Figure 1). Indeed, in one of his regular letters to Lewis Mumford in July 1947, F.J.O. noted that “[m]y party of fifty-four [to Sweden and Denmark] was not very distinguished, but it was a good cross-section of the provincial councillors and officers concerned with planning” (quoted in Hughes, 1971, p. 151). So, while Hall (2008, p. 60) perhaps overstated the reputation of the delegates as “movers and shakers”, the subsequent international study tours would nevertheless attract a number of senior officials in the field of planning. The final 1961 tour to the USA, for instance, included Wilfred Burns (Newcastle City Council), Leslie Lane (London County Council) and Dennis Riley (Staffordshire County Council) – all senior planning officers who would become President of the Town Planning Institute within six years of the tour (Riley in 1962, Lane in 1964, Burns in 1967). As with F.J.O.'s observations on the first international study tour to Sweden and Denmark, delegates within the planning profession were usually either senior planning officers (such as Burns, Lane and Riley) or members of planning committees of city or county councils.

Second, the international study tours attracted a smaller number of delegates from private architecture and building firms, a smaller number still of university lecturers and students, as well as individuals with a “lay” interest in planning. A number of individuals went on several international study tours, with S.H. Baker (Deputy Council Planning Officer of West Sussex County Council) and John Clear (Barrister-in-Law and Councillor at Hertfordshire County Council and Welwyn Garden City Urban District Council) being the most regular attendees on the surviving delegate lists aside from F.J.O. and M.P.O. (at eight and seven appearances respectively).

Third, the delegation lists reflect the gendered practices of local government and planning at the time (Tickell & Peck, 1996). The vast majority of professionals on the international study tours were men (who heavily dominated local government senior roles at the time; see Keith-Lucas & Richards, 1978). A small number of professional women attended, such as Josephine Reynolds, then-lecturer at the Department of Civic Design at Liverpool University (one of the few female planning lecturers in the 1950s) who travelled to Austria on the 1951 international study tour.



That is not to say women were not present on the tours. They were. Wives often accompanied their husbands, although the gendered norm at the time was neither to record their first names nor their professions on the delegation lists. In addition, aside from post-tour reports written by Keable (1948) and Reynolds (1951) who took part in the international study tours to Ireland and Northern Ireland, there are no other publicly available accounts from women delegates. Nevertheless, the reports by Reynolds and Keable are illuminating. Not only do they speak of the places visited and the challenges faced by local planners, they are also critical of the planning frameworks in place. For Reynolds (1951, p. 516) “many of the problems” seen on the Austrian tour, “could be solved ... if there were stronger planning powers.” Meanwhile Keable, then Conference Secretary of the TCPA, was aghast with the disinterest in planning in Ireland and Northern Ireland. She concludes her report by asking: “May we not help to repay your generous hospitality by stimulating you to look to your own interests before it is too late?” (1948, p. 181). Such criticism by Reynolds and Keable does indeed resonate with many other TCPA tour reports between 1947 and 1961 as we shall go on to detail. Yet given the relative silencing of women on the international study tours, our understanding of their roles on them is limited and partial, as are many institutional and professional histories.

With the large number of married couples on the tour, the TCPA frequently advertised the international study tours as “study-holiday tours” (see, for example, Figure 2). For F.J.O. they were designed to mix work with pleasure, studies with holidays. An announcement for the France and Andorra tour of 1956, for example, reasons that “As in all TCPA tours ... the purpose is to couple a pleasant holiday with interesting study, and friendly meetings and exchanges of views with intelligent people of like interests in the places visited” (Town and Country Planning, 1956, p. 150). They were, as the handbook for the 1957 tour to Portugal and Spain states, designed for “members, their families and friends” (UK NA FJO/H). Two more mantras were frequently repeated in promotional material: first that the international study tours were more than just sightseeing holidays; they, as outlined in the advertisement for the Spain 1952 study tour, involved “travelling with a purpose” (see Figure 3). The second was that they offered an unparalleled opportunity to meet, travel with, and discuss planning issues with those with a “common interest”, as well as allowing access to people and places that individuals would have difficulty accessing otherwise (Osborn, 1948). Combined, it was hoped that this would provide delegates with “impressions a little more representative than those of tourists who encounter only hotel porters, visitors and official guides” (Osborn, 1947a, p. 390).

TCPA STUDY-HOLIDAY TOUR 1958

# Yugoslavia

*Arrangements are now being made for a tour of Yugoslavia in late September 1958. Itinerary will probably include Ljubljana, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Dubrovnik, Split, and Rijeka.*

*Further details from:*

**Tour Secretary**  
**Town and Country Planning Association**  
**28 King Street**  
**Covent Garden**  
**LONDON WC2**

**Figure 2.** Advertisement for the Yugoslavia tour (1958). Source: Town and Country Planning (1958a, p. 47).

*Travelling with a Purpose*

## 14-DAY TOUR OF SPAIN

*Sunday, 28 Sept.—Sunday, 12 Oct.*

The TCPA is organizing a tour to Spain for members and others who wish to combine study and enjoyment in intelligent and informed company. The provisional itinerary (by coach) includes Irun, Burgos, Madrid, Toledo, Saragossa, Lerida, and Barcelona. Visits under official guidance to housing and planning schemes, hydro-electric works, and places of scenic and historic interest. The party will be limited to thirty. Inclusive cost £60-70. Particulars from the Secretary, TCPA, 28 King Street, London WC2

**Figure 3.** Advertisement for the Spain tour (1952). Source: Town and Country Planning (1952, p. 344).

The international study tours served a number of purposes for the TCPA and for F.J.O. in particular. Not only were the tours mechanisms through which the British delegates could learn from places they visited and people they met, but they provided F.J.O. and others with a platform to express their views on planning. The international study tours were important means through which the prescriptions of F.J.O. and the TCPA – most noticeably decentralisation, new towns and green belts – could be promoted to audiences outside of the UK. As Whittick (1987) has argued, they were “all part of Osborn's passionate campaigning” (p. 97) as F.J.O. “was keen to propagate his ideas internationally” (p. 93).

Yet for all this, it was also clear that the international study tours fulfilled F.J.O. and M.P.O.'s desire to travel. In short, they clearly enjoyed experiencing new places and meeting new people, as well as meeting up with old acquaintances. Indeed, outside of the TCPA tours, F.J.O. and M.P.O. would regularly travel abroad. Both, for example, went annually to the congresses of the IFHTP in various cities from Arnhem to Tokyo. They also went on three lengthy lecture tours of the USA in 1947, 1950 and 1960. This desire for frequent travel is noted in a post-tour report of Spain in 1952, when F.J.O. aged 67, wrote: “I hope to go to many places I have never seen, and the sands of time are running out” (Osborn, 1952c, p. 549). Yet in a letter to Lewis Mumford in August 1958, F.J.O. expressed concern about the consequences of travelling: “I had disorganised my work too much this year from travelling ... The prolegomena and aftermaths of travel absorb more time than I care to; and probably at my age I am trying to take in and digest more than I shall ever have time to make use of ... It is beginning to penetrate my stupidity that I must stay put for a year or so and do some real work” (quoted in Hughes, 1971, p. 281). Nevertheless, F.J.O. would continue to travel abroad regularly with M.P.O., the TCPA and the IFHTP for the next eight years or so.

### **Experiencing the tours (1947–1961)**

The itineraries of the international study tours were very busy. The delegates were typically met by senior planning officials in the different “stops” and usually given guided tours (on barge, boat, coach or foot). They would see a variety of residential neighbourhoods, office developments, factories, shopping precincts and so on. They were also shown countless plans

and models for future developments (see, for example, Figure 4). The TCPA tours visited few new towns or “garden suburbs” over the years, although they occasionally saw plans for such developments (for example the plans for satellite towns around Leningrad on their 1958 Soviet Union tour). While this is perhaps surprising given the focus of the TCPA, it reflected the limited adoption of such developments in mainland Europe at the time. Instead, the international study tours concentrated on the central and suburban areas of larger cities. Typically smaller towns and villages were only visited en route.



**Figure 4.** Delegates and hosts observing a model for the redevelopment of part of Kiev city centre. Source: Osborn (1958, p. 387).

The TCPA delegates frequently visited recently completed or on-going developments that had featured in the planning and architecture press in the UK including *Town and Country Planning*. The international study tours, therefore, offered an opportunity to experience them, to see how they looked and felt, inside and outside, something the “two dimensional” pages of the planning press continues to struggle to capture. As more recent work has argued, actually being there generated a different set of experiences and responses (González, 2011; McCann, 2011; Ward, 2011; Wood, 2014). F.J.O. would also promote the tours as an opportunity to liaise with residents, sometimes through the assistance of translators and guides, to get a sense of what it

was really like to live and work in the locations visited (Osborn, 1947b; see also Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** F.J.O. and M.P.O. talk with Lilly Medin and her grandson Michael at their home in Västerås, Sweden in September 1954. The image was reproduced on the front page of the local newspaper *Vestmanlands Läns Tidning* during the visit. Source: Whittick (1987, p. vii).

One much talked about development at the time was the new suburb of Vällingby in Stockholm. This was visited on the 1954 international study tour to Norway and Sweden. Heavily promoted as “the ABC city” – with ABC standing for *Arbete* (Work), *Bo* (Live), *Centrum* (Centre) – Vällingby would become a highly influential experiment in social democratic suburban development (Hall, 2002, pp. 334–344), and one that F.J.O. (Osborn, 1955, p. 232) praised as “the perfect marriage of science and design, with not a trace of Corbusierite wilfulness or whimsicality.” Nevertheless his view on Vällingby would change over time. Writing with Arnold

Whittick over 20 years after his first visit there, F.J.O. bemoaned the way in which Vällingby and similar schemes in Sweden have become “dormitories for commuters” as well as their over-use of high-rise dwellings – far removed from F.J.O.'s ideal of the largely self-reliant, low-rise garden city (Osborn & Whittick, 1977, p. 101).

Even further removed from F.J.O.'s utopian vision were those of Le Corbusier. F.J.O. was an intrigued but ardent critic of Le Corbusier's ideas, plans and developments (see Osborn, 1952a, 1952b). It was perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that the 1953 international study tour of France offered an opportunity to visit the Swiss architect's much-talked about and much-visited Unité D'Habitation in Marseilles. F.J.O. had visited the development the previous year but wanted to return with TCPA tour delegates. Opening in 1952, the 17-storey concrete block – which still stands – sits on top of large stilts. When opened, it included 337 maisonettes, space for a shopping centre on the eighth floor, and a rooftop featuring a paddling pool, playground and a restaurant. In the way that Howard and F.J.O. had used Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City as “models”, Le Corbusier used Unité D'Habitation as a snapshot of the future city (or at least some parts of it). It signified a move to a modernist city of mass-produced, high-density tower blocks situated above and adjacent to open spaces on the site of the old city (Fishman, 1977). For F.J.O., “Corb's Marseilles fantasy” – as he termed it in one 1952 letter to Lewis Mumford – was a dystopian vision (quoted in Hughes, 1971, p. 205). In another letter to Mumford, this time following the 1953 TCPA tour, F.J.O. was highly critical: for him it was an “impressive monstrosity” with fundamental flaws: poor lighting and peculiar room dimensions especially. He further reported that “Margaret said the Howard League for Penal Reform would condemn the building as a prison” (quoted in Hughes, 1971, p. 222). The visit to Unité D'Habitation, therefore, afforded F.J.O. another chance to see a rival vision of the city of tomorrow, as well as an opportunity to share with the other delegates his verdict on Le Corbusier's work.

In addition to visiting sites and viewing plans and models, the delegates were lectured on the past, present and future planning of the locations visited. Indeed, F.J.O. noted that they attended 24 lectures – “all admirably condensed” – during their 12-day tour to the Netherlands in 1948 (Osborn, 1948, p. 208). Delegates were also met on international study tours by a variety of local officials such as architects, engineers, planners and mayors at lunch and dinner receptions, an example of how leisure and policy tourism are often conjoint (González, 2011). Reflecting on their tour of the Soviet Union, F.J.O. recalls the “Trimalchian feasts” the delegation were provided with (Town and Country Planning, 1958b). Likewise Richard Edmonds (1958, p. 124), the Chair of London County Council's Town Planning Committee, reminisced fondly about an

evening at the Architects' Club and Rest Home outside of Moscow which ended with “champagne upon the terrace, more toasts, much goodwill, and a great deal of laughter.”

While the relationship between leisure and work would often blur – as Edmond's recollection suggests – the balance between the two was not always to every delegate's pleasing. The 1949 Italy international study tour, for example, appeared to be run less than smoothly with two delegates complaining to F.J.O. about the frenetic pace of the 16-day tour which included visits to Bologna, Genoa, Milan, Rome and Venice. Here the complainants reasoned that the pace offered little time to attend cultural attractions or liaise in depth with every host – problems acknowledged by F.J.O. in responding letters and the post-study tour report (Osborn, 1949; UK NA FJO/H). With this in mind, future tour itineraries would feature several free afternoons, evenings or days in the larger cities.

Other issues with the international study tours were also noted in the follow-up reports and talks. The most commonly noted difficulties faced by the delegates were language problems – even on tours such as the 1958 Soviet Union tour where they were provided with translators (Cook et al., 2014) – as well as difficulties in understanding the intricacies of the planning systems at different scales. So while F.J.O. valued and promoted the insights of the tours, he did not “cherish the illusion that after one fortnight in a country we come back with a complete picture” (Osborn, 1953, p. 649) – a proviso that is regularly echoed in post-study tour reports by F.J.O. and other delegates (e.g. Lane, 1962; Osborn, 1947b, 1958).

### **Observations on tour and mobile lessons (1947 and beyond)**

The aforementioned limits to the international study tours did not prevent F.J.O. and his fellow delegates from engaging critically with what they encountered. For example, the delegates of the 1958 Soviet Union tour were particularly dismissive of Khrushchev's recently introduced Industrialised Housing Programme that sought to provide cheap and modern accommodation – through family apartments in prefabricated, mass-produced five-storey apartment blocks – across the Soviet Union (Cook et al., 2014). Such schemes in the cities visited were continually criticised in the post-tour report and talks. In particular, it was the “workmanship” that was criticised, which delegate H. Myles Wright – a colleague of Josephine Reynolds at the University of Liverpool – noted “ranges from the mediocre to the very bad” (Wright, 1958, p. 165). More strategic issues were also raised. For example, “the Russians”, as another delegate summarised bluntly, “have nothing to teach us in principles of town planning” (Wells, 1959, p. 378).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, in F.J.O.'s post-study tour talks and reports, he regularly highlighted similar problems to those that he was actively campaigning against in the UK – namely sprawling cities and high-density developments. For example, in Madrid he was appalled by the sprawl of the city and the building of more suburbs, but noted that he felt “like the Messenger from Mars” in suggesting that they limit the expansion of the city (Osborn, 1952c, p. 554). F.J.O. and others would also regularly comment on the absence of national planning in the countries they visited and the lack of any national strategy to move people and industries from cities to new towns (e.g. Keable, 1948; Osborn, 1949).

It is therefore worth considering what delegates learnt, if anything, from the international study tours. With at least 240 individuals attending one or more of the tours, a definitive answer is not possible, of course. Nevertheless, despite F.J.O.'s enthusiasm for study tours between 1947 and 1961, they appeared to do little to change his views on the issues facing cities and how they should best be addressed. This is acknowledged as much by F.J.O., in a paper presented to the American Society of Planning Officials at its National Planning Conference in Florida, 1960, when he stated: “I must admit that in my wanderings about the world, I see also too few signs that anyone is really grappling with the fundamentals of the urban, or metropolitan, problem” (Osborn, 1960, p. 6.). So if anything, F.J.O.'s travels simply reinforced his thinking on the problems and the solutions he advocated (as well as their universalism). More than anything, it was Ebenezer Howard and his writing, rather than the international study tours, which continued to have the biggest influence on F.J.O.

Although a number of destinations were dismissed as having little to offer British planners – such as the Soviet Union (Cook et al., 2014) – others were represented as those from which lessons should be learnt. The 1961 USA international study tour was possibly the most influential of all the tours, reflecting a certain path dependency in the kinds of cities and their wider contexts from which those involved in UK planning have learnt (Peck & Theodore, 2010a). Led by Wyndham Thomas, the Director at the TCPA, the tour included the east coast cities of Baltimore, New York, Philadelphia and Washington DC (see Figure 6). F.J.O. and M.P.O. were absent having visited the USA the previous year. The introduction to a series of short post-tour reports by delegates in Town and Country Planning summarises a number of the key lessons:

The party learned a great deal, and as much from the mistakes made in such matters as urban highways policies as in the positive achievements in stimulating business participation in renewal programmes. The most important lessons of all, however, were



the habits and demands that became of the accepted pattern in a highly prosperous and increasingly mobile society. Huge “out-of-town” shopping centres, restaurants, clubs, motels, a widening variety of commercial entertainments, larger and better equipped houses, more cars – and more miles a year driven by owners – the boat as a new status symbol, drive-in cinemas; all these things and more are now, or soon will be, making their impact felt here. An anticipatory study of the suburban and satellite areas of metropolitan centres in American is the best possible preparation for British planners. (Town and Country Planning, 1961a, p. 316)

The Journal of the Town Planning Institute rarely featured reports from the TCPA tours, the main exception being the USA tour when post-tour reports by Wyndham Thomas, Wilfred Burns and Leslie Lane were published in it. While critical of aspects of what they saw – such as public housing provision (Thomas, 1962) and downtown decay (Lane, 1961) – the three reports presented the USA as a tomorrow's world. Its cities were viewed, in the words of Brenner (2003), as prototypical cities where trends of the future first emerge. These were places to learn from, imitate and emulate. What is more, the cities visited were regarded as sites of planning and policy experimentation and innovation. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the reports noted that, like the USA, the UK should develop out-of-town shopping centres (Thomas, 1962) and more sophisticated transport planning (Burns, 1962), and it must “emulate the Americans in their concept of Urban Renewal” reasoned Leslie (1962, p. 195). In light of the high profile nature of the 1961 TCPA tour to the USA, the Town Planning Institute – whose international study tours were few and far between – also organised two to North America, in 1964 and 1967. Both focused on large metropolitan cities and were each attended by approximately 100 delegates (Journal of the Town Planning Institute, 1964; Rathbone, 1967). These had the effect of reinforcing and cementing the USA as the place from which British planners ought to learn, even as the negative consequences of residential and retail suburbanisation were beginning to become apparent (Fox, 1985, pp. 137–189).



**Figure 6.** Members of the 1961 TCPA study tour listen to Robert Weaver (standing) at the offices of the Housing and Home Financing Agency, Washington DC. Source: *Town and Country Planning* (1961b, p. 426).

The 1961 TCPA international study tour reports in *Town and Country Planning* were accompanied by an announcement stating that they were planning another tour of the USA. More details were promised but never arrived. The tour did not take place. International study tours would no longer be regular features of the TCPA's agenda. In fact, only eight TCPA international study tours took place between 1962 and 2007. Resigning as Chairman of the Executive in April 1961, F.J.O. would only go on one more TCPA tour, of Japan, which corresponded with the IFHTP congress in Tokyo in 1966.

Under F.J.O.'s replacement, Peter Self, the TCPA continued to be overworked and understaffed (Hardy, 1991b). Together with the exit of F.J.O. (as well as his considerable working hours) this left little capacity to regularly organise lengthy and complicated international study tours. Furthermore, under Self there was a shift in emphasis, away from learning from and visiting planning abroad towards showcasing UK “best practice”. Here the focus was almost exclusively on the new towns which were once again in favour with the UK government. In total 32 new towns were designated in the UK between 1946 and 1970 (commencing with Stevenage and finishing with the Central Lancashire New Town). The TCPA sought to build on the existing interest in and visits to the new towns from planners and policy-makers in the UK and abroad. Therefore, domestic study tours of the different new towns became regular fixtures on the

TCPA event calendar during the 1960s and these were supplemented by a series of annual international study tours of British new towns between 1970 and 1982. Eventually interest waned amongst policymakers and practitioners. In the early 1980s new town tours were phased out and replaced with tours of attempts to renew the UK's inner cities. For a time, however, there was a sense that the UK was the pioneer in new town development – at least among those involved – so why visit Marseilles, New York City and Stockholm when you could visit Milton Keynes, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City?

## **Conclusion**

The 1947–1961 international study tours of the TCPA emerged during a time when towns and cities in Europe and North America were being rebuilt. They also corresponded with a steady but uneven strengthening of planning systems, a growth in formal planning education and an expanding number of planning professionals in many of the countries. The international study tours also took place during a time when there was a particular emphasis on planners and related professionals actively learning from elsewhere; circulating ideas, models and plans, and visiting places that were held up as sites of “good” or “best” practice (Nasr & Volait, 2003; Healey & Upton, 2010). The international study tours of the TCPA, therefore, not only provided a work-related vacation, they also enabled delegates to learn from the places visited and the people met. Equally as important, they also offered the TCPA an opportunity to develop new contacts and make re-acquaintances. In so doing, the international study tours provided a platform from which F.J.O. and the TCPA could spread the word beyond the UK about the problems of urban sprawl and high-density development as well as the benefits of decentralisation, new towns and green belts.

The post-war international study tours share a number of similarities with the post-2008 TCPA tours, as well as the contemporary policy tourism focused on in the academic literature (González, 2011; Ward, 2011; Wood, 2014). Indeed, the 1947–1961 TCPA tours involved similar content, in terms of hearing from involved officials and practitioners, viewing models and plans and walking around building sites, neighbourhoods and new developments. They also echo contemporary study tours in being a selective process, involving “the rescripting of places ... [and] reassembling of cities out of the bits and pieces that are visited” (González, 2011, p. 140).

Nonetheless, the 1947–1961 TCPA international study tours have important differences to the post-2008 TCPA tours abroad. First, the length of the tours has shrunk dramatically (from

several weeks in most cases to three or four days). The speeded-up nature of policy-making as well as the shrinking budgets of UK local governments have played a role here as there is little capacity and money now available for planners to organise and participate in longer visits. That said, the post-2008 TCPA international study tours seem somewhat lengthy when compared to the most common form of study tour today – the full or half-day excursion, often attached to a conference. Second, the recent destinations of the TCPA international study tours have become much more focused on Northern European countries (such as Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden) than the post-war international study tours. Indeed, these destinations are quicker to get to, meaning less of a time commitment for participants. While it still has an allure for UK planners, the USA is outside the current remit of the “European study tour”, despite the considerable movement of policies and ideas that take place between the UK and the USA (Peck & Theodore, 2001).

Third, the post-2008 tours are marketed solely as educational working trips in contrast to the advertising for the “study-holiday” tours of the post-war period. Thus, the later tours have sought to avoid being mistaken for “jollies” and “junkets”, pejorative labels that are sometimes given to forms of policy tourism. Fourth, whereas the majority of delegates of the 1947–1961 tours were public sector male professionals (accompanied by their wives in some instances), today's tours are more variegated in terms of the sector and gender composition. This reflects a shift in the planning profession itself, but also the variety of other job titles and occupations that involve some degree of planning. It speaks to the range of individual and institutional actors in the contemporary policy mobility “business”, from academics to journalists, consultancies to think tanks (Cook & Ward, 2011). Fifth and finally, the “reputation” of British planning is not what it once was. F.J.O. and his delegates viewed themselves as being at the leading edge of planning, and there is evidence that some planners outside the UK also viewed them in this way (see, for instance, Town and Country Planning, 1956a). So while the previous international tours combined learning from elsewhere with the promotion of British planning ideas internationally, the emphasis of the recent TCPA European study tours is much more humble: trying to address the inadequacies of contemporary British planning through learning from planning systems elsewhere (Hall, 2014).

In making these concluding observations we have begun to address Harris and Moore's call for “the histories of urban policy mobilities ... to be more carefully explored and unpacked” (Harris & Moore, 2013, p. 1505). Given that the policy mobilities literature has been accused of “presentism” (Jacobs, 2012), we have sought to bring this body of work into close dialogue with

the literature on the circulation of planners and planning ideas. The empirical cornerstone of this paper – the post-war international study tours of the TCPA – also provides a small counter-balance to the contemporary focus of the policy mobilities literature. As this paper has argued, a historical focus can reveal the continuities and changes in the “informational infrastructures” (McCann, 2011) that shape and lubricate the circulation of planning ideas and expertise. More work on the geographies and histories of urban policy mobilities is, of course, needed. In conducting further research, archival research can provide particularly useful insights into the past contexts, experiences, and performances embodied in policy tourism, against which to consider those in the contemporary era.

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<sup>i</sup> Colin Buchanan was a senior town planner at the Ministry of Town and Country Planning and is perhaps best known for writing the influential report *Traffic in Towns* (1963).