



Migrants and Urban Transformation in Sixth Century Porto

Jorge Ricardo PINTO, Assistant Professor
University of Porto, Faculty of Letters, Portugal
mirpinto@netcabo.pt

In the second half of the 19th century, the city of Porto, a liberal city that had an important Baroque structure, witnessed a massive arrival of rural population in an attempt to escape the deep crises in their rural environment, where poverty and famine devastated, forcing the city to make housing arrangements for them. In less than half a century the urban population grew more than 50 percent.

The low wages migrants earned in the city's industry, in such a severe inflation time, led to the construction of small one storey houses, built side by side and front to front in the yards of the bourgeoisie properties, forming long rows. These housing arrangements were the most rational solution in terms of intensive use of the ground and the retrenchment of expenses by the promoter. The areas of those houses were scarcely over 16 m².

By the analysis of Christian Baptism registrations of the second half of the 19th century, the present paper wishes to understand where exactly these new urban inhabitants came from, what was their pattern of departure from their hometown and what was their model of settlement in Porto, decoding causes and explaining consequences on urban morphology and social geography.

KEY WORDS: Urban growth, social geography, urban morphology.