

## **Permanence and evolution in the hidden city - reasons for the deceptive interventions towards the 'ilhas' in Porto, from 1939 till 1976**

**Luís Guimarães, DUyOT (PhD student)**

ETSAM, lguimaraes@arquitectura.uminho.pt

Phone/fax numbers: 00 351 966501362 - 00 351 253510509

The 'ilhas' - a specific type of nucleus of proletarian houses, placed at the back of the plots in the inner city, without dignifying conditions to its inhabitants - emerged as the main housing solution for the working class in Porto in the late 19th century. We argue that their long lasting permanence, results from the continuous lack of effective alternatives to the constant demand of low-cost housing in the inner-city, along with the inertia derived from the legal frame and the state *laissez-faire* attitude.

Without alternatives under private promotion in the city, after a series of experiments, two public interventions arise for the period of analysis: the violent displacement of over 6000 families to rent apartments in peripheral blocks, under the action of "Plano de Melhoramentos" and "Plano de Salubridade", held by the City Hall from 1956 till 1966. And the direct democracy attempt of the SAAL program, during the PREC, that expected to re-house over 11.000 families, mostly for future owned row-houses, granting them the right to the place of origin and dignifying housing conditions under a participative process. Nonetheless, this was soon suspended, having no significant impact for the 'ilhas' population as a whole. By 1976, these, amongst other interventions, had left a significant amount of families living in precarious house conditions, far from being solved till present day.

We characterize the 'ilhas' evolution and its distinct interventions, while referring to their models of origin and application in Porto reality, as to the causes and consequences of its later disappointment.

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