

Le Play's school in Portugal and the statement of single-family housing architecture

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ABSTRACT

In the 19th century, according to Frederic Le Play, the collective effort to social and economic harmonization had to be carried out through an organic order inspired by certain rural and secular communities of medieval origin. With the aim of achieving social peace and economic progress, a new rural morality would be applied to urban communities under the hierarchical play between Church, industrial patronage and the working-class. It was a social engineering propose, gradually updated with hygienists' observations, to control daily practices and domestic space. Among others, the individual ownership, the guarantee of transferable heritage, individual housing with gardens as complement for livelihood and playful, were base conditions to the strengthening, sedentarization, and perpetuation of the family group and, consequently, the physical and emotional stability of the individual. Le Play's sociology school arrived in Portugal in 1908 through his disciple Léon Poinsard at the invitation of the University of Coimbra and the King D. Manuel II.

At the beginning of the 20th century, one of the main doubts concerning housing policies was related with the dialectic between single-family homes and collective housing models. Through the last years of the monarchy, the whole republic, and the foundation of the dictatorship, the great majority of the politicians supported detached houses for ideological reasons. But, on the

other hand, technicians and people linked to local grim urban problems chose massive solutions in order to solve working-class accommodation properly and quickly. In these processes, who loses and who wins? What were the political orientations and its housing models? What objectives they pursued and how were these implemented? How did the opposition between field and city structure this thinking? What was the relationship between power and architecture? What kind of buildings came up from this long-lasting historical process?

These are some of the questions that the lecture intends to enunciate having, as leitmotif, the presence in Portugal of Le Play's ethics and social methodology.

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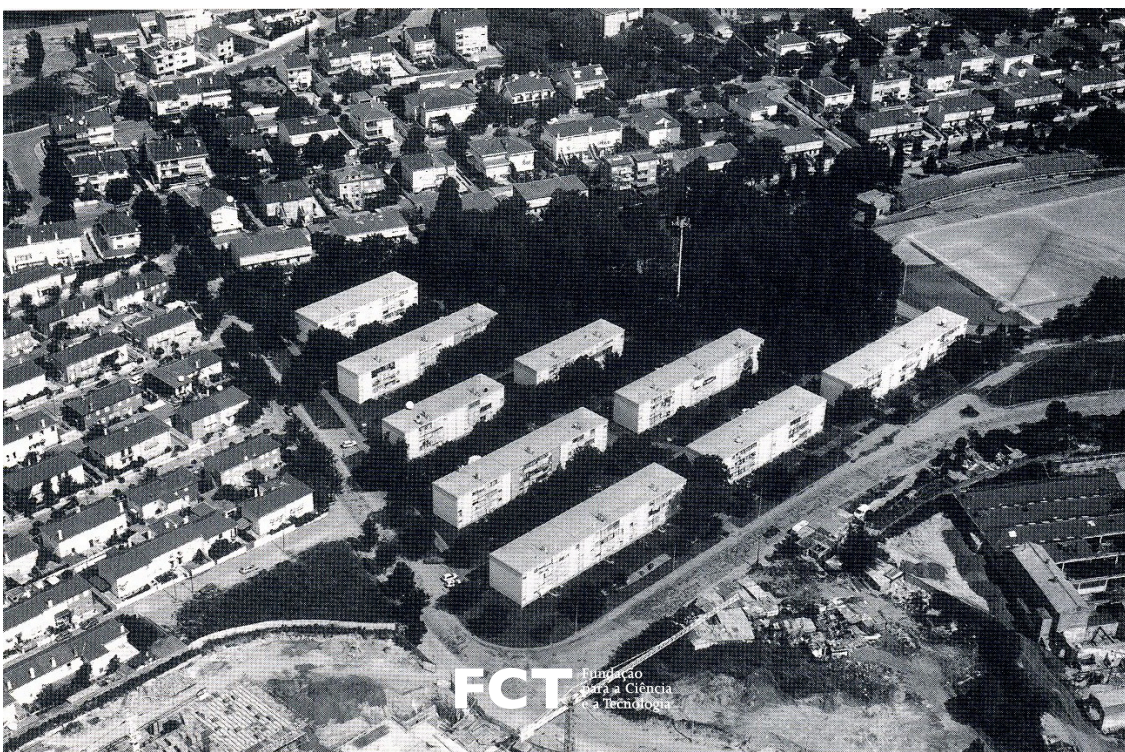
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