The impact of migration on family organization: using the family reconstitution method to analyse trends on family's units in the context of the 19th century emigration in northwest Portugal.

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The parish of Vila do Conde was fully immersed in the migration streams that overtook Portugal during the nineteenth century. The availability of internal and external passport registers made possible the analysis of the population outflow. Thousands of men left the village which certainly affected the population balance. How did the absence of the huge amount of young males impact upon the demographic behaviour? Did it have any effect on nuptiality, and fertility patterns? The answer to this question is definitely yes. The absence of so many young boys would directly affect marriages and in consequence, fertility. However, the movement of people from other parishes into the capital of the *Concelho* made a way out of this demographic trap. This paper will be analysing the parish marriage registers, in order to investigate the demographic behaviour in the parish of Vila do Conde in face of the huge male outflow.

*Nuptiality in Vila do Conde: trends in the age at marriage.*

The analysis of the marriage registers made possible the visualisation of nuptiality patterns during the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, the observation of age patterns was feasible only for the last four decades of the century, since age information started to be regularly registered from 1860 only. There are data for 1856 and 1857 but they are incomplete (there is age information for 33.8% of the total number of marriages for this period). I have decided to plot the data for the

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years of 1856 and 1857 in some tables, but any interpretation must take into account the lack of information for the five year group. The data will be shown in five years period, from 1860 to 1889, and also the year of 1900. Figure 6.1 shows the total numbers of marriages registrations during the nineteen century. There was a clear increase in the number of registers, which is also happening against a background of population increase over the century. It is worth noting that between 1859 an 1867 there was a huge decrease in the number of marriages. This drop in the numbers occurs some years after the international and also the internal emigrations have reached high peaks, between 1851 and 1858 (Figure 5.16). This may have a relation developed. Emigration generated a deficit of potential grooms, directly affecting the marriage market. Taking into account that a large proportion of the emigrants were young teenagers, it is reasonable to think that the absence of young males would affect the matrimonial market with a lack of some years delay.

Figure6.1: Annual numbers of registered marriages. Parish of Vila do Conde, Porto, Portugal, 1800-1900.

Source: Parish Registers from Vila do Conde, Arquivo Distrital do Porto.
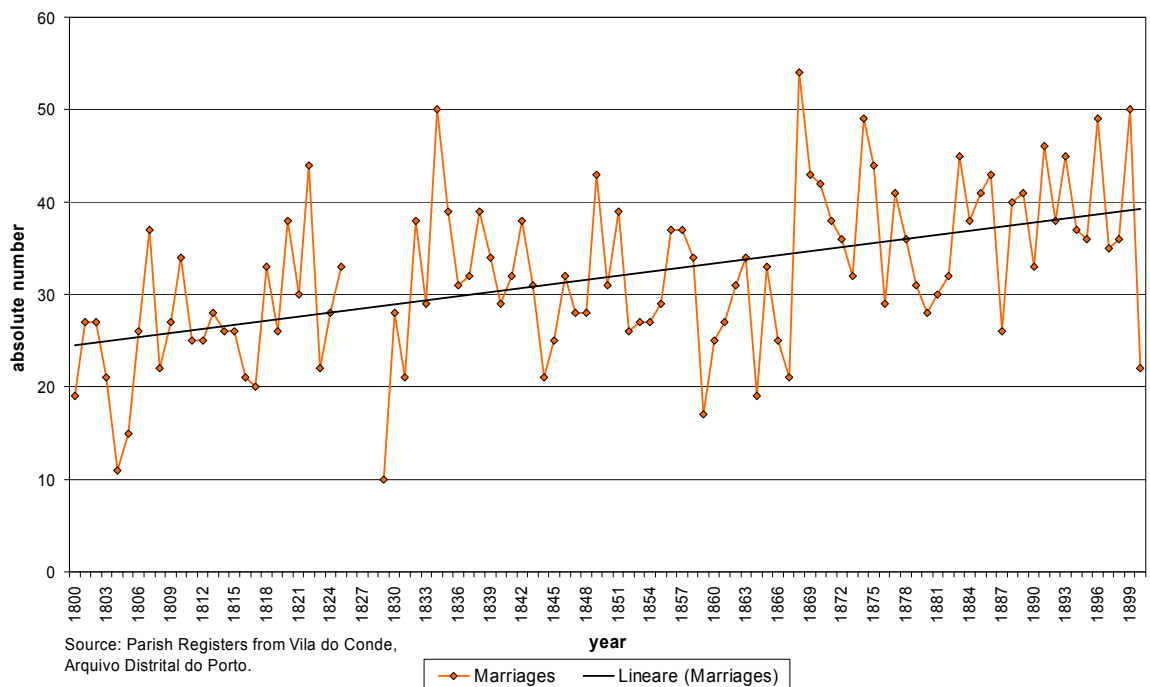
The seasonality of marriage shows no visible trend during the first half of the century (Figure 6.2). Although the pattern is not particular clear it is possible to say that during this time couples would choose to get married during the months of December to February, April and May, August to October. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the first two months of the year and also July were the busier periods for the church. The concentration of marriages in the first months of the year could be explained by the fact that the emigration to Brazil increased considerably during the second half of the nineteenth century and the optimum time for a transatlantic travel was from August to November, not the winter time of January and February, not in July, when it is the peak time of summer in Europe. Being an urban centre, Vila do Conde did not present a typical rural seasonal pattern, in which marriages take place mostly from October to March, avoiding spring and summer, during which cultivating activities were concentrated.

Figure 6.2: Seasonal Index of Marriages. Parish of Vila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1855 to 1899.

Source: Marriage Registers,
Parish of Vila do Conde 1800-1900.
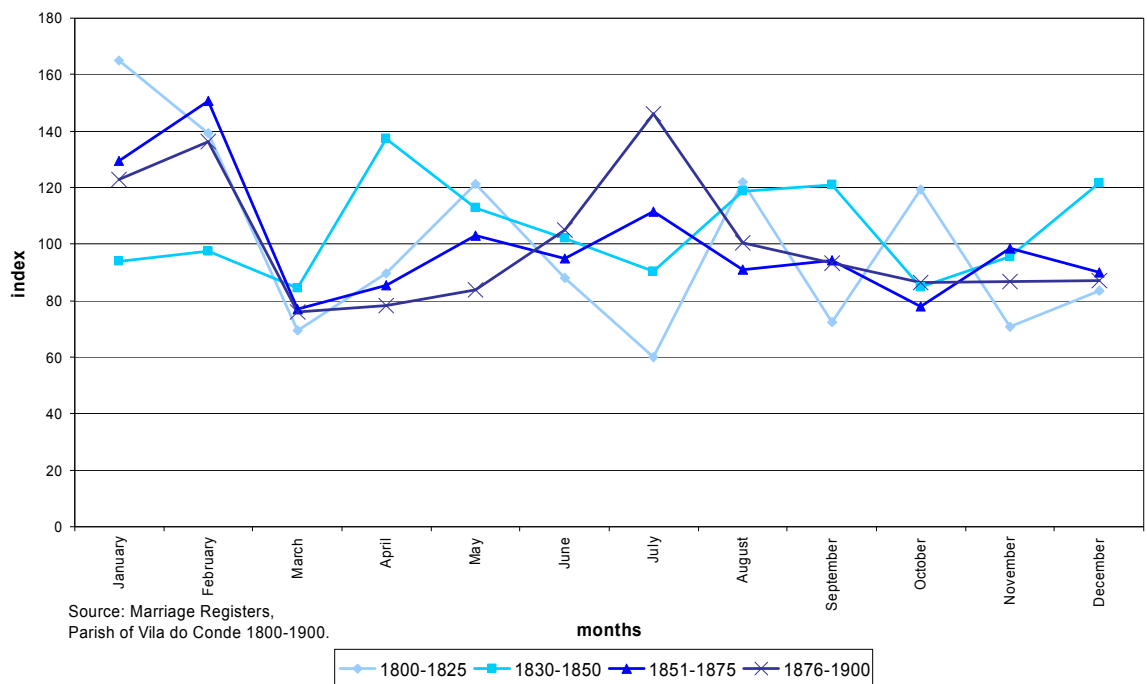
Given the availability of information of age at marriage by marital status, for the last four decades, it was possible to calculate the mean, the median and the mode

ages for the single bridegrooms and the first two measures for the widowers. The ages were calculated by marital status of brides and grooms, since the older ages of widows and widowers would distort the results. Tables 6.1 and 6.3 show all measures for each five year period. The mean ages at marriage is plotted in Figure 6.3 to make easier comparison with other studies, which adopt the mean age. However, it is important to have in mind that the existence of very old fiancés had impacted the mean ages with a higher values than was generally displayed.

The ages at marriage of spinster brides and bachelor grooms experienced a small decrease of 0.75 and 0.31 years respectively, during the second half of the nineteenth century (Figure 6.3). If in the beginning of the period the mean age for female was 23.6 and 24 years for males, at the end it was 22.8 and 23.7, although during the decade of 1870 there was an increase in the age at marriage in both sexes reaching 25.75 years for brides and 25.32 for grooms, and between 1890 and 1894 the grooms' age went up to 25.16 years. It is very curious to note the closeness of the mean ages of single men and single women. In Peter Laslett[2] words, the high proportion of spouses with small age gap could be indicative of 'marriage tending towards the compassionate'. However, cautions must be exercised in analysing mean ages since they are an average number of the total and for that reason hide the existence of many couples with substantial difference in their ages. Single people were getting marriage in their early twenties, and those couples were marring at younger ages over time.

When looking to the mean ages of widow brides remarrying, the trend assumes a more diffuse pattern. Their mean ages from 1860 to 1899[3] were 35.25 years in 1860-1864, and fell to 32.55 years from 1875 to 1879, rose again to 42.38 from 1885 to 1889 and dropped to 30.61 from 1895-1899. Even with this huge variation it is still possible to see that during the period between 1880 and 1894 the age rose more than 7. If we consider the grooms who were widowers and remarried,

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[2] Lastett, Peter. Family Life and Illicit Love in earlier generations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977: 13.
[3] The data for the first year group is incomplete and it is probably affecting the calculation, so it was not taken into cosideration.

there is also no specific trend. Which may be partially explained by the size of the sample. The spinster brides and bachelor grooms with age information number in total 1,187 and 1,189 cases respectively, the widows and widowers number to 133 and 203 cases. It is important to point out, though, that between the years of 1865 and 1874 the widower grooms' mean age at marriage rose from 38.9 to 43.7 years, fell to 36.4 years in the next five years, and up again to 46.5 in 1890-1894. Widows and widowers presented a very similar pattern.

Figure 6.3: Mean Age at Marriage, by marital status. Parish of Vila do Conde, Porto, Portugal, 1856 to 1899.
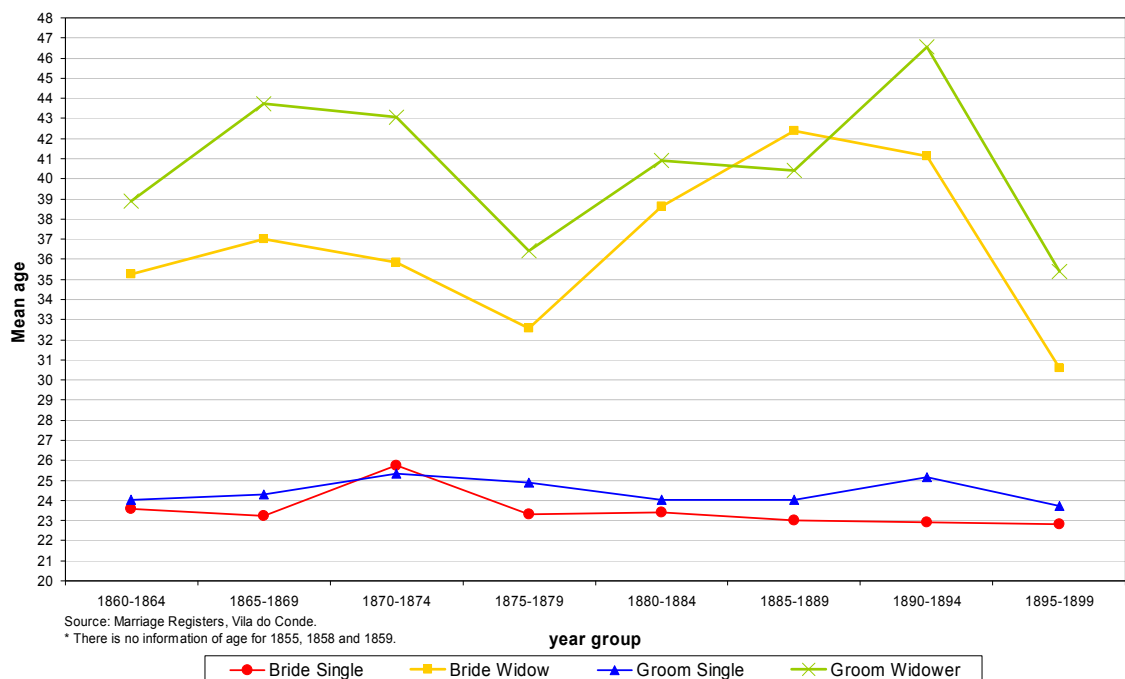
It is worth noting that widowers are getting married in older ages than widows. It is probably related to the fact that men had and still have a shorter life expectancy than women. Since the couples marring for the first time were getting married at similar ages, in theory, in the case of natural death a higher proportion of husbands would die before their wives. Instead, the men would have become widowers as a result of a fatality that interrupted the life of their wives at a premature ages.

TABLE 6.1: Female and Male Mean, Median, Mode, Minimum and Maximum Age at Marriage by 5 years period and marital status. Parish of Vila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1856 to 1899.

A - Bachelors/Spinsters only

Year Group	N°	Mean	Median	Mode	Min.	Max.
Female						
1856-1857*	37	**26.30**	24	22 &23	16	46
1860-1864	109	**23.59**	23	22	16	39
1865-1869	143	**23.22**	22	21	15	45
1870-1874	132	**25.75**	24	20, 21 &23	15	50
1875-1879	148	**23.34**	22	22	14	53
1880-1884	137	**23.39**	22	20	15	49
1885-1889	154	**22.99**	21.5	19	14	46
1890-1894	175	**22.90**	21	21	16	55
1895-1899	152	**22.84**	22	21	16	47
Total	1187					
Male						
1856-1857*	37	**27.30**	24	22	18	70
1860-1864	109	**24.03**	23	22	0	44
1865-1869	142	**24.29**	23	23	16	53
1870-1874	130	**25.32**	24	21 & 23	16	58
1875-1879	150	**24.90**	24	22 & 24	16	53
1880-1884	139	**24.06**	22	21	16	49
1885-1889	154	**24.06**	23	21	17	52
1890-1894	177	**25.16**	23	21	19	69
1895-1899	151	**23.72**	23	22	17	48
Total	1189					

Source: Marriage Registers, Vila do Conde.

*There is no information of age for 1855, 1858 and 1859.

B - Widow/er only

Year Group	N°	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.
Female					
1856-1857*	3	**25.00**	23	20	32
1860-1864	16	**35.25**	35	23	60
1865-1869	12	**37.00**	36.5	27	48
1870-1874	22	**35.82**	33.5	22	70
1875-1879	11	**32.55**	30	22	48
1880-1884	13	**38.62**	39	24	50
1885-1889	13	**42.38**	41	21	58
1890-1894	7	**41.14**	42	22	57
1895-1899	36	**30.61**	29	18	45
Total	133				
Male					
1856-1857*	11	**25.27**	24	20	36
1860-1864	18	**38.89**	37.5	23	72
1865-1869	22	**43.73**	44.5	22	77
1870-1874	37	**43.08**	45	21	74
1875-1879	24	**36.42**	33	21	70
1880-1884	21	**40.90**	41	21	67
1885-1889	30	**40.43**	36.5	23	74
1890-1894	20	**46.55**	49.5	23	66
1895-1899	20	**35.40**	34.5	20	56
Total	203				

Source: Marriage Registers, Vila do Conde.

*There is no information of age for 1855, 1858 and 1859.

It is possible that this tendency of same age couples marring was not taking place in the first half of the century, being the gap difference between widows and widowers a cohort effect. However, the trend is very much steady and does not show any sign of a different pattern in the recent past. There period between 1885 and 1889 was the only one in which widow brides reached higher ages than grooms who were widowers. It could be a cohort effect related to the fact that between 1870 and 1874 spinster brides had older mean age at marriage than their bachelor grooms.

If we look at the percentage of single men and single women marrying over 30 and over 35 years we see a peak that appears during the period between 1870 and 1874 (Table 6.2). More than one quarter of men marrying for the first time was over age thirty. For the brides, during the same period the peak reaches almost 24 percent, and 21 for the corrected percentage excluding those marrying widowers. These proportions are not as high as those detected by Brettell[4] for the Parish of Lanheses (52% for males and 56% for females) for instance. Instead, it shows that the chance to get marriage would be considerable lower if a woman had passed the age of 35, even considering marrying a widower.

TABLE 6.2: Percentage of Single Men and Single Women marrying over 30 and over 35 years old, by year group. Parish of Vila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1855 to 1899.

Year Group	% Males		% Females			
	over 30	over 35	over 30		over 35	
			A	B	A	B
1856-1857*	15.79	10.53	23.64	23.26	12.73	13.95
1860-1864	21.85	11.26	16.92	13.16	7.69	4.39
1865-1869	21.58	11.58	14.45	10.14	6.36	3.38
1870-1874	27.19	17.51	23.91	21.23	11.96	9.59
1875-1879	24.38	10.95	14.36	12.74	7.73	5.73
1880-1884	22.16	11.35	15.06	12.68	6.63	3.52
1885-1889	18.84	10.14	13.02	9.64	8.33	7.23
1890-1894	19.27	11.93	11.94	9.29	5.47	4.37
1895-1899	16.13	6.91	8.14	7.59	3.49	3.80

Source: Marriage Registers, Vila do Conde.
A - those marrying widowers included, B - those marrying widowers excluded.
*There is no information of age for 1855, 1858 and 1859.

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[4] Brettell 1986: 103.

Table 6.3 present the frequency distribution for all individuals for whom age information is available. This shows the same peak in the year period from 1870 to 1874. It is noteworthy that the following quinquenia displays a fall in the percentage of 30 to 34 year old brides in conjunction to a rise in the proportion of very young brides of 14 to 19 years old (24%). Table 6.3 shows that there is a trend towards a rise in the proportion of those marring at the age 14 to 19, while an opposite trend is seen for brides at 30 to 34 years old. For men, a rising trend is seen over the period for the grooms between 20 and 24 years old, reaching almost 60% in 1900. Overall, there was a trend towards rejuvenation of spouses, with the increase of the proportions of very young brides between 14 and 19 years old, and young grooms between 20 and 24.

TABLE 6.3: Frequency distribution of age at marriage by sex and year group (all marriages with age information). Parish of Vila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1855 to 1899.

Year Group	Age Groups							
	14-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50 +
Females								
1856-1857*	13.46	44.23	15.38	13.46	5.77	5.77	1.92	0.00
1860-1864	16.18	39.71	19.85	10.29	8.09	4.41	0.74	0.74
1865-1869	17.14	41.71	20.57	9.71	4.57	2.29	4.00	0.00
1870-1874	10.87	34.24	22.28	15.76	5.98	5.98	3.26	1.63
1875-1879	24.16	37.08	20.22	7.87	6.18	1.12	2.25	1.12
1880-1884	15.48	48.21	14.88	9.52	4.17	2.38	4.17	1.19
1885-1889	26.46	41.27	12.70	5.29	6.88	3.70	1.59	2.12
1890-1894	24.87	43.65	16.24	7.11	3.55	1.52	1.52	1.52
1895-1899	18.72	45.32	20.69	5.91	4.43	3.45	1.48	0.00
1900	27.27	40.91	18.18	0.00	4.55	4.55	0.00	4.55
Total	19.35	41.56	18.28	8.84	5.39	3.19	2.33	1.06
Males								
1856-1857*	5.77	55.77	21.15	3.85	3.85	5.77	0.00	3.85
1860-1864	11.11	42.96	23.70	8.89	6.67	3.70	0.74	2.22
1865-1869	6.47	50.00	21.18	8.24	1.76	3.53	3.53	5.29
1870-1874	5.46	40.44	20.77	11.48	4.37	5.46	3.28	8.74
1875-1879	8.29	43.09	27.62	8.84	6.08	1.10	2.76	2.21
1880-1884	13.69	49.40	13.10	11.90	0.60	5.36	2.98	2.98
1885-1889	8.38	47.12	25.65	5.76	4.71	2.09	1.57	4.71
1890-1894	4.02	53.77	20.10	7.04	5.03	2.01	1.01	7.04
1895-1899	8.42	58.42	18.32	7.43	1.98	2.97	0.99	1.49
1900	13.64	59.09	4.55	4.55	0.00	9.09	0.00	9.09
Total	8.05	48.90	21.02	8.38	3.79	3.39	2.00	4.46

Source: Marriage Registers, Vila do Conde.

*There is no information of age for 1855, 1858 and 1859.

The age difference between couples getting married is another point worth of comment Table 6.4. From the total number of marriages analysed 54.4 percent presented grooms one or more years older than the brides, and 8.4 percent had the same age. It is worth noting that the proportion of grooms six to nine years older than the bride is generally higher than the proportion of couples with a difference of four or five years. If we look at the proportion of grooms six years or more older than brides, it oscillates between 15 and 24 percent during the second half of the nineteenth century. This is a high proportion.

Another noteworthy feature of marriage is that the proportion of women ten years older than their grooms is for most of the period over 4%. Moreover, if we see the group of brides six or more years older than their grooms, the proportion rises to 10 percent or more (except for the year group of 1890-1894, when it accounts for 6.9 percent of the total). Between 1870 and 1874, 22 percent of the brides were six or more years older than the grooms. We have also seen that this particular period display high peaks in the mean age at marriage.

TABLE 6.4: Age Difference between Grooms and Brides by proportion of marriages in each category. Parish of Vila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1855 to 1899. (those marrying as single only)

Year Group	Number of Cases	Groom older than Bride by						Bride older than Groom by						Same Age
		1	2-3	4-5	6-9	10+	6+	1	2-3	4-5	6-9	10+	6+	
				Years						Years				
1856-1857*	37	5.4	18.9	5.4	10.8	8.1	18.9	10.8	10.8	8.1	10.8	8.1	**18.9**	2.7
1860-1864	108	10.2	16.7	9.3	10.2	5.6	15.7	9.3	12.0	7.4	7.4	5.6	**13.0**	6.5
1865-1869	142	7.7	21.8	8.5	9.9	5.6	15.5	5.6	12.0	7.0	8.5	2.1	**10.6**	11.3
1870-1874	127	9.4	13.4	4.7	9.4	7.1	16.5	3.9	11.8	9.4	14.2	7.9	**22.0**	8.7
1875-1879	148	7.4	13.5	14.9	18.2	6.1	24.3	4.7	8.1	5.4	6.1	6.1	**12.2**	9.5
1880-1884	137	9.5	16.8	8.8	5.1	10.2	15.3	13.1	10.9	8.8	5.8	5.1	**10.9**	5.8
1885-1889	154	13.0	18.2	9.7	11.0	5.8	16.9	7.1	10.4	5.2	4.5	4.5	**9.1**	10.4
1890-1894	175	9.7	16.0	13.1	13.1	9.7	22.9	9.1	9.7	5.7	5.7	1.1	**6.9**	6.9
1895-1899	151	9.3	15.2	11.9	7.9	7.3	15.2	9.9	10.6	7.9	5.3	4.0	**9.3**	10.6
1900	19	5.3	36.8	10.5	5.3	10.5	15.8	10.5	5.3	10.5	5.3	0.0	**5.3**	0.0
Total	**1198**	9.3	16.9	10.2	10.7	7.3	18.0	8.0	10.5	7.1	7.1	4.4	**11.5**	8.4

Source: Marriage Registers, Vila do Conde.

The period between 1870 and 1874 shows a peak in the mean age at marriage, which seems to be a reaction to the previous decade, when there was a huge decrease in the total number of marriages. The chain reaction started in the decade of 1850 when there was a considerable increase in the number of young males leaving the village. In the next decade the deficit of males in the population was enough to increase the proportion of young unmarried women. The decade of 1870 would present an accumulation of spinsters over 30 years old, who would be getting married to younger men. But where did those young men came from if a great proportion of them was leaving the country?

An analysis of the spouses' places of birth provides us with a partial explanation to this question. A consideration of the proportions of grooms and brides who were born in a parish other than Vila do Conde provides some hints as to what was happening. In the case of the women, most of them were natives of the village (75.7%), another 8.7% were born in other *Concelhos* from the District of Porto and just 6.7% were born outside the District of Porto. But males case show a different picture, in which 15.4% were from other *Concelhos* in the Porto District and 12.6% from other Districts (Table 6.5). A substancial proportion of grooms were coming into the village to marry, but when did they come, and at what ages?

TABLE 6.5: Total numbers and percentage of Brides and Grooms according to the place of birth. Parish of Vila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1800 to 1900.

Place of Birth	Brides		Grooms	
	n^0	%	n^0	%
no information	139	6.13	184	8.12
Parish of Vila do Conde	1715	75.68	1322	58.37
Other Parishes of Concelho of Vila do Conde	70	3.09	92	4.06
Other Concelhos from Porto District	198	8.74	349	15.41
Neighbouring Districts*	119	5.25	218	9.62
Other Districts	9	0.40	67	2.96
Other Countries	16	0.71	33	1.46
Total	2266	100.00	2265	100.00

*Neighbouring Districts are composed by: Viana do Castelo, Braga, Vila Real, Viseu and Aveiro.

Source: Marriages Registers, Vila do Conde, 1800-1900.

The distribution of single grooms by place of birth shows clearly that the Parish of Vila do Conde received an increasing number of males from other parishes and also from other districts during the second half of the nineteenth century (Table 6.6). Most of the 'foreigners' came from other *Concelhos* of Porto District[5], and also from neighbouring Districts. The parish of Vila do Conde was attracting males from other places, and most of the parishes that were 'sending' grooms were located in the interior of the district (not in the coast). These immigrants were probably immigrating from the rural area in search of employment in the urban centre of Vila do Conde.

TABLE 6.6: Distribution of Single Grooms by place of birth. Parish of Vila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1800 to 1899.

| Year Groups	no info	Parish Vila C.	*Concelho* Vila C.	*Concelhos* Porto District	Districts Neighbours*	Districts Other	Countries Other	Total
1800-1804	0.26	2.38	0.22	0.75	0.09	0.09	0.09	3.89
1805-1809	0.66	2.30	0.31	0.71	0.31	0.00	0.04	4.33
1810-1814	0.62	2.25	0.18	0.57	0.31	0.00	0.00	3.93
1815-1819	0.26	0.57	0.00	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.93
1820-1824	0.35	1.77	0.04	0.04	0.09	0.00	0.00	2.30
1825-1829	0.13	0.75	0.00	0.09	0.00	0.04	0.00	1.02
1830-1834	0.79	3.13	0.04	0.40	0.53	0.40	0.00	5.30
1835-1839	0.53	3.89	0.09	0.53	0.62	0.09	0.04	5.78
1840-1844	0.57	3.44	0.00	0.22	0.57	0.09	0.31	5.21
1845-1849	0.97	2.91	0.18	0.84	0.62	0.13	0.04	5.70
1850-1854	0.71	2.65	0.09	0.62	0.53	0.26	0.13	4.99
1855-1859	0.62	2.52	0.22	0.93	0.57	0.22	0.09	5.17
1860-1864	0.09	2.74	0.22	0.66	0.66	0.40	0.04	4.81
1865-1869	0.18	3.62	0.31	1.41	0.49	0.26	0.04	6.31
1870-1874	0.35	3.31	0.13	0.97	1.02	0.18	0.18	6.14
1875-1879	0.04	3.93	0.35	1.10	0.84	0.22	0.13	6.62
1880-1884	0.22	3.31	0.44	1.59	0.40	0.18	0.13	6.27
1885-1889	0.26	4.06	0.26	1.24	0.84	0.09	0.04	6.80
1890-1894	0.35	4.72	0.62	1.41	0.49	0.18	0.04	7.81
1895-1899	0.13	4.11	0.35	1.24	0.66	0.13	0.09	6.71
Total	8.12	58.37	4.06	15.41	9.62	2.96	1.46	100.00

*Neighbouring Districts are composed by: Viana do Castelo, Braga, Vila Real, Viseu and Aveiro.

Source: Marriages Registers, Vila do Conde, 1800-1900.

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[5] In fact they came mostly from Povoa do Varzim, a parish localized in the northern border of Vila do Conde.

When couples with wives older than husbands are analysed separately an increase in the proportion of the grooms born outside the parish is observable (Table 6.7). Among those grooms married to older brides, 32.3% were from other *Concelhos*, and 58% were born in the parish of Vila do Conde. Such picture suggests that a significant proportion of the young boys marring older women was made up of immigrants. However, there was still a substantial proportion of grooms, 58%, from the village. We might ask if this group of *Vila Condenses* were distinguished in any fashion. In order to answer this question we will first delineate the mean ages at marriage by place of birth and following, the age at marriage by the groom's economic sector of employment.

TABLE 6.7: Total numbers and percentage of Brides and Grooms by place of birth. Parish of Vila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1800 to 1900. (grooms younger than brides only)

Place of Birth	Brides		Grooms	
	n^0	%	n^0	%
no information	22	1.98	35	3.15
Parish of Vila do Conde	814	73.33	641	57.75
Other Parishes of Concelho of Vila do Conde	39	3.51	60	5.41
Other Concelhos from Porto District	143	12.88	211	19.01
Neighbouring Districts*	77	6.94	112	10.09
Other Districts	4	0.36	35	3.15
Other Countries	11	0.99	16	1.44
Total	1110	100.00	1110	100.00

*Neighbouring Districts are composed by: Viana do Castelo, Braga, Vila Real, Viseu and Aveiro.
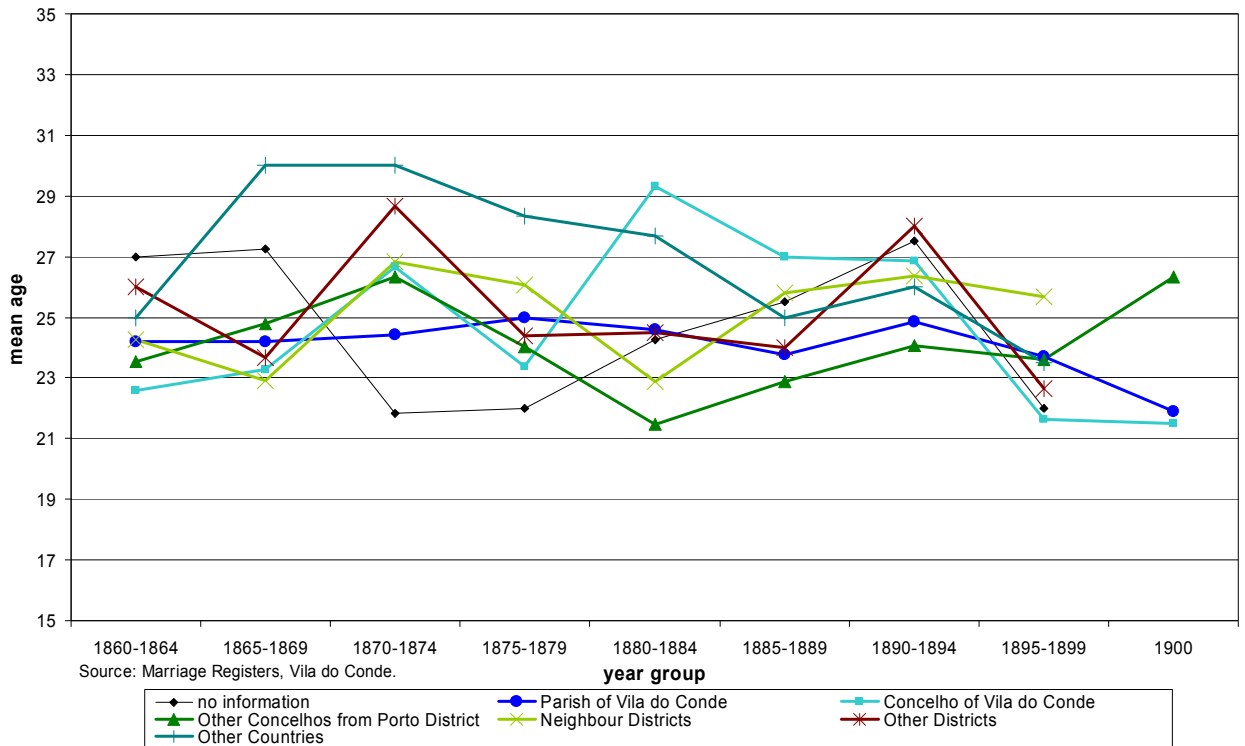
Source: Marriages Registers, Vila do Conde, 1800-1900.

An interesting picture is obtained from the observation of the mean age at marriage according to place of birth (Figures 6.4 and 6.5). Among brides, the group born in other *Concelhos* of the Porto District presented higher mean ages than those born in the parish of Vila do Conde, in the period between 1870 and 1894. The difference was 3 years in 1870-1874. A similar pattern is found to women from the neighbouring Districts. This picture shows that demographic behaviour was

differentiated by place of birth. Women who had decided to emigrate also appended to postpone marriage. Particularly interesting is the contrary behaviour of males between 1870 and 1874. The male pattern was not as clearly defined as that for women, but it is possible to see that in this quinquenium the mean age at marriage of grooms born in other *Concelhos* of Porto District and also from neighbouring Districts was respectively 3 and 1.5 years younger than the natives of Vila do Conde. The mean age of those born in the village did not change much during the period of peak marriages. This is an important finding. In order to understand the urban Portuguese demographic behaviour it is crucial to decipher migration systems and identify the different groups in the population made up of internal migrants. In the case of Vila do Conde, immigrants from other parishes were occupying the marital niches vacated by who had left for Brazil.

Figure 6.4: Brides 'Mean Age at First Marriage by place of birth. Parish of Vila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1800-1900. (single grooms marring single brides only)
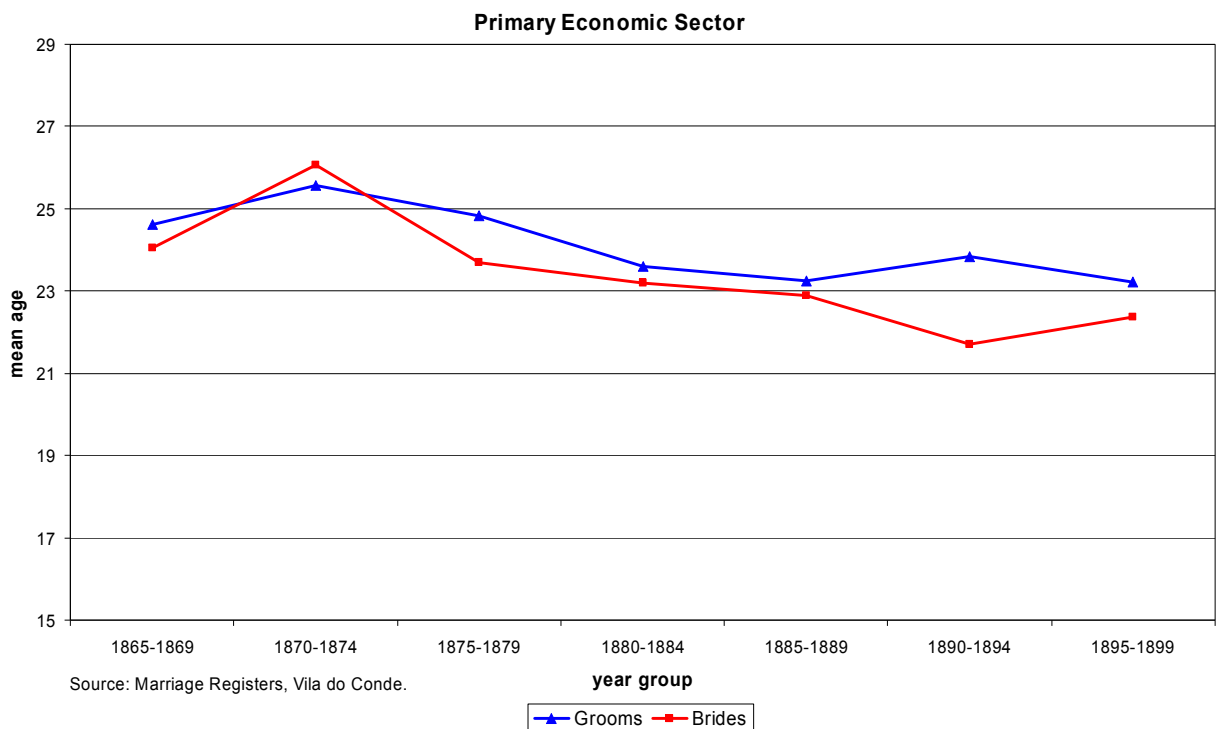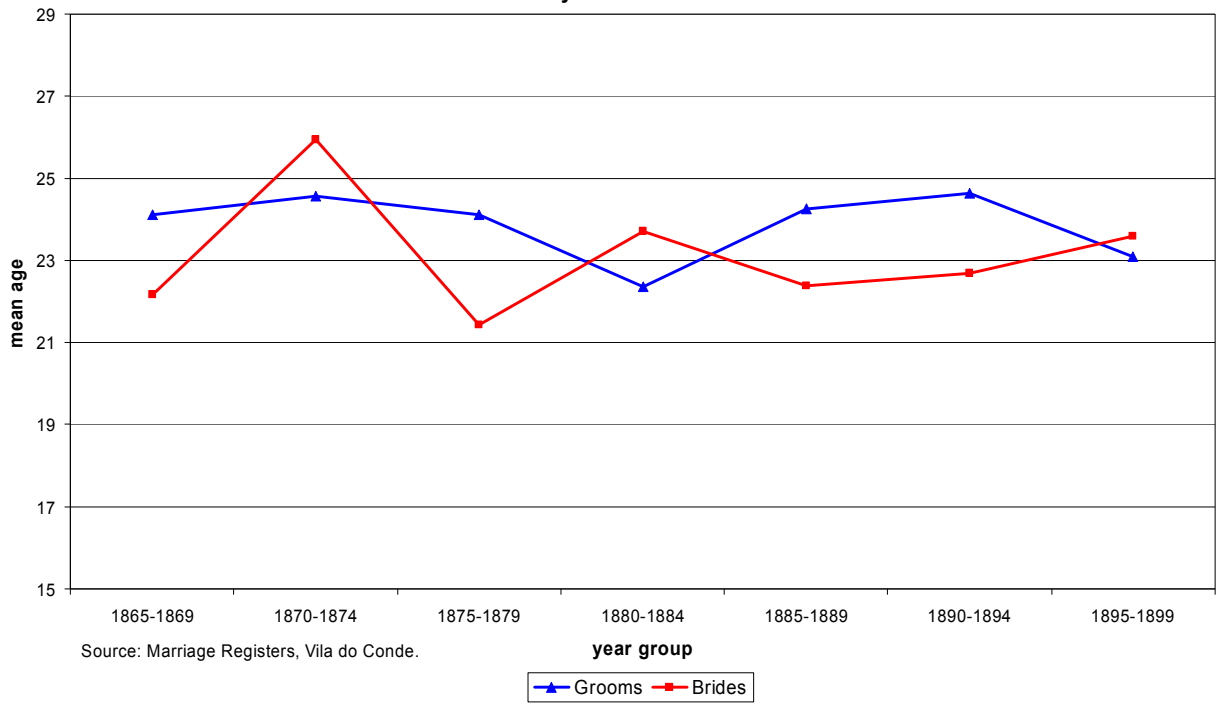

Source: Marriage Registers, Vila do Conde.

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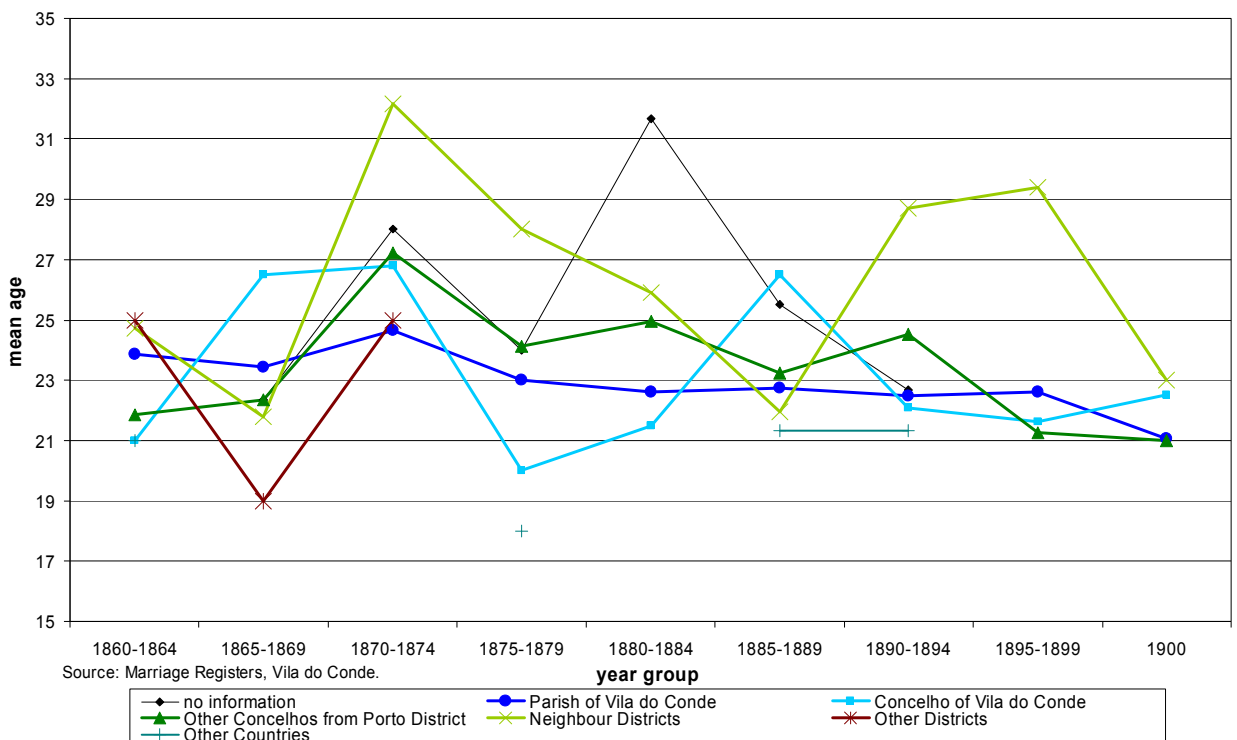
Figure 6.5: Grooms' Mean Age at First Marriage by place of birth. Parish ofVila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1800-1900. (single grooms marring single brides only)

Source: Marriage Registers, Vila do Conde.

Legend:
- no information
- Parish of Vila do Conde
- Concelho of Vila do Conde
- Other Concelhos from Porto District
- Neighbour Districts
- Other Districts
- Other Countries

If we consider mean age at marriage by economic sector, different patterns emerge (Figure 6.6). The grooms employed in the primary economic sector were older than their brides. This norm was inverted just in 1870-1874, when the wives were 0.5 year older than their husbands. The couples in which grooms were working in the secondary economic sector presented a less stable pattern, with some variability during the period. Brides from this group had older mean ages at first marriage in three periods: 1870 to 1874, 1880 to 1885 and 1895 to 1999. The grooms born outside Vila do Conde and also the native grooms marrying older brides were mostly employed in the secondary economic sector. Those individuals were employed as carpenters (30%), masons (24%), painters (12.8%), shoemakers (11%), blacksmiths (3%) and locksmiths (3%). The tertiary sector presents a very consistent pattern, in which women were around two and three years younger than their

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husbands. Another observation that can be taken from Figure 6.7 and 6.8 is that couples working in the primary sector started the period with higher mean ages at first marriage than those from the secondary sector. However, those ages decreased over time and by the end of the century they presented the lowest mean ages (Figures 6.7 and 6.8). Furthermore, the gap between the mean ages of both sexes did not vary greatly. Couples which grooms' work was in the tertiary sector were the older to marry, and they also presented the largest age-gaps (reaching 3.4 years in 1880-1884).

Figure 6.6: Mean Ages at Marriage for Men and Women by husband'sEconomic Sector insertion. Parish of Vila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1800 to 1900. (single grooms marring single brides only)
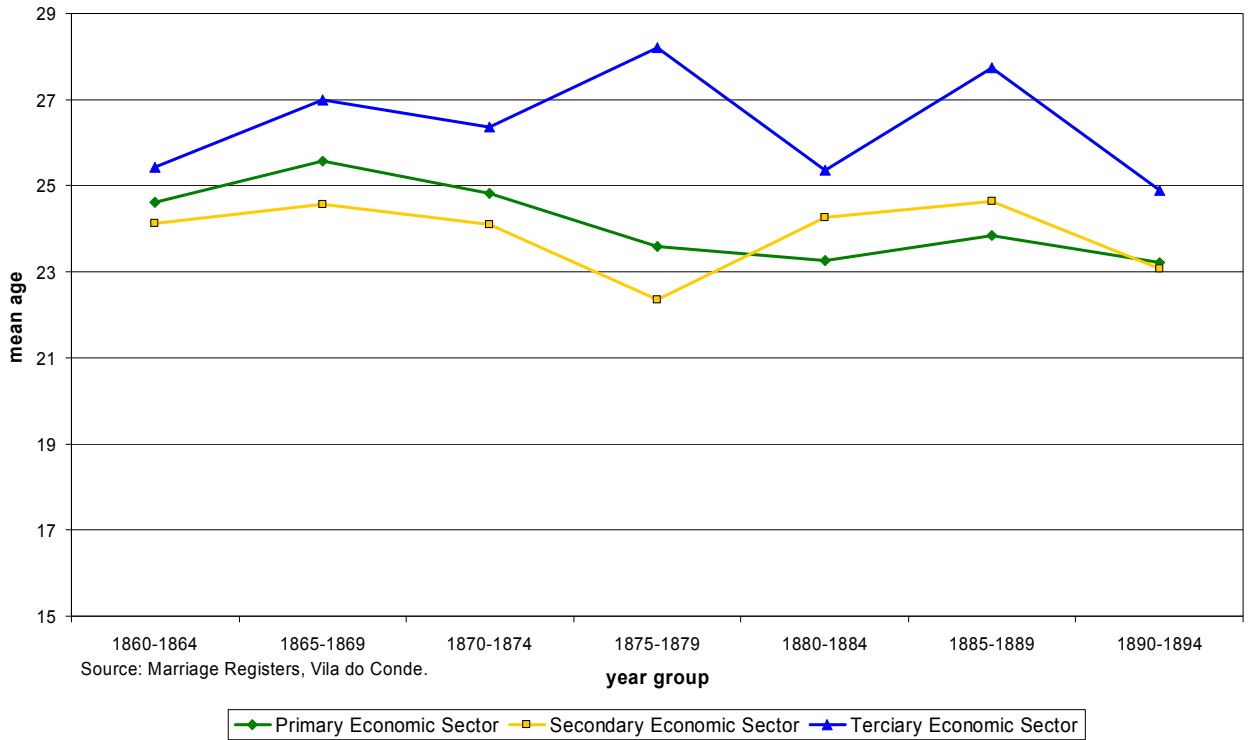

Primary Economic Sector

Source: Marriage Registers, Vila do Conde.

Secundary Economic Sector

Source: Marriage Registers, Vila do Conde.

Tertiary Economic Sector

Source: Marriage Registers, Vila do Conde.

*Figure 6.7 : Groom's Mean Age at First Marriage by economic sector. Parish ofVila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1800-1900. (single grooms marring single brides only)*

Source: Marriage Registers, Vila do Conde.

Primary Economic Sector — Secondary Economic Sector — Terciary Economic Sector

Figure 6.8 : Bride's Mean Age at First Marriage by Groom's economic sector. Parish ofVila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1800-1900. (single grooms marring single brides only)

Source: Marriage Registers, Vila do Conde.

Primary Economic Sector — Secundary Economic Sector — Tertiary Economic Sector

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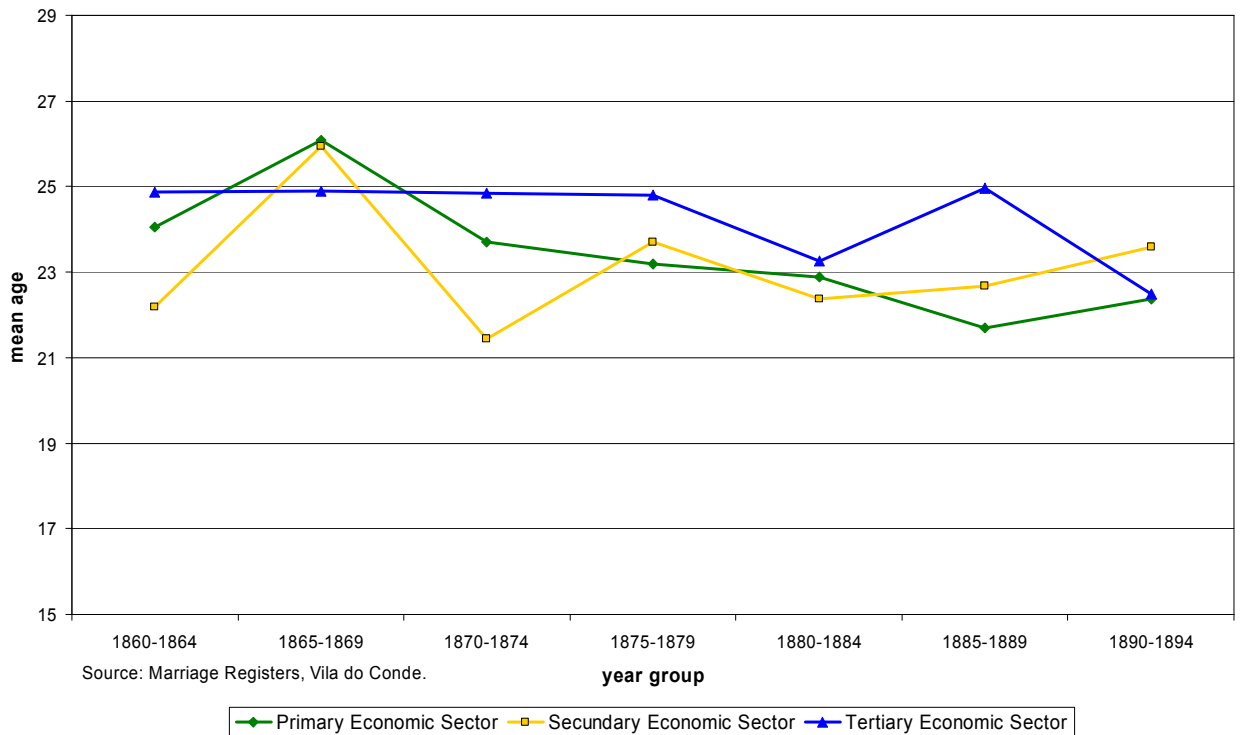
Now we will consider the proportion of celibates in the village and the relationship between the age at first marriage and the death of bridegroom's parents. The first analysis will verify if the outflow of males was producing spinsters; the second will try to detect the role of the family and inheritance practices in the constitution of a new family. Definitive celibacy was calculated by the proportion of individuals over 45 years old who were declared as spinsters and bachelors in their burial registrations.

In Vila do Conde, during the second half of the nineteenth century between 6 and 11 percent of women 45 years old or more were spinsters. Marital status data are missing in 31% of the total for 1860-1864, so it will not be considered in this analysis. These are not a high proportion of female celibates by northern Portuguese standards. According to Bandeira[6] the Portuguese female average was around 22 percent from 1864to 1900. It is noteworthy that not only the proportion of spinsters is lower in Vila do Conde, but is also diminishes during the years of 1870 to 1884. It could be related to the fact that older women were getting married to younger males, as described before. Bachelors constituted a very small number. What makes sense, since the sex ratio of the parish was really low (see Table 4.1).

TABLE 6.8: Proportion of Celibates. Parish of Vila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1800 to 1900.

| Year Period	Females			Males		
	N° deaths	>=45 years	>=50 years	N° deaths	>=45 years	>=50 years
		%	%		%	%
1860-1864	185	13.51	13.51	127	3.94	3.94
1865-1869	301	9.63	8.97	239	4.60	4.60
1870-1874	276	8.33	7.97	267	1.87	1.87
1875-1870	292	6.16	6.16	292	2.40	2.05
1880-1884	324	6.17	6.17	264	1.89	1.89
1885-1889	344	10.76	9.01	283	2.47	2.47
1890-1894	330	10.00	9.39	312	1.92	0.96
1895-1899	358	8.38	7.54	300	1.33	1.33
1900	62	6.45	6.45	66	6.06	4.55
Total	2475	8.85	8.28	2154	2.60	2.37

*total number of deaths with age information.

Souce: Burial Registers, Vila do Conde.

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[6] Bandeira, 1996: 283.

The last point I would like to mention is about the relationship between age at first marriage and the presence of the father. There appears to have been some relationship between parents' age at death and the mean age at marriage of both sons and daughters in Vila do Conde (Figures 6.7 and 6.8). Brides and grooms with no father, mother or both, married earlier than those whose parents were still alive. Most of those who have lost their fathers prior to their marriage were working in primary and secondary occupations (42 and 36%, respectively), that means the less wealthy people working in more physically demanding jobs.

Figure 6.7: Bride's Mean Age at First Marriage by five year period, and if parents were alive or not by the time of the marriage. . Parish of Vila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1855 to 1899. (those marrying as single only)

Source: Marriages Registers, Parish of Vila do Conde.
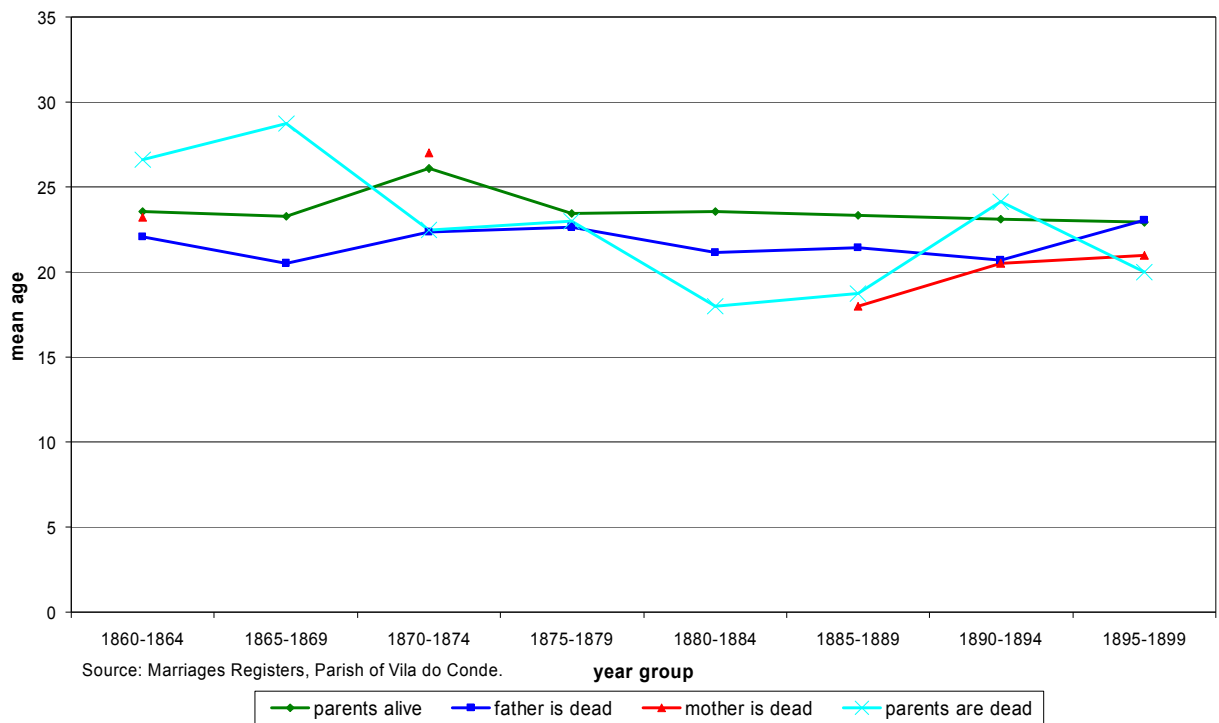
Figure6.8: Groom's Mean Age at First Marriage by five year period, and if parents were alive or not by the time of the marriage. . Parish of Vila do Conde, Porto District, Portugal, 1855 to 1899. (those marrying as single only)

Source: Marriages Registers, Parish of Vila do Conde.
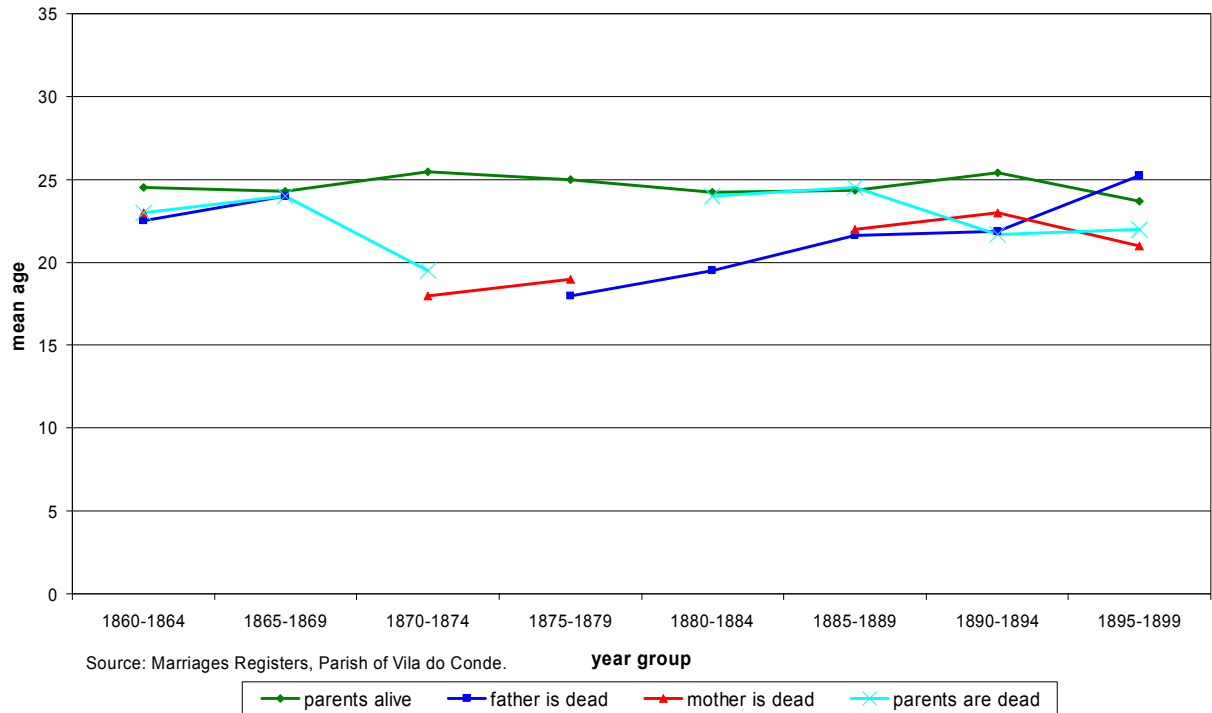
Conclusions:

According to the analysis exposed, the determinants of the age at first marriage in Vila do Conde were not only place of residence (rural/urban), gender, if immigrant or not, but also occupation and the presence of father. All these factors seem to have impacted on the decision of getting married. But was it also true for other populations in northern Portugal? This final section aims a comparative analysis of nuptiality patterns in other parishes in an attempt to delineate a picture of marital behaviour in northern Portugal.

The investigation of nuptiality in Vila do Conde brought up two important conclusions. First, that Vila do Conde, as an urban place, presented very low mean ages at first marriage, if compared to the region average. In other words, a higher proportion of young people were getting marriage there when compared to the District of Porto as a whole. Second, that differences in marital behaviour was certainly related to the occupation of the groom, which could be considered as a proxy of social status. Social expectations and economic insertion were definitely affecting the decision of when to get married.

The mean ages at first marriage in the parish of Vila do Conde were much lower than those of the Porto District's calculated by Rowland[7] (Tables 3.6 and 3.7). Grooms and Brides in Vila do Conde married at younger ages than the District's average. This difference could be related to the fact that Vila do Conde was a urban centre and the high mean ages for the District reflected the higher mean ages at marriage foreseen in rural areas.

Brettell[8], studying marriage patterns in the parish of Lanheses[9], calculates the mean age at marriage for the period between 1700 and 1970. For the nineteenth century, she presents bachelor groom's mean ages of 28.7 years for the first decade of the century, that fell to 26.3 in the 1830s, and rose to 31.9 in the 1890s. For the spinster brides the mean age at marriage was 27.1 between 1800 and 1809, fell to 25.8 in the 1820s, rose to 30 between 1860 and 1879, and started a steady fall in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Well, it is clear that the mean ages at marriage in Lanheses are considerably higher than in Vila do Conde. Even when comparing to the District,

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[7] Rowland, 1997:105-106.
[8] Brettell, 1986:101.
[9] The parish of Laneses is located in the Concelho of Viana do Castelo, which is located in the District of Viana do Castelo.

Lanheses presented higher mean ages at marriage then the District of Viana do Castelo as a whole (see Tables 3.6 and 3.7).

In another case study, O'Neill[10] calculates the mean age of first marriage in the hamlet of Fontelas[11] between 1870 and 1978. The mean age of grooms was of 32.1 years in the decade of 1870, rose to 35.3 in the next decade, and fell to 30.9 in the last decade of the century. For the brides, the mean age at first marriage was of 34.4 years in the 1870s, fell to 32.2 in the next decade and fell again to 27.1 in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Also in this case the numbers are higher than those calculated for the District of Vila Real as a whole.

Scott[12], studying the parish of Sao Tiago do Ronfe[13], calculates the mean age at first marriage for grooms during the first half of the nineteenth century of 27.4, and 27 years for the second half. For the brides the ages were 29.1 and 27.7. In this case the data was grouped in long periods, and cannot be compared with the district ages, but it is still higher than the ages found for Vila do Conde.

Pereira[14] calculated the mean age at first marriage for the parish of Cedofeita, in the city of Porto, for the years of 1881 and 1882. In this case, grooms had 24.2 years and brides 23.5. The numbers here are closer to those for Vila do Conde than the other cases.

The parishes of Lanheses, Fontelas and Sao Tiago do Ronfe have in common the fact that they are all rural areas localized in the northern part of Portugal, far from the coast. All three parishes had smaller populations than Vila do Conde. According to the Portuguese Census of 1864, Lanheses had 1.044 residents, Ronfe had 888, and the parish

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[10] O'Neill, Brian Juan. *Social Inequality in a Portuguese Hamlet:* land, late marriage and bastardy, 1870-1978. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987: 273.
[11] The hamlet of Fontelas belongs to the Parish of Mosteiro, which is located in the Distric of Bragança.
[12] Scott, Ana Silvia Volpi. *Familias, Formas de Uniao e Reproducao Social no Noroeste Portugues (seculos xviii e xix)*. Guimaraes: Neps – Universidade do Minho, 1999: 200-201.
[13] The parish of Sao Tiago do Ronfe is located in the Concelho of Guimaraes, which is located in the Distric of Braga.
[14] Pereira, Gaspar Martins. Casamento e condiçao social no Porto oitocentista. Revista da Faculdade de Letras – Historia II Série (XIII), 1996: 475-488. p. 485.

of Mosteiro, where Fontelas is located, had 607 residents. Vila do Conde was an urban centre placed by the coast and had 4.127 residents in the same year of 1864. The parish of Cedofeita, instead, was located in the biggest urban concentration of northern Portugal, the city of Porto, and had a population of 11.828 residents in 1864.

Different life conditions and expectations had probably affected the decision of getting married. In the countryside land was essential for subsistence. Inheritance was almost the only possibility of getting land. So in order to compose a family land was compulsory. Of course, the wait for inheritance was just feasible once the parents had any land or property. As Brettell[15] points out, many rural families 'owned very little land or none at all, inheritance of property from father or mother would certainly have mattered little'. In this case, Brettell argues that the marriage postponement were related to the 'desire of parents to maintain the labor or potential income of unmarried children (…) for as long as possible'.

In the city, instead, there was no land. Most of the people worked in secondary or tertiary economic sectors and did not have to wait to get married. In coastal cities, as Vila do Conde and Porto, there was still the possibility of fishing, but in this case the sea was opened to anyone, without the need to inherit it. The young ages at first marriage in Cedofeita goes in accordance with the hypothesis of differential ages for urban and rural populations. However, it just cover the years of 1881 and 1882, More research must be done in other urban centres to a better understand of the relationship between nuptiality and socio-economic conditions. The population size of urban villages has probably scared other historians to study it. I personally agree that the numbers are really scary, but it would be important for the Portuguese Historiography to compose a more clear scenario of the demography of urban areas in the nineteenth century.

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[15] Brettell, 1986: 110.

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Vila do Conde presents two different scenarios from what concerns spouses' age gap. Firstly, high proportions of young women are getting married to older men. Why young brides enter marriages with older men? An answer to this question requires some considering of the role played by male return migration. Some of those young males left for Brazil have also returned. They were no longer young but they were probably wealthier than those living in the village. Alves[16] shows that although the return migration was not as huge it was the opposite flux, it was still important. Alves estimates that the number of returned emigrants would be of 2.416 in 1858, 2860 in 1859, 3.971 in 1860, and 3.828 in 1861. Moreover, the majority of returned migrants had succeed in Brazil and brought to their fortunes to Portugal. Monteiro[17] presents very well this phenomenon in his study of the parish of Fafe. According to him, returned migrants had brought not only wealth but also prosperity and modernity. Hence, they would be in better financial conditions than many of their parish fellows. In the case they were still single, they would had a privilege post in the marriage market.

The second scenario is high proportions of women getting marriage to younger men. In the years of 1870 to 1874 , 22 percent of the brides were six or more years older than their grooms. This was the highest peak, but the proportions are high during the whole period of observation. The same can be seen in the rural Parish of Lanheses. Brettell argues that this phenomenon was an effect of the Portuguese inheritance system, which gave equal rights for males and females. For a young man the marriage with a older women would be advantageous. The wife would already have established a household, and would probably have received her inheritance. According to Brettell, a great part of those women marring in late ages 'were the ones that had remained with their parents until their death and were therefore the recipients of the 'terços''[18]. The same could be said for the older brides from Vila do Conde. They would be attractive to

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[16] Alves, 1994: 251.
[17] Monteiro, 2000:321.
[18] Brettell 1986: 127.

young males, especially those that came from rural areas in search of opportunities in the urban centre.

Differential marital behaviour by place of birth was another interesting finding. Brides born in other *Concelhos* had higher mean ages at first marriage than those born in the village. In the opposite direction, grooms originally from other parishes were younger than those born in Vila do Conde. It seems to be the case in which women delay their marriage in order to migrate to the urban centre, whilst young men find in the urban centre the chance towards prosperity through getting married to older women.

Young males that immigrated to the village were probably inserted in the secondary economic sector, since most of them have probably moved there to escape from rural areas. Hence, couples with brides older than grooms would have probably been inserted in the secondary economic sector. This is confirmed by the comparative analysis of mean ages at first marriage by economic sector. Couples from the primary and the tertiary sector presented more stability in the age gap over the period in focus, while those from the secondary sector exposed a great variation. Another noteworthy point is the age gap varied according to the economic sector of the groom. Those working in the primary sector presented a very small gap, whereas those from the tertiary sector had bigger gaps.

Pereira[19], studying families from Porto over the last two decades of the nineteenth century, concludes that couples from the 'Superior Class'[20] had higher proportions of grooms much older than brides. Those from 'popular Class' instead, had very similar ages. Pereira[21] argues that the 'Superior Class' adopted some socio-economic strategies for the maintenance of the family patrimony and status. The groom

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[19] Pereira, Gaspar Martins. *Familias portuenses na viragem do seculo (1880-1910).* Porto: Edicoes Afrontamento, 1995: 214-215.
[20] Pereira had classified occupations in three different groups: Superior Class (owners, capitalists), Medium Class (owners of small plots of land or small business, artisans, state employees) and Popular Class (labours, servants, fishermen, beggars).
[21] Pereira, 1995: 218.

from this class had to get ready, had to achieve its maturity to be able to constitute a solid marriage. The bride, instead, had to be younger, 'pure', and virgin. It was a kind of alliance in which the names of the families would been preserved. In the case of the 'Popular Class', Pereira argues that both spouses were young because in an urban centre there was no land to cultivated and so they would need to look for a job in young ages, reducing the father control over them.

Celibacy is another demographic event that calls for attention. Vila do Conde presented lower proportion of definitive spinsters and bachelors when compared to other parishes. For the parish of Sao Thiago de Rofe, Scott[22] estimates that 35,5 percent of the women were celibate during the first half of the nineteenth century. By the second half of the century the proportion falls abruptly to just over 10 percent. However this last estimative was calculated on information of just 18 women, what is certainly affecting the results. For the parish of Lanheses, Brettell[23] estimates that female celibacy was of 33.9 percent in 1860-1869, 33.3 in 1870-1879, 18.2 in 1880-1889, and 24.3 in the last decade of the century. For the year of 1881, Pereira [24]estimates that 17 percent of the women were celibate in the parish of Cedofeita (Porto). Although, he points out that this figure would vary according to the occupation of the head of the household.

What does seem apparent is that rural areas had high incidence of celibacy than urban areas. It is probably related to the fact that in the countryside the need for land was crucial for the composition of a new household[25]. The lack of land for everyone would generate just two options for those without land: emigration and celibacy. The men were going for the first option, while the women were left behind alone. Low sex ratios had certainly contributed to celibacy, since there were just not enough males available.

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[22] Scott, 1999:204-205.
[23] Brettell, 1986: 132.
[24] Pereira, 1995: 208-209.
[25] See Brandao, 1988.

Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that in Portugal celibacy was not synonymous of sex abstinence. The impossibility of marriage did not stop people from having sex and babies.

The final point to discuss is the relationship between having a father and getting marriage. This finding accords with findings from other case studies concerning inheritance practices in northwest Portugal. Brettell[26], studying the parish of Lanheses, affirms that in the case when 'individuals relied upon land for their livelihood, each new generation had to await the passing on (or retirement) of an earlier generation before it could assume control of the family patrimony.' In this case, rural areas would present higher mean ages at marriage. What the study of Vila do Conde suggest is that not only those in need for land would postpone marriage when the father was still alive, but it seems to happens in general to everyone. Presence of parents, in special of the father, was definitely a strong determinant of the age at first marriage, so it was to emigration.

The analysis of nuptiality in Vila do Conde has pointed to the necessity of more studies about the demographic differences between rural and urban centres. It seems clear that these two areas cannot be treated as the same.

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[26] Brettell, 1986: 109.