

Colonial America: The Gateway to Barcelona's Fashion Rise

Alrizky R. Rachmansyah Putra¹

¹Barcelona Program for International Students, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain,
alriskiptr@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Barcelona is today recognized as a major fashion capital, with many notable shopping districts playing host to some of the most notable and prestigious fashion brands in the world. The city has witnessed the start and rise of some of the most influential names in the industry and is ranked in the top 5 of the most important fashion capitals on earth. This status is thanks to the success of Barcelona and Catalonia's cotton and textile industry from the 18th - 20th centuries, which allowed for the city's fashion scene to flourish and become what it is today. However, it is impossible to talk about this success without mentioning the impact of trade relations between Catalonia and Colonial America. In this article, I wish to elaborate on the history of Catalonia's textile industry and the impact that trade with Colonial America had on its evolution to allow the region to industrialize at a rapid pace and sustain a burgeoning fashion industry in Barcelona.

Keywords: *Barcelona fashion industry; Catalan textile industry; Colonial American trade*

ABSTRAK

Barcelona hari ini dikenal sebagai salah satu pusat mode terbesar di dunia, dengan beragam distrik belanja yang memajang produk dari merek-merek ternama di muka bumi. Ibukota Katalonia ini telah melihat awal dan kebangkitan nama-nama paling berpengaruh di dunia mode dan memegang peringkat sebagai kota mode kelima terpenting. Status ini mereka peroleh berkat kesuksesan industri tekstil Katalonia dan Barcelona dari abad ke-18 hingga ke-20, yang membiarkan industri mode kota tersebut untuk berkembang. Namun, mustahil untuk membahas kesuksesan ini tanpa menyinggung pengaruh dari hubungan perdagangan antara Katalonia dan Amerika Kolonial. Dalam artikel ini, saya berharap untuk mengelaborasi sejarah industri tekstil Katalonia dan pengaruh dari interaksi dengan Amerika Kolonial terhadap perkembangannya yang membiarkan kawasan tersebut untuk melakukan industrialisasi dalam skala yang cepat dan mengembangkan sebuah industri mode di Barcelona.

Kata Kunci: *Industri mode Barcelona, industri tekstil Katalonia; perdagangan Amerika Kolonial*

Introduction

Barcelona is widely considered today as one of the world's leading fashion capitals, with various eclectic fashion houses and designers setting up shop in its streets and a signature Mediterranean style that truly exemplifies Southern European charm.¹ From hosting some of the most notable fashion districts in the planet, to being the starting point for some of the most influential names in the industry, names which include the likes of Jeanne Lanvin and Cristóbal Balenciaga, Barcelona has risen through the ranks to become the fifth most important fashion hub in the world, as reported by the Global

¹ Yusufcan Bulut, "Top Fashion Cities around the World," Istanbul Fashion Center, July 26, 2024, https://istanbulfashioncenter.com/blogs/news/top-fashion-cities-around-the-world?srltid=AfmBOorrdZ0XgemlholnRF3kpTmABE3JBM04N_A1lcqvbCMOJz5MYpP1.

Language Monitor in 2014.² This status was obtained thanks in part to the boom of Barcelona, and as a whole, Catalonia's cotton and textile industry that started from the 1800s. This textile boom, alongside the development of other industries, was the leading spark that led to the rapid industrialization of Catalonia and subsequent urbanization of Barcelona.³ It can be argued that without the rapid growth of this sector, Barcelona and Catalonia would not be as highly prominent within the modern world as it is today.

The history of Catalonia's dynamic textile industry can be traced back all the way to the imported printed cotton (calicoes or "indianas") ban of Spain in 1728, which encouraged the growth of domestic cotton production. Due to this ban, local merchants in Barcelona invested heavily on the development of calico manufacturing, and by the 1780s, Catalonia's textile industry had grown to such an extent that they were producing nearly two-thirds of the cotton cloths being manufactured in England, which was nothing short of astonishing. It was to the point that the city was dubbed as "the Manchester from Southern Europe".⁴ From the proto-industrialization of the industry, production of Barcelona-made indianas, the introduction of the steam-powered machines to the production of textiles, and the industrial revolution, the Catalan textile and fashion industries continued to rise in importance and prominence.⁵ However, one event that I would make a case for to be the true kickstarter to the industry's golden period, as well as Catalonia and Barcelona's growth, is the beginning of trade between the region and the New World, i.e. Colonial America. Through the interaction of goods and people between these two parts of the world, many pivotal developments within Catalonia's history, society, economy, and politics took shape, and it is also here where Barcelona's fashion scene took its first steps into the international market.

However, Catalonia was far from being the only European power to trade with the New World. Other nations such as The Netherlands, The UK, France, Portugal, Sweden, and Denmark were also racing to extract the resources of Colonial America to enrich their own coffers, improve their standing in the continent, and spread their influence.⁶ This period not only saw a brand new level of resource extraction and slave exploitation by the European powers in order to carve out the new order in the new continent, but also the blooming of multiple industries in Europe due to the access to American resources. For Portugal, Spain, and the UK, sugar was the most prized commodity to be extracted from the Americas, with Portuguese Brazil, Spanish Central and South America, and British Caribbean being major hotspots for sugar production and employed hundreds of thousands of African and Amerindian slaves in the plantations.⁷ Meanwhile, at a much smaller scale, Sweden and Denmark were also in the market for cash crops such as tobacco and rum that they obtained from trading with other European powers. Since the colonial holdings of these two kingdoms were not sufficient to operate large-scale

² Ian Mount, "Barcelona Has Transformed Itself into a Design Mecca," *Financial Times*, March 30, 2014, <https://www.ft.com/content/30fb04fa-b021-11e3-b0d0-00144feab7de>.

³ "Steam and the Nation," Museu d'Història de Catalunya, accessed November 18, 2024, https://www.mhcat.cat/enmhc/exhibitions/the_memory_of_a_country/steam_and_the_nation.

⁴ Richard Herr, "A Distinctive Industrialization: Cotton in Barcelona, 1728-1832.," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 25, no. 2 (1994), <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A16315162/AONE?u=anon~1e4d4a27&sid=googleScholar&id=f8307a3d>.

⁵ Alejandro Sánchez Suárez, Jaume Artigues, and Francesc Mas, *Indianes, 1736-1847: Els Orígens de La Barcelona Industrial* (Barcelona, Spain: Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2013).

⁶ "Motivations for Colonization," *National Geographic*, October 2, 2024, <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/motivations-colonization/10th-grade/>.

⁷ Harry Magdof, Charles E. Nowell, and Richard A. Webster, "Western Colonialism," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, April 11, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Western-colonialism>.

plantations and production operations of these goods, Denmark and Sweden were limited in their exploitative capabilities.⁸

This reality brings to light a question on how and why did Catalonia, which was a part of the Spanish Empire at this point, managed to differentiate its own operations in the New World from the rest of Spain and went on a whole different path of development than its Iberian neighbors, instead of conforming with the economic dealings and growth with the rest of the Spanish kingdom. By this point, with the signing of the Nueva Planta Decree in 1716, Catalan independence was pretty much stomped out and they have been forced to comply with the ruling of a centralized Spanish authority, and thus, it would have been logical to assume that foreign relations between Catalonia and outside parties would have to conform with the policies set out by Madrid.⁹ However, that was not what happened and Catalonia went on to carve out its own growth and development trajectory from the rest of Spain due to its distinct relationship with Colonial America.

Research Question

With Barcelona's current status as not only one of the most important economic and cultural centers in the world, but also a leading global capital in fashion, this paper is going to look into its modern history in order to answer the question of **why did trade with Colonial America jumpstart Barcelona's rise as a fashion hub?**

As alluded to in the previous part, the trade relationship between Catalonia and Colonial America was a major turning point in the development of modern-day Catalan society, and thus, in order to ensure that the topic of discussion within this paper does not stray too far from its original intentions, I would be limiting this paper to discussing the impact of the Catalan-American trade relationship on the region's textile trade and industry and how it lead to the rise of Barcelona's fashion scene.

Theoretical Framework & Hypothesis

In order to answer the research question of this article, the writer would be employing the use of the Conflict Theory. This framework of thinking argues that distinct social groups, with their own varying degrees of wealth and resources, are always in direct competition with each other for access over said resources and that these conflicts are catalysts for social changes and development. However, this theory also posits that this unequal access to resources and wealth also exacerbates how different societies perceive others compared to themselves and determine their branching path of development.¹⁰ In the case of the trade relationship between Catalonia and Colonial America, the Conflict Theory argues that the repression of Catalan society by the Kingdom of Spain created an unequal access to resources and wealth between the two entities, and thus created a different socioeconomic environment that is distinct in Catalonia which necessitates an entirely different demand for resources and trade requirements from the rest of Spain.

⁸ Astrid Nonbo Andersen, "The Nordic Countries Face a Colonial Reckoning," *Current History* 123, no. 851 (March 1, 2024): 95–100, <https://doi.org/10.1525/curh.2024.123.851.95>.

⁹ "Decree of the Nueva Planta of the Audience of the Principality of Catalonia (1716)," History Lab, February 19, 2022, <https://historylab.es/decreo-of-the-nueva-planta-of-the-audience-of-the-principality-of-catalonia-1716/>.

¹⁰ Arditya Prayogi, "Social Change in Conflict Theory: A Descriptive Study," *ARRUS Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (April 11, 2023): 37–42, <https://doi.org/10.35877/soshum1652>.

Using the theory above, a number of hypotheses can be drawn regarding the Research Question. The first one is that due to the different state of economic prosperity and development in Catalonia compared to the rest of Spain at the time, it could have created an environment where luxury industries such as fashion could prosper. This hypothesis is supported within articles such as “*The Catalan commercial integration with early modern Europe, 1630–1778*” by Carles Manera, Jose Perez-Montiel, Oguzhan Ozcelebi, and Andreu Seguí¹¹, “*The Diverse Growth of 18th-Century Catalonia: Proto-Industrialisation*” by Ferrer Alos Llorenç¹², and “*Agricultural Progress and the Economic Background in Eighteenth-Century Catalonia*” by P. Vilar¹³, where the authors highlight how Catalan society and bourgeoisies were some of the richest and most mercantilist in all of Southern Europe thanks to the lucrative export of brandy and wine to the rapidly industrializing Northern Europe. This could have allowed the region to gain access to wealth and resources from the New World in a way that few other regions in Spain could compete with, making them one of the richest regions in the Mediterranean and the increase in demand of high quality goods was able to support the development of industries such as fashion.

Another hypothesis that can be made is that geopolitical tension at the time could have left Catalonia cut off from the rest of the global trade network and access to valuable imports, and thus the access to the Colonial American resources helped to remedy that shortage. This hypothesis is supported with written works such as “*Trade and Empire, 1700-1870*” by Daudin, Guillaume, Kevin Hjortshøj O’Rourke, and Leandro Prados de la Escosura¹⁴, “*The Development of Free Trade in Europe*” by Gene A. King, Jr.¹⁵, “*The Rise of Free Trade in Western Europe, 1820-1875*” by C. P. Kindleberger¹⁶, and “*Eighteenth-Century International Trade Statistics*” by Loïc Charles and Guillaume Daudin¹⁷, where they highlighted the rampant taxation and restriction of colonial goods from Asia and processed products from competing kingdoms were driven by the desire to protect their own domestic markets and encourage the development of homegrown industries. This is especially prevalent in Catalonia, who had been importing goods from British Malta and India such as wool and printed textiles respectively due to a lack of naturally-grown cotton before the ban of said products enacted by the Kingdom of Spain. This meant that a supply hole was left and that the import of New World cotton could have been what filled it.

The last assumption that can be made is that the conflict of interests between the isolationist policies of the Spanish Kingdom and the demand of textile products by the increasingly wealthy Catalan citizens may have driven merchants in Barcelona to change their trading strategies with Colonial America and other regions to supply the growth of a domestic textile industry. As supported by articles

¹¹ Carles Manera et al., “The Catalan Commercial Integration with Early Modern Europe, 1630–1778,” *Applied Economic Analysis* 33, no. 97 (October 11, 2024): 35–52, <https://doi.org/10.1108/aea-11-2023-0444>.

¹² Ferrer Alos Llorenç, “The Diverse Growth of 18th-Century Catalonia: Proto-Industrialisation,” *Catalan Historical Review*, October 2012, 67–84, <https://doi.org/10.2436/20.1000.01.71>.

¹³ P. Vilar, “Agricultural Progress and the Economic Background in Eighteenth-Century Catalonia,” *The Economic History Review* 11, no. 1 (1958): 113–20, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2591686>.

¹⁴ Daudin, Guillaume, Kevin Hjortshøj O’Rourke, and Leandro Prados de la Escosura. *Trade and Empire, 1700 - 1870*. Paris, France: OFCE, 2008.

¹⁵ Gene A. King, “The Development of Free Trade in Europe,” Hillsdale College, 2008, <https://www.hillsdale.edu/educational-outreach/free-market-forum/2008-archive/the-development-of-free-trade-in-europe/#:~:text=The%20eighteenth%20and%20early%20nineteenth,to%20protect%20nascent%20domestic%20industries>.

¹⁶ Charles P. Kindleberger, *The Rise of Free Trade in Western Europe, 1820-1875* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: M.I.T., 1974).

¹⁷ Loïc Charles and Guillaume Daudin, “Eighteenth-Century International Trade Statistics,” *Revue de l’OFCE* 140, no. 4 (July 9, 2015): 7–36, <https://doi.org/10.3917/reof.140.0007>.

such as “*Barcelona Business Interests and the Atlantic World*” by Yolanda Blasco-Martel and Jose Miguel Sanjuan Marroquin¹⁸, “*Colonial Reckoning: Reexamining the Slave Past in Catalonia*” by Gerard Llorens Decesaris and Adrià Enríquez Àlvaro¹⁹, as well as “*Catalan Business and the Loss of Cuba, 1898-1914*” by R. J. Harrison²⁰, through the establishment of the Royal Barcelona Trading Company, merchants from Catalonia were able to secure valuable resources and technology from Colonial America and Great Britain, importing New World products and steam technology from British workers to Barcelona. This influx of new goods and the rising demand for high-end textile products may have become the catalyst for Catalonia's textile industry and, subsequently, Barcelona's own fashion scene.

Methodology

In constructing the materials for this research paper, I will be utilizing the Literature Analysis Method. According to the definition, the Literature Analysis Method is a research method which dissects relevant documents and other communication media in order to collect info pertaining to a specific subject matter.²¹ Researchers that use this method of analysis utilizes existing literature from others to discover the development of the subject matter, explore the existing ideas in the field, and to identify the research gap that could be expanded upon by the researchers' own written work. The advantage of this method is that it can be employed for both qualitative and quantitative research. By using the method of Literature Analysis, the researcher will look into observing and studying from related documents, news articles, journals, and online videos regarding why Catalonia's trade relationship with Colonial America is so quintessential in the evolution of its cotton industry and how it snowballed into the blooming of Barcelona's fashion scene. The reason behind this decision is due to the historic nature of the topic and the need to rely on documentations made by historians and scholars regarding the events in order to be able to come to a satisfying answer to the research question of this paper. As previously stated, media such as documents, academic journals, research literatures, news articles, and such will be the main sources of information for this research paper. All of these sources will be analyzed in order to draw the most valid and relevant information that can answer the research question set by the researcher of this paper.

Analysis

A. Catalan's Prosperity and the Demand for Textiles

One of the biggest contributors to Catalonia's prosperous development that differentiate itself from the other regions of Spain is its 18th century farming revolution. This revolution was supported by Catalonia's land ownership structure. Compared to Southern Spain, where land ownership was majority owned by large estates, Catalonia and other Northern regions were characterized by smaller

¹⁸ Yolanda Blasco-Martel and Jose Miguel Sanjuan Marroquin, “Barcelona Business Interests and the Atlantic World,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History*, September 30, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.013.739>.

¹⁹ Gerard Llorens Decesaris and Adrià Enríquez Àlvaro, *Colonial Reckoning: Reexamining the Slave Past in Catalonia* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2025)

²⁰ R. J. Harrison, “Catalan Business and the Loss of Cuba, 1898-1914,” *The Economic History Review* 27, no. 3 (August 1974): 431–41, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2593383>.

²¹ “Literature Reviews,” Auraria Library, April 4, 2025, <https://guides.auraria.edu/researchmethods/literaturereviews#:~:text=Problem%20formulation,of%20an%20area%20of%20research.>

landholdings.²² This system allowed for the evolution of a different social structure characterized by a broader base of landowners and a more diverse agricultural economy. This diversity led to the end of the dominance of the Mediterranean Trilogy crops of grape, wheat, and olive, and introduction of other produce to the farming cycle in the region such as linen, hemp, potato, rice, maize, and nuts in the shift from subsistence to market-oriented agriculture.²³ This diversification is coupled with the adoption of new farming techniques and irrigation technologies to proliferate profitable agricultural practices throughout Catalonia.²⁴ As a result, Catalonia's export industry flourished and it turned Barcelona into a dynamic trade city with a rising bourgeoisie and worker class as wages throughout the region increased, leading to Catalonia's middle class becoming some of the wealthiest in the entire Mediterranean region.

Aside from agricultural exports, Catalonia also developed a robust alcoholic beverage industry, with vineyards spread throughout the region allowing for the production of high quality wine and brandy which were in high demand in Northern Europe. Through Barcelona, merchants and farmers developed an extensive network of trade routes to cities in Northern Europe and the Caribbean and, by 1736, the region generated massive profits from the increasing demand of brandy and wine of the Mediterranean. The ensuing prosperity from this heightened exportation of alcoholic beverages led to the increase in demand for manufactured goods such as printed cloth in the region.²⁵ This increase in demand jump started the first indiana printing ventures in Barcelona, using the technique of stamping wooden moulds on linen traded from Amsterdam. As the demand from the brandy and wine trade to Northern Europe increased, so did the profit garnered by Catalan merchants, who used the capital to develop a fleet of trading ships to increase the traffic of their goods being traded around the world.²⁶ Through this expansion of trading armada and Catalonia's lucrative exportation of alcoholic beverages and agricultural products, the cotton industry continued to expand as it met the growing demand of printed textiles by the increasingly prosperous locals.

The aforementioned demand for printed textiles manifested in the form of a small cotton industry centralized in Barcelona, where Amsterdam linen were brought in by merchants. These early textile factories were in the form of workshops built into the ground floor of buildings in the city and were mainly undertaken by entrepreneurial merchants, shopkeepers or artisans who saw the booming market for printed textiles.²⁷ However, with the increasing population of Catalonia that coincided with the region's increasing wealth, the burgeoning industry expanded beyond the walls of Barcelona by the 1800s and soon operations began to take place in cities such as Manresa, Mataró, Olot, and Reus.²⁸

²² Alfonso Díez-Minguela, Julio Martínez-Galarraga, and Daniel A. Tirado-Fabregat, "Regional Income Inequality in Spain 1860–2015," *Regional Inequality in Spain*, 2018, 81–103, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96110-1_4.

²³ Julio Martínez-Galarraga and Marc Prat, "Inequality in Rural Catalonia in the Early Eighteenth Century," *Cliometrica* 19, no. 1 (July 20, 2024): 195–247, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11698-024-00289-0>.

²⁴ Jaume Freire-González and Ignasi Puig-Ventosa, "Effects of the Hydraulic Infrastructure on Economic Growth: Evidence from Catalonia," *Sustainable Water Resources Management* 2, no. 2 (April 4, 2016): 199–206, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40899-016-0052-9>.

²⁵ Francesc Valls-Junyent, *La Catalunya Atlàntica: Aiguardent i Teixits a l'arrencada Industrial Catalana Francesc Valls Junyent ; Pròleg de Jordi Nadal* (Vic, Spain: Eumo, 2004).

²⁶ Carlos Martínez Shaw, *Agricultura, Comercio Colonial y Crecimiento Económico En La España Contemporánea: Actas Del Primer Coloquio de Historia Económica de España (Barcelona, 11-12 de Mayo de 1972)* (Barcelona, Spain: Editorial Ariel, 1974).

²⁷ James K. J. Thomson, *The Catalan Calico-Printing Industry Compared Internationally* (Anuari de la Societat Catalana d'Economia, 1998).

²⁸ J. K. J. Thomson, *A Distinctive Industrialization: Cotton in Barcelona 1728-1832* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Then, with the later introduction of American cotton in the early 19th century, Barcelona's textile industry only boomed even further, as New World materials were being introduced and added to the production of Barcelona-printed textiles and made them an even bigger hit.²⁹ All in all, this type of industrial evolution would not have been possible without the existence of a wealthy middle and bourgeois class such as those in Catalonia, who demanded for fine goods and ultimately laid the groundwork for textile, and later fashion, industries to develop in Barcelona.

B. Textile Ban and New World Cotton

At the later end of the 17th century, particularly 1668, the British East India Company was shifting its focus from a predominantly spice-dominated trade with the Indian subcontinent to textile, with the kingdom acknowledging that Indian printed textiles were some of the best in the world and is highly sought after by Europeans.³⁰ This trade allowed for Indian textile products to flood into Europe and, subsequently, ruined domestic producers who could not compete with the higher quality, cheaper commodities. As a response, multiple kingdoms introduced protectionist measures to secure their domestic markets, with Britain implementing import duties on textile products brought over from India in 1690, and a ban on printed Indian textiles in 1701. Spain followed suit in 1717 with a ban on all Asian textiles and later followed up with banning European imitations in 1728.³¹ Due to this ban on Indian printed textiles, and thanks to Catalonia's remarkable ability to adapt to market changes and trade restriction, Barcelona managed to become Europe's leading printed textile producers, with 113 manufactures compared to 111 in Britain and 114 in France.³²

Not long after the ban on Indian textiles, another major global conflict between the European powers nearly sabotaged Catalonia's textile industry. The Seven Years' War (1756-1763) was one of the most significant conflicts in history, with the outcome reshaping the global order and realigned political allyship between European powers.³³ This rearranging of alliances had major implications on trade patterns and colonial holdings for everybody in Europe, including Catalonia. Due to the numerous fighting going on, trade networks between both continents suffered severe disruption.³⁴ Not only were the trade line between Catalonia and America jeopardized, but the yarn trade between the region and Malta were also severed when the island fell into British hands in 1802, which forced Catalonia, who up until that point had only spun and weaved cotton by hand, to become self-sufficient.³⁵ The alcoholic beverage exports to Northern Europe were also heavily impacted due to maritime fighting between the

²⁹ J. K. Thomson, "The Spanish Trade in American Cotton: Atlantic Synergies in the Age of Enlightenment," *Revista de Historia Económica / Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History* 26, no. 2 (September 2008): 277–313, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0212610900000343>.

³⁰ S. N. Broadberry and Bishnupriya Gupta, *Cotton Textiles and the Great Divergence: Lancashire, India, and Shifting Competitive Advantage, 1600-1850* (London, United Kingdom: Centre for Economic Policy Research, 2005).

³¹ Joobin Bekhrad, "The Floral Fabric That Was Banned," BBC News, February 24, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20200420-the-cutesy-fabric-that-was-banned>

³² Julio Martínez-Galarraga and Marc Prat, "Wages and Prices in Early Catalan Industrialisation," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2014, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2404970>.

³³ Igor Radulovic, "The Seven Years' War: The Greatest Conflict of the 18th Century," *TheCollector*, December 8, 2021, <https://www.thecollector.com/seven-years-war-18-century/>.

³⁴ David Ringrose, *Spain, Europe and the Spanish Miracle, 1700–1900* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

³⁵ James K. J. Thompson, "Transferencia Tecnológica En La Industria Algodonera Catalana: De La Indianas a La Selfactina," *Revista de Historia Industrial*, 2003, <https://raco.cat/index.php/HistoriaIndustrial/article/view/63526/86905>.

great powers, and coupled with the increasing competition of Russian vodka and Scottish whisky, the Catalan export market seemed to be losing the battle on many fronts.³⁶

Due to this state of urgency, entrepreneurs from Barcelona quickly course corrected. With now being limited to the Spanish domestic market, cotton merchants quickly opted for the adoption of new cotton spinning machines from England in order to reduce the cost of production and gain market share. This process of automation in the production of indianas started with the first spinning jenny utilized in Barcelona in 1785, then followed by the first water frame in 1793, to the arrival of the first spinning mule in 1806.³⁷ Through the introduction of these new technologies, indiana production in Catalonia recovered to such an extent that by 1820, it returned to the 1792 levels, but now using locally produced cotton yarn. By 1815 there were a total of 40 mules and jennies and by 1829 there were 410 mules and 30 jennies in Barcelona.³⁸ With the introduction of spinning technology into the fold, indiana production spread from Barcelona to the surrounding towns and cities due to the need for water power. Cities such as Igualada and Manresa became important centers for cotton spinning, with the latter city having 11 water-driven spinning mills by 1831. Weaving also spread to other Catalan cities, with Mataró, Berga, Igualada, Reus, Vic, Manresa, Terrassa and Valls having large concentrations of these weaving workshops.³⁹

From 1783 to 1796, after the end of the conflict with Britain and restoration of relations with America, Catalan's trade with the New World entered a golden age thanks to the restoration of American raw cotton supply and the boom of printed textile and linen export to Spain's crown colonies.⁴⁰ By 1792, Catalonia's cotton weaving sector was equivalent to 16% of that in Britain, which made the region the industrial heartland of the Spanish kingdom and earned the title of "the factory of Spain" by the 19th century.⁴¹ This highlights how important Colonial America is to the development of Catalonia's textile industry, especially after a tumultuous period of conflict in Europe.

The next hallmark moment in the Catalan textile industry's history came during the end of the Cádiz monopoly on trade with the Americas in the last quarter of the 18th century, a period where Catalonia was essentially cut off from trading with the New World by the ruling Bourbon royals.⁴² With the abolishment of this trading barrier, Barcelona merchants were able to utilize their new and improved fleets that they developed thanks to their lucrative alcoholic beverage trade in order to export their products to the American markets and bring in products from the young continent back to Catalonia. This new influx of trade connections between two parts of the world beckoned the creation of the Royal

³⁶ Alex Sánchez and Francesc Vals Junyent, "El Mercado Del Algodón En Barcelona Durante La Crisis Del Antiguo Régimen (1790-1840)," *Revista de Historia Industrial*, no. 58 (1966): 61–93, <https://raco.cat/index.php/HistoriaIndustrial/article/view/297667>.

³⁷ James K. J. Thompson, "Transferencia Tecnológica En La Industria Algodonera Catalana: De La Indianas a La Selfactina," *Revista de Historia Industrial*, 2003, <https://raco.cat/index.php/HistoriaIndustrial/article/view/63526/86905>.

³⁸ Carlo Maria Cipolla, *The Fontana Economic History of Europe* (Glasgow, United Kingdom: Collins/Fontana Books, 1975).

³⁹ J. K. J. Thomson, *A Distinctive Industrialization: Cotton in Barcelona 1728-1832* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁴⁰ Julio Martínez-Galarraga and Marc Prat, "Wages, Prices, and Technology in Early Catalan Industrialization," *The Economic History Review* 69, no. 2 (August 27, 2015): 548–74, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ehr.12127>.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² David Ringrose, *Spain, Europe and the Spanish Miracle, 1700–1900* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Barcelona Trading Company to the Indies, which was a charter company established in 1755 that oversaw all of the direct trade between Catalonia and Colonial America.⁴³

The establishment of economic ties between Catalonia and Colonial America was a pivotal moment in the development of the region's cotton industry, as the increased access to raw cotton gave way for the sector's growth. From the Americas came two types of cotton that are imported, ginned (processed) and unginned cottons, both of which were brought in by the boatloads to Barcelona. The main sources of these New World cottons came from plantations located within a rectangle zone bordered within Havana, Vera Cruz, La Guaira, and Cartagena.⁴⁴ Aside from cotton, other raw materials were brought in from America back to Catalonia that were inputted into the production of the textile industry, with products such as brazilwood and indigo being introduced to Barcelonan indianas. The exchange of resources between the two regions became so lucrative that Catalan merchants would invest heavily in the illicit slave trade to Cuba for some decades after the abolishment of slavery.⁴⁵

C. The Spanish Crown vs Barcelona Merchants

Not only does Catalonia's textile industry face challenges from the outside world, but internal barriers were also imposed on Catalonia ever since their loss in the Spanish War of Succession and the Bourbon Royal House took control of the Kingdom of Spain. Between the mercantilist Spanish kingdom and the entrepreneurial Catalan merchants, a conflict of interest between the two sides would force Catalonia to adapt to institutional challenges in order to meet the growing demands of printed textile in the region and adopt innovative strategies to grow their textile industry, which ultimately laid the groundwork for Barcelona's own fashion industry to develop. In fact, the entire history of contemporary Catalonia was marked by the defiance of the region against the central Spanish authority, with any policy enacted by the government in Madrid would intentionally or unintentionally have a different outcome in Catalonia in comparison to other regions of Spain.

With the centralized economic policies being pushed by the Bourbon royalty in order to promote modernization and centralization of Spain's economy and administration after the Habsburg era, Catalonia was forced into compliance and essentially submission to the government in Madrid. All of this was done in order to ensure that every territory under the control of the crown would be dependent on the government and turn the colonies into markets for Spanish manufactured products.⁴⁶ However, this forced conformity actually ended up becoming a catalyst for the birth of Catalonia's textile industry. As a response to the demand for printed textile by the increasingly wealthy citizens in the region and the ban of all Asian textile products enacted by the government, Catalan merchants based in Barcelona began producing locally produced printed textiles called indianas.⁴⁷ Thus, ironically, the

⁴³ Julio Martínez-Galarraga and Marc Prat, "Wages, Prices, and Technology in Early Catalan Industrialization," *The Economic History Review* 69, no. 2 (August 27, 2015): 548–74, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ehr.12127>.

⁴⁴ J. K. Thomson, "The Spanish Trade in American Cotton: Atlantic Synergies in the Age of Enlightenment," *Revista de Historia Económica / Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History* 26, no. 2 (September 2008): 277–313, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s021261090000343>.

⁴⁵ Alex Sánchez and Francesc Vals Junyent, "El Mercado Del Algodón En Barcelona Durante La Crisis Del Antiguo Régimen (1790-1840)," *Revista de Historia Industrial*, no. 58 (1966): 61–93, <https://raco.cat/index.php/HistoriaIndustrial/article/view/297667>.

⁴⁶ Sergio Ortega Noriega, *Breve Historia de Sinaloa* (Mexico City, Mexico: Colegio de México, Fideicomiso Historia de las Américas : Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999)

⁴⁷ Yolanda Blasco-Martel and Jose Miguel Sanjuan Marroquin, "Barcelona Business Interests and the Atlantic World," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History*, September 30, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.013.739>.

kingdom's plan to promote a centralized economic strategy actually ended up contributing to the start of Catalonia's textile industry and, subsequently, its industrialization and Barcelona's fashion scene.

Another hurdle that Catalan merchants faced was in getting their products to the Spanish American colonies, the biggest market for Catalan manufactured and agricultural goods at the time. This challenge came in the form of the Cádiz Monopoly, a period where all trade between peninsular Spain and Colonial America was restricted to only the port of Cádiz.⁴⁸ This meant that all other ports in the kingdom, including Barcelona, were not permitted to establish direct trade routes between Europe and the Americas. From 1503 until the late 1700s, the monopoly stand, and all ships and cargo bound for the Castilian Indies were funneled through only one official channel in Southern Spain, with this condition being particularly devastating to Catalonia's infant textile industry. In order to overcome these restrictions, Catalan merchants took advantage of every loophole possible, from becoming the majority of ship captains manning the fleets bound for the Americas, smuggling Catalan textiles and American resources through a network of merchants, and most importantly, the establishment of the Royal Barcelona Trading Company to dominate trade to the Spanish West Indies territories of Puerto Rico, Hispaniola and Margarita Island, disseminate business knowledge and trade skills from abroad, as well as advocate for the removal of the monopoly.⁴⁹ Thanks to this persistent effort, Catalan goods were able to secure a strong foothold in the American market and the textile industry was capable of receiving valuable New World cotton despite facing numerous institutional blockades, allowing it to continue growing throughout the monopoly.

Even after the end of the Cádiz Monopoly in 1778, Catalonia's textile industry had already grown to where it could not be stopped, having already established a solid foundation on the domestic market. What the end of the monopoly meant was that it opened the floodgates for a new golden era in the industry. After peace was established in 1783 following the American Revolutionary War, trade between Catalonia and Colonial America outpaced the activities of other Spanish regions in the same period, with records from the Archivo General de Indias detailing Catalan merchants showcasing their remarkable initiative in establishing economic relations with the New Continent to the point where, by the mid-1780s, the region had achieved a majority autonomy for its trade with the Americas. Trade between the two regions became so lucrative that between 1781 and 1799, Barcelona received a total of 27 ships filled with New World cotton every year, a remarkable number at the time.⁵⁰ It is clear that by this point, no matter what centralized policies the government in Madrid tried to impose on the kingdom, Catalonia's merchants and entrepreneurial drive would find a way to persevere.

Now having established themselves as the dominant textile printing manufacturer in the Spanish kingdom thanks in part to the Bourbon royalty's centralization efforts, Catalonia would meet the ever-growing demand of the product from both the region and the rest of Spain by kicking production into next gear with the introduction of imported British steam machines. The steam machine was brought over to Barcelona via skilled British workers after England removed the ban on emigration of export

⁴⁸ Mark A. Burkholder and Lyman L. Johnson, *Colonial Latin America* (New York City, United States: Oxford University Press, 2019).

⁴⁹ J. K. Thomson, "The Spanish Trade in American Cotton: Atlantic Synergies in the Age of Enlightenment," *Revista de Historia Económica / Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History* 26, no. 2 (2008): 277–313, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0212610900000343>.

⁵⁰ "Ships Entering Barcelona Carrying American Cotton, 1781-1799 (in Pounds)," History Lab, February 19, 2022, <https://historylab.es/ships-entering-barcelona-carrying-american-cotton-1781-1799-in-pounds/>.

labor in 1825, with these skilled men opening the Bonaplata Factory.⁵¹ The opening of this first steam-powered factory proved to be invaluable to the rapid industrialization of Barcelona, and Catalonia as a whole, as the company manufactured power looms and spinning machines, alongside providing training for any cotton manufacturers looking to utilize steam machines in exchange for the banning of all cotton imports and the freedom to import certain materials and equipments duty-free.⁵²

This exchange opened the gates for the spread of steam machines across the region, as just a year after the Bonaplata began operations, five more companies had emerged to further increase the production capacity of Barcelona. The city experienced further prosperity with not only the increase in production of indianas and other printed cotton products and the adoption of the factory system, but after the colonies of the Spanish Crown in the Americas gained their independence, they also received the paid repatriation of capital.⁵³ The influx of cotton from the young continent also exploded during this industrial period, with a total of 197 ships stocked full of the material from Cuba and Puerto Rico docking in Barcelona's port in 1840, and 11 thousand tons of raw cotton were being used in 1848 alone.⁵⁴ The industry quickly outgrew the walls of Barcelona by the late 1830s and new factories were being opened in villages on the periphery of the city, with Gràcia, Sant Andreu, Sant Martí and Sants becoming the new industrial suburbs and contributed to the expansion of the greater Barcelona area.⁵⁵

This rapid adoption of mechanization in the textile industry, alongside the ever growing Barcelona trade sector, increased productivity and reduced prices. In 1840, Spanish textiles were 81% more expensive compared to their English counterparts, but due to the vertical integration of textile manufacturing brought by steam machines, that number dropped to 14% in 1860.⁵⁶ This allowed for the mass processing of New World cotton to be done more efficiently and cheaply than they had ever been before. During the same period, the price of Catalan printed cotton dropped by 69%, which allowed the region to not only dominate the Spanish textile market, but also take out the competition from other regions, with the textile industry in Galicia being wiped out due to the inability to compete with the Catalan prices. This also allowed for the birth of wool textile production in Sabadell, Terrasa and Manresa, leading to the decline of importance of the woolen centers in Castille.⁵⁷

In a weird twist of fate, the policies intending to curtail and left Catalonia vulnerable and dependent on the Spanish crown actually was the catalyst for the region's textile industry to truly explode. If the ban on Indian-made printed textiles have not been introduced, then Barcelona merchants would not have been able to compete with the far cheaper and better made products, thus opening a hole in the supply chain where these bourgeois were able to take advantage and lay the groundwork for the birth of Catalonia's textile industry. The opening of trade to the American colonies and the

⁵¹ Carlo Maria Cipolla, *The Fontana Economic History of Europe* (Glasgow, United Kingdom: Collins/Fontana Books, 1975).

⁵² James K. J. Thompson, "Transferencia Tecnológica En La Industria Algodonera Catalana: De La Indianas a La Selfactina," *Revista de Historia Industrial*, 2003, <https://raco.cat/index.php/HistoriaIndustrial/article/view/63526/86905>.

⁵³ Carlo Maria Cipolla, *The Fontana Economic History of Europe* (Glasgow, United Kingdom: Collins/Fontana Books, 1975).

⁵⁴ Joan Ramon Rosés, "The Early Phase of Catalan Industrialisation, 1830-1861," *Florence: European University Institute*, 1998, <https://doi.org/10.2870/804492>.

⁵⁵ Alejandro Sánchez Suárez, Jaume Artigues, and Francesc Mas, *Indianes, 1736-1847: Els Orígens de La Barcelona Industrial* (Barcelona, Spain: Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2013).

⁵⁶ Joan Ramon Rosés, "The Early Phase of Catalan Industrialisation, 1830-1861," *Florence: European University Institute*, 1998, <https://doi.org/10.2870/804492>.

⁵⁷ Manuel Núñez de Arenas and Manuel Tuñón de Lara, *El Movimiento Obrero En La Historia de España* (Barcelona, Spain: Nova Terra, 1970).

introduction of the steam machine only further propelled the growth of the region to be the industrial heartland of the entire Spanish kingdom.

D. The Start of Barcelona's Fashion Scene

With the booming textile industry increasing the prosperity and importance of Barcelona and Catalonia on the world stage, it gave way for the development of a burgeoning fashion scene that started during the 20th century. Thanks in part to the city's success, various designers from Spain and other countries in Europe have been able to move in and take advantage of the high quality garments being produced in Barcelona to create outstanding local designs. The first prominent fashion salon in Catalonia was introduced by Pedro Rodriguez, who opened his Parisian-style boutique in 1919. Another one of these figures included the French haute couture designer Jeanne Lanvin, who first learned dressmaking in Barcelona and opened a branch store of the Lanvin fashion house in 1929 in the city.⁵⁸

In the same year, Barcelona hosted the International Exposition of 1929 and in that very event, one of the most pivotal moment in the history of Barcelona's fashion scene, and arguably modern fashion as a whole, took place when Cristóbal Balenciaga, the world-famous designer from Getaria, Basque Country and founder of the renowned Balenciaga fashion house, first established himself.⁵⁹ Together with Rodriguez, both designers became the leading faces of Spain's fashion industry during their time. Aside from the launch of notable names into the spotlight, the 1920s saw the rise of multiple textile warehouses like Santa Eulàlia, El Dique Flotante and La física. These establishments produced haute couture pieces that were put on display throughout the shopping districts of Barcelona.⁶⁰ Thanks to these emerging fashion figures and companies, coupled with Barcelona's connection with Paris and the strong Catalan textile industry, led to the city's rise in status as a bustling fashion capital.

During the period of the Second Spanish Republic, Barcelona played host to a number of noteworthy fashion shows between the years of 1931 and 1936, however progress within the industry was halted during the Civil War times.⁶¹ After Franco came into power in the aftermath of the war, five fashion houses emerged in the 1940s and were given support by the dictator as he saw the industry's potential to increase the international recognition and export of Spain. These five establishments were dubbed "Los Cincos Grandes", and they consisted of Pedro Rodriguez, Manuel Pertegaz, Asunción Bastida, Santa Eulalia, and El Dique Flotante.⁶² With the government's backing of these houses, Catalonia's fashion industry continued to gain notoriety on the international scene.

The late 20th century saw the greatest rise in Catalonia's status as a fashion hub. Spanish textile manufacturers and clothing companies, under the leadership of designer José María Fillol, created the 'Moda del Sol', which was an initiative made to promote Spanish fashion and up-and-coming designers. This initiative was a complete success, as it brought the national fashion scene to global prominence thanks to its heavy coverage by Vogue magazines from 1967 to 1974, with Barcelonan designers such

⁵⁸ Esther Herrera, "Catalan Fashion, An Industry With Expansion Stitched Up," European Business Express, May 8, 2014, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170318033119/http://europeanbusinessexpress.com/2014/05/08/catalan-fashion-an-industry-with-expansion-stitched-up/>.

⁵⁹ Saida Santana, "Balenciaga & Barcelona: Journey to the Origins," AzureAzure.com, July 22, 2013, <https://www.azureazure.com/fashion/balenciaga-barcelona-journey-to-the-origins-599/>.

⁶⁰ Esther Herrera, "Catalan Fashion, An Industry With Expansion Stitched Up," European Business Express, May 8, 2014, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170318033119/http://europeanbusinessexpress.com/2014/05/08/catalan-fashion-an-industry-with-expansion-stitched-up/>.

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² "Guide of Fashion Companies Based in Barcelona," GBSB Global Business School in Europe, June 1, 2014, https://www.global-business-school.org/announcements/guide_of_fashion_companies_based_in_barcelona.

as Santa Eulàlia, Sant Patrick, Margarita Nuez, and Marisol Bofill getting shined for their participation.⁶³ The 1960s also saw the birth of prêt-à-porter, or ready-to-wear, fashion which replaced haute couture trends and saw the rise of prominent designers of the 1970s including Toni Miró and Antonio Balado.⁶⁴

The end of the 20th century and onwards saw the emergence of modern fast fashion giants, as well as the formalization of operations for global luxury brands within the districts of Barcelona. In 1985 and 1994, both Massimo Dutti and Stradivarius were born in the Catalonian capital before being bought by Zara's parent company, Inditex, in the 1990s.⁶⁵ Mango, one of the world's leading fast fashion retailers, was also founded in Barcelona by brothers Isak and Nahman Andic, who migrated from Turkey to Spain, and opened their first store on Passeig de Gràcia in 1984.⁶⁶ Other notable brands which have originated from the Catalan capital are names such as Tous, Paloma Wool, VIKTRA, Ailanto, Sita Murt, Lupo Barcelona, Great Tomorrow Clothing, and Desigual, all of which have become favorites with local and international fashion enthusiasts. With the closing of the century and the beginning of the 21st, more and more fashion houses and retailers opened their doors throughout Barcelona, with Passeig de Gràcia, La Rambla de Catalunya, and Portal de L'Angel becoming hosts to their businesses and welcoming millions of tourists and locals to shop within their streets. In current times, Catalonia is the home to around 1,700 fashion businesses that employ more than 100,000 people, generating US\$ 13.8 billion every year for the region, with Barcelona being the zenith of the entire industry.⁶⁷

Alongside the establishment of these global fashion brands and retailers, Barcelona also plays host to a myriad of fashion shows and events that showcases what the world and the city has to offer to the fashion industry. One of the most notable is the 080 Barcelona show, which is the city's bi-annual Fashion Week that's held to showcase the designs of some of Barcelona's brightest fashion minds over the course of 5 days.⁶⁸ Another notable event is the TSNB Barcelona, which was an initiative started in 2010 that turned Passeig de Gràcia into a car-free, shopping zone open to the public until 1:00 AM with an abundance of discounts and deals from all of the tenants occupying the street in the beginning of every December.⁶⁹ Lastly, the Barcelona Fashion Summit, which was first held in 2013, is a yearly meeting that brings together Spanish fashion experts in order to convene and discuss industry trends, broaden networks, and trade information for those looking to further bolster their fashion portfolios.⁷⁰ These events exemplify the continuous importance of Barcelona's fashion industry and why it has become a hotbed for many developments within the industry.

⁶³ “¿Te Acuerdas? - Pioneros Del ‘prêt-a-Porter’ Español,” RTVE, May 22, 2012, <https://www.rtve.es/play/videos/te-acuerdas/acuerdas-pioneros-del-pret-porter-espanol/1415562/>.

⁶⁴ “Industry, Fashion and Prêt-à-Porter in Barcelona,” Barcelona és Moda, September 18, 2013, <https://web.archive.org/web/20201009023828/http://www.barcelonaesmoda.com/en/actualitat/industry-fashion-and-pret-a-porter-in-barcelona/>.

⁶⁵ Suzy Hansen, “How Zara Grew into the World's Largest Fashion Retailer,” The New York Times, November 9, 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/11/magazine/how-zara-grew-into-the-worlds-largest-fashion-retailer.html>.

⁶⁶ “Our History,” Mango Fashion Group, accessed November 21, 2024, <https://www.mangofashiongroup.com/en/our-history>.

⁶⁷ Ian Mount, “Barcelona Has Transformed Itself into a Design Mecca,” Financial Times, March 30, 2014, <https://www.ft.com/content/30fb04fa-b021-11e3-b0d0-00144feab7de>.

⁶⁸ Miguel Rodriguez, “About Us,” 080 Barcelona Fashion, 2016, <https://web.archive.org/web/20161217024545/http://www.080barcelonafashion.cat/en/about-us-0>.

⁶⁹ Jordi Campo, “The Shopping Night Barcelona 2016 Vuelve El 1 de Diciembre Por Todo Lo Alto,” BCN FASHION PRESS®, November 13, 2016, <https://bcnfashion.es/2016/11/the-shopping-night-barcelona-2016-vuelve-el-1-de-diciembre-por-todo-lo-alto/>.

⁷⁰ “Barcelona Fashion Summit,” Barcelona Fashion Summit 2025, 2024, <https://www.barcelonafashionsummit.com/>.

Conclusion

Barcelona, and the Catalan textile industry as a whole, owed their success to the economic relations made between them and Colonial America. All of the pivotal moments of the industry's history, from the introduction of New World cotton to the explosive growth of the region's trade sector, down to the rapid industrialization and modernization of Catalonia, can be attributed to the ties between the two regions. However, challenges along the way threatened to sever the ties between the two regions, from geopolitical tension to an isolationist central policy in Spain. And yet, despite all of that, Catalonia's ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit managed to find a way to persevere through and ensure that the demands for printed textile would be met, whether that be through exploiting legal loopholes or importing new cutting-edge technology to mass produce textile products. Thanks to these efforts, Barcelona managed to foster a supportive environment which allowed for the growth of the city's fashion industry, an industry which saw some of the most prominent names in fashion rise and gave birth to numerous iconic brands. Now, as a leading hub of global style, Barcelona's fashion scene continues to be a breeding ground for evolutionary designs and ideas and it'll continue to be an important location for the fashion world going forward.

Acknowledgement

The first author is an International Relation UNPAR undergraduate student who participated in the IISMA program at Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona).

References

- Andersen, Astrid Nonbo. "The Nordic Countries Face a Colonial Reckoning." *Current History* 123, no. 851 (March 1, 2024): 95–100. <https://doi.org/10.1525/curh.2024.123.851.95>.
- Arenas, Manuel Núñez de, and Manuel Tuñón de Lara. *El movimiento obrero en la historia de España*. Barcelona, Spain: Nova Terra, 1970.
- "Barcelona Fashion Summit." *Barcelona Fashion Summit 2025, 2024*. <https://www.barcelonafashionsummit.com/>.
- Bekhrad, Joobin. "The Floral Fabric That Was Banned." *BBC News*, February 24, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20200420-the-cutesy-fabric-that-was-banned>.
- Blasco-Martel, Yolanda, and Jose Miguel Sanjuan Marroquin. "Barcelona Business Interests and the Atlantic World." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History*, September 30, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.013.739>.
- Broadberry, S. N., and Bishnupriya Gupta. *Cotton textiles and the Great Divergence: Lancashire, India, and shifting competitive advantage, 1600-1850*. London, United Kingdom: Centre for Economic Policy Research, 2005.

Bulut, Yusufcan. "Top Fashion Cities around the World." Istanbul Fashion Center, July 26, 2024. https://istanbulfashioncenter.com/blogs/news/top-fashion-cities-around-the-world?srsltid=AfmBOorrdZ0XgemplholnRF3kpTmABE3JBM04N_A1lcqvbCMOJz5MYpP1.

Burkholder, Mark A., and Lyman L. Johnson. *Colonial Latin America*. New York City, United States: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Campo, Jordi. "The Shopping Night Barcelona 2016 Vuelve El 1 de Diciembre Por Todo Lo Alto." BCN FASHION PRESS®, November 13, 2016. <https://bcnfashion.es/2016/11/the-shopping-night-barcelona-2016-vuelve-el-1-de-diciembre-por-todo-lo-alto/>.

Charles, Loïc, and Guillaume Daudin. "Eighteenth-Century International Trade Statistics." *Revue de l'OFCE* 140, no. 4 (July 9, 2015): 7–36. <https://doi.org/10.3917/reof.140.0007>.

Daudin, Guillaume, Kevin Hjortshøj O'Rourke, and Leandro Prados de la Escosura. *Trade and Empire, 1700 - 1870*. Paris, France: OFCE, 2008.

Decesaris, Gerard Llorens, and Adrià Enríquez Àlvaro . *Colonial reckoning: Reexamining the slave past in Catalonia*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2025.

"Decree of the Nueva Planta of the Audience of the Principality of Catalonia (1716)." History Lab, February 19, 2022. <https://historylab.es/decreed-of-the-nueva-planta-of-the-audience-of-the-principality-of-catalonia-1716/>.

Díez-Minguela, Alfonso, Julio Martínez-Galarraga, and Daniel A. Tirado-Fabregat. "Regional Income Inequality in Spain 1860–2015." *Regional Inequality in Spain*, 2018, 81–103. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96110-1_4.

Freire-González, Jaume, and Ignasi Puig-Ventosa. "Effects of the Hydraulic Infrastructure on Economic Growth: Evidence from Catalonia." *Sustainable Water Resources Management* 2, no. 2 (April 4, 2016): 199–206. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40899-016-0052-9>.

"Guide of Fashion Companies Based in Barcelona." GBSB Global Business School in Europe, June 1, 2014. https://www.global-business-school.org/announcements/guide_of_fashion_companies_based_in_barcelona.

Hansen, Suzy. "How Zara Grew into the World's Largest Fashion Retailer." The New York Times, November 9, 2012. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/11/magazine/how-zara-grew-into-the-worlds-largest-fashion-retailer.html>.

Harrison, R. J. "Catalan Business and the Loss of Cuba, 1898-1914." *The Economic History Review* 27, no. 3 (August 1974): 431–41. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2593383>.

Herr, Richard. "A Distinctive Industrialization: Cotton in Barcelona, 1728-1832." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 25, no. 2 (1994). <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A16315162/AONE?u=anon~1e4d4a27&sid=googleScholar&xid=f8307a3d>.

Herrera, Esther. "Catalan Fashion, An Industry With Expansion Stitched Up." *European Business Express*, May 8, 2014. <https://web.archive.org/web/20170318033119/http://europeanbusinessexpress.com/2014/05/08/catalan-fashion-an-industry-with-expansion-stitched-up/>.

Hughes, Robert. *Barcelona*. London, United Kingdom: Harvill, 1999.

"Industry, Fashion and Prêt-à-Porter in Barcelona." *Barcelona és Moda*, September 18, 2013. <https://web.archive.org/web/20201009023828/http://www.barcelonaesmoda.com/en/actualitat/industry-fashion-and-pret-a-porter-in-barcelona/>.

Kindleberger, Charles P. *The rise of Free Trade in Western Europe, 1820-1875*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: M.I.T., 1974.

King, Gene A. "The Development of Free Trade in Europe." Hillsdale College, 2008. <https://www.hillsdale.edu/educational-outreach/free-market-forum/2008-archive/the-development-of-free-trade-in-europe/#:~:text=The%20eighteenth%20and%20early%20nineteenth,to%20protect%20nascent%20domestic%20industries.>

"Literature Reviews." Auraria Library, April 4, 2025. <https://guides.auraria.edu/researchmethods/literaturereviews#:~:text=Problem%20formulation,of%20an%20area%20of%20research.>

Llorenç, Ferrer Alos. "The Diverse Growth of 18th-Century Catalonia: Proto-Industrialisation." *Catalan Historical Review*, October 2012, 67–84. <https://doi.org/10.2436/20.1000.01.71>.

Magdof, Harry, Charles E. Nowell, and Richard A. Webster. "Western Colonialism." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, April 11, 2025. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Western-colonialism>.

Manera, Carles, Jose Perez-Montiel, Oguzhan Ozcelebi, and Andreu Seguí. "The Catalan Commercial Integration with Early Modern Europe, 1630–1778." *Applied Economic Analysis* 33, no. 97 (October 11, 2024): 35–52. <https://doi.org/10.1108/aea-11-2023-0444>.

Martinez-Galarraga, Julio, and Marc Prat. "Inequality in Rural Catalonia in the Early Eighteenth Century." *Cliometrica* 19, no. 1 (July 20, 2024): 195–247. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11698-024-00289-0>.

Martinez-Galarraga, Julio, and Marc Prat. "Wages and Prices in Early Catalan Industrialisation." *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2404970>.

Martinez-Galarraga, Julio, and Marc Prat. "Wages, Prices, and Technology in Early Catalan Industrialization." *The Economic History Review* 69, no. 2 (August 27, 2015): 548–74. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ehr.12127>.

"Motivations for Colonization." *National Geographic*, October 2, 2024. <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/motivations-colonization/10th-grade/>.

- Mount, Ian. "Barcelona Has Transformed Itself into a Design Mecca." *Financial Times*, March 30, 2014. <https://www.ft.com/content/30fb04fa-b021-11e3-b0d0-00144feab7de>.
- Ortega Noriega, Sergio. *Breve historia de Sinaloa*. Mexico City, Mexico: Colegio de México, Fideicomiso Historia de las Américas : Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999.
- "Our History." Mango Fashion Group. Accessed November 21, 2024. <https://www.mangofashiongroup.com/en/our-history>.
- Pons, Marc. "1855: 'Association or Death', the Story of Catalonia's First General Strike." *El Nacional*, December 12, 2023. https://web.archive.org/web/20240605093622/https://www.elnacional.cat/en/culture/1855-catalonia-general-strike-history_288318_102.html.
- Prayogi, Arditya. "Social Change in Conflict Theory: A Descriptive Study." *ARRUS Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (April 11, 2023): 37–42. <https://doi.org/10.35877/soshum1652>.
- Radulovic, Igor. "The Seven Years' War: The Greatest Conflict of the 18th Century." *TheCollector*, December 8, 2021. <https://www.thecollector.com/seven-years-war-18-century/>.
- Ringrose, David. *Spain, Europe and the Spanish Miracle, 1700–1900*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Rodriguez, Miguel. "About Us." 080 Barcelona Fashion, 2016. <https://web.archive.org/web/20161217024545/http://www.080barcelonafashion.cat/en/about-us-0>.
- Rosés, Joan Ramon. "The Early Phase of Catalan Industrialisation, 1830-1861." *Florence: European University Institute*, 1998. <https://doi.org/10.2870/804492>.
- Santana, Saida. "Balenciaga & Barcelona: Journey to the Origins." *AzureAzure.com*, July 22, 2013. <https://www.azureazure.com/fashion/balenciaga-barcelona-journey-to-the-origins-599/>.
- Sánchez Suárez, Alejandro, Jaume Artigues, and Francesc Mas. *Indianes, 1736-1847: Els orígens de la barcelona industrial*. Barcelona, Spain: Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2013.
- Shaw, Carlos Martínez. *Agricultura, Comercio colonial y Crecimiento Económico en la España contemporánea: Actas del primer coloquio de Historia Económica de España (Barcelona, 11-12 de mayo de 1972)*. Barcelona, Spain: Editorial Ariel, 1974.
- "Ships Entering Barcelona Carrying American Cotton, 1781-1799 (in Pounds)." *History Lab*, February 19, 2022. <https://historylab.es/ships-entering-barcelona-carrying-american-cotton-1781-1799-in-pounds/>.
- "Steam and the Nation." *Museu d'Història de Catalunya*. Accessed November 18, 2024. https://www.mhcat.cat/enmhc/exhibitions/the_memory_of_a_country/steam_and_the_nation.

Sánchez, Alex, and Francesc Vals Junyent. "El Mercado Del Algodón En Barcelona Durante La Crisis Del Antiguo Régimen (1790-1840)." *Revista de Historia Industrial*, no. 58 (1966): 61–93. <https://raco.cat/index.php/HistoriaIndustrial/article/view/297667>.

Thomson, J. K. J. *A distinctive industrialization: Cotton in Barcelona 1728-1832*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Thomson, J. K. "The Spanish Trade in American Cotton: Atlantic Synergies in the Age of Enlightenment." *Revista de Historia Económica / Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History* 26, no. 2 (2008): 277–313. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0212610900000343>.

Thomson, J. K. "The Spanish Trade in American Cotton: Atlantic Synergies in the Age of Enlightenment." *Revista de Historia Económica / Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History* 26, no. 2 (September 2008): 277–313. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0212610900000343>.

Thomson, James K. J. *The Catalan calico-printing industry compared internationally*. Anuari de la Societat Catalana d'Economia, 1998.

Thomson, James K. J. "Transferencia Tecnológica En La Industria Algodonera Catalana: De La Indianas a La Selfactina." *Revista de Historia Industrial*, 2003. <https://raco.cat/index.php/HistoriaIndustrial/article/view/63526/86905>.

Valls-Junyent, Francesc. *La Catalunya atlàntica: Aiguardent I teixits a l'arrencada industrial catalana* francesc Valls Junyent ; pròleg de Jordi Nadal. Vic, Spain: Eumo, 2004.

Vilar, P. "Agricultural Progress and the Economic Background in Eighteenth-Century Catalonia." *The Economic History Review* 11, no. 1 (1958): 113–20. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2591686>.

"¿Te Acuerdas? - Pioneros Del 'prêt-a-Porter' Español." RTVE, May 22, 2012. <https://www.rtve.es/play/videos/te-acuerdas/acuerdas-pioneros-del-pret-porter-espanol/1415562/>.