UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Dipòsit digital de documents de la UAB

This is the **accepted version** of the journal article:

López Antón, Margarita; Torra Fernández, Lídia. «Rethinking Pre-Industrial Business : women Entrepreneurs in Eighteenth-Century Catalonia through Calico Factories and Reseller Shops». *Revista de historia industrial*, 9 October 2026, p. 1-31 DOI 10.1344/rhi-ihr.49987

This version is available at https://ddd.uab.cat/record/337505

under the terms of the CC BY license.

HISTORIA INDUSTRIAL

Industrial History Review

Advancing the understanding of industrialization processes

This manuscript has been accepted for publication in an upcoming issue of *Revista de Historia Industrial–Industrial History Review* (RHI-IHR) and will appear in the Special Issue "Beyond the Hidden Entrepreneur: Women, Business, Regions and Economic Change in Modern Spain". This early-view version has not gone through proofreading, copy-editing, or formatting. The production process may introduce minor changes, which will not affect the academic content of the article.

Suggested citation: López-Antón, Margarita, and Lídia Torra Fernández. 2026. 'Rethinking Pre-Industrial Business: Women Entrepreneurs in Eighteenth-Century Catalonia through Calico Factories and Reseller Shops'. *Revista de Historia Industrial–Industrial History Review*. doi: https://doi.org/10.1344/rhiihr.49987.

Received: 2 December 2025; *Accepted*: 09 October 2026; *Published online*: 09 October 2026

Fecha de recepción: 2 Diciembre 2025 – *Fecha de aceptación*: 09 Octubre 2026; *Publicado online*: 09 Octubre 2026

ISSN: 1132-7200 | Online ISSN: 2385-3247 | © RHI-IHR

Copyright © RHI–IHR 2022. This document is under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To see a copy of this license click here https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/.

Rethinking Pre-Industrial Business: Women Entrepreneurs in Eighteenth-Century Catalonia through Calico Factories and Reseller Shops

MARGARITA LÓPEZ-ANTÓN (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4634-8526 | margarita.lopez@uab.cat

LÍDIA TORRA FERNÁNDEZ (ESCI. Universitat Pompeu Fabra)
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8985-1458 | lidia.torra@prof.esci.upf.edu

ABSTRACT
It is difficult to understand economic sectors in pre-industrial cities without measuring the roles played by women, both as workers and as entrepreneurs. This work aims to change the image of pre-industrial business and to advance the history of business by paying attention to women. For this purpose, we have used several primary sources as almanacs, company records and notarial sources such as the incorporation and renewal of trading companies, wills and marriage contracts. We identified 103 businesswomen who were engaged in 24 economic activities and whose leadership and management lasted long term. We focus on two economic sectors, calico factories and resellers, considering their social capital as well as business and mercantile importance. We analyze our findings through several economic theories of the entrepreneur, with the aim of identifying the entrepreneurial characteristics and patterns of these women.

KEYWORDS: female entrepreneurship, business history, Catalonia (Spain) 18th century, calico factories and resellers

JEL CODES: J16, N83, O10, R11

1. Introduction

> "This word Merchants, taken in its full extent, comprises not only Bankers, Exchangers, Underwriters, Shippers, etc., but also Farmers who sell their fruits, Manufacturers who dispatch their goods; in a word, all who buy and sell" (Gallard 1796, p. 2).

Women's work, although devalued and largely invisible, was fundamental to the industrialisation of Europe. Without taking it into consideration, neither the economic development nor the social evolution of contemporary Catalonia can be understood (Nash 1988, p. 159). Yet its omission is characteristic in Spain and in other countries (Hudson and Lee 1990; Horrell and Humphries 1995; Janssens 1997; Humphries and Sarasúa 2012; Muñoz-Abeledo 2012; Pérez-Fuentes 2013; Borderías 2013).

Women were not only workers, but also businesspeople, even though the role of entrepreneur was traditionally reserved for men. In eighteenth-century Catalonia, women's participation in business activities was shaped by a legal framework that limited their full legal capacity, particularly in the case of married women. Catalan civil law recognised women's legal personality but placed them under marital authority (*potestas maritalis*), which restricted their ability to enter contracts or manage property without their husband's consent, except in specific situations such as widowhood or the administration of dowry assets (Carbonell 1997; Font Rius 1985). As noted by Carbonell (2004), these legal constraints did not entirely prevent women's economic activity, but they did restrict their autonomy and visibility in the business world.

Little is known about women in the world of business and much remains to be explored about their positions within family businesses and workshops, both urban and rural (Martini and Bellavitis 2014). Most of the research analysing women in business in the eighteenth century comes from British historiography (Dexter 1924; Hufton 1975; Boxer 1975; Prior 1985; Wright 1989; Sanderson 1996; Sharpe 2001; Wiskin 2006; Phillips 2006; Haggerty 2006; Owens 2008; Crowston 2008; Hafter 2007; Van den Heuvel 2007; Barker 2006, 2017; Collinge 2014, 2019; Erickson 2008, 2011, 2018, 2024).[1] Less research has been carried out for other regions in the world as well as for Spain (Lobato 1995; Fernández-Perez 1997; Vicente 2008; Solà 2008, 2009; Torra 2015, 2022; Rey 2021; García-Gil 2023; Lindoso and González López 2025).

The aim of this paper is to uncover the role of women in the commercial world of 18th-century Barcelona, both in family businesses and in workshops, in their own businesses, as investors, shareholders, professionals, and self-employed. Our research asks: What roles did they play? What skills did they need? Were they able to accumulate capital and reinvest it? Did they start their own businesses or run family businesses? Did they actively manage businesses or were they absentee owners or shareholders? In which sectors were they most likely to work? Were they single, married, or widowed? Overall, how true is the perception that middle-class women were disengaged from economic life? To answer these questions, this paper analyzes two completely different case studies: calico factories (secondary sector consisting of new and printed cotton industry, which was thought to have few women in management positions) and resellers (tertiary sector with an active, well-established socially acceptable female presence). Furthermore, in the first case, the examples come from large companies whereas in the second case, the examples come from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Beyond documenting the presence of women in business activities, this article seeks to contribute to broader debates in business and economic history concerning the visibility, scale, and significance of female entrepreneurship in pre-industrial societies. Drawing on evidence from eighteenth-century Catalonia, it reassesses traditional interpretations that portray women as peripheral economic actors largely confined to small-scale subsistence

[1] Yeager's work (1999) deserves special mention for its chronological extension (11th-20th centuries) and for the wide range of businesses and regions it covers.

activities. By revealing women's participation across a wide range of commercial, manufacturing, and investment activities, the article argues for a more nuanced understanding of pre-industrial business. It also places the Catalan case in dialogue with recent international scholarship on female entrepreneurship, particularly studies from England (Barker 2006, 2017; Phillips 2006; Sharpe 2001; Erickson 2008, 2011, 2018, 2024; Collinge 2014, 2019), the Northern Netherlands (Van den Heuvel 2007), and France (Hardwick 1998; Crowston 2002, 2008; Hafter 2007). These studies have highlighted the importance of family businesses, women's own capital, widowhood, and the often-hidden economic activity of married women despite legal and institutional constraints. Similar dynamics can be observed in the Catalan case, suggesting that these patterns were not exclusive to north-western Europe but were also present in Mediterranean commercial societies.

This article begins with an introduction and the description of the sources. Then, we examine the concept of entrepreneur from several economic theories and take a broad look at co-participation of women in craftworker businesses and companies, as well as at women's self-employment, from a macro perspective. Next, we use a micro approach to examine the calico industry and the resale sector with the objective of developing case histories of women entrepreneurs by analysing their business trajectories. Finally, we provide some conclusions.

2. Sources

One of the biggest challenges for this study was finding sources that do not ignore women's work. For the 18th century, there are no Population Registers or Industrial or Tax Registrations for Catalonia and the existing censuses largely hide women's work. In the case of England there is research on women entrepreneurs through the analysis of fire insurance (Earle 1989; Hunt 1996; Kay 2009), with these women representing 10% of the total. Trade directories have also shown that the same percentage (10%) were businesses owned by women (Barker 2006; Haggerty 2006; Burnette 2009; Kay 2009; Corfield 2012). A smaller percentage (5%) is found through trade cards (Erickson 2024). In addition, a study carried out with the documents of those imprisoned for debt shows that 20% were women entrepreneurs (Wakelam 2020).

For this study we used almanacs, commercial guides, reports and company records. Specifically, the *Almanake Mercantil o Guía de Comerciantes* (Gallard 1796-1807), *Índice de los primitivos accionistas del Banco Nacional de San Carlos de 1782* (Tortella 1986), *Catálogo del Fondo Comercial del Instituto Municipal de Historia* (Voltes 1961). The methodology used was a complete nominative extraction of all women listed as managing businesses for all existing years, thus creating a database. After eliminating duplicate names, occupational classification was carried out using the coding system PSTI (Primary, Secondary, Tertiary International) (Shaw-Taylor and Wrigley 2014).[2] We

[2] The PST is a system of occupational codes designed by Wrigley and Davis and developed as PSTI (International) by Leigh Shaw-Taylor and Osamu Saito. This research methodology is led by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure. Each occupation is identified by four codes. The

also used the following primary sources to complement the information gathered in our database: the *Libreta en donde se notan los sujetos aprobados por esta Real Junta Particular de Comercio para tener Fábrica de Indianas, Cotonas y Blavetes (1774-1784)*, the *Informe de 1784 que realizó la Compañía Real de Hilaturas* and the *Informe Diocesano de 1786 sobre la industria de la estampación de Indianas*.[3]

Additionally, we used a micro approach to better understand the role of women in the formation of businesses in Barcelona from the second half of the 18th century until the 1807. We focus on notarial sources, especially for the incorporation and renewal of trading companies, as well as wills and marriage contracts. These documents allowed us to identify women entrepreneurs in Barcelona.[4] Other scholars have used notarial archives from different geographical areas, albeit with distinct methodological approaches. Hardwick (1998) drew on judicial sources and notarial records to reconstruct the economic and credit practices of men and women in French urban contexts during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Craig (2015) adopted a long-term perspective by analysing women's participation in various forms of business in Europe and North America from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries.

We focused on two economic sectors, considering their social capital and business and mercantile importance (Torra 2015). Calico factories helped make Barcelona one of the most important textile centres producing printed fabrics in southern Europe. Moreover, reselling street sales were also essential to the city's day-to-day life's population.

3. Women entrepreneurs, investors, and self-employed in Catalonia (1750-1807)

3.1. What does it mean to be an entrepreneur?

The concept of the entrepreneur differs according to economic theory. Cantillon (1730/1950) was one of the first to recognise the importance of the entrepreneur (or businessman) as a central figure in economics and is therefore considered the founder of the "entrepreneur theory". Classical economic theory identifies the entrepreneur as the capitalist, the person who risks their capital. For Smith (1776), an entrepreneur is a person who invests their capital in production and benefits from the division of labour. According to Say (1803/2001), an entrepreneur combines land, labour, and capital to produce goods and services, assuming the inherent risks. For Ricardo, another classical economist, the entrepreneur uses their capital to obtain the highest possible profit, assuming the risks inherent in the market (Ricardo 1817/2004).

For Marx (1867/2008), however, the entrepreneur is seen as a figure within the capitalist system who exploits workers and profits from their labour. Engels's entrepreneur

first digit defines the sector of activity, the second defines the group, the third defines the section, and the fourth code defines the occupation.

[3] In order of appearance: Biblioteca de Catalunya (hereafter BC), Barcelona, Ref. JC, Box 71, LIII, 21 and Ref. JC, Box 68, LI, 13, 2, and the last reference, Textile Printing Museum of Premià de Mar.

[4] All notarial references are listed throughout the text.

(1884/2017) organises the productive process, but does not provide direct labour, since their role is that of an exploiter who extracts surplus value from the labour of others. Lenin (1917/1974) also speaks of the entrepreneur as member of the bourgeois class who exploits the proletariat. Neoclassical economists developed a vision more focused on the behaviour of the entrepreneur within a competitive market economy, with an emphasis on profit maximisation and efficiency. For Marshall (1890/2006), the entrepreneur is an economic agent who organises the factors of production (labour, capital and natural resources) with the aim of maximising profits. Marshall therefore attaches particular importance to the management function of the firm. Schumpeter (1911/1967) develops a theory of the innovative entrepreneur. He sees the entrepreneur as a person who introduces new products, processes or business models, playing a key role in economic transformation and market dynamism. Knight (1921/1947) presents the concept of the risk-entrepreneur who assumes the risks and uncertainties inherent in the production process, while making decisions about the allocation of resources in an environment of uncertainty. By the 20th century, the theory of the entrepreneur emphasizes the person who manages, controls and makes key decisions within an organisation. Thus, an entrepreneur has become more of a manager, not necessarily an owner or capitalist (Weber 1922/1974).

Contemporary approaches to the concept of the businessman as entrepreneur have expanded classical definitions. *The British Business Census of Entrepreneurs* (Bennett et al. 2020) defines entrepreneurs empirically as all proprietors or self-employed individuals recorded in historical censuses, with or without employees, thereby capturing women's business activity beyond male-normative models. Building on this framework, Van Lieshout et al. (2019) demonstrate that female entrepreneurship in England and Wales was shaped by marriage and motherhood, highlighting the importance of life-course-sensitive definitions. From a long-term perspective, Bennett et al. (2019) integrates such quantitative definitions into an analysis of business proprietorship trends since 1851. Complementarily, Aston and Bishop (2020) argue that female entrepreneurship took multiple historical and contextual forms, and therefore, the concept of entrepreneur should be understood as relational, flexible, and shaped by institutional and gendered frameworks.

3.2. Catalan Women's Businesses (1750-1807)

After reviewing the definitions of *entrepreneur*, we examine the diversity of businesses ran by women in Catalonia focusing mainly in Barcelona. We use the following sources: *Almanake mercantil o guia de comerciantes* (Gallard 1796-1807), *Índice de los primitivos accionistas del Banco Nacional de San Carlos de 1782* (Tortella 1986), *Catálogo del Fondo comercial del Instituto Municipal de Historia (*Voltes 1961), and legal sources, mainly notary documents. Other primary sources have been used to examine how women businesswomen and entrepreneurs were effectively hidden during this period.

Table 1 shows the total number of women entrepreneurs (103) we found from 1750 to 1807. In the secondary sector, women in the textile industry predominated, representing

96% of the total sector. Within the textile industry, "cotton" and "lace and doilies" were the most important activities, representing 62.8% and 15.7% respectively.

Corporate names made the presence of women entrepreneurs invisible, even when they were the main shareholders of companies. For example, in the *Libreta en donde se notan los sujetos aprobados por esta Real Junta Particular de Comercio para tener Fábrica de Indianas, Cotonas y Blavetes (1774-1784*) [Register Recording the Individuals Approved by this Royal Special Board of Trade to Operate Manufactories of *Indianas*, *Cotonas*, and *Blavetes* (1774–1784)], 47 men and no women are listed. The 1784 report by the *Compañía Real de Hilaturas* [Royal Spinning Company] shows 30 calico factories, none in the hands of women. In the *1786 Informe Diocesano sobre la industria de la estampación de indianas* [Diocesan Report on the printed cotton industry], a document that listed 100 calico factories and private houses where canvases were painted in the city of Barcelona, only one woman appears, *Rita y Magin Marí*, with a factory on Carrer de les Molas, where five young boys (7 to 15 years old) were employed. Yet our database shows 21 factories with women entrepreneurs. For example, the widow Mrs. Pablo Fontseré serves as the owner of a printed cotton factory and as a shareholder of the *Real Compañía de Hilados* for 12 consecutive years, which indicates that she had long-term management of the factory. Other cases support this assertion (Erickson 2024).

In relation to the second textile activity (lace and doilies), women owned eight companies in our database, six are from Mataró and two from Arenys de Mar. For example, Teresa Manent, a widow, ran a lace and silk doily business for 10 years; and Teresa Casamitjana, also widowed, ran a silk doily factory in the same period. But when we cross-reference the data from 31 Mataró factories in *Matrículas Industriales y Repartos de Subsidios de Comercio* for the years 1724–1793 (López-Antón 2021), we do not find any of the businesswomen listed. Thus, women's entrepreneurial activities were hidden from official documents.

In the tertiary sector, textile-related activities (textile merchant, woollen cloth merchant, fabric shop, and silk products shop), comprised 34.7% of the total and have the highest number of women traders. These are followed by food-related activities (fish trader and food retailer), representing 32.7% of the tertiary sector. It should be noted that in other countries all-female or mixed guilds existed, such as the craftswomen in Paris, the dressmakers' guild in France, and the midwives' guild in various cities in Germany (Dixon 1995; Wensky 1982; Wiesner 1986; Crowston 2002; Loats 1997). This was not the case in Barcelona, except the guild of the resellers, as Renom's (2025) research highlighted.

TABLE 1 ▪ *Women entrepreneurs (1750-1807)*

PSTI	Activity	Number	%
	Secondary sector		
2,10,1,2	Dressmaker	1	2,0
2,10,2,3	Hosiery manufacturer	1	2,0
2,2,1,4	Spirit manufacturer	1	2,0
2,20,0,15	Textile manufacturer	1	2,0
2,20,1,15	Manufacturer woollen fabrics	1	2,0
2,20,2,60	Manufacturer of worsted stitches (sashes and garters)	1	2,0
2,20,4,15	Cotton spinning and weaving mills	11	21,6
2,20,4,4	Calico factory	21	41,2
2,20,7,20	Manufacture of silk products (trimmings, scarves, stockings)	3	5,9
2,20,8,1	Silk doily manufacturer	5	9,8
2,20,8,60	Manufacturer of thread lace	3	5,9
2,20,9,1	Tape manufacturer	1	2,0
2,40,1,1	Paper manufacturer	1	2,0
	Total Secondary sector	**51**	100,0
	Tertiary sector		
3,0,0,1	House of Commerce	1	1,9
3,1,4,3	Fish trader	2	3,8
3,20,0,15	Textile trader	12	23,1
3,20,1,15	Woollen cloth trader	4	7,8
3,25,40	Boat trader	1	1,9
3,61,1,1	Iron merchant	1	1,9
4,0,0,1	Retailer	2	3,8
4,1,6,0	Food retailer	15	28,9
4,20,6,0	Fabric shop	1	1,9
4,20,7,0	Silk products shop (scarves, trimmings)	1	1,9
5,60,0,8	Capitalist/Shareholder financial institution	12	23,1
	Total tertiary sector	**52**	100,0
	Total	103	100,0

Source: Banco de España Library. *Almanak mercantil o guia de comerciantes* (Gallard 1796-1807); Tortella (1986) [1782]; Voltes (1961); the same as in Tables 2 and 3. Own elaboration.

By analysing shareholders, we were able to find 12 women investors in Catalonia in 1782, who purchased a total of 87 shares' *Banco de San Carlos* —an average of 7.25 shares per woman. Even though this is a small number, it is evidence of women's participation in the financial market and as the international literature shows, the importance they played in the development of the financial revolution (Dickson 1967; Holderness 1973; Carlos and Neal 2004; Laurence 2008; Newton and Cottrell 2009).

Finally, the remaining 9.5% of the women entrepreneurs oversaw trading houses and were boat, iron, and retail merchants. In summary, we found women entrepreneurs in 24 economic activities, which leads us to believe that they were not restricted to small businesses such as food, clothing, etc... These results align with those found by Erickson

(2024) in London for the same period, where women appear as whalebone sellers, manufacturers of artificial cast stone, toys, trinkets, fans, as well as sellers of tea, coffee, chocolate, tobacco, fabrics and laces. They were goldsmiths, silversmiths, jewellers, cabinetmakers, and hatters. They sold, children's clothes, manufactured watchmakers, stationer, medical warehouse business, wax chandler, and others.

In the next section, we use a micro approach to develop case histories of specific women entrepreneurs. Our goal is to provide more information about women's behavior and thus, better understand the reality of their economic experiences.

4. Calico factories in Barcelona and women entrepreneurs

The first centralized manufacturer in the Catalan capital was the calico factory *Jacint Esteva i Cia*, registered in the notary office of Sever Pujol in 1736 (Sánchez 2001, p. 247). By the beginning of the 19th century, the number of such factories had increased to more than one hundred (Grau and López 1974; Thomson 1992). Technical and organisational changes in the production of printed fabrics prompted new capital investment and the hiring of foreign technicians as well as technical training for employees (Sánchez 2012). New business possibilities permeated the traditional local craftworker society, attracting expertise, capital, and savings from a wide variety of occupations: cloth merchants, druggists, silversmiths, master textile craftsmen, weavers, wool dressers, dyers, tailors, as well as engravers, carpenters, bricklayers, hauliers, sailors, and rope makers. Some were integrated as partners in the new cotton textile factories, through the establishment of collective trading companies; others carried out professional activities as salaried workers. As the cotton sector boomed, many individuals accumulated significant profits over a relatively short period. Even peasants who owned uncultivated or low-yield land close to the capital (particularly in the town of Sant Martí de Provençals) enjoyed new opportunities, as printed cotton factories needed open space outside the city walls to dry their fabrics. New demand allowed small landowners to revalue their land. On the other hand, members of the liberal professions and wealthy landowners invested capital in the development of the new cotton factories. We found notaries, lawyers, and doctors among the capitalist partners of the new companies, especially during the last decades of the 18th century and the first decades of the 19th century.

4.1. Women entrepreneurs in calico factories

Little is known about women entrepreneurs in the factories of the 18th century. We analysed the relationship between women and business on the basis of notary deeds drawn up at the start of a factory's activity, consulting the first incorporation of mercantile companies for more than eighty factories established during the period. Only some of them mention the presence of women as partners or managers (Table 2). Where data are missing, women may have made in-kind investments (such as looms, boards, moulds, various utensils, cotton, or other raw materials), the source may not estimate the value of women's contributions, or information was simply not available.

TABLE 2 ▪ *Women partners in the calico factories of Barcelona (1750-1807)*

Date	Factory*	Capital (Catalan pounds)	Woman Partner	Marital Status	Women's share of the partnership (%)
1754	Joan Aiguasanosa i Cia.	1,420	Eulàlia Llobet Bayés	widow	63,38
1762	Isidre Català, Llorens i Cia.	26,000	Gertrudis Llorens Vinyes	widow	26,92
1770	Josep Canaleta, hereu i Cia.	33,402	Patronila Canaleta Pallés	widow	65,86
1771	Jaume Ordeig i Cia.	In kind	(...) Ordeig	married	
1772	Esteve Bosch i Cia.	2,806	Francisca Quer Casas	widow	46,30
1777	Esteve Gramatges i Cia.	In kind	Isabel Gramatges Igual	married	
1779	Miquel Formentí i Cia.	20,000	Maria Formentí Gustà	married	25
1780	Marí, Boris i Cia.	10,000	Rita Marí de la Fuente	widow	25
1781	Francesc Rigalt, pare, fill i Cia.	10,000	Felipa Rigalt Caponata	married	20
1781	Corominas, Maleras i Cia.	6,000	Magda Corominas Porxas	married	
			Magda Maleras Alabau	married	
1783	Olaguer i Francisca Iglesias Cia.	5,000	Francisca Iglesias Capdevila	married	41,66
1792	Ausich i Cia	4,500	Josepa Ricart	married	33,33
1799	Monfar, Rubiol i Cia.	In kind	Mª Carme Monfar de Patau	married	25
			Mariana Rubiol Monistrol	married	25
1805	Benet Ferrer Pasqual i Cia.	1,084	Isabel Rofer	widow	50
			Isabel Ferrer Rofer	married	50

Note: * According to the type of constitution, 9 companies were newly established (64.3%), while 5 were continuing companies (35.7%). It should also be mentioned that there is a factory located not in Barcelona city, but in its province, in Mataró (Ausich i Cia). The complete production process involved other activities: fabric manufacturing (e.g., Jaume i Cia), and spinning (e.g., Monfar, Carles, Rubiol Josep i Cia).

Sources: Arxiu Històric Protocols Notarials de Barcelona (hereafter AHPB). civil law notaries Carles Carbonell, 1762; Francesc Comelles, 1770; Antoni Duran Quatrecases, 1754; Joan Fontrodona Roura, 1772; Ignasi Marfà, 1799; Lluís Marsal, 1805; Ramon Mateu Smandia, 1781, and 1783; Jaume Morelló, 1780; Manuel Oliva Viloca, 1777; Josep Ribes i Granés, 1771, and 1779; Josep Grau Sayrols Carreras, 1781, and 1792. Own elaboration.

Table 2 shows the presence of 17 women as partners in calico factories. Four characteristics are noteworthy. First, across the 14 companies, there were 47 male and 17 female partners, representing 73.4% and 26.6% respectively. This latter percentage is a significant figure. Second, all the businesses (14) have the corporate form "Cia." (company name), so we are not talking about small businesses, as indicated by their capital amounts. The same situation is observed in the case of dress-making in England where these businesswomen were not small artisans, they ran highly capitalized companies (Erickson 2011). Third, 64.7% and 35.3% are married women and widows, respectively. This data confirms what other authors have already commented, namely that the economic activities of married women suffer from greater (Clark 1982; Geib-

Gunderson 1998; Erickson 2008, 2024; López-Antón 2026). Fourth, there seems to be a tendency for widows to own a higher percentage of shares than married women. This data could be explained by the fact that widows owned their own shares plus those of their deceased husbands as stated by Erickson (2024):

> "a marital business partnership is visible usually only in retrospect, when a widow took over her husband's concern and ran it for decades, suggesting that she had been deeply involved with it during marriage too"

The case of the widow Eulàlia Llobet Bayés is noteworthy. Eulàlia first appears as a partner in a calico factory constructed in a building located on *carrer del Carme* in Barcelona. On 10 June 1754, in the notary's office of Antoni Duran Quatrecases, we learned that Eulàlia, widow of Josep Llobet a cutler, along with Esteve Subirana, a master linen weaver, Miquel Arolas and Joan Aiguasanosa, also linen weavers, but not yet masters; and Josep Llorens, master engraver (all residents of Barcelona, except Aiguasanosa, a native of Mataró, a nearby town) set up a collective mercantile company, with plans for ten years of activity.[5] Their shared capital amounted to 1,420 pounds with Eulàlia making the largest capital contribution of 900 pounds (63.38%), while Joan Aiguasanosa invested just 60 pounds (4.22%).[6] Eulàlia was illiterate and did not sign the document, which was signed by the male partners.

Aiguasanosa was appointed the manager or administrator of the factory. He worked according to the instructions of Arolas and Llorens, who each received a salary of 3 pounds per week, plus a fifth of annual profits, to be distributed in proportion to their initial investments. Thus, Eulàlia received more than 60 percent of the profits.

Shortly afterwards, Eulàlia remarries to the factory administrator, Joan Aiguasanosa. Their marriage contract was registered at the notary's office of Francesc Comelles on 7 August 1754, and states that Eulàlia contributed 900 pounds to the marriage, along with jewellery, furniture, clothes, and household goods all estimated at 179 pounds. Joan Aiguasanosa signed a deed in receipt of the aforementioned wealth—without providing his wife any *escreix*. Francesc Llorens signed as witness of the marriage.[7]

Four months later, the trading company was legally renewed. Aiguasanosa continued as administrator, as Llorens as engraver. Two new members joined the company, Joan Torras, a textile shopkeeper [*passamaner*] on Carrer Canvis Nous, and Francesc Recolons, a master linen weaver. Both men were from Barcelona. By then the factory's share capital amounted to 4,800 pounds, and the participation among partners was equalised, with 1,200 pounds distributed to each of them. To summarize, between June and December 1754, Eulàlia Aiguasanosa Bayés remarried, left the company, and transferred her capital to her second husband. This may explain how Joan Aiguasanosa was able to contribute 1,200 pounds (when he previously had invested only 60 pounds).

[5] AHPB, Civil Law Notary (hereafter not.) Antoni Duran Quatrecasas, 976/22, f. 108.

[6] We refer to Catalan pounds.

[7] AHPB, not. Francesc Comelles, 1051/2, f. 263

For unknown reasons, the weavers Esteve Subirana and Miquel Arolas disappeared from the business.[8]

With the arrival of Joan Torras, who had important contacts in the sector, the factory prospers. The company gained new customers in Barcelona and outside of Catalonia, among them Salvador Oliver, a businessman in the city of Palma de Mallorca.[9] In need of new space for the factory, Aiguasanosa leased a plot of land near the port for storage and other activities.[10]

A second renewal of *Joan Aiguasanosa i Cia* took place in June 1760. The share capital grew to 7,070 pounds, 1,000 pounds in currency and the rest in fixed capital, cotton, and various materials. According to the administrator, the company's capital had increased by more than two thousand pounds in one year.[11] However, Eulàlia Aiguasanosa Bayés, who had no children, soon became a widow for a second time. She took over the company as a partner again, making a larger capital contribution. No longer illiterate, she restarted the printed cotton business under the company name *Viuda Aiguasanosa i Cia*. Commercial sources indicate that the company continued to operate until at least 14 July 1764. [12]

In fact, the double widowhood of Eulàlia opens and closes a circle. As Llobet's widow, she starts a business with her own capital, working with four men partners, and closes it with a greater capital investment and social recognition given that she is the main partner of *Viuda Aiguasanosa i Cia*. As Aiguasanosa's widow, she manages the company after it has grown significantly and has been formally renewed twice. During the factory's ten years of manufacturing, Eulàlia's personal and economic conditions have changed. She is no longer illiterate and her wealth has increased. Our hypothesis is that Eulalia never stopped running her business. However, when she was married, the legal sources concealed her role in the business. It is important not to allow the bias of the sources themselves to hinder our understanding of the reality of women's economic experiences (Owens 2008). A similar case occurred in London with Elizabeth Godfrey, a silversmith, who was recorded under her own name only upon her first widowhood in 1731, and again in 1741 upon her second. It is implausible that Godfrey stopped working and running the business in which she was trained during her two marriages (Erickson 2024).[13]

[8] AHPB, not. Josep Bossom Grosset, 977/14, f. 225

[9] AHPB, not. Llorenç Madriguera Famadas, 1024/10, f. 2.

[10] AHPB, not. Llorenç Madriguera Famadas,1024/10, f.4.

[11] AHPB, not. Llorenç Madriguera Famadas, 1024/10, f.33

[12] Arxiu Històric de la ciutat de Barcelona (hereafter AHCB). Commercial Collections. "Llibre que presenta Eulalia Aiguasanosa señora, viuda, de la fàbrica de indianas, a 14 de julio de 1764". Ref. B-298.

[13] Some authors still limit the scope of women's business activities. Vickery (2020) argues that only a few women were successful in the luxury trades. Yeager (2015) suggests that 18th-century women writers were successful because of the limited alternatives available. Sánchez (2011) argues that women were generally excluded from the possibility of running a factory and that this did not partially change until well into the 19th century. Other authors (Honeyman 2007; Durepos, McKinlay and Taylor 2017; Erickson 2024) point out the absence of gender considerations in business history in general.

The professional career of the widow Gertrudis Llorens Viñas roughly coincides with that of Eulàlia Aiguasanosa Bayés. The company *Isidro Català, Llorens i Cia* is founded on 1 June 1762, in the notary's office of Carles Carbonell, with the aim of establishing a calico factory in Barcelona. The share capital amounted to 26,000 pounds. Gertrudis, the widow of Eudalt Llorens, a silk dyer, contributed 7,000 pounds. Isidro Català Vivas, a silk weaver and the administrator of the new factory, also contributed 7,000 pounds. Antoni Gispert, cloth merchant, and Nicolau Sivilla, silk weaver, each invested 5,000 pounds; while Joan Arau and Pau Illa, both printed cotton manufacturers and merchants, contributed 1,000 pounds each. All of the partners signed the document and the company made plans for five years of activity.

Gertrudis Llorens could read and write, and periodically checked the factory's balance sheets with the administrator Català, who was in charge of purchasing cotton and other materials, with the help of Sivilla. The manufacturers, Arau and Illa, managed the production process, and Sivilla oversaw paying the workers' wages. Weaving was outsourced to off-site independent weavers. The printing process, however, was carefully controlled by Pau Illa, who paid special attention to the development of the dyes. The company had a meadow for drying printed fabrics in Sant Martí de Provençals (acquired by Llorens' widow from the merchant Pere Pau Ferrer), as well as an adjacent house, used as a warehouse and office.[14]

The company *Esteve Bosch i Cia* shows another side of the printed cotton business. Francisca Quer, widow of Joan Quer, landowner, was the main partner of the company, which was registered on 9 April 1772 in the notary's office of Joan Fontrodona Roura. The capital fund amounts to 2,806 pounds. Francisca contributed 1,300 pounds. Partner Salvador Ravella, a merchant, contributes 1,300 pounds, while Josep Sala Viver, a calico manufacturer, invested 206 pounds. Esteve Bosch, house builder [*mestre de cases*], made no capital contribution, but acted as the administrator and cashier of the company.[15] The document specifies that company profits were distributed among the partners in proportion to the capital contributed, with two exceptions. Sala would have taken a profit as if he had invested 500 pounds. This extra pay compensated him for his expertise, and came in addition to his salary for making moulds and experimenting with dyes and colours, a delicate and painstaking activity. Bosch, meanwhile got 2 percent of annual profits, despite not having invested any capital. Before marriage, Francisca was Francisca Casas Pi, daughter of a ribbon manufacturer from Barcelona. A plot of land that was transformed into a calico meadow for the factory originally belonged to the Quer family. Flanked by trusted partners who were skilled in the trade, Francisca continued in the family business.[16]

[14] AHPB, not. Carles Carbonell, 1068/3, f.361.

[15] We don't know why he was chosen as cashier; perhaps it was because of his accounting knowledge. What is certain is that he was the cashier, as reflected in this notarized document: "Esteve Bosch, master builder, is chosen as cashier and will be assigned 2% of the profits." AHPB, not. Joan Fontrodona Roura 1064/12, f.118 (1772).

[16] AHPB, not. Joan Fontrodona Roura, 1064/12, f.118.

The trading company *Ausich i Cia* was registered at the notary's office of Josep Grau Sayrols on 1 January 1792, with a capital fund of 4,500 pounds. Josepa Ricart, married, contributed 1,500 pounds; Josep Ausich, merchant, contributed 1,500 pounds; Josep Auger, engraver, 1,000 pounds; and Bonaventura Puig Martí, linen weaver and administrator of the factory, 500 pounds.[17] Josepa's husband does not appear in the document. From other sources, we know that he is Carles Ricart, a partner in *Casas, Ricart, Amigo i Cia*, another calico factory, on Carrer Més alt de Sant Pere.[18] So here are a husband and wife, each a partner in a different factory. After being widowed, Josepa married Anton Buxó Alom in 1795. Buxó is a shopkeeper, son of Josep Buxó, also a printed cotton manufacturer from Barcelona.[19]

One company involved an unusual collaboration between two married couples. Carles Monfar Clariana, a notary of Barcelona, and his wife Mª del Carme Monfar de Patau joined forces with Josep Rubiol Sentiu, a farmer, and his wife Mariana Rubiol Monistrol, to run a calico factory that was registered in the notary's office of Ignasi Marfà in 1799. The partnership was for a period of just one year but could be renewed if the parties wished. The deed states that the Monfar couple supplied ten spinning machines, looms, and other utensils, while the Rubiol couple contributed 400 pounds in cash for buying cotton and paying wages of employees. Carles and Maria Carmen Monfar were not involved in the day-to-day running of the company; Josep and Mariana Rubiols took over the factory's management. Each couple received 50 percent of the profits.[20] The partnership seems cautious, foreseeing only one year of business, and one wonders how a notary and his wife got hold of a set of machines for a calico factory. We do know that the women signed the document and were participants in the company.

The company *Jaume Ordeig i Cia* (Table 2) illustrates a different situation. The notary Josep Ribas Granés drafted the constitution of this mercantile company in 1771. The partners were Pere Vilarrasa, a carpenter from Barcelona; Jaume Ordeig, linen weaver from Sant Hipòlit de Voltregà (now residing in Barcelona), and his wife, whose presence is only indicated in the deed by an ellipsis "(...) Ordeig". Any cash capital contributed by the partners is not declared. Three looms, two tables, moulds, and other work tools are mentioned, and it is agreed that Vilarrasa will provide the factory with two new looms, probably built by him. Ordeig managed production, outsourcing the spinning from the premises. This was a common practice, with women commissioned by workshops and factories to spin at home on a piecework basis.

Little can be said with certainty about Ordeig's wife. We did find a marriage contract written in Barcelona in 1771, between Jaume Ordeig, a linen weaver and native of Sant Hipòlit de Voltregà, and María Grilló Amblasi, raised in Barcelona and daughter of a wool weaver from Sant Boi de Lluçanés. Maria Grilló's monetary dowry amounted to 260

[17] AHPB, not. Josep Grau Sayrols Carreras, 1114/18, f.3

[18] AHPB, not. Josep Grau Sayrols Carreras, 1114/18, f.82

[19] AHPB, not. Francesc Portell, 1142/37, f.458

[20] AHPB, not. Ignasi Marfà, 1155/3, f.8.

pounds from her family, and she also received an *escreix* [null betrothal] from her husband.[21] We cannot verify the identity of (...) Ordeig, but a clause in the partnership agreement states that she will have to work with her husband. The notary's omission of her name could be explained by a difficult personal situation prior to the marriage, and the social stigma that this would have entailed. The monetary dowry provided by María Grilló seems high compared to that of other women getting married in Barcelona. Finally, we simply note that some families who lived outside of Barcelona sent young daughters to work as maids in the capital, with the hope that they would establish themselves and marry under better circumstances. A good monetary dowry could ease a young woman's transit and cushion the social stigma of serving as maid.

The factory *Miquel Formentí (major) i Cia* was registered on 1 July 1779 in the notary's office of Josep Ribas Granés. The company's initial share capital amounted to 20,000 pounds, divided equally among five partners: María Formentí Gustà, wife of Miquel; Manuel Cardeñas Soler, a money changer; and Narcís Plandolit and Francisco Ribas, both merchants. The document indicates that the director Miquel controled the factory's production and kept the accounting and correspondence books, while sharing administrative tasks with his wife María. However, from the outset, the Administrator, Miquel Formentí, had very limited powers. This is demonstrated, firstly, by the chapters of the deed of incorporation. For example, chapter 7 stipulated that he was not authorized to make purchases on credit or for cash exceeding 2,000 Catalan pounds, nor to sell on credit for amounts exceeding 1,000 pounds.[22] Secondly, all documentation (letters, invoices, delivery notes, etc.) remained in the possession and control of partner María Formentí Gustà with the express obligation to show them to the other shareholders.[23] What could be the reason for this? Before this company, the Formentí family appeared in two other businesses, Joan Pongem i Cia (1747) and Miquel Formentí y Cia (1759), both of which failed due to mismanagement by the Formentís, father and son. Therefore, María Formentí Gustà's entry as a partner was in the role of a "figurehead." In the former Formentí company, several women were involved, including widows of the initial partners and their minor children. Finally, on September 2, 1786, they requested the Royal Court of the Consulate of the Barcelona Sea Exchange to appoint a person to carry out the liquidation of the company, which was finally completed on October 31, 1793.

One company had two women partners, a mother and daughter. Isabel Rofer, widow, and Isabel Ferrer Rofer, married, each contributed 1,084 pounds to the fund of a mercantile company that was formed on 21 August 1805 in the notary's office of Lluís Marsal. The document gave the company a duration of five years. Son-in-law and husband Benet Ferrer Pasqual, a master hosiery manufacturer who did not contribute capital, worked as

[21] The *escreix* (in Catalan) or *esponsalicio* (in Spanish) is the donation made by the husband to the wife upon receiving her dowry (marriage contract). It is also considered a form of compensation between the families of the couple. In 18th-century Barcelona, the *escreix* was generally half of the dowry, while in other parts of Catalonia this amount could vary.

[22] AHCB. Commercial Fonds. *Formentí, Gustà i Cia, María*. Ref. B.141.

[23] AHPB, not. Josep Ribas Granés, 1046/31, f.1.

administrator of the printed cotton factory, keeping its accounts, paying wages to the steward and workers, and managing the debit and credit books. He had to present a balance sheet to the partners every six months.[24]

The *Rofer i Ferrer Cia* had a close relationship with the *Boladeras i Rossel Cia*, which was formed by the couple Josep Boladeras, master tailor, and his wife Melania Rossel, dressmaker and seamstress, together with their partner Tropez Rossel, a French merchant who settled in Barcelona. The Boladeras and Rossel family ran a shop selling fabrics and ready-made clothes in the capital. Though we do not know the relationship between Melania and Tropez, nor the location of the clothing shop, we do know that Boladeras i Rossel bought printed cotton fabrics from Rofer i Ferrer, helping make them fashionable. Melania Rossel worked there as a dressmaker and tends to customers with the help of a salaried shop assistant.[25] This is evidence of commercial complementarity between a printed cotton factory and a clothing shop that had French partners.

5. The food trade in Barcelona and self-employment among women resellers

Pierre Vilar draws attention to modest individuals integrated into mercantile categories of commercial importance. Often, such individuals escape the researcher's eye. Vilar is referring to small merchants, carters, peasant-businessmen, and others whose mercantile dynamics have not been considered sufficiently important to analyse within the framework of Catalan economic development in the second half of the 18th century (Vilar 1964-68). Since Vilar's well-known criticism, many researchers have expressed interest in understanding the trajectories of such people.

Barcelona's ordinances governing the guild of *tenders-revenedors* [shopkeepers and resellers] in the second half of the 18th century were unusual (Tintó-Sala 1991; Molas and Cazeneuve 2017). Regulations allowed individuals who were not members of the corporation, including masters or officers from other guilds, to work in shops after they paid a licence fee. The same regulations also authorised women to resell, after paying the same fee. Thus, outsiders, masters and officials from other guilds, and women (whether they were maiden, married, or widows), could earn their livelihoods in reselling. This made it possible for poor families to earn an income and survive periods of vulnerability. For strangers who had recently arrived in the city in search of work and for destitute individuals, this was crucial (Carbonell 1997).

Many reselling shops were family businesses run by men who, at the same time, worked for wages at other jobs (Bridgewater and Miquel 2021), a circumstance that left women in their families an opening at the reselling stall. A halo of autonomy was thus built into the business practice.

[24] AHPB, not. Lluís Marsal, 1172/8, f.184.

[25] AHPB, not. Lluís Marsal, 1172/8, f.364.

In the world of reselling, the decision to formalise a partnership in a notary's office—representing an additional cost—was probably unusual. Mutual trust and oral pledges were normally sufficient for business partners. This can be seen in wills and post-mortem inventories in which references to verbal pacts between individuals were frequently observed. A visit to the notary's office is only needed when a business has been in operation for some time and changes are imminent, or when quarrels have arisen between members and clauses and conditions need to be set in writing. As a result, few commercial reselling companies were formally registered in Barcelona.

5.1. Self-employment of women resellers

In this section we focus on resellers who sold fish, bacon, cheeses, pulses, rice, dried fruits, and other food items that were essential to the city's day-to-day life. Such "resellers" included stable shops located in premises with a covered roof, as well as outdoor mobile stalls. Table 3 shows the presence of 16 women as shareholders in vendors and resellers businesses. In the same way as the case of calico factories, there are some general noteworthy characteristics. First, across the 14 companies, there were 35 male and 16 female partners, representing 68.6% and 31.4% respectively. This latter percentage is higher than that obtained for the calico factories (26.6%). The data show the significant presence of women entrepreneurs in the calico factories, a sector not typically associated with women.

Second, 10 businesses have corporate form "Cia" and 4 are individual businesses representing 71.4% and 28.6% of the total, although in this case study the capital amounts are much lower. Second, 50%, 43.8% and 6.2% are married widows and single, respectively. These data confirm that married women played an active role in economic life, not only as consumers but also as entrepreneurs. It should be noted, however, that in this case the percentage of married women (50%) is lower than that found for calico factories (64.7%). We believe that these percentages could vary depending on the life cycle of men and women. Below, we provide some examples using a micro approach.

The first example is *Pons, Folch i Gallissà i Cia*, a family reselling shop, for which a mercantile company deed is drawn up on 11 October 1761 in the notary office of Carles Carbonell.[26] According to the document, Jerónima, unmarried, born in Montbrió del Camp (Tarragona) and daughter of Josep and Maria Gallissà, farmers, ran the shop with partner Sebastià Pons, a rope-maker and reseller, who was born in Badalona and was married to Tercia Pons Rovira. Sebastià appears in the contract as a capitalist partner and supplier of goods. The agreement states that Jerónima will serve clientele in a stall located in the Born area and receive a third of the profits from the business. Tercia will work as the administrator and will receive two thirds of profits. Jerónima did not know how to write; the notary's assistant signed for her.

[26] AHPB, not. Carles Carbonell, 1068/2, f. 311.

TABLE 3 ▪ *Women shopkeepers /resellers in Barcelona (1750-1807)*

Date	Reselling	Capital (catalan pounds)	Women Partner	Marital Status	Women's share of the partnership (%)
1757	Grau Rovira i Llobera i Cia.		Mariangela Lloberas Rovira	Widow	
1759	Jaume Polls		Teresa Polls Font	Widow	
1761	Pons, Folch, Gallissà i Cia.	250	Gerònia Folch Gallissà	Married	8
1764	Teodora Batlle		Teodora Batlle Baye	Single	
1768	Proubasta i Vilassau i Cia.		Maria Vilassau Guardiola	Widow	
			Teresa Proubasta Vilassau	Married	
1769	Bruguera i Duran i Cia.	300	Maria Bruguera Pera	Widow	33,33
1782	Anna Sadurní		Anna Sadurní Batlle	Widow	
1783	Aguilar i Badia		Antònia Aguilar Torras	Married	
1786	Bassagaña i Cavalleria i Cia.		Rosa Bassagaña	Married	
1786	Farà, Antonietti, Fortis, Vietta i Cia.	3,300	Vicenta Farà	Married	16,6
1790	Farà, Antonietti, Duró i Larol i Cia.		Vicenta Farà	Married	
1790	Abril i Genovés i Cia.		Maria Abril Fàbregas	Married	
1797	Bruguera Pibernat i Cia.		Maria Bruguera Babot	Widow	
1801	Amblas and Murtra i Cia.	200	Antònia Amblas Corominas	Married	50
			Magdalena Murtra Laplaza	Widow	50

Sources: AHPB,. civil law notaries Ramon Alier Riera, 1757, and 1759; Carles Carbonell, 1761, and 1768; José Antonio Cassani Mascarí, 1769; Francesc Joan Elias Bosch, 1801; Josep Grau Sayrols Carreras, 1790, and 1797; Guillem Odena, 1764. Own elaboration.

Two years later, in May 1763, Jerónima marries Miquel Folch, single man and with high pluriactivity (reseller, rope-maker and sailor) in Barcelona, who, like Jerónima, was originally from Montbrió del Camp.[27] From marriage contracts written after the marriage, we know that Jerónima worked as a maid in a household when she arrived in Barcelona, and later as a salaried employee in the reseller's stall of Sebastià Pons. As a monetary dowry, Jerónima brought to the marriage 100 Catalan pounds that she had saved and received from her husband 100 pounds as a nuptial gift. The spouses agreed that Jerónima would get half of any assets they may attain during their future married life.

[27] AHPB, not. Carles Carbonell, 1068/4, f.50.

Shortly after their marriage, the Folch-Gallissà family, together with Sebastià Pons, set up a new trading company in the same notary's office.[28] Miquel supplied tuna to the company's new shop, which was located in closed premises with a covered roof in the Born, while Jerónima continued to be the public face of the business with the help of two maids and a young assistant. Profits and losses were divided in three equal parts, one for Pons and the other two for the spouses.

It seems that the Folch-Gallissà business was prosperous. In 1794, the couple's daughter Mariana married Jaume Gassull Ballart, a merchant born in Barcelona. Miquel, who had previously worked as a reseller, rope-maker, and sailor, now appears as a merchant in his daughter's marriage contract. The dowry that the maiden brings to the marriage amounts to 350 pounds, while the bride received 175 pounds as an *escreix*. Here, a mother's business has helped create an important economic and social advance for the next generation.

We know that Jerónima continued to ran the business. When son-in-law Gassull asked Jerónima for a loan to pay for some goods. Jerónima lended the required sum and Gassull signed a debit note at the notary office of Jeroni Cavallol Gras on 12 November 1794. Gassull commited to pay "the sum of 210 pounds in Barcelona currency, which the aforementioned Jerónima Folch, his mother-in-law, has lent without interest, in cash, for the purpose of the resale shop she has opened in this city".[29] Jerónima's trajectory from maid to shop assistant to company partner suggests that she was a savvy and successful businesswoman and also illustrates the opportunities presented by Barcelona's thriving reselling sector.

Another example comes from a married couple, Pere Proubasta and María Teresa Proubasta Vilassau, who found themselves in serious financial difficulties. The situation was truly critical and their assets were about to be seized. In order to shore up her family's economic situation, Maria Teresa turned to her mother Maria Vilassau, also a shopkeeper. Vilassau capitalises María's business with goods and promised to support her daughter and son-in-law until they can pay off their expenses and move forward. To do so, she formed a trading company with them at the notary office of Carles Carbonell on 9 September 1768. In addition to settling María's business's debts, the document lists a variety of foodstuffs that Vilassau pays for (including cod, tuna, smoked herring, imported cheeses, soap), thus restocking María's shop.[30] The source does not provide further details about the future of this family.

The following example shows how men and women could take on multiple jobs. In 1783, Josep Abril, a manufacturer of stockings and a retailer, formed a trading company with two other stocking manufacturers, Francisco Mercader and Ignasi Borjas, and a merchant, Josep Mayol. Almost a decade later, in 1792, Josep and his wife Maria Abril Fabregas

[28] AHPB, not. Carles Carbonell, 1068/4, f.51.

[29] AHPB, not. Jeroni Cavallol Gras,1122/9, f.196.

[30] AHPB, not. Carles Carbonell, 1068/10, f.244.

formed a partnership with Simon Genovés, a retailer, to open a shop on Carrer del Carme. Their trading company was registered under the name Abril i cia in the notary's office of Josep Grau Sayrols.[31] The company's initial capital was left undetermined: "money will be contributed as and when necessary". María managed the business, and profits were divided in three equal parts. Josep Abril's family, originally from Vilassar de Mar, a town near Barcelona, supplied the shop with fresh fish, vegetables, wine, vinegar and other items.[32] This is an example of relatives outside of Barcelona creating vertical integration with the Catalan domestic market (Torra 2022, pp. 49-66). Meanwhile, Josep Abril continued to produce cotton and silk stockings.

Taking on more than one job was not uncommon for women in the reselling sector. The shop of widow Maria Bruguera was located on Carrer Banys Vells. One of the clauses of her company's deed (formed in 1769) states, "it has been agreed that every year half a quintal of hemp will be bought, from which, after being spun, clothes will be made for sale and for the use and service of the house".[33] Mariangela Lloberas Rovira, widow of Pau Lloberas, managed a shop on Carrer Agullers and also did spinning for the merchant Pere Geccseli.[34] Antonia Aguilar Torras keept a box of thread under the counter of her shop to make lace in her spare time.[35]

The following examples provide a picture of the array of goods sold in shops run by women. In these cases, the women belonged to families whose businesses were passed down from generation to generation.

Teodora Batlle, an unmarried daughter of Josep Batlle, ran the family's shop with the help of a maid and two young apprentices in a rented house in the Born area. When Teodora died in 1764, a post-mortem inventory of the shop's possessions was completed.[36] The shop had two counters and a desk. Its stock included pork belly, pork fat, rice, vegetables, dried fruits, smoked herring, and salted fish. But what is distinctive for Teodora's shop was its specialisation in select imported items, such as cod from Norway, English butter of different qualities, and a variety of cheeses from France, Holland and England, a banquet of luxury foods unaffordable to most Barcelona citizens. The Batlle family were also wholesalers in Barcelona and might have distributed goods to shops in other towns. The walnut desk held considerable cash, 1,335 Catalan pounds, plus other currencies worth about 1,400 pounds, as well as vouchers signed by retail debtors and small debit markers apparently from parishioners. Teodora, we learn, was a lender. A 1757 debit note records a loan of 160 pounds provided to Isabel Valls, who was married, though her husband was absent from the home. Isabel needed to pay annual rent

[31] AHPB, not. Josep Grau Sayrols Carreras, 1114/16, f.486.

[32] AHPB, not. Josep Grau Sayrols Carreras, 1114/16, f.486.

[33] AHPB, not. José Antonio Cassani Mascaró, 1030/24, f.188.

[34] AHPB, not. Francesc Comelles, 1051/5, f.152.

[35] AHPB, not. Artigas Molins, 1086/20, f.209.

[36]AHPB, not. Guillem Odena, 1054/9, f.243.

for the three looms she used to make stockings at home, which was how she secured her family's livelihood. She would repay the loan in five instalments over two years (the document does not specify the interest she paid Teodora).

Teresa Polls and Anna Sadurní ran a shop in Plaça del Born. Anna imported cod and stockfish from Norway, continuing the business ran by her husband Josep Sadurní, and previously by her father-in-law, also Josep Sadurní. A commercial dispute gives us an idea of the commercial importance of this family enterprise. We know through notarial record, the elder Josep complains to A. Doez, the Dutch captain of a ship, for having lost part of his cargo of fish during a voyage to Barcelona. In the resulting administrative and public argument, Claudio Timmermans, a foreign merchant and acting Dutch vice-consul in Barcelona, mediated between the parties.[37]

At least some of these businesswomen enjoyed remarkable autonomy. In England, any business owned by a married woman belonged to her husband under cover. Although various authors have confirmed the use of the concept of "feme sole trader," which allowed a married woman to trade as if she were single (McIntosh 2005; Phillips 2006; Erickson 2024), we found a similar situation in our research. In 1801, the notary Francesc Joan Elías Bosch records the establishment of a trading company between two women, Antonia Amblas Corominas, married to Ramon Amblas, a bricklayer living in the town of L'Ametlla del Vallès, and Magdalena Murtra Laplaza, widow of Anton Murtra, a dealer from Barcelona. Each woman agrees to contribute 100 pounds in order to buy goods for resale and to establish a cash fund. Agreeing to work and make decisions together, both partners sign the document. The document notes that

> "... it is agreed that the aforementioned Antonia may, without the intervention of her husband and with complete independence from him, and with her own funds, freely continue the business and administration of the shop, with her own interests and capital prevailing, buying and selling (....). Antonia earned assets with her work and industry (...), therefore her husband cannot attempt to take over anything. Antonia expresses her autonomy, she says she does not need any consent from her husband, given that she invests money and capital that belongs only to her".[38]

6. Conclusions

It is difficult to understand economic sectors in pre-industrial cities without measuring the roles played by women, both as workers and as entrepreneurs. How many studies have examined productivity, labour, economic development, and other economic and social indicators without adequately considering women's economic activities? We are aware of the difficulties involved, particularly because many primary sources conceal or underestimate women's work and business participation. It is therefore essential not to

[37] AHPB, not. Jeroni Rojas Albaret, 973/12, f.10.

[38] AHPB, not. Francesc Joan Elías Bosch, 1123/26, f.120.

allow the gender bias embedded in historical sources to obscure our understanding of women's economic experiences. This article seeks to contribute to business history by making women's entrepreneurial activities more visible and by integrating them into broader interpretations of pre-industrial economic life.

Our research identified 103 businesswomen engaged in 24 different economic activities in Catalonia between 1750 and 1807, many of whom maintained their businesses over long periods. The most significant sectors were textiles and food trades, which together account for a substantial proportion of the women identified (65.1% and 16.5% respectively). These findings demonstrate both the diversity and the persistence of women's participation in the economy, revealing a far broader entrepreneurial presence than is usually captured by conventional sources.

A micro-level analysis based on notarial documentation has allowed us to reconstruct the business trajectories of women involved in two distinct sectors: calico manufacturing and food reselling. Resellers generally operated with relatively modest amounts of capital and combined business ownership with direct participation in everyday commercial activities. Their businesses were often embedded within family networks and could be transmitted across generations. Many combined several occupations simultaneously, while family and kinship relationships frequently played a significant role in the supply of goods, access to credit, and business continuity.

Women involved in calico manufacturing operated in a very different business environment. Entry into the sector required higher levels of capital investment, technical knowledge, and access to commercial networks. In many cases, women acted as major investors, equal partners, or majority shareholders, particularly in situations of widowhood. Their participation demonstrates that women were not restricted to small-scale commercial activities but could also be involved in sectors characterised by substantial capital requirements and complex organisational structures.

According to the data found for the same number of businesses (14), there is a greater volume of female entrepreneurs as resellers (31.4%) than as calico factories (26.6%). But it is not possible to argue that one sector had a "higher" or "lower" level of entrepreneurship and this was not our goal either. For example, if we compare the trajectories of Jerónima Folch Gallissà and the Gertrudis Llorens, we cannot tell which of the two was more entrepreneurial. It is important to recognize that although the reselling businesses may appear modest, given the large number of existing businesses it was actually intensely corporate with lots of commercial activity. As stated earlier, the resellers and calico factories are simply different and yet have common characteristics such as the source of their investment funds and their marital status. In both cases, monetary dowries contributed by women made critical phases of business development possible, either by starting companies or increasing the amount of capital needed by the factories or companies. Married women made up 57.6 percent of our sample, followed by widows (39.4 percent) and single women (3 percent). These data support something

that other authors have shown: the work of married women is statistically underestimated, so alternative sources need to be sought out.

More broadly, our findings invite a reconsideration of some traditional interpretations of pre-industrial business. The identification of women entrepreneurs across 24 economic activities demonstrates that female participation was neither exceptional nor confined to marginal economic niches. Women were active in commercial, manufacturing, and financial activities of varying scales, ranging from small reselling shops to companies linked to one of the most dynamic sectors of the Catalan economy. These results challenge the image of a predominantly male entrepreneurial world and suggest that women's contribution to economic activity was more significant and diverse than is commonly reflected in traditional narratives of pre-industrial business history.

The evidence presented here also contributes to a growing international historiography on female entrepreneurship. Recent studies on England, the Netherlands, and other European regions have demonstrated that women participated as owners, managers, investors, and business partners to a greater extent than previously assumed. The Catalan case confirms that such patterns were not exclusive to the Anglo-Saxon world. The trajectories analysed in this article reveal important similarities with those identified in studies of England (Barker 2006, 2017; Phillips 2006; Sharpe 2001; Erickson 2008, 2011, 2018, 2024; Collinge 2014, 2019), the Northern Netherlands (Van den Heuvel 2007), and France (Hardwick 1998; Crowston 2002, 2008; Hafter 2007), particularly regarding the importance of family businesses, the investment of women's own capital, the role of widowhood in business continuity, and the economic activity of married women that frequently remained hidden from official records. These similarities suggest that female entrepreneurship in eighteenth-century Catalonia formed part of broader European patterns rather than representing an exceptional or isolated case.

Finally, this article highlights the methodological importance of combining different types of sources when studying women's economic activity. Many of the businesswomen identified here remain invisible in institutional records, official reports, and other documentation traditionally used by historians. Their presence only becomes evident when commercial guides, mercantile documentation, and notarial sources are analysed together. This finding has implications beyond the Catalan case, suggesting that the underrepresentation of women in many historical studies may reflect the limitations of surviving sources rather than the actual absence of female entrepreneurship. In this respect, the article contributes not only new empirical evidence but also a methodological approach for recovering women's participation in pre-industrial economies.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the grant PID2025-172954NB-I00 funded by Knowledge Generation Projects of the Spanish State Research Agency (AEI), "Gender, Industry and Commerce in the Spanish Economic Modernization (1850–1930) (GEINCO)". This research is linked to the *Business Efficiency and Competitiveness Group (BECG)* by

Generalitat de Catalunya [SGR 9015-579696/2026]. This work was supported by the grant PID2022-139652NB-I00 funded by MCIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033 and by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), "A way of making Europe". We would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers and the editors of RHI-IHR for their valuable comments and suggestions, which have greatly helped us to improve the quality of the article.

Author contribution statement

The two authors have jointly produced the entire article, but Margarita López Antón should appear first because she proposed the research topic and devised the structure of the study.

References

Aston, Jennifer, and Catherine Bishop. 2020. 'Discovering a Global Perspective'. In *Female Entrepreneurs in the Long Nineteenth Century: A Global Perspective*, edited by Jennifer Aston and Catherne Bishop, 1-31. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Barker, Hannah. 2006. *The business of women: Female enterprise and urban development in Northern England 1760-1830*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barker, Hannah. 2017. *Family and business during the Industrial Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bennett, Robert; Harry Smith, Carry van Lieshout, Piero Montebruno, and Gill Newton. 2019. 'Gender'. In *The Age of Entrepreneurship: Business Proprietors, Self-employment and Corporations since 1851*, edited by Robert Bennet, Harry Smith, Carry van Lieshout, Piero Montebruno and Gill Newton, 192-217. New York: Routledge.

Bennett, Robert J., Carry van Lieshout, Harry Smith, Harry, Piero Montebruno, and Martin Lucas-Smith, eds. 2020. *BBCE: Atlas of Entrepreneurship.* https://www.bbce.uk/atlas/. Accessed on 8 May 2026.

Borderías, Cristina. 2013. 'Revisiting Women's Labor Force Participation in Catalonia (1920-1936)', *Feminist Economics*, 19 (4): 224-242.

Boxer, Charles R. 1975. *Women in Iberian Expansion Overseas, 1415-1815*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bridgewater, Pol and Laura Miquel. 2021. *El gremi i confraria de Sant Miquel dels revenedors de Barcelona entre els segles XVI i XVII (1590-1620): política, economía i Societat*. Barcelona: Edicions Rondas.

Burnette, Joyce. 2009. *Gender, work and wages in Industrial Revolution Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cantillon, Richard. 1950. *Ensayo sobre la naturaleza del comercio en general* [*Essai sur la Nature du Commerce en Général*]. México: Fondo de cultura Económica. (Original work published in 1730).

Carbonell, Montserrat. 1997. *Sobreviure a Barcelona: dones, pobresa i assistència al segle XVIII*. Barcelona: Eumo.

Carbonell, Montserrat. 2004. 'Dones i activitat econòmica a la Catalunya moderna'. In *Dones en transició: de la societat tradicional a la societat industrial*, edited by Mary Nash, 55-78. Barcelona: Icaria.

Carlos, Annim, and Larry Neal. 2004. 'Women investors in early capital markets, 1720-1725', *Financial History Review*, 11: 197-224.

Clark, Alice. 1982. *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century England*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Collinge, Peter. 2014. 'A genteel hand in the malt business: Barbara Ford (1755-1840) of Ashbourne', *Midland History*, 39 (1):110-32.

Collinge, Peter. 2019. 'Guilds, authority and the individual: The Company of Mercers prosecution of Dorothy Gretton in early eighteenth-century Derby', *Business History*, 61 (2):281-98.

Corfield, Penelope J. 2012. 'Business leaders and town gentry in early Industrial Britain: Specialist occupations and shared urbanism', *Urban History*, 39 (1):20-50.

Craig, Beatrice. 2015. *Women and Business since 1500: Invisible Presences in Europe and North America?* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Crowston, Clare. 2002. 'Engendering the guilds: Seamstresses, tailors and the clash of corporate identities in old regime France', *French Historical Studies*, 23(2): 339-371.

Crowston, Clare. 2008. 'Women, gender and guilds in Early modern Europe: An overview of recent research', *Internacional Review of Social History*, 53(S16): 19-44.

Dexter, Elisabeth Williams (Anthony). 1924. *Colonial Women of Affairs: Women in business and the Professions in America before 1776*. Boston: Hougthon Mifflin Company.

Dickson, Peter G.M. 1967. *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit 1668-1756*. London: Macmillan.

Dixon, E. 1995. 'Craftwomen in the *Livre des Métiers*", *The Economic Journal*, 5(18): 209-228.

Durepos, Gabrielle, Alan McKinlay, and Scott Taylor. 2017. 'Narrating histories of women at work: Archives, stories, and the promise of feminism', *Business History*, 59 (8):1261-1279.

Earle, Peter. 1989. *The making of the English middle class: Business, society and family life in London, 1660-1730*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Engels, Friedrich. 2017. *El Origen de la Familia, la Propiedad Privada y el Estado* [*Der Ursprung der Familie, dos Privateigenthums und des Staats*]. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Akal. (Original work published in 1884).

Erickson, Amy L. 2008. 'Married women's occupations in eighteenth-century London', *Continuity and Change*, 23 (2): 267-307.

Erickson, Amy L. 2011. 'Feature: Working London. Eleanor Mosley and Other Milliners in the City of London Companies 1700-1750'. *History Workshop Journal*, 71(1):147-72.

Erickson, Amy L. 2018. 'Esther Sleepe, Fan-Maker, and Her Family', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 42 (2):15-37.

Erickson, Amy L. 2024. 'Wealthy businesswomen, marriage and succession in eighteenth-century London', *Business History,* 66, (1):29-58.

Fernández-Pérez, Paloma. 1997. *El rostro familiar de la metrópoli: redes de parentesco y lazos mercantiles en Cádiz, 1700-1812*. Madrid: Siglo XXI.

Font Rius, Josep Maria. 1985. *Institucions de dret civil català*. Barcelona: Editorial Bosch.

Gallard, Diego, ed. [n.d.]. *Almanak Mercantil o Guía de Comerciantes (1796-1807)*. Madrid: Viuda de D. Joaquín Ibarra.

García-Gil, Elizabeth. 2023. 'Las mujeres en el ámbito de los negocios en Andalucía durante el siglo XVIII. Iniciativas, resistencias y emprendimiento de Doña Josefa de Lara y Montoya', *Obradoiro de Historia Moderna*, 32: 1-21.

Geib-Gunderson, Lisa .1998. *Uncovering the Hidden Work of Women in Family Businesses: A History of Census Undernumeration*. New York: Routledge.

Grau, Ramon and López, Marina. 1974. 'Empresari i capitalista a la manufactura catalana del segle XVIII. Introducció a l'estudi de les fabriques d'Indianes', *Recerques: historia, economía i cultura*, 4: 19-57.

Hafter, Daryl M. 2007. *Women at work in preindustrial France*. Pensilvania: The Pensilvania State University Press.

Haggerty, Sherryllynne. 2006. *The British Atlantic Trading community, 1760-1810. Men, Women and the Distribution of Goods*. Leiden and Boston: Brill Academic Publishers.

Hardwick, Julie. 1998. *The Practice of Patriarchy: Gender and the Politics of Household Authority in Early Modern France*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Holderness, Brian A. 1973. 'Elisabeth Parking and her investments, 1733-1766: Aspects of the Sheffield money market in the eighteenth century', *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society of Sheffield*, 10: 81-87.

Honeyman, Katrina. 2007. 'Doing business with gender: service industries and British business history', *Business History Review*, 81(3):471-493.

Horrell, Sara and Humphries, Jane. 1995. 'Women's Labour Participation and the Transition to the Male Breadwinner Family, 1790-1865', *Economic History Review*, 48 (1): 89-117.

Hudson, Pat, and William Robert Lee, eds. 1990. *Women's Work and the Family Economy*. Manchester: Historical Perspective.

Hufton, Olwen H. 1975. 'Women and the family economy in eighteenth-century', *French Historical Studies*, 9: 1-23.

Humphries, Jane and Sarasúa, Carmen. 2012. 'Off the record: Reconstructing women's labor force participation in the European past', *Feminist Economics*, 18 (4): 39-67.

Hunt, Margaret R. 1996. *The middling sort: Commerce, gender, and the family in England, 1680-1780*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Janssens, Angélique. 1997. 'The Rise and Decline of the Male Breadwinner Family?', *International Review of Social History*, 42 (5): 1-23.

Kay, Alison. 2009. *The foundations of female entrepreneurship: Enterprise, home and household in London c. 1800-1870*. London: Routledge.

Knight, Frank. H. 1947. *Riesgo, Incertidumbre y Beneficio* [*Risk, Uncertainty and Profit*]. Madrid: Aguilar. (Original work published in 1921)

Laurence, Anne. 2008. 'The emergence of a private clientele for banks in the early eighteenth century: Hoare's Bank and some women customers', *Economic History Review*, 61(3): 565-586.

Lenin, Vladimir. 1974. *El Imperialismo, Fase Superior del Capitalismo.* [*Империализм как высшая стадия капитализма*]. Madrid: Editorial Fundamentos. (Original work published in 1917).

Lindoso Tato, Elvira, and Tamara González López, eds. 2025. *Entre el poder y la subsistencia: la empresa española en clave femenina, ss. XVIII-XX*. Universidade da Coruña.

Loats, Carol L. 1997. 'Gender, guilds, and work identity: Perspectives from sixteenth-century Paris', *French Historical Studies*, 20 (1): 15-30.

Lobato, Isabel. 1995. *Compañías y negocios en la Cataluña preindustrial.* Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla.

López-Antón, Margarita. 2021. 'Tras los pasos de Francisco de Zamora. Trabajo de las mujeres y reconstrucción de las tasas de actividad en Cataluña (siglos XVIII-XIX)'. PhD Thesis, Barcelona: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB).

López-Antón, Margarita. 2026. 'Beyond Big Business. Rethinking the role of married women in Catalonia (Spain) in the first quarter of the 20th century', *Business History*, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/00076791.2026.2681470

McIntosh, Marjorie K. 2005. 'The benefits and drawbacks of femme sole status in England, 1300-1630', *Journal of British Studies*, 44 (3):410-438.

Marshall, Alfred. 2006. *Principios de Economía* [*Principles of Economics*]. Madrid: Síntesis. (Original work published in 1890).

Martini, Manuela, and Anne Bellavitis. 2014. 'Household economies, social norms and practices of unpaid market work in Europe from the sixteenth century for the present', *The History of the Family*, 19 (3): 273-282.

Marx, Karl. 2008. *El capital: crítica de la economía política. Tomo I: El proceso de producción del capital* [*Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*]. Méjico: Siglo veintiuno. (Original work published in 1867).

Molas, Pere and Cazeneuve, Xavier. 2017. 'Els gremis de Barcelona', *Quaderns d'Historia,* 24: 9-12.

Muñoz-Abeledo, Luisa. 2012. 'Women in the rural and industrial labour force in nineteenth-century Spain', *Feminist Economics*, 18:121-144.

Nash, Mary. 1988. 'Treball, conflictivitat social i estrategies de resistència: la dona obrera a la Catalunya Contemporània'. In *Mes enllà del silenci*, edited by Mary Nash, 153-71. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya.

Newton, Lucy A., and Philip L. Cottrell. 2009. 'Female investors in the first English and Welsh commercial joint-stock banks. In *Women and their Money 1700-1950. Essays on women and finance*, edited by Anne Laurence, Josephine Maltby and Janette Rutterfors, 115-32. Abindgdon: Routledge.

Owens, Alastair. 2008. 'Una inversión oculta? Dones i empresa a Anglaterra', *Recerques*, 56: 61-89.

Pérez-Fuentes, Pilar. 2013. 'Women's Economic Participation on the Eve of Industrialization: Bizkaia, Spain, 1825', *Feminist Economics*, 19 (4): 160-180.

Phillips, Nicola. 2006. *Women in business, 1700-1850*. Martlesham: Boydell and Brewer.

Prior, Mary, ed. 1985. *Women in English Society 1500-1800*. London and New York: Methuen, 93-117.

Renom Pulit, Mercè. 2025. *Revenedores. Gènere I treball a Barcelona (s.XV-XIX)*. Barcelona: Associació Antic Gremi Revenedors, 1447.

Rey, Ofelia. 2021. 'Mujeres en el comercio gallego de Ultramar a fines del siglo XVIII'. In *As Mulheres nos Caminhos da História*, edited by Marta Lobo de Araújo, Claudia Contente and Alexandra Esteves,38-59. Braga: Universidade do Minho.

Ricardo, David. 2004. *Principios de Economía Política y Tributación* [*On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*]. Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica (Original work pulished in 1817).

Sánchez, Álex. 2001. 'Les activitats econòmiques a Barcelona (1717-1833)'. In *Història de Barcelona. El desplegament de la ciutat manufacturera (1714-1833)*, vol V, edited by Jaume Sobrequés, 215-82. Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona.

Sánchez, Álex. 2011. 'Els fabricants d'indianes: orígens de la burgesia industrial barcelonina', *Barcelona: quaderns d'història*, 17:197-219.

Sánchez, Álex. 2012. 'Els orígens de la industrialització, 1750-1832'. In *Atlas de la Industrilización de Catalunya, 1750-2010*, edited by Jordi Nadal, José María Benaul and Carlos Sudrià, 11-53. Barcelona: Vicens Vives.

Sanderson, Emma. 1996. *Women and work in eighteenth-century Edinburgh*. New York: Macmillan.

Say, Jean-Baptiste. 2001. *Tratado de Economía Política* [*A Treatise on Political Economy*]. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica. (Original work published in 1803).

Schumpeter, Joseph A. 1967. *Teoría del Desarrollo Económico* [*Theory of Economic Development*]. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica. (Original work published in 1911)

Sharpe, Pamela. 2001. 'Gender in the economy: Female merchants and family business in the British Isles, 1600-1850', *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 34:283-306.

Shaw-Taylor, Leigh, and Tony E.A. Wrigley. 2014. 'Occupational Structure and Population Change'. In *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain*, edited by Roderick Floud, Jane Humphries, and Paul Johnson, vol. 1, 53–88. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

Smith, Adam. 2007. *La riqueza de las naciones* [*The Wealth of Nations*]. Madrid: Alianza. (Original work published in 1776).

Solà, Àngels. 2008. 'Negocis i identitat laboral de les dones', *Recerques*, 56: 5-18.

Solà, Àngels. 2009. 'Las mujeres como productoras autónomas en el medio urbano (siglos XIV-XIX)'. In *La Historia de las mujeres: perspectivas actuales*, edited by Cristina Borderías, 225-67. Barcelona: Icaria Editorial.

Thomson, James. 1992. *Els orígens de la industrialització a Catalunya. El Cotó a Barcelona, 1728-1832*. Barcelona: Edicions 62.

Tintó-Sala, Margarita. 1991. *Els Tenders revenedors de la ciutat de Barcelona*. Barcelona: Associació de Socors Mutus de Previsió Social.

Torra, Lídia. 2015. 'Las fuentes notariales para el estudio de la formación, renovación y cancelación de sociedades mercantiles constituidas en Barcelona durante el siglo XVIII'. In *Pensar con la historia desde el siglo XXI. Actas XII Congreso de la Asociación de Historia Contemporanea*, edited by Pilar Falguera and Juan Carlos Pereira, 2191-210. Madrid: UAM.

Torra, Lídia. 2022. 'Societats mercantils en el negoci del vi i l'aiguardent a Barcelona en el segle XVIII'. In *Vins, aiguardents i caves. La comercialització de la producció vinícola catalana (segles XVIII-XXI)*, edited by Josep Colomé-Ferrer, Jordi Planas and Raimon Soler-Becerro, 49-65. Tarragona*:* Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Publicacions URV.

Tortella, Mª Teresa. 1986. *Índice de los primitivos accionistas del Banco Nacional de San Carlos*. Madrid: Banco de España.

Van den Heuvel, Danielle. 2007. *Women entrepreneurship. Female traders in the Northern Netherlands, c. 1580-1815*. Amsterdam: Aksant.

Van Lieshout, Carry, Harry Smith, Piero Montebruno, and Robert J. Bennett.2019. 'Female entrepreneurship: business, marriage and motherhood in England and Wales, 1851–1911', *Social History*, 44(4), 440–468.

Vicente, Marta. 2008. 'Comerciar en femení. La identitat de les empresàries a la Barcelona del segle XVIII', *Recerques*, 56: 47-59.

Vickery, Amanda. 2020. 'Branding Angelica: Reputation management in late eighteenth-century England', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 43 (1):3-24.

Vilar, Pierre. 1964-68. *Catalunya dins l'Espanya moderna. Recerques sobre els fonaments econòmics de les estructures nacionals* (4 vols.). Barcelona: Edicions 62.

Voltes, Pedro. 1961. *Documentos y estudios. Catálogo del Fondo Comercial del Instituto Municipal de Historia*. Barcelona: Instituto Municipal de Historia.

Wakelam, Alexander. 2020. *Credit and debt in eighteenth-century England: an economic history of debtors' prisons*. London: Routledge.

Weber, Max. 1974. *Economía y Sociedad. Esbozo de sociología comprensiva* [*Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*]. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica. (Original work published in 1922)

Wensky, Margret. 1982. 'Women's Guilds in Cologne in the Later Middle Ages', *Journal of European Economic History*, 11 (3): 631-650.

Wiesner, Merry E. 1986. *Working women in Renaissance Germany*. Nueva Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Wiskin, Christine. 2006. 'Businesswomen and financial management: Three eighteenth-century case studies', *Accounting, Business and Financial History*, 16 (2): 143-161.

Wright, Susan. 1989. 'Holding up half the sky: Women and their occupation in eighteenth-century Ludlow', *Midland History*, 14 (1): 53-74.

Yeager, Mary A. 1999. *Women in Business*. Cheltenham and Massachusetts: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Yeager, Mary A. 2015. 'Women change everything', *Enterprise and Society*, 16 (4):744-769.

Repensar els negocis preindustrials: Dones emprenedores a la Catalunya del segle XVIII a través de fàbriques d'indianes i revenedores

RESUM

És difícil entendre els sectors econòmics de les ciutats preindustrials sense mesurar el paper que hi van jugar les dones, tant com a treballadores com a emprenedores. Aquest treball pretén canviar la imatge de l'empresa preindustrial, avançar en la història de l'empresa prestant atenció a les dones. Amb aquesta finalitat, hem utilitzat diferents fonts primàries com almanacs, registres de societats i fonts notarials com la constitució i renovació de societats mercantils, testaments i contractes matrimonials. Hem identificat 103 empresàries que es dedicaven a 24 activitats econòmiques, i el seu lideratge i gestió en molts casos va ser a llarg termini. Ens centrem en dos sectors econòmics, fàbriques d'indianes i revenedores, tenint en compte el seu capital social i la seva importància empresarial i mercantil. Hem analitzat les nostres troballes a través de les diferents teories econòmiques de l'emprenedor, amb l'objectiu identificar característiques i patrons emprenedors.

PARAULES CLAU: emprenedoria femenina, història de l'empresa, Cataluña (Espanya) segle XVIII, fàbriques d'indianes i revenedores

CODIS JEL: J16, N83, O10, R11

Repensar la actividad empresarial preindustrial: Mujeres emprendedoras en la Cataluña del siglo XVIII a través de las fábricas de indianas y los comercios de reventa

RESUMEN

Es difícil comprender los sectores económicos en las ciudades preindustriales sin medir el papel desempeñado por las mujeres, tanto como trabajadoras como emprendedoras. Este trabajo busca transformar la imagen de las empresas preindustriales y avanzar en la historia empresarial prestando atención a las mujeres. Para ello, hemos utilizado diversas fuentes primarias como almanaques, registros mercantiles y fuentes notariales como la constitución y renovación de sociedades mercantiles, testamentos y contratos matrimoniales. Identificamos a 103 empresarias que se dedicaban a 24 actividades económicas y cuyo liderazgo y gestión se mantuvo a largo plazo. Nos centramos en dos sectores económicos, las fábricas de indianas y las revendedoras, considerando su capital social e importancia empresarial y mercantil. Hemos analizado nuestros hallazgos a través de las diferentes teorías económicas del emprendedor, con el objetivo de identificar las características y patrones empresariales de estas mujeres.

PALABRAS CLAVE: emprendimiento femenino, historia de la empresa, Cataluña (España) siglo XVIII, fábricas de indianas y revendedoras

CÓDIGOS JEL: J16, N83, O10, R11