

Labarca shows that she made exactly the same accusation against her daughter-in-law, Maddalena, that had been used against her: that she was extravagant and untrustworthy with her husband's affairs. As Labarca concludes, Caterina was reusing 'scripts' of madness to manoeuvre in a fraught family dispute. Yet Labarca also detects in this story shifts in the vocabulary of mental illness during the second half of the eighteenth century: Maddalena's testimony characterises her husband's instability in terms of the disturbances to his temperament and spirits.

This book provides a challenge to the idea that the handling of mental illness was principally a medical concern, demonstrating the role of the ducal authorities and of families, neighbours, and priests. It also pays attention to the language used to describe the sick and the changes in expression. It is a compelling study, uncovering and analysing a wealth of fascinating material concerning the history of mental affliction in its social, cultural, and legal contexts, and making a significant contribution to our understanding of gender and family relations in the early modern period through the prism of Eighteenth-Century Tuscan society. ■

Mary Ann Lund

University of Leicester

ORCID 0000-0001-6738-1686

Francisco J. Medina-Alabaladejo, José Miguel Martínez-Carrión, Salvador Calatayud eds. *Inequality and Nutritional Transition in Economic History: Spain in the 19th and 21st centuries*. Abingdon/New York: Routledge; 2023. 284 p. ISBN 9781032212463. 120 \$

Nutrition is one of the key determinants of living standards and inequality in all societies. There is a vast literature that studies the change in dietary habits over time across cultures. While there is general agreement that unequal distribution of food is driven by socioeconomic, gender, generational and geographical reasons, little attention paid to how these changes were experienced by different sectors of the population. The relevance that inequality in nutrition is better understood when examined in a long-term perspective. *Inequality and Nutritional Transition in Economic History: Spain in the 19th-21st centuries* takes this challenge. This topic is a challenge because the quality and quantity of sources is variable and its

interpretation requires expertise in different fields such as economic history, development economics, anthropology, and different specialties in medicine such as endocrinology and pediatrics. This rich volume brings together the ideas and research of 29 authors compiled in ten chapters and an introduction.

Given the difficulty to obtain historical sources and adequately interpreting them, this volume examines the topic through a multi-dimensional approach that utilizes two methodologies that can jointly provide a more comprehensive picture of inequality in nutrition over time. The first is based on the analysis of diets based on primary sources and the second examines the effect of nutritional inequalities based on biological standards of living.

As a preamble to this volume, the introduction presents the main findings in the evolution of biological standards of living in Spain to establish a context for the subsequent chapters. It explains how Spain is an interesting country to study given the quality and quantity of sources available. The authors provide a summary of the vast extant anthropometric history scholarship produced by Spanish scholars since the 1980s and, from it, the reader get an idea of the trends in stature in Spain in the past two centuries and how they have been influenced by industrialization, the Civil War, the years of Autarchy during the first phase of the Franco Regime and economic growth and development during the post Franco era.

It would be impossible in this review to address all important points made in each chapter so I will present the main findings of each chapter as they contribute to the main questions formulated in the introduction.

The first chapter uses hospital diets to assess changes in dietary habits in the Mediterranean regions of Spain across different income groups. It shows that the percentage of total income spent on food by a given household was strongly correlated with the potential improvement the quality of the diet. People with lower income spent more on food and had less possibility to improve the quality of their diet.

The second chapter examines the rural-urban inequality by focusing on trends in heights. In the Spanish case there does not appear to be an urban penalty given that many cities had good sanitary infrastructure and tended to concentrate government and service sector activities. The exception to this pattern were cities where industrialization preceded the era of investments in health infrastructure (cities in the north). Another exception is the fact that there is height premium for rural populations from regions with high agricultural productivity (southeastern region).

The third chapter looks at inequality in intakes of nutrients in terms of gender and age groups based on diet analysis taken from various national data

bases. The findings show that nutritional deficiencies tended to affect more adult women, pregnant women, and children and manifested in insufficient intake of nutrients such as iron, calcium, or folic acid. These deficiencies increased mortality rates for these groups and as well as stunting.

The fourth chapter examines the case of the Canary Islanders, a population that is tall but poor. Canary Islanders did not endure subsistence crises as other regions of Spain due to their favorable environmental conditions and, being in an island, they were less exposed to disease. In contrast, the reliance on export agriculture as an economic activity also made them vulnerable to international trade cycles.

By studying the stature of male residents in Madrid in the twentieth century, chapter five looks at height differentials across social classes in the same geographical environment. There were persistent and growing gaps between high income, medium and low-income young male residents who lived through the Civil War and the first phase of the Franco dictatorship where there was a fall in GDP. Young men of the higher income groups did not see a decrease in the average height while lower income groups did. After, 1950 average heights across social classes started to converge and eventually men of all classes got significantly taller. Chapter 6 analyzed the nutritional status of soldiers in 1958 and uses the results as a proxy of the diet of the Spanish population during this period of nutritional transition. The findings conclude that there was both insufficient caloric intake and lack of variety in the diet. Chapter 7 explores malnutrition on the rural population and the regional inequalities during the Spanish largest economic phase (1964-1972). The finding shows that people in the zones of agricultural activity were undernourished amid the boom of economic development due to inadequate dietary habits rather than scarcity of resources.

The last three chapters address the effects of changes in dietary habits in the last 40 years as traditional inequalities disappeared. Chapter 8 examines how, starting in the 1980s traditional inequalities in access to food disappeared, there were new social inequalities in nutrition. Higher income and higher schooling groups transitioned to a diet focusing on health criteria and high-quality products. This trend has translated in a higher percentage of people with excess weight and obesity among their lower income and less educated counterparts. Those are the finding presented in chapter 9. Studies on the potential effect of dietary changes due to the economic hardship caused by the Great Recession of 2008 show paradoxical results. In times of recession Spaniards prefer to eat less of the same diet than change the composition of their diet, keeping in mind healthy eating guidelines. Spaniards have a homogeneous dietary culture shared

by most of the population, this opens the possibility that the increase in excess weight and obesity may be due to changes in lifestyle rather than diet.

The findings of this book shed light on the case of Spain, but the questions formulated are relevant for any other nation. This book is then an invitation for scholars working on similar topics in other countries. As such, this volume is an invaluable reference for an audience interested in the study of living standards and inequality in the past and today from a multidisciplinary perspective. Additionally, it is a compelling example of how historical studies can make substantive contributions to other fields and how findings and methodologies from disciplines in the natural and health sciences can provide useful knowledge to understand the past. ■

Moramay López Alonso

Rice University

ORCID 0000-0003-1127-7083

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Este libro colectivo constituye uno de los resultados del proyecto de investigación liderado por Leoncio López Ocón y Álvaro Ribagorda, “Desafíos educativos y científicos de la Segunda República española (1931-1936): internacionalización, popularización, e innovación en universidades e institutos” (<https://2rec.usal.es>), que ha abordado, durante la complicada coyuntura de la pandemia causada por la Covid-19, tres lagunas de la historiografía sobre la Segunda República española: las innovaciones pedagógicas en la enseñanza universitaria y secundaria, la divulgación de la ciencia y la técnica en la esfera pública y las relaciones internacionales de los científicos republicanos.

Los autores han aportado nuevas pruebas y reflexiones que sitúan a la Universidad Central entre las instituciones clave para la transformación del sistema universitario español de la época. El volumen que aquí reseñamos constituye la continuación del que por primera vez estudió el proyecto universitario republicano, *La Universidad Central durante la Segunda República. Las ciencias Humanas y*