

Victoria López Barahona and José A. Nieto Sánchez, “Standardized Clothing: Innovations in the production, commerce and consumption of garments in seventeenth-century Madrid”, *Sociología del Trabajo*, 71, 2011, pp. 118-135.

ABSTRACT

This essay discusses the rise of ready-to-wear clothing in seventeenth-century Madrid. Like some other European cities, the capital of the Hispanic monarchy experienced an early development of this kind of innovative industry, which was headed by the ‘gremio de mercaderes de ropería de nuevo’ (new-clothier merchants’ guild). The analysis of the fifteen shop inventories that have been gathered so far allow us to look more deeply into the shops’ stocks, the evolution and internal composition of the guild, the changes that it implemented in the organization of the production process –mainly, through the standardization of garments, new forms of fabric supply, and subcontracting networks-, as well as to outline some of the concomitant changes in the commercialization and consumption patterns of these items. The first results of this research cast some doubts on the leading role of England in the emergence of this industry, question the rigidity traditionally attributed to the guild system in Old Régime Madrid, and underline the economic and social relevance of ready-to-wear clothing trades in early modern capital cities as forerunners of the subsequent better known industrial developments.

Key words: standardized garments, ready-to-wear clothing, Madrid, new-clothier merchants’ guild, garment trades, clothes, guilds, industry, commerce.