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Catholic Dressing in the Spanish Franco Dictatorship (1939–1975): Normative Femininity and Its Sartorial Embodiment

The Francoist state, in collusion with the Church, tried to domesticate women's bodies and encode dressing patterns in accordance with Catholic moral doctrine. This article interrogates the normative notion of femininity in Francoism, focusing on ecclesiastical discourse and Catholic dress code. The Church dictated dressing norms, and the Franco regime sanctioned to a great extent its sartorial parameters. This paper also explores how women embodied gender ideals and sartorial patterns. I argue that foreign (im)moral influences that fissured normative discourses and sartorial practices from the 1950s onwards, after the international rehabilitation of the dictatorship and the transition from a society marked by an autarkic economic policy to a consumer society. This historical analysis suggests that efforts of (wo)men in positions of power within the Francoist regime and the Catholic Church to control the infiltration of other models and fashions were increasingly unsuccessful.

Introduction

Normative femininity is defined as that pattern or model of "being a woman" which is discursively constructed as desirable, acceptable, and "normal" in a specific society and culture; becoming the "norm"; and having performative effects on bodies.[1] The body therefore constitutes a matrix element in the sociocultural construction of identities and subjectivities. Following the historiographic proposal put forth by Aurora Morcillo, women's bodies are more than an ensemble of physical organisms; they are also receptacles for commonplaces about women's nature or *loci communes*, that is, sociocultural conventions attributed to femininity. Bodies are spaces with historical signifi-

1. P. Cryle and E. Stephens, *Normality. A Critical Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2017), 1–20.

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cance for gender.[2] They are delineated by the norms of a given society, culture, and religion. What bodies are, how they are represented, and how they are dressed are things which are historically determined.

Thanks to its performative capacity, dressing becomes one of the ways in which identity — gender and religious, among others — is materialized, expressed, and made visible. Clothing is located at the interface between the body and its sociocultural (re)presentation, where the symbolic borders of gender, religion, class, age, and so on can be (re)negotiated.[3] Dress codes can be deployed as a disciplinary mechanism, whereas fashion can become something potentially disruptive, transgressive, or antinormative. For this reason, dressing practices constitute an instrument that can be used to scrutinize normative discourses around Catholic femininity. They are the focus of this historical analysis.

In addition to prescriptive discourses of a political and religious order, oral sources help us to gauge to what extent women embodied normative femininity. The "life stories method" allows us to explore the identity construction of "being a woman" through memory, a field of action in which "perceptions of being" are continually negotiated.[4] In this sense, oral history is not so much to provide evidence for, contrast or refute historiographical premises, or complement the information provided by traditional written sources, but rather to understand the meaning of these. I have selected for this article the testimony of three sisters, daughters of a peasant-housewife and a shipowner, from a small coastal village in Galicia, in north-western Spain. Their testimonies help us to materialize the dialectic between normative discourses and dressing practices as well as specify the complex incarnation of new trends in the periphery and "habits of being."[5]

Modesty and Austerity in the Post-Civil War Period

The Catholic Church and the Franco state — born of a failed coup and bloody Civil War (1936–1939) — were tied together in an indissoluble marriage until the 1960s. This symbolic union, "becoming one flesh," took the shape of National Catholicism.[6] The Catholic Church played a decisive role in modelling a normative femininity in Franco Spain. Catholicism and

2. A. Morcillo, *En cuerpo y alma. Ser mujer en tiempos de Franco* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2015), 11, 110. This book arises from the fusion of two others in English: A. Morcillo, *True Catholic Womanhood: Gender Ideology in Franco's Spain* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University, 2000); and *The Seduction of Modern Spain. The Female Body and the Francoist Body Politic* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University, 2010).
3. J. Twigg, "Fashion, the Body, and Age," in *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*, eds., S. Black *et al*. (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 78–94; D. Crane, "Fashion, Identity, and Social Change," in *Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 1–25.
4. M. Llona, "Historia oral: la exploración de las identidades a través de las historias de vida," in *Entreverse: teoría y metodología práctica de las fuentes orales* (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco / Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea, 2012), 15–60.
5. C. Giorcelli and P. Rabinowitz, *Accessorizing the Body: Habits of Being I* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 1–6.
6. A. Morcillo, *En cuerpo*, 45.

domesticity were axes of identity in the construction of that gender model. The historian Aurora Morcillo calls this model of gender "True Catholic Womanhood." With this, she reconceptualises True Womanhood, or the culture of domesticity,[7] based on National Catholicism, highlighting the neo-baroque trappings of the Franco regime.

According to Morcillo, femininity under Franco had its roots in works such as *La perfecta casada* (*The Perfect Wife*) written by Fray Luis de León during the Counterreformation and inspired by, among others, the Valencian humanist Juan Luis Vives and his *Instrucción de la mujer cristiana* (*The Education of the Christian Woman*).[8] This does not mean that there was only one Catholic discourse around the model of gender, nor that this remained undisturbed over time. However, certain traits were conserved from the works written by Catholic moralists and clergy from the period after the Council of Trent (1545–1563) until almost the nineteenth century.[9] The attitude of suspicion towards women and their immodest dress was a constant, as it continued to be during the first half of the twentieth century. This prescriptive Catholic literature for women was widely republished during Francoism. The 1944 edition of Vives's work expressed the distrust towards the adornment of women's bodies in the following terms:

> Let us now see how the blessed martyr San Cyprian feels: "The adornment," he says, "and regalia of dress and the deception of cosmetics are appropriate only for public bad women, who are already entirely satisfied, encouraged in their insolence of their honour: you know that there is no adornment nor regalia as precious as those who care nothing for such worldly vanities, who care not but for their own goodness, with all humility."[10]

The preoccupation with respectable, modest, and proper dress dated back a long time. The battle against immodesty did not begin under Franco, nor was it an isolated case in the European interwar period.[11] Inmaculada Blasco signals that the battle against indecent fashion was especially relevant during the 1920s. In effect, not a single year passed without different dioceses emitting pastorals and circulars warning of the dangers of immorality in women's dress.[12] These initiatives brought together testimonies of others from the turn of the twentieth century, such as the Crusade of Christian Modesty initiated

7. This concept is used principally in English-language historiography. Coined by Barbara Welter in 1966, it refers to the prevailing value system among the middle and upper classes in the nineteenth century, also known as the "Cult of Domesticity." B. Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1966): 151–74.
8. A. Morcillo, *En cuerpo*, 68–74.
9. R. Mínguez, "La paradoja católica ante la modernidad: modelos de feminidad y mujeres católicas en España (1851–1874)" (PhD diss., Universitat de València, 2014), 188.
10. J. L. Vives, *Instrucción de la mujer cristiana* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1944), 54–70, 57. I have deliberately used the Spanish version published during the Franco years (here in translation) in order to highlight how this edition was used in the context of the Christian moral campaigns around women's dress that are the subject of this article.
11. A. T. Pelka, "Mujer e ideología en la posguerra española: feminidad, cuerpo y vestido," *Historia Social*, no. 79 (2014): 23–42, 32.
12. I. Blasco, *Paradojas de la ortodoxia: política de masas y militancia católica femenina en España (1919–1939)* (Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2003), 178.

in 1913, referenced by Isidro Gomá y Tomás in his work *Las modas y el lujo* (*Fashion and Luxury*). The man who would later become Primate between 1933 and 1940 warned women who obediently followed the dictates of fashion about their predisposition towards sin:

> It is not enough for you to appear modest; it is essential to be so. It is not sufficient to be so; it is necessary to look so. … Modesty, therefore, which is considered a Christian virtue, imposes upon your decency in dress. … Because in many of the models imposed upon you by fashion there is, *señoras*, a great iniquity on the part of the artist or the stylist who, more than dressing you, appears to have taken it upon themselves to perform what one critic has called "the art of undressing decency." Such is the perverse intention betrayed by the combination of certain cuts, cloths, pleats and colours with which the priests of fashion preoccupy themselves, with the aim of profaning your bodies and turning them into a bait for sin.[13]

Gomá's work was republished in 1926 and 1938, and during the Franco years it was frequently referenced in textbooks aimed at schoolgirls. Catholic discourse emphasized the deterioration of Catholic traditions and values as well as the aesthetic transgressions of the "modern woman," especially under the pretext of the emancipatory drives unfolding during the first third of the twentieth century.[14] The domestication of bodies and souls was also a priority for the new regime. In order to re-establish the gender order and re-Catholicize society, the ecclesiastical authorities enjoyed the regulatory support of the Francoist civil authorities. Dress played the role of a symbolic gauge of the feminine ideal of the devotedly Catholic woman: sacrificial mother and housewife confined to the domestic space.[15]

Religious dispositions were not limited to dress *stricto sensu* but rather included the entire (re)presentation of bodies: their appearance and adornment — clothing, makeup, hairstyle — as well as corporeal behaviours, postures, and expressions and, by extension, physical self-perception, and self-awareness.[16] Some of the most widely distributed "specific rules for female modesty" have been attributed to Enrique Plá y Deniel, Primate between 1941 and 1968. The Spanish prelates echoed these guidelines. Such was the case of the Bishop of Malaga in 1943:

13. I. Gomá y Tomás, *Las modas y el lujo. Ante la ley cristiana, la sociedad y el arte* (Toledo: Editorial Católica Toledana, 1938), 43–50, 149–50.
14. N. Aresti, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas. Los ideales de feminidad y masculinidad en el primer tercio del siglo XX* (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco / Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea, 2001); J. Luengo, *Gozos y ocios de la mujer moderna. Transgresiones estéticas en la vida urbana del primer tercio del siglo XX* (Málaga: Universidad de Málaga, 2008); M. Llona, «Recordar el porvenir: las mujeres modernas y el desorden de género en los años veinte y treinta», *Arenal* 27, no. 1 (2020): 5–32.
15. G. Di Febo, "Spanish Women's Clothing during the Long Post-Civil War Period," in *Accessorizing the Body: Habits of Being I*, eds., C. Giorcelli and P. Rabinowitz (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 126–47, 127.
16. I. Blasco, "Moda e imágenes femeninas durante el primer franquismo: entre la moralidad católica y las nuevas identidades de mujer," *Utopía y praxis latinoamericana* 2, no. 2 (1997): 83–93, 89.

> 1st Dresses must not be so tight that they provocatively show off the shape of the body. 2nd Dresses must not be so short that they do not cover the best part of the legs; it is not acceptable for them to stop at the knee. 3rd A low neckline goes against modesty and there are some that are so daring that they could be gravely sinful because of the dishonest intention they reveal or the scandal they provoke. 4th It is against modesty not to cover the arm at least to the elbow. Those who always wear long sleeves which go below the elbow and cover the whole arm are very worthy of praise. 5th It is against modesty not to wear stockings. 6th It is also against modesty to wear transparent dresses, or dresses with lace, in places that should be covered. 7th Girls' skirts must go to the knee and those twelve years and older must wear stockings. 8th Boys must not show their bare thighs. 9th For going to church one must wear long sleeves that cover the arm and forearm, with stockings and dresses that cover most of the legs, without low necklines or transparent fabric or lace. 10th Girls' teachers — especially the religious ones — should know that the Sacred Congregation of the Council … orders that they do not accept in their schools and convents those who wear less honest dresses and that, even when those already admitted, if they do not make amends, expel them. … 12th It is a sin against Christian modesty and honesty for men and women to swim together; to mingle together — in bathing suits — during games or pastimes, or to wear indecent and revealing bathing suits, hiding from view the most elemental rules of modesty." … NOTE: To be widely distributed among women, especially young women.[17]

In short, the female bodies that incarnated this code religiously would show only the face, hands, and feet. Official ecclesiastical bulletins, produced by the Archbishoprics and distributed to all local parishes, were the main form of written communication through which these decrees were distributed.[18] In addition to the distribution of specific circulars on this topic, parish priests were responsible for reminding people about these dress codes from the pulpit and were also required to announce them at church entrances.[19] As late as the 1950s, prelates insisted on the need to pay attention to "the illustrative posters in church doorways" and to hang them "in those where they did not appear."[20] Similarly, the press continued to publish these norms with very little variation.[21]

Teaching girls from an early age how to dress modestly was an ecclesiastics' concern. The headmaster and schoolteachers were urged not to admit in their educational centres students who did not comply with Catholic dress precepts:

> We know and are pleased to record here the zeal that not only the religious, but the public-school teachers of the State or Municipality, put into ensuring that the girls'

17. B. Santos Olivera, *Normas concretas de modestia femenina* (Málaga: Diócesis de Málaga, 1943).
18. I. Blasco, "Moda, 86.
19. B. Santos Olivera, "Carta pastoral sobre la modestia femenina," *Boletín Oficial del Obispado de Málaga*, no. 6 (June 1945): 390–471, 470.
20. B. de Arriba Castro, "Exhortación pastoral del arzobispo de Tarragona sobre la modestia cristiana," *La Vanguardia Española*, 29 July 1953, 11.
21. "Vida religiosa. El cardenal primado dicta normas de modestia ante la festividad de la Inmaculada," *ABC*, 7 December 1957, 50.

uniform, their students, strictly adheres to the standards of Catholic morality and honesty.[22]

The Catholic Church was not the only institution that ensured feminine modesty. The women's wing of the single party, FET-JONS (*Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS*), was also involved in the moral-sartorial women's guardianship. However, its principles were not identical and the relations between these institutions were tense. The Church and the FET-JONS Women's Section (*Sección Femenina de FET-JONS*) had tensions stemming from their desire to expand their influence. The struggle for controlling the educational system was key in this regard. The Franco's regime distributed educational competences favouring the ecclesiastical hierarchies, but the FET-JONS Women's Section was also in charge of publishing school manuals and teaching some subjects of the female curriculum, such as physical education. The girl's physical education attire was a point of confrontation between the Falangists and the ecclesiastics. The latter were very critical of exposing women's bodies, but both agreed that sport should not lead to scandal. Their differences came over where to draw the line.[23] Pilar Primo de Rivera, head of FET-JONS Women's Section, tried to alleviate the differences by entrusting the Falangists' religious advisor, fray Justo Pérez Urbel, with creating an appropriate sportswear.

Discourses around modesty were particularly intense during the post-war years and the period of autarky. The 1940s were marked by the rejection of opulence. The times required sober, simple, and discreet cuts. In addition to moral orders for austerity, the magazines and textbooks produced by the FET-JONS Women's Section carried articles and lessons on how to be "thrifty." One good idea was to invest in utilitarian fashion and versatile garments, such as reversible coats:

> As a practical detail, now that linings cost almost as much as cloth, one of the major fashion houses presents a reversible coat, meaning a coat made from two very fine flannel cloths in well-coordinated colours — for example, blue and black, brown and beige) — which can be worn equally on one side or the other, according to our preference. This system, as you can see, allows us to have two coats for the price of one, an advantage which we would be well advised to keep in mind when preparing our budget.[24]

However, shortages and the poverty of a large part of the population conditioned the degree of compliance with the aforementioned dress code. For example, according to Catholic morals, stockings were an essential garment for preserving decency. "Not wearing stockings is against modesty," warned

22. Liga Española contra la Pública Inmoralidad, "Disposiciones y normas sobre la moralidad de costumbres," *Boletín Oficial del Obispado de Barcelona*, no. 5 (24 April 1944).
23. M. Vincent, "Camisas Nuevas: Style and Uniformity in the Falange Española, 1933–1943," in *Fashioning the Body Politic: Dress, Gender, Citizenship*, ed. Wendy Parkins (Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2002), 167–87, 183.
24. "La moda," *Medina*, no. 3 (27 March 1941), 12.

the Bishop of Malaga.[25] But stockings were a very scarce item. In order to keep up appearances, some women used dyes or chicory as a self-tanning lotion.[26] Some even painted a line down the back of their legs with an eye liner to simulate a seam. The priest Daniel Vega Perea criticized this very practice in his satirical-costumbrista study.[27] In the 1950s *Sección Femenina*'s school manuals still noted that stockings were too fragile and expensive.[28] Many women chose to mend their stockings because they did not have the means to buy new ones each time they got a run, which was often. Nélida B. P. recalls that when she was fifteen, she started to work mending other women's stockings. She recounts that, whereas for everyday life stockings could be omitted out of practicality or economic necessity, in order to go to church on Sundays they were "mandatory, sacred."[29]

For attending church, the strict observance of norms was essential. Beyond Sunday mass, any ceremony, procession, or religious act required the same modesty and care in dress. It was customary to save a dress for Sundays and special occasions. The "Sunday best" dress was usually the newest one. Local *fiestas* and romerias were the perfect occasions for showing off a new dress. However, the majority of women could not afford more than one new dress each season, and some not even that. Working-class women often inherited clothes from sisters, cousins, or neighbours. By making a few adjustments to a dress, they could pass it off as their own. Sometimes they reused cloth from old dresses to make a "model that was more in style." Some women were even able to make their own garments based on basic knowledge of cuts and dressmaking. Separate school curricula meant that girls had to take a sewing course, but additionally many of them left school at age fourteen to learn dressmaking. Given the limited commercial availability, it was very common for people to go to seamstresses or stylists. These women worked for themselves or for somebody else, either from home or in the house of those who requested them. Nélida B. P. refers to this system in her interview. She recalls that the seamstresses went to the family home for a few days, traveling with their sewing machines on their heads, leaving her three sisters and her "all kitted out" for the season.

The figures found in women's magazines from the period served as inspiration for self-fashioning. The post-war Falangist magazines — such as *Y* (1938–1946) or *Medina* (1941–1945) — offered a considerable dose of sartorial plurality. The "way of being" displayed in the magazines' pages was

25. B. Santos Olivera, *Normas concretas de modestia femenina* (Málaga: Diócesis de Málaga, 1943).
26. "Productos de belleza Visnú," *Medina*, no. 226 (15 July 1945), 22.
27. D. Vega Perea, *Las modas al ridículo. Estudio satírico costumbrista* (Madrid: La Milagrosa, 1946), 65–73.
28. Sección Femenina de FET-JONS, "Convivencia Social. Lección III. El vestido," in *Enciclopedia elemental* (Madrid: Ernesto Giménez, 1954), 458–60.
29. Nélida B. P. (Burela, 1945) left primary school at the age of 13 to go help her aunt, who had just had a baby. At 15, she began to work mending stockings. She married when she was 23. In 1968, her brother-in-law opened a shoe store, and she became the manager. In 1980, she became the owner of the store, which she ran until her retirement in 2010. Interview by the author, 3 January 2020.

not a mere reaction to the "modern woman" but was part of the dialogue with gender identities altered by "modernity,"[30] The Falangists opted to "appear" aesthetically modern without directly attacking the moral principles. Their uniform incorporated a blue shirt, a fundamental artefact of the Falangist identity that symbolized a certain transgression of the gender order. Their uniform was stipulated with skirt instead of trousers to "avoid the dangers of masculinization."[31] But at the same time, the Falangist magazines, with their illustrations of impractical hats, tailored suits, and impractical court shoes, made it quite clear that the favoured aspirational model was the bourgeois lady.[32]

Other women's magazines could also present models that moved away from the normative dress standards to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the periodical's editorial line and target audience. For example, specialized fashion magazines focused on upper-middle class, bourgeois, and aristocratic women. A journal such as *El Boletín de la moda* (*The Fashion Journal*), founded by the designer Asunción Bastida in 1952, displayed haute couture ensembles that were out of line with some of the norms of Christian decency. Well out of reach of the majority, they were more luxurious, lowcut, and colourful — and less modest, demure, and restrained. The higher classes enjoyed greater permissiveness in dress not only with regard to the limited artistic freedom demonstrated in magazines but also when it came to innovating and embodying it. As Pelka notes, the privileged classes were not willing to renounce either their lifestyle or their sartorial style.[33]

Sartorial practice was conditioned by necessity, possibility, and circumstance. If we accept that women's experiences varied depending on their socioeconomic class, age, civil status, religious beliefs, and where they were from, among other factors, not all women embodied normative femininity.[34] Notwithstanding the determination to (re)define rigidly what it was to "be a woman" and "dress as a Catholic" on the part of those groups whose power — religious and civil — was authorized by the Francoist state, there were multiple femininities and sartorial embodiments.

Foreign (Im)Moral Influences from the 1950s

Fashion to Escape

The politics of autarky transcended the economic realm and had a sociocultural dimension, serving as a protective barrier against (im)moral influences and "foreignizing" tendencies. The intrusion of Parisian fashion on the

30. Á. Cenarro,"La Falange es un modo de ser (mujer): discursos e identidades de género en las publicaciones de la Sección Femenina (1939–1945)," *Historia y Política*, no. 37 (2017): 91–120.
31. D. Ridruejo, "Historia del Primer Consejo," *Y*, no. 1 (February 1938), 5–6.
32. M. Vincent, "Camisas Nuevas.
33. A. T. Pelka, "La imagen de la mujer. La moda femenina en la España de los años cuarenta," in *La dictadura franquista. La institucionalització d'un règim*, eds. A. Segura, A. Mayayo, and T. Abelló (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 2012), 223–34, 232.
34. H. Graham, "Gender and the State: Women in the 1940s," in *Spanish Cultural Studies*, eds. H. Graham and J. Labanyi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 182–95, 183.

Spanish side of the Pyrenees, or from the "Yankyism" which was slowly invading "Old Europe," had been a preoccupation since the beginning of the century and still was.[35] La *ville lumière* had been the world fashion capital until the Nazi occupation of 1940, although from the 1930s it was not the only place dictating fashion trends. Hollywood and its star system were a significant factor in the configuration of new sociocultural and sartorial patterns. Pope Pius XI pronounced against the dangers of cinematographic spectacle in his 1929 Encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri*, claiming that it increased the possibilities of a "moral and religious shipwreck." In the 1936 Encyclical *Vigilanti Cura*, he directed himself to the Bishopric of the United States, recognizing the potential of cinema for their work but reminding them of the need to watch over Catholic morality.[36] Spanish prelates considered American cinema to be one of the causes of "demoralization" and the move away from domesticity.[37]

At the end of the Second World War, some haute couture designers harnessed the general weariness with wartime restrictions, moving towards a sartorial style that was removed from austerity and moderation. This is the context in which Corolle, the first collection by Christian Dior (1905–1957), was launched in 1947. Voluminous skirts, which spared no expense on metres of the best-quality cloth, created the visual effect of an hourglass. The editor of the American magazine *Harper's Bazaar*, Carmel Snow, baptized the collection as *New Look*: "It's quite a revolution, dear Christian. Your dresses have such a new look!"[38] This marked the arrival of generous and rounded dimensions as opposed to the straight lines of the previous decade.

With a degree of sartorial inspiration taken from the past, this was a real catalyst moment that left no one indifferent. The media and the big screen broadcast Dior's call to women to extricate themselves from the sartorial monotony of the (post)war years. Dior designed with elite women in mind. But haute couture also served for many women as an escape from everyday life. And it had its detractors. The ones who were most opposed were American women, who thought this meant a return to excessively long skirts that hid their legs; they even formed protest groups. The largest of these was the Little Below the Knee Club in Chicago.[39] For the opposite reason, the New Look was harshly criticized in the first issue of *Teresa*, the most widely read and longest-running journal published by the Sección Femenina. In an article suggestively titled "La moda dejó de ser una dictadura" ("Fashion is No

35. I. Gomá y Tomás, 140, and 183.
36. Pope Pius XI, "Divini Illius Magistri," in *Encyclicals* (Vatican City: Holy See, 1929); and "Vigilanti Cura," in *Encyclicals* (Vatican City: Holy See, 1936). In the 1950s, Pius XII also pronounced on this concern: Pope Pius XII, "Miranda Prorsus," in *Encyclicals* (Vatican City: Holy See, 1957).
37. G. Di Febo, 130.
38. M. F. Pochna, *Christian Dior: The Biography* (London: Duckworth Books, 2008), 148.
39. American men were not enthusiastic either. Their scorn for the *New Look* was based principally on how much would be spent on cloth for dresses if women followed this trend. So they formed their own group, the League of Broke Husbands, which eventually had 30,000 members. L. Edwards, *Guía ilustrada para interpretar la moda: un manual sobre la evolución del vestido desde el siglo XVI hasta el XX* (Madrid: Libsa, 2017), 143.

Longer a Dictatorship"), S. Morales, a regular fashion columnist for the magazine, called it "Dior's useless cry to impose the short skirt," making a plea for restraint.[40]

The attempt to mould Spanish women, instructing them in Catholic domesticity and its corresponding dress, was particularly torturous from the middle of the century onwards. With the international rehabilitation of the Franco regime and the transition to a consumer society, efforts to control the entry of foreign customs and fashion that went against the prevailing norms were in vain. In addition to military bases and dollars, the 1953 diplomatic pacts with the United States brought with them echoes of the American way of life/wife. The mass media was filled with American advertisements and movie stars. Nevertheless, well removed from Hollywood glamour, the American middle class adopted a simple and relaxed style known as the American look, based on comfort without renouncing elegance.

During the Second World War, while Parisian designers were less active, the stylish Claire McCardell (1905–1958) started to design clothes that busy women could wear day to day — simple and practical, using synthetic fabrics and often with sporty lines. The American Look had a huge influence on style in the United States and Europe during the 1940s and 1950s.[41] This was the origin of *prêt-à-porter* (ready-to-wear). This phenomenon made low-cost imitations of haute couture designs accessible through a system of standardized sizes. From the 1950s haute couture was slowly displaced by ready-to-wear, without disappearing altogether.

Indecent Swimsuits

Summertime, and bathing suits in particular, were an obsession for the clergy in their singular crusade against immorality. This determination was largely sanctioned by the Franco regime. In 1941, the Dirección General de Seguridad (State Security Office) published a circular regarding "the moral rules for swimming at beaches and swimming pools":

> In order to avoid sin or a lack of civic decency during our present summer season, through the violation of existing law and offence to morals and good habits, the following norms are decreed: First, it is forbidden in all areas of the country to swim at the beach or in swimming pools without wearing the proper garment, as well as the use of bathing suits which, because of their form or because they leave some part of the body uncovered, are offensive to public modesty and decency. Second, it is similarly forbidden for swimmers to be out of the water, regardless of the motive, without wearing a bath robe or similar garment. Third, the following are exempt from the previous rule: enclosed solaria located at swimming pools or on riverbanks or beaches, which are totally separated from the rest of the public and have compulsory separation of the sexes; where there is only one solarium, there must be regulated times for bathers of each sex. Fourth, the organization of dances

40. S. Morales, "La moda dejó de ser una dictadura," *Teresa*, no. 1 (January 1954), 8–14.
41. S. and T. Pendergast, "American Look," in *Fashion, Costume, and Culture: Clothing, Headwear, Body Decorations, and Footwear through the Ages*, vol. 5, ed. S. Hermsten (Farmington Hills: UXL – Thomson, 2004), 852–3.

> in bathing suits at pools or public baths is also strictly forbidden. Fifth, Agents of the State will investigate, without delay, any complaints of infractions of the previous rules, and will detain, where appropriate, those in violation of the rules. Depending on the case, these will be punished with a fine of up to *five hundred* pesetas and subsidiary arrest, without prejudice to the closure of bathing establishments where infractions of this kind occur repeatedly.[42]

This circular was published, with very few changes, for several years. In the 1950s, the moral dress code for beaches and swimming pools remained largely intact. With the arrival of the summer, the press echoed abovementioned five regulations.[43] Far from advocating a relaxation of the rules, some provincial authorities increased the number of regulations in the circular.[44] The collaboration between civil and Church authorities was essential to this "war against immorality." Here is how the Catholic youth of Pontevedra put it in their monthly publication:

> It is well known that when the first warmth of springtime arrives, the more or less immodest dress of many women, some young and some not so young, is accentuated, with grave offence to women's decency and dignity, and without conforming to the norms of Christian morality or to the basic precepts of social coexistence. This impertinence and vulgarity in the basest form of women's dress — or undress — which is at its height in the summer, is found not only at beaches, solaria and similar places, but also in town squares, streets and passages, trams and buses and all over the place. … And the affront and audacity reach such an extreme that women who are indecently dressed dare to profane the House of God by entering into church. And since evil does not tend to diminish, but instead and to the contrary gets more obvious and worse with each day that passes … we believe the time has now come for the Church and civil authorities to intervene.[45]

In May 1951, the first National Conference on Morality for beaches, swimming pools, and riverbanks was held in Valencia, organized by the Spanish Episcopal Commission for Orthodoxy and Morality. According to the participants — representatives from almost all provinces, as well as civil authorities and prelates — with the arrival of the hot weather, moral dangers lay in wait in greater number and immodesty exceeded the limits of public decency. The conference's conclusions emphasized the interest the Head of State and the Ministry of the Interior had in the issue of summer morality, calling on the collaboration of the provincial and local civil authorities to put "a stop to the paganist and nudist invasion of foreigners which vilify Spain's honour as well as the Catholic sentiment of our Patria." Similarly, there was a plea for the Commission to provide rules on acceptable bathing suits, for ladies as well as gentlemen.[46]

42. Gobernador Civil de A Coruña, "Baños, playas y piscinas," *Boletín Oficial Provincial de A Coruña*, no. 161 (21 July 1941), 459. La *cursiva* es del original.
43. Gobernador Civil de Lugo, "La moralidad en las playas," *El Progreso*, 28 June 1951, 2.
44. Gobernador Civil de A Coruña, "Circular sobre playas y piscinas," *El Correo Gallego*, 22 June 1951, 2.
45. "Guerra a la inmoralidad," *Spes*, no. 211 (July 1952), 8.
46. Comisión Episcopal de Moralidad y Ortodoxia de España, "Conclusiones," *I Congreso Nacional de Moralidad en Playas, Piscinas y márgenes de* ríos, 13 May 1951, 1–2.

In 1958, this Commission published an 85-page compendium of *Norms of Christian Decency*, chapter 13 of which was dedicated to the "winter of souls," that is, the summer:

> 119. The summertime, beyond the usual places of residence, will not be dangerous if we remember that God is everywhere, that He sees us, and that his orders are to be followed always and in all places. We need to be very aware that bad examples, especially for simple people, can cause scandals of great seriousness, worthy of terrible abominations of Christ. … 121. Particular danger to morality is found in *public bathing places*, at beaches, swimming pools, riverbanks, etcetera. … 124. In *swimming pools for men only* simple bathing suits can be tolerated, and the most acceptable are the variety resembling the "Meyba" garment.[47] For *women only* the suit should be such that it covers the trunk, with a small skirt for outside the water. 126. In *mixed bathing areas*, if they absolutely cannot be avoided, … bath robes. … 129. *Sunbathing areas* should not be a pretext for excessive nudity, which is not normally necessary, and when it is, should be done well away from the view of other people.[48]

Rule number 119 was a reminder to "summer holidaymakers" that God was omnipresent, even if they were subject to less control and vigilance, on the margins of the usual social and gender conventions of their place of origin. Numbers 124 and 125 demonstrate that bathing suits continued to be in the spotlight at the end of the 1950s. Number 126 emphasized the bath robe, a compulsory garment that one had to wear right to the edge of the sea or the pool. In summary, in spite of the foreign influence experienced in the country starting in the 1950s — a hinge decade for the regime — Catholic morality continued to constrict women's bodies. Persecution was still intense during the summer months. Women continued to hear hostile diatribes against new fashions and immodest bathing suits. But the overskirt and the bath robe could not resist the competition of the bikini.

The two-piece bathing suit has been attributed to Jacques Heim (1899–1967) and the engineer-turned-designer Louis Réard (1897–1984), when the restrictions of (global) warfare made it necessary to reduce cloth. At the time it was invented, it was such an indecent garment that not a single model could be found who was willing to show it off. The first to dare was the stripper Micheline Bernardini in 1946, who declared that the costume would be "more explosive than the Bikini bomb," with reference to the nuclear tests being carried out by the United States in the Marshall Islands.[49] Its acceptance, however, was slow and controversial throughout the world.

In Spain, the bikini became popular in the 1960s, but it first arrived just two years after its invention. In 1948 the press published the photograph of the back of a woman in a bikini watching a regatta on the Royal Pier on the Magdalena peninsula in Santander. It turned out to be a twenty-year-old

47. Men's swimwear that takes its name from the *Meyba* swimwear brand, created in 1945 by Josep Mestre and Joaquim Ballbé.
48. Comisión Episcopal de Ortodoxia y Moralidad, *Normas de decencia cristiana* (Madrid: Secretariado del Episcopado Español, 1958), 45–7. La *cursiva* es del original.
49. A. Patrick, *The Bikini: A Cultural History* (London: Parkstone, 2002).

French student taking summer courses at the International University Menéndez Pelayo. In order to avoid sanctions and public scandals with international repercussions, the Magdalena beach was enclosed for exclusive use of female foreign students, with no restrictions on their attire. The other beaches were still under the existing regulations.[50] The civil authorities were obliged to make some concessions, especially when the transgressors were foreigners.

At the beginning of the 1960s, prelates persisted in their determination to be women's moral and sartorial guardians. School manuals still included lessons on the need for girls' bathing suits not to draw "attention for being indecent."[51] The Franco state makes a clear commitment to exploit tourism as a key sector for its economic development and international rehabilitation. The regime was more preoccupied with its international finances and the tourist sector than "a few centimetres of cloth."[52] The consent for fashions and habits considered a priori immoral was a decisive requirement in this regard. The civil authorities looked the other way in order to continue welcoming tourists and dollars. The Civil Guard, which, in the days of puritanism, had been charged with correcting excesses in dress and safeguarding a prudish modesty, received instructions to turn a blind eye. A certain permissiveness of clothing for foreign tourists could help to attract tourists and enable a better exterior image. Although Catholic morality did not disappear, religious authorities no longer counted on the belligerence of the Francoist authorities when it came to the surveillance of public morality.

Within the Church, there were some exceptions. On the Costa del Sol, it is worth mentioning the myth of the "bikini archpriest," Rodrigo Bocanegra. Although we cannot be sure that the archpriest declared himself in favour of the bikini, he is a figure directly linked to Marbella's economic and tourist development.[53] It is true that pastorals and ecclesiastical publications identified tourists as agents of Satan who brought perversions with their depraved, compromised, and corrupting customs. Father Antonio García Figar, in his 1961 work *For a Better Woman*, complained:

> What would we say about other beaches in Levante or the Costa Brava and the Costa del Sol, about which they say things we'd prefer to forget as soon as we hear them? What draws our attention are the foreign women, starved of religion and good habits, whom our women copy as "our century's favourite daughters." To add to this, bathing suits, at some beaches and swimming pools, are shown off on the street, bars and open-air summer rooftops, in a corrupt mix with young men and even bachelors "of a certain age", with the odd midsummer old man, who do not spare a thought for children or decent people. Nor do all the semi-naked bodies

50. L. Alonso, *La represión sexual en la España de Franco* (Barcelona: Luis de Caralt, 1977), 64–5.
51. Sección Femenina de FET-JONS, "Lección XVI. En la playa," in *Economía Doméstica. Quinto y sexto curso de bachillerato. Magisterio. Comercio* (Madrid: Ibarra, 1961), 329–34.
52. J. Gracia and M. Á. Ruiz, *La España de Franco (1939–1975). Cultura y vida cotidiana* (Madrid: Síntesis, 2014), 354–5.
53. A. M.ª Mata, *Marbella fue una sotana Rodrigo Bocanegra Pérez, «Don Rodrigo»* (Marbella: A. M.ª Mata Lara, 2008).

look like Venus as they come out of the water; most of them have skinny ribs or enough scandalous fat to chew on.[54]

Although contributing to Spain's economy and international reputation, female tourists caused scandal with their beachwear that defied rules and shapes. Beyond the economic transformation in areas with large numbers of holidaymakers, the rise of mass tourism brought with it a certain relaxation in the control of morals and dress. The state promotion of tourism aimed to attract Western European visitors through attractive and cheap appeals to "sun and beach." The local population in tourist centres quite quickly became disinhibited in their bodies due to their proximity and constant contact. Many women took advantage of the impact of tourism to exceed normative limits, even though some were insulted in public for doing so.[55] Nevertheless, Spanish family tourism was quite restrained. Furthermore, the adoption of beach customs by people who lived in small coastal towns in less touristy areas was slow and complex. Irma B. P. recalls that the bathing suits worn by her relatives who lived in Argentina caused a scandal around A Mariña (Lugo) in the 1960s:

Our relatives sent us photos in hammocks and swimsuits in Mar de Plata. And then they came to visit, and we went to the beach. I was wearing a swimsuit too, but my swimsuit covered me up to here [pointing above the knee] and also had an overskirt! It did not have sleeves, but by pure miracle. … And I told my mum [in reference to her cousins]: "Oh mom, what a shame! Everyone is watching us." Because the swimsuits they were wearing were a scandal. … And my mother used to say to me: "It doesn't matter. Don't worry about it. There [in Argentina] this is how girls dress." My mother had always been very modern, but who stopped people's tongues [gossip]?[56]

In the 1960s, normative femininity found itself unable to compete with so much imported (sartorial) embodiment of the feminine. Counter to the false prediction of a 1964 study funded by the Francoist state, which forecast that it would soon go out of style, the bikini infiltrated the minds and bodies of Spanish women.[57] Similarly, beaches became an essential part of summer holidays; a new playing field; a place of observation, exhibition, and relations between the genders — for locals as much as visitors.

54. A. García Figar, "Capítulo X. Haced visible a todos vuestra modestia," in *Por una mujer mejor* (Madrid: Morata, 1961), 76–82, 79–80.
55. M. Nash, "Mass Tourism and New Representations of Gender in Late Francoist Spain: The Sueca and Don Juan in the 1960s," *Cultural History* 4, no. 2 (2015): 136–61.
56. Irma B. P. (Burela, 1944) left school at the age of 14 and went to learn sewing with a cousin, who was a door-to-door seamstress. After that, she began to make clothes for her family and even embroider them. She was a sewing-machine saleswoman for a while. She taught other women how to use a sewing machine for tailoring and embroidery. In 1970 she married and left this job, but she never stopped teaching. She still teaches embroidery courses, at the age of 77. Interview by the author, 2 January 2020.
57. S. D. Pack, *Tourism and dictatorship: Europe's peaceful invasion of Franco's Spain* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 144–5.

Uncovering Women after Vatican II

Catholic women had to cover their heads in order to enter a place of worship or participate in any religious ceremony. The head covering was a Biblical requirement mentioned in the Pauline epistles.[58] The veiling practice represented women's sacredness or, more generally, their piety and a public commitment to Catholic moral doctrine. This dress practice is not exclusive to Catholicism but is present as well in other religions. Even today the great symbolic battles over women's bodies, as a space of cultural expression and social values, have as their reference point garments such as the *hijab*.[59]

The interviewees not only remember to wear a veil at every Sunday mass but also treasure some of them. Photographs of the time hinder us to see beyond black and white, but oral sources provide us multiple shades and colours. After receiving First Communion, girls had to start to wear veils, but these could be in lighter colours. Benita B. P.'s veil was made of a "very pale blue" tulle.[60] Although the most common for adult women were the black veils of tulle, feast days and processions were the perfect occasion to show off those made of blond lace or black Chantilly lace (Fig. 1).

One of the most elegant headdresses was the *mantilla*. Placed on the head with a large comb made from shell, this garment was typical of upper-class married women in religious acts. It was a mark of distinction and a sign of belonging to a social group. From the 1950s, the *mantilla* began to be relegated to ceremonial garment for the godmothers at baptisms and weddings of the highborn, bullfights, or *Semana Santa* (Holy Week) processions.[61] The staging of Semana Santa was an exemplary demonstration of National Catholicism.[62] This garment acquired spectacular symbolism in this fervent Catholic commemoration and authentic ritual of public patriotism. The most iconic photographic image of this holy annual event is probably that of young women wearing *mantillas*, black tailored knee-length suits, and gloves (Fig. 2). More than religious faith, these women embodied the decorum — a symbol of the moral health of society — as well as the bourgeois etiquette and the Spanish tradition. The *mantilla* was a prestigious symbol of the Spanish tradition since the seventeenth century. The Baroque once again

58. 1 Cor. 11:2–16.

59. From a decolonial perspective, the anthropologist Saba Mahmood indicates that for some women the veil has become a symbol against compulsory secularism under colonial modernity. Against this interpretation, the Algerian feminist Wassyla Tamzali claims that the burka, the burkini, the hijab, and any other type of veiling are not religious symbols but a way of sexualizing women in such a way that they are seen only as a sex, with no identity. S. Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2005); and W. Tamzali, *El burka como excusa. Terrorismo intelectual, religioso y moral contra la libertad de las mujeres* (Barcelona: Saga, 2010).

60. Benita B. P. (Burela, 1952) left school at the age of 14. She first worked mending stockings, like her sister Nélida. She also worked mending fishing nets and, at 21, she began working as a decorator at the Sargadelos Ceramic Factory (Cervo). She worked at the factory until the 1990s. Interview by the author, 17 April 2019.

61. G. Di Febo, 141.

62. M. Vincent, "La Semana Santa en el nacionalcatolicismo: Espacio urbano, arte e historia. El caso de Valladolid (1939–1949)," *Historia y Politica*, no. 38 (2017): 91–127.

Figure 1 Veiled women in the procession of the Virgin of Carmel, patron saint of seafarers. San Cibrao (Lugo, Spain), 16 July 1954. (Photo Library: Fototeca do Concello de Cervo).

Figure 2 Women with *mantilla* in a Semana Santa (Holy Week) procession. Vilagarcía de Arousa (Pontevedra, Spain), 1962. (Photo Library: O Faiado da Memoria).

becomes a key cultural vehicle when it came to combining these aesthetic, religious, and political values.

The II Vatican Council (1962–1965) gave hope to the most progressive young Catholic women, who considered the veil an antiquity and a nuisance:

> Some people believe that it would be correct for the conciliar Bishops to leave the question of the social and private conduct of Christian women to their free choice: this refers to attire, fiestas, attending performances, etc. The time for "rules" has passed; they humiliate more than they help. … Will the use of the veil disappear now? Let us get this from the Council! It's a nuisance because we forget it and at times we want to enter a church and we do not have it. What's more, it's old, it's hot, it's a bother… and in other countries women do not wear it.[63]

Vatican II brought with it changes in religiosity, an internal process of secularization and the rise of a multiplicity of discourses within Catholicism. In relation to women, conciliar texts spoke of "social promotion," but there were significant and intentional silences that later led to conservative pronouncements. This was the case with the position of women inside the Church or questions related to sexuality. Nevertheless, to the extent that they comprised a set of positions open to interpretation and references to women were ambiguous, there was room for manoeuvre. As Eider de Dios y Raúl Mínguez argue, the conciliar principles and their subsequent reinterpretation allowed many Catholic women to become empowered. In this way, they were able not only to change the way they lived their faith but also to adopt a critical attitude both inside the Church and outside.[64]

Although the conciliar debates made no mention of the veil, its use declined. The silence around this issue was interpreted as a repeal or, at least, a more flexible attitude towards this once compulsory dress practice. In April 1969, Pope Paul VI promulgated the Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum*, a reform of the Roman Missal of Pius V (1566–1572), by order of the Second Vatican Council.[65] In early May 1969, the Missal was presented to the media. The secretary of the *Consilium*, the Italian Bishop Annibale Bugnini, was asked a question about women's veils. Based on his answer, the Italian and international press reported that Saint Paul's decree regarding women's attire, that is, that women had to cover their heads, was no longer a requirement for entering church.[66] This issue was loudly echoed in the American press:

> In some dioceses, wearing a hat or veil during services was made optional in recent experiments. By ignoring any reference to the rule at all, the new missal abolishes it as a requirement. Women may still cover their heads if they want to. … Some of the changes are expected to raise resistance in the more conservative areas of

63. C. Enríquez de Salamanca, "¿Qué representa el Concilio para las mujeres? Actitudes prácticas," *Senda y Alba*, no. 23 (October 1962), 23–4.
64. E. de Dios and R. Mínguez, "De la obediencia a la protesta. Laicas católicas ante el Vaticano II," *Feminismo/s*, no. 28 (2016): 213–33.
65. Paul VI, "Missale Romanum," in *Constituciones Apostólicas*, (Vatican City: Holy See, 1969).
66. 1 Cor. 11:2–16.

> Catholicism — including Rome itself. It has been a long-established practice in parish churches in Rome and elsewhere in Italy for priest to devote a Sunday sermon each year to reminding women they must cover their heads in church, even threatening to refuse Communion to violators. … Modernization at Church rites represented a major victory for progressives striving for the "aggiornamento" (updating) of the Church.[67]

In June 1969, Bugnini found himself having to clarify a "public misunderstanding," declaring that it had been "a terrible mistake." The "1,900-year-old/19-centuries-year-old rule" regarding women's veils had not been modified.[68] In fact, the 1983 Code of Canon Law only omitted canon number 1262 from the 1917 Code of Canon Law, without explicitly repealing it.[69] According to canon law, a subsequent law only cancels a previous one when it does so explicitly. Although there was not a clear revocation, women continued to abandon the veil; in the United States, Catholic women typically wore hats. It thus went from being a strict rule to a practice encouraged and strongly recommended by the religious authorities but now without penalty.[70] In any event, the covering of the head became a residual or merely ceremonial practice in late Franco Spain.

Vatican II also brought some relaxation in religious clothing. Catholic institutional clothes constituted an ostentatious fossilized fashion. The more opulent liturgical vestments of the ecclesiastical hierarchies contrasted with the nuns' modest habits. The religious habit offered the nuns a certain degree of independence and respect within the Church and in the broader society. The *aggiornamento* entrusted nuns to leave the church and convent walls and connect with the community. According to the American historian Ann Braude, nuns understood that their veils and floor-length robes separated them from (American) society.[71] The habit helped nuns feel part of their community, but it alienated them from the rest. Some congregations shortened their habits, and eventually many abandoned it altogether in order to serve communities more effectively.

Patterns for New Generations

Throughout the 1960s young women adopted their own style — a young style. Miniskirts became one of the decade's symbols of dress and youth, a contrast with the modesty and respectful style of Christian dress. Skirt lengths became a headache and motivated religious moralists, such as Father Vega Perea, to spill rivers of ink. In his custombrist satire of 1946, he was

67. "Church Erases Head-Cover Rule," *Quad-City Times*, 3 May 1969, 14. See also: "New Catholic Missal Wipes Out Rule for Women to Cover Heads in Church," *The Danville Register*, 3 May 1969, 2.
68. "Catholic Women Must Cover Head," *Wisconsin State Journal*, 22 June 1969, 36; "Vatican Insists Women Wear Hats in Church," *The Lexington Herald*, 23 June 1969, 16; "Catholic Women Still Cover Head," *The Journal Times*, 5 July 1969, 9.
69. Catholic Church, *Code of Canon Law* (Vatican City: Holy See, 1983).
70. "Catholic Women Still Cover Head," *The Journal Times*, 5 July 1969, 9.
71. A. Braude, *Sisters and Saints. Women and American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 71–2.

scandalized by the comparison between a photograph from the turn of the century and a contemporary one in which a young woman posed with a bathing suit on the beach in Estoril, Portugal. He wrote: "today the only ones who dress in full accordance with the rules of the Church are the nuns. . . . To a greater or lesser degree, skirt lengths tend to move towards the ultrashort."[72] He was not mistaken. The miniskirt, despite being morally reprehensible, found a place in young women's wardrobes. Although its origins are broader, the popularization of the miniskirt has been attributed to the British designer Mary Quant (b. 1934) and the Parisian stylist André Courrèges (1923–2016). The "miniskirt boom" arrived in Spain in the autumn and winter of 1966–1967.[73] In March 1968, Mary Quant came to Spain to present her miniskirt designs at the residence of the British ambassador in Madrid.[74]

Trousers were another focus of tension. The polemic surrounding this garment demonstrates that the component that disrupted the gender order did not necessarily involve a lack of cloth or the exposure of bodies, as with the bikini and miniskirt. It was a transgression of gender. The Dominican friar García Figar defined it as "male" and "masculinizing":

> Nor are men's trousers flattering on young women, either physically or socially. Men feel ashamed to see women in trousers, and they feel a great disdain towards them when they see men's attire profaned. … These women and those "over the hill" should say farewell to marriage and the happiness that comes with it. … Trousers were invented for men and skirts for women.[75]

The new dress trends did not arrive everywhere at once. In the 1960s, trousers appeared among the *mariñanas*,[76] but they became popular later. As Benita B. P. says, "when things get here it's late. But once we got into the trousers, there was no one left to take them off."[77] Her sister Irma remembers very clearly the impact caused by the first girl in Burela (Lugo) who dared to wear "trousers like men":

> Back then we were not wearing trousers. They did not exist for women! I remember when I was already a little girl, a girl from Burela put on her first trousers and they criticized her a lot. A lot! Oh, I was 18 years old [1962]. That girl was from my gang, a friend of mine. People said: "Oh, but look at her, how dare she? Wearing trousers like men! How brazen!" Imagine! Actually, all of as drooled because we all wanted to wear trousers. About a year later, we started wearing them. All in trousers! I've never criticized her, but older people… Imagine! She was always a very modern girl and had an aunt who was a very good seamstress. She took all the fashions out of the figures in the magazines. She did not care, and she did well. She ordered the fabrics from Viveiro or Ribadeo [two larger towns in the north of

72. D. Vega Perea, 201–10.
73. "Bomba 66. La minifalda," *Triunfo*, no. 209 (4 June 1966), 23–5.
74. "Mary Quant y sus muchachas," *ABC*, 22 March 1968, 21; and "La creadora de la minifalda," *La Vanguardia*, 21 March 1968, 7.
75. A. García Figar, *Por una mujer mejor* (Madrid: Morata, 1961), 80.
76. *Mariñanas* is the demonym for women from A Mariña, a coastal region north of Lugo in Galicia, Spain.
77. Benita B. P. (Burela, 1952). Interview by the author, 17 April 2019.

Lugo]. She went by bus to pick up the goods. There were no other transportation options. The train came after, my dear. Goodness! And look what train we still have now, and what time we are in![78]

Nevertheless, the assumption about rural backwardness — in this case, when it came to in-*corporating* new sartorial patterns — needs nuance. On one hand, women who lived on the coast or in rural areas in the interior that had more economic activity and were better connected could easily be up to date with the latest trends. When they could afford to, they could even wear them. The fact that they lived in a small town did not necessarily mean that

Figure 3 Girls in baby-doll style dresses and pants in the atrium of the church in Covas parish. Viveiro (Lugo, Spain), ca. 1970. (Photo Library: Memorias do Vicedo).

78. Irma B. P. (Burela, 1944). Interview by the author, 2 January 2020.

they were isolated and dressed in an "old-fashioned" way. On the other hand, living in the city mean they could allow themselves to "be modern." Women in rural areas were not left on the margins of fashion items such as trousers, the champion of female comfort and autonomy. Village girls also started to cut the length of their skirts and wear *baby-doll* dresses, even to go to church and on festival days (Fig. 3).

Conclusion

This historical analysis suggests that the efforts of (wo)men in positions of power within the Francoist regime and the Catholic church to control the infiltration of other models and fashions were increasingly unsuccessful after the international rehabilitation of the regime and the transition to a consumer society. Francoist civil authorities left the religious authorities without normative support gradually, but they kept trying to model women morally and sartorially. Notwithstanding the constant monitoring of Catholic values and the social control of "what will they say?", there were women who sartorially embodied subjectivities that contrasted with normative femininity.

Dress was the arena in which aspects that conformed to "being a woman," as dictated by the Church and the Franco regime, entered into conflict with others that challenged them in a nonnormative way, to be eventually resignified and/or accommodated. More than the measurement of cloth or the transgression of gendered sartorial conventionalisms, what was under debate was a new form of consciousness towards bodies and practices of identity, as well as sexual-affective practices, among young people.[79] Dress, therefore, constitutes a tool for testing normative discourses around the body, gender, and religion. In the twilight years of the dictatorship, female bodies became weapons against moral and sexual policy. In the end, they transformed the social fabric and led to the collapse of the predominance of Catholic values and, by extension, Francoism.[80]

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

79. F. J. García-Ramos, "Mary Quant en España. La mini, la midi y la maxi a través de las fotografías de Juana Biarnés para el diario Pueblo," *Indumenta*, no. 3 (2020): 40–55, 48.
80. A. Morcillo, *En cuerpo*, 285.