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**Asociación Española de Historia Económica**

**DATOS SOBRE TESIS DOCTORALES**

**Autor**: Guillermo Antuña Martínez

**Filiación (Universidad/centro de investigación)**: Universitat de Barcelona

**e-contacto**: gantuna@tecnocampus.cat

**Programa de Máster:** Historia Económica – Universitat de Barcelona

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**Título de la Tesis:** Long-term dynamics shaping industrial path development: The metalworking sector in Asturias (Spain), 1939-2018

**Dirección:** Dr. Jordi Catalan Vidal (UB) y Marc Prat Sabartés (UB)

**Idioma:** Castellano e inglés

**Miembros del tribunal y su filiación**:

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**Resumen**: (no más de 1000 palabras)

This thesis investigates the evolution of the metalworking sector in the steelmaking region of Asturias, Spain, from the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939 to 2018. Its aim is to understand the long-term factors and dynamics that counterintuitively enabled this industry to become a regional leader amid the decline of hegemonic industries and a rapid shift towards services. By integrating business, institutional, and structural perspectives over nearly eight decades, this study brings focus to how agency and contingency shape industrial paths, illuminating the processes through which persistence and change occur in regional economies. Asturias, which became Spain’s steelmaking hub with the establishment of a national champion Ensidesa during the Francoist era, is a key yet understudied region in Southern Europe’s industrial history. While this specialization initially hindered adaptation during the global industrial crises of the 1970s and 1980s, this research demonstrates that the Asturian metalworking sector became the regional benchmark during this period, illustrating how strong industrial legacies can foster lasting economic pathways amid structural transitions.

Chapter 1, Revisiting the Francoist industrial policy: the 'unwanted' birth of a metalworking cluster in the industrial pole of Asturias (Spain), 1939-1985, explores the emergence of this hierarchical metalworking cluster. By analyzing primary sources such as company records, industrial censuses, and economic reports, this chapter illustrates how the spillovers generated by the creation of Ensidesa indirectly enabled the emergence of this ecosystem despite very limited state support, underscoring the role of endogenous capabilities and in regional economic development.

Chapter 2, A step forward: the Asturian metalworking sector facing industrial restructuring, 1978-2000, investigates the sector’s performance during a period of national and global productive reorganization. The chapter questions the extent to which cluster resilience can be attributed to pre-existing competitive strengths versus industrial policy interventions. This analysis reveals that firms within the cluster leveraged global value chains and Industry 4.0 advancements to maintain competitiveness, reflecting a broader trend where secondary sectors adapt through innovation and strategic integration into high-value production networks. This case study highlights the nuanced effects of industrial policy, suggesting that resilience in industrial sectors may stem not only from policy but also from adaptive capabilities.

Chapter 3, Industrial Path creation, a business case approach: Daniel Alonso Group from steelmaking to wind power, examines the growth of this sectoral leader within the cluster. Through corporate archives, interviews, and media analysis, this chapter addresses how firms rooted in traditional industries can evolve through diversification, using DAG’s transition from steelmaking to renewable energy as a model for adaptive industrial strategies. This transformation reflects how do individual firms within mature industries create new pathways for growth, especially in emerging sectors like renewable energy.

Finally, Chapter 4, Common roots, different paths: The influence of big steelmaking firms on the evolution of the metalworking sector in Asturias and Umbria, 1958-2010, offers a comparative analysis of Asturias and Umbria, Italy, investigating how regional productive ecosystems evolve within different policy and industrial frameworks. By reconstructing the metalworking sectors in both regions, this chapter underscores how industrial agglomeration patterns can vary even among seemingly similar regional economies, with a special focus on how the different roles played by large companies in these networks can shape these trajectories. This analysis contributes to understanding the diverse outcomes of industrial agglomeration, providing valuable insights into the role of big firms as drivers for spatial distribution and economic competitiveness of regional clusters.

This thesis aims to advance our knowledge on long-term industrial dynamics, focusing on traditional sectors' capacity in developing related activities. From the perspective of business history, this allows for a deeper understanding of how the interplay between big firms, SMEs and institutions define industrial ecosystems and allows for related diversification. Adopting this analytical logic, more focused on sectoral interrelation and value chains than on isolated activities, could enable tracing trajectories that explain the relative success of some sectors overshadowed by basic industries, and uncover hidden potential for developing future growth pathways in declining regions.

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**Observaciones**: