



Asociación Española de Historia Económica

DATOS SOBRE TESIS DOCTORALES

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DPhil in Economic and Social History, University of Oxford

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Common lands and economic development in 19th and early 20th century Spain

Dirección: Robert Allen

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Resumen: (no más de 1000 palabras)

This dissertation contributes to the long-standing debate between those who argue that the enclosure of the commons was as a precondition to foster economic growth and those who defend common property regimes can be efficient and sustainable. Exploiting historical evidence from 19th century and early 20th century Spain, this research shows that the persistence of the commons in some Spanish regions was not detrimental to economic development, at least relative to the institutional arrangements they were replaced with. On the contrary, during the early stages of modern economic growth, the communal regime not only did not limit agricultural productivity growth, but indeed constituted a crucial part of the functioning of the rural economics in a number of ways. On the one hand, these collective resources complemented rural

incomes and, subsequently, sustained households' consumption capacity. The reduction in life expectancy and heights in the provinces where privatisation was more intense, as well as the negative effect on literacy levels, strongly supports that the privatisation of the commons deteriorated the living standards of a relatively large part of the population. On the other hand, the communal regime also significantly contributed to financing the municipal budget. Deprived from this important source of revenue, local councils became unable to adequately fund local public goods and ended up increasing local taxes. Lastly, the social networks developed around the use and management of these collective resources facilitated the diffusion of information and the building of mutual knowledge and trust, thus constituting a vital ingredient of the social glue that hold these rural communities together. All things considered, the persistence of the commons in some regions provided peasants with cooperation mechanisms different from the market and made the transition to modern economic growth more socially sustainable.

Códigos JEL: N33, N53, O13, O15, O43, Q15

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Observaciones: