

TITLE: Common lands and economic development in Spain

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ABSTRACT: The impact of the privatisation of the commons remains a contested topic throughout the social sciences. Focusing on the Spanish case, this article reviews the literature and provides an overall assessment of this historical process based on recent research. Common lands appear to have been reasonably well managed and their dismantling did not foster agricultural productivity. Instead, the privatisation process negatively affected the economic situation of a large proportion of rural households and local councils, as well as deteriorating the stock of social capital. Therefore, the long-standing belief in the existence of a trade-off between equity and efficiency actually turns out to be misleading.

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