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Salle 212

Séminaire recherche

The Most Important Event? The Long-Run Impact of the

Dissolution of the French Monasteries

RÉSUMÉ

During the French Revolution, a massive reallocation took place, where all Church properties were confiscated and auctioned. As a result, some areas experienced a radical change in their ownership structure, while in others the pre-revolutionary ownership structure remained virtually unchanged. In this study, I use the auction of monastic properties to trace the economic and social consequences of this massive reallocation. I show that arrondissements with greater reallocation experienced higher levels of industrial and agricultural productivity in the mid-19th century. I trace these increases in productivity to higher investments in steam power, more efficient land use, land tenure and greater land inequality. I also show that the reallocation had a positive effect on the number of economic elites and on the modernization of political preferences, consistent with a rise of the bourgeois class after the Revolution.





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