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Confiscations of the Estates of the Regular clergy and Capitalistic Accumulation in Early modern Europe and American Continent

In modern age, from the history of economy point of view, regular clergy Has been, together with nobles, one of the protagonists of ancient regime Society. In particular from the council of Trento (1545-1563) , in catholic Countries, abbeys, monasteries and convents accumulated for more than two Centuries enormous real estates and personal patrimonies . Italian states Knew the phenomenon in a particularly strong way, but the problem is much More extended and concerns not only Europe, but, particularly due to Jesuit And Dominican missions, also American Continent.

These patrimonies were accumulated and administrated by management systems Only apparently equal to the ones used for laic property. In pre industrial Society property was strictly related to the ones who enjoyed its benefits, So that the status of these goods from tributes, hereditary transmission And destination of income point of view was significantly different from The one of laic goods, both nobles and not nobles. Moreover, the economic Course of regular clergy ends in a traumatic way with the suppression that Suddenly transfers the result of centuries of accumulation to other Economic subjects. So that accumulation, management and dissolution of Regular clergy patrimonies configure like economical phenomena of Particular interest exactly due to their originality.

From the historiographic point of view these subjects have enjoyed until Now of scarce interest. Above all from the macroeconomic point of view the Implication of the regular clergy economic presence and the effects of its Elimination have not been defined yet. Our research propose to give a Contribution in this sense through a comparative perspective of Investigation based on a rereading of the thesis of Max Weber about the Connection between protestant ethic and capitalistic development. The development of capitalism was generally favored - or in any case not Hindered - by the protestant ethic. The ethic behind the accumulation and Management of the goods of the regular clergy had a different function, Serving either to curb the development of capitalism or at the very least To slow it down.

The estates that were accumulated over centuries by tens of thousands of Abbeys, convents, and monasteries were absorbed in different time periods Through confiscation and requisitions enacted by figures ranging from the English monarchy to the protestant princes, from the Illuminated monarchs To Napoleon and the liberal governments of the nineteenth century.

What impact might factors such as the timing of the dispersion of the Estates of the regular clergy, the methods employed, and the ultimate Destination of these patrimonies, both in Europe and in the Americas, have Had in terms of the development of capitalism in each individual country?

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