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Universidad Autónoma de Madrid



## ABSTRACT

**Title:** *As I Grew Older*. The cost of access to secondary education in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Spain

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**Subject area:** Economic History

**Abstract:** This paper tries to understand which factors affected the decision to undertake secondary studies in 19th-century Spain. To do so, secondary education graduation age is proposed as an effective way of measuring the implicit cost of acquiring education in modular and non-compulsory educational contexts such as this one. A theoretical framework is proposed in which there are two main factors that affect the decision to undertake secondary school studies: the level of ability and the cost imposed by the geographical structure of the educational network. Using a novel historical source on the Spanish high school network in academic year 1877-1878, the results suggest that the decision to pursue secondary education is positively related to literacy, as expected. However, the results also indicate a negative relationship between the decision to undertake secondary education studies and the place of origin of the students being rural or urban. All this evidence suggests there may have been a problem of educational access to secondary education motivated by a small and spatially concentrated secondary education school network.

**Keywords:** Spain, 19<sup>th</sup> century, secondary education

**JEL codes:** N33, N93