Abstract: The development of primary schooling has been considered since the beginning of the nineteenth century as a major process and notably characteristic of developed capitalist societies. French research on education has generally merely noted this development, considering the interpretation to be obvious. We have a different conception, considering that the increase in school attendance in France requires a fresh conceptual approach and new empirical and theoretical validation work. For this, our cliometric study of primary education by administrative department in France in the nineteenth century is based on retrospective national accountancy and econometric methods.

Keywords: Education, convergence, quantitative history, cliometrics, econometric history, France.

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