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Access to the trade: Citizens, craft guilds and social and geographical mobility in early modern Europe – a survey of the literature, with additional new data

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and apprentices



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ABSTRACT

Citizenship is a socio-political instrument of inclusion – and therefore inevitably also of exclusion. It has been so ever since the invention of the concept in Antiquity. In the historical literature it is often argued that the exclusion element was for a long time predominant, and only became replaced by ‘inclusion’ after the French Revolution and the rise of parliamentary democracy. In the pre-modern world exclusion mechanisms were indeed an important aspect of the rules for the acquisition of citizenship status, and in particular for guild membership and the monopoly rights that their regulations asserted. Guilds, especially, have been portrayed as providing unfair advantages to established masters and their descendants, over immigrants and other outsiders. This potentially had serious economic consequences. Privileged access to certain professions and industries is seen as a disincentive for technological progress. On the basis of this critique, we might assume that the sons of locally established citizens and masters dominated the citizenry of towns and the membership of the average craft guild. In this paper the results of detailed local investigations of the composition of citizenries and guild apprentices and masters are brought together, to find out to what extent this picture is historically correct. We argue that this data offers an indirect measurement of the accessibility of citizenship and guilds that allows insight into the mechanisms of exclusion and their impact. The paper finds that sons of established masters did dominate in some places and trades, but in many others they did not, and that, by implication, our understanding of urban and guild ‘monopolies’, and the measure of protection and reward they supplied to established citizens, is in need of serious revision. This in turn implies that the historical narrative of European citizenship creating an ever greater inclusiveness, is perhaps also in need of revision.

Workpackage 3 explores the historical dimensions of citizenship in Europe from the seventeenth century onwards. It aims to provide a long-term perspective on the issues facing modern policy makers in relation to citizenship in the multi-national environment of the EU. An important element of this is comparing various citizenship regimes and connecting their characteristics to economic performance and overall wellbeing. This working paper is intended to provide the basis for one element of this comparison.

¹ The topic of this paper was discussed in team meetings that also included Josep Capdeferro Pla (Barcelona), Raoul De Kerf (Antwerp), Bert De Munck (Antwerp), and Marcel Hogenboom (Utrecht).



INTRODUCTION

It is generally assumed that restricted access to urban manufacturing and trade constrained the pre-modern economy. Restricted access was part of a wider set of regulations that imposed political constraints on economic development ('feudalism'). Urban citizenship regimes generally limited some, or even all, economic roles to full citizens, or burghers, freemen, *bourgeois*, *burgers*, *Bürger*, and so on. Within many cities, access to specific economic roles was further constrained, as sectors of the urban economy were frequently given over to the control of guilds. The interaction of guild and city government was complex. Guilds were established by documents that laid down the ground rules for their role in society and were approved and supported by local governments.² However, in some cities, guilds, often of wealthy merchants, dominated the local government. This combination of urban citizenship and guild regulation has been portrayed by many economic historians as a great villain in restricting access to markets, and thus hampering progress.³ Its abolition, with the move toward national citizenship in the nineteenth century is, in turn, one of the conventional explanations for economic growth.

It has often been observed that the rules and regulations in guild documents were remarkably open-ended in areas where one would expect more guidance, such as the training of the workforce (Davids 2007: 67). However, one element was always there: the members of the guild would be granted, as a privilege of their membership, the exclusive right to produce and sell a specific product, or range of products, to the exclusion of all non-members. This privilege is usually called the guild 'monopoly'. Its uses were neatly summed up in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) when Adam Smith, discussing the guilds, portrayed them as 'a conspiracy against the public' (quoted in Epstein and Prak 2008, 1). In recent years, questions have been raised about the effectiveness of the monopoly: could guilds really monitor and enforce, especially in large urban centres, their 'monopoly'? Or were they inevitably undercut by interlopers and illicit producers, on the one hand, and by supplies of goods from other localities, some without guilds, on the other? Indeed, some doubt about the applicability of the word 'monopoly' is appropriate in the first place, when we know that guilds themselves were not market actors, but merely producers' organisations (Epstein 1998: 56-60; Ogilvie 2010). These questions apply equally to the economic implications of citizens' economic privileges more generally. Their answer is, it should be clear, central to our understanding of the operation and implications of premodern citizenship regimes.

In this paper we evaluate the strength of urban and guild monopolies by exploring the openness of access to citizenship and guild membership. How easy did those we might term outsiders find it to become a citizen or guild member? This, we argue, offers a way to evaluate the significance of the economic constraints that city and guild created. The array of formal rules created by cities and guilds to define and control who could gain entry have often been used to highlight the scale of barriers faced by people without a previous connection to the urban community or, in the case of guilds, trade. By implication, they have also been taken as indicating the rewards membership brought to insiders. To the extent that citizenship or guilds generated valuable economic rents to insiders, they would also have created incentives for others to try to gain access – and for those who were already within the city or guild to try to reserve access to a small pool of their own choosing. Our concern is with the outcome of this conflict of interest, and we use evidence on the extent to which outsiders were actually present as citizens and guild members as an indicator of the presence of effective barriers to entry. If access to the 'monopoly' was open to almost anyone whose ambition it was to join, then it would seem that the 'monopoly' was not as strong as is sometimes implied, and could not have led to the disastrous outcomes that many historians claim it had. By implication, pre-modern economies were not constrained by their

² Unless stated otherwise, this paper ignores merchant and shopkeepers' guilds, which worked under different circumstances, and often had other recruitment practices. Wherever the term 'guild' is used in the paper, it should therefore be read to mean 'craft guild'.

³ Mokyr 1990: 77, 258-60, 267, 298; Landes 1998: 174, 223, 239, 242-45; Musgrave 1999: 71, 73, 89; Mokyr 2002: 31, 259-60.



institutional arrangements in quite the way economists and historians have long assumed – and sometimes still assume.

Recent scholarship on the history of Europe's cities and guilds has produced evidence about these questions that is almost by definition local. So far nobody has collected and compared these local data to provide a comparative overview. This is the focus of the present paper. As we will see, much of the data relates to England, France, and the Low Countries, where some of the most active guild research has been concentrated. But there is just enough evidence for Germany and Central Europe to claim that the picture presented here is valid for Europe as a whole, rather than for a small – and possibly a-typical – part of it.

Measuring openness is, unsurprisingly, rather harder than it sounds. One methodological problem for establishing the impact of restrictions on entering the economic arena arises from the problem of defining a benchmark that would indicate openness. Critics of the guilds often seem to implicitly posit a completely open labour market. Labour market economics, however, has questioned whether this ever exists outside of the textbook, and generally emphasises 'segmentation' as the default state of labour markets. Formal and informal barriers create 'segments' that privilege some groups of workers over others. Segmented labour markets have been uncovered in the pre-industrial period (Vries 1993; Crowston 2001: 86-94). Guilds formally and informally created such barriers. It would be wrong, however, to assume that in the absence of guilds there would be no other obstacles producing similar effects. It is well-known that after the abolition of the guilds some occupations displayed strong intergenerational continuities, not necessarily as a result of formal selection mechanisms (Granovetter 1974: 5; Montgomery 1991; Corak and Piraino 2011). In other words, the segmentation of the labour market that would be produced by other factors in industrial societies raises questions about how we can empirically identify the distinctive role of guilds in the promotion or inhibition of flexible labour markets. In this paper, we sidestep this problem to some extent by comparing various guild regimes and assuming that large numbers of entrants previously unrelated to the trade constitutes a situation of openness, while small numbers of 'new' entrants points in the direction of high (formal) barriers. Our aim at this stage is to map patterns of relative openness that may allow us to assess the causes and distribution of barriers, and their likely significance across the European landscape of citizenship regimes.

The mixture of citizen and guild barriers varied in cities across Europe. Citizenship might act as the main barrier to free access to urban economic activities in some cities. In others, the guild itself was the first hurdle that newcomers had to overcome. In those towns citizenship was, in other words, a secondary effect of guild membership. These various institutional structures affect the sources that were created. Some towns registered the inclusion of non-natives as citizens in the community, but failed to record natives whose access to citizenship was automatic. The divergent picture of urban and guild records often make it difficult to discern how open towns or guilds were to outsiders. Guild records sometimes allow us to identify individuals whose parents had been members of the same guild, because as masters' sons (or daughters) they might pay a lower entrance fee. Such distinctions were made in citizen registers of some German towns, but rarely in other places. The second section will discuss data on citizens, while sections three and four deal at greater length with guilds.

The data presented in this paper capture access to citizenship at entry, but for the guilds we can explore access at two different points. First, we can look directly at new entrants through the study of membership registers. In some cases at least, as well as allowing us to establish how many newly enrolled members were the sons of existing guild members, they provide information about their background, such as their place of origin. Second, we can gauge the characteristics of the membership through apprenticeship. Craft guilds usually required their members to spend several years learning the craft. Not all apprentices would become masters, but this was a stage which gave individuals the potential of becoming a master. Therefore, evidence about the characteristics of apprentices will be used to help flesh out our picture of the openness – or lack thereof – of the pre-modern urban and corporate system in Europe.



1. OBSTACLES

Becoming a 'member' of a pre-modern European town or city required completing a registration process that was fraught with conditions. These varied from meeting mundane financial conditions – paying a fee was almost always part of the process – to fulfilling religious and moral criteria in those towns that required certain standards of behaviour from their prospective citizens or guild masters. The standard modes through which someone came to acquire citizenship, insofar as they did not enter via apprenticeship and a guilds, in most European towns would be patrimony (inheritance), purchase and gift. To receive citizen status as a gift was exceptional; purchase and patrimony were more widespread and important from our perspective. Patrimony had again two distinct forms. The first was inheritance from one's parents: in most towns the children of citizens automatically inherited that status. The second was to marry a citizen; the status would automatically transfer to the spouse, who would continue to enjoy it after their husband or wife passed away. Purchase, on the other hand, could involve overcoming substantial financial obstacles (Shephard 1986: 117; Kluge 2007: 131). Lourens and Lucassen (2000) have investigated citizenship dues in the Dutch Republic and Germany, and observed that these were relatively low in the western provinces of the Republic, substantial in the eastern provinces, and higher still in many German towns. The latter also imposed moral and religious restrictions on their candidate citizens. Without proof of legitimate birth, or adherence to the official religion, it was impossible to become a citizen. As we will see in section 2, this did not prevent large numbers of immigrants from obtaining citizen status.

One reason why it was attractive to obtain citizens status was that it permitted access to the guilds. In the Low Countries urban citizenship was a precondition for joining a guild.⁴ In London and some other English towns it was the exact opposite: one became a freeman by joining the guild. Although some guilds had obtained permission to formally restrict access to their ranks and so limit the membership, this seems to have been exceptional. There is no evidence that formal limitations of numbers increased during the Early Modern period. In several European countries, including England, the Holy Roman Empire and the Low Countries, guilds were normally required to accept candidates who met the membership criteria (Kluge 2007: 230, 233). Having said that, to acquire the membership of a guild required from the candidate that he – only rarely she, as for many guilds gender presented one insurmountable obstacle to direct entry⁵ – managed to overcome several hurdles. Each offered the opportunity for guilds to raise further, 'informal' barriers in the way that they applied these different conditions.

Three types of hurdles were placed in the way of the prospective guild member: skills, morals, and money. As far as skills were concerned, the great majority of craft guilds imposed either one, but often two sorts of requirements. The first was apprenticeship. A minimum number of years was almost always prescribed before a craftsman could practice as an independent master. These apprenticeship terms varied significantly by region and by craft. England had an exceptional regime in two ways: its Statute of Artificers, from 1563, created a national framework for apprenticeships, and the Statute imposed a minimum seven-year apprenticeship for all trades. On the continent, the terms of apprenticeship were set locally, and varied for each trade. Seven years was, moreover, unusually long by continental standards. No pattern has yet been uncovered in the continental variations, and this is often taken as evidence that English regulations on the duration of apprenticeships had little or nothing to do with skill, but were mainly instruments to regulate access to the trade (Wallis 2008: 852). This has been qualified for other countries in recent years by the suggestion that the length of apprenticeship was a compromise between the wish to regulate the number of masters and the necessity of allowing new

⁴ Kuijpers and Prak 2001: 127-28 show that it was an important, but not the only reason in Amsterdam; De Kerf 2014: 123 shows that this general rule was not always enforced in Antwerp.

⁵ New data, reported by Crowston, suggest that this stereotype did not always apply: in Paris almost 14% of new masters in the 18th century were female mistresses; in Rouen out of a total of 224 new masters in 1768, 85 were men (38%), and 139 women (62%).



ideas and practices to access the trade (De Munck 2011: 230-32). Especially in crafts where the number of required years was relatively short, moreover, the majority of masters may have acquired additional years of extra experience, presumably as journeymen, before setting up shop as an independent producer (e.g. Panhuysen 2000: 156, 302; Boers-Goosens 2001: 85-86). In other words, formal periods of training may have varied much more than the actual practice. From the opposite angle, the same impression emerges from English data that shows how only those who wanted to set up as masters in London and Bristol itself would complete the seven-year apprenticeship. Many others, who either wanted to leave the capital or else entered employment as journeymen, never bothered to stay on for the full seven years (Minns and Wallis 2011).

Next to the period of apprenticeship, many guilds required their prospective members to first demonstrate proficiency in the trade by producing a master piece. There is debate among guild historians about the value of the master piece, and if the exam was merely symbolic, or a serious test of skills (De Munck 2010b: 340-42; 2011: 233-35). No pattern has so far been established in the distribution of exams among trades, even though some, such as surgeons, or bakers, seem to have had such requirements almost everywhere. So health may have been one element, but it definitely was not the only one.

In some parts of Europe, most notoriously in the Holy Roman Empire, guild membership and trade were often coloured by issues of 'legitimacy' and 'honour', which could practically restrict membership and economic rights on the basis of parentage, moral behaviour, or occupation (Stuart 2006). Such rules were also in force in Dijon, which was situated quite close to German-speaking territories, and in late fifteenth and sixteenth century London. New masters in sixteenth-century Dijon moreover had to be 'good Catholics' (Farr 1988: 22-23); these rules were no longer in force in the eighteenth century. In the eastern parts of the Dutch Republic new rules were introduced in the course of the seventeenth century, restricting access to local citizenship to Calvinists only. By implication, only Calvinist immigrants were admissible to the guilds. These rules seem to have been introduced under pressure of the guild masters who dominated local representative institutions. Similar institutions were lacking in the seaboard provinces of the Republic, where such restrictions were never introduced (Prak 2002). It is quite possible that in other places affiliation to the dominant (or state) religion was so much taken for granted, that it was not even stated explicitly.

And then there was money... Both the apprenticeship and the acquisition of master status required the aspiring craftsman to fork out various sums of money, sometimes very substantial sums. In this area, the variations in time and place were very significant. To register as an apprentice was usually cheap. However, masters might demand additional payments before accepting apprentices (Minns & Wallis 2013: 8-10).

Masterships could be cheap, but not necessarily so. Moreover, many guilds distinguished between masters' sons, local residents, and immigrants, with the first category paying substantially less than the second, which again received preferential treatment over the third. A pattern is difficult to establish. In the Dutch Republic, for example, outsiders were worse off compared to masters' sons than in the Spanish, later Austrian Netherlands, despite the fact that in the latter region guilds were a significant political force and might have easily used their power to impose higher tariffs against outsiders (Davids and De Munck 2011: 11). At the same time, poor applicants could hope to obtain a cheaper rate, if they were willing to stay on for some extra years to compensate their master for his cheap training. Quite a few were placed by orphanages and other welfare institutions and thus avoided paying the high dues (Nederveen Meerkerk 2005: 261-73; De Kerf 2014: 48). We have to remember, also, that membership dues were only part of the total cost of setting up one's own workshop – and not necessarily the most important (Fock 1984: 3-4)

The systems of citizenship and guild regulations were diverse and complex. Their characteristics will be studied in detail in a future paper in this project (deliverable 3.2). At this stage, it is sufficient to observe that they created the potential for cities and guilds to protect local monopolies by differentiating against outsiders. This might occur explicitly, or through the ways that they implemented these regulations in practice. Conversely,



city and guild regulations might have modest or even positive effects. Apprenticeship and mastership regulations, in particular, lead to the acquisition of valuable human capital and its certification respectively; here regulation might facilitate the operation of training markets, allowing potential apprentices and masters to trust each other enough to enter contracts, just as schools and universities are regulated in the modern world. The real measure of city and guild monopolies is thus not in the rules they wrote down, but in the impact these had on the ability of people to enter, and it is this we turn to next.

2. OUTCOMES: SOCIAL PROFILES OF NEW CITIZENS

Membership of early modern urban communities was generally controlled by citizenship.⁶ Citizens enjoyed many privileges and rights over non-citizens, such as permanent residency, greater economic rights, and varying levels of political rights. Citizens paid the taxes and were responsible for the common defence of cities. Many cities (especially in the Holy Roman Empire) theoretically enjoyed some level of self-government, with the citizenry (sometimes along with the guilds) electing various councils to represent and govern. The institution varied considerably over time and space: in some cities at some times, citizenship was valuable and its rights meant a political voice and an economic advantage; in other cities at other times, the taxation and military obligations, and a limiting of representative government meant that it was mostly a status symbol which many migrants saw as an unnecessary investment.

Procedures for acquiring citizenship could vary widely – and so did their registration. In the Dutch provincial town of 's-Hertogenbosch, for instance, everybody who was born locally became a citizen automatically. All the others who wanted to become a citizen, had to purchase it. In the second half of the eighteenth century about half the population thus had citizen status as a birth right, while almost a third of the other half (or fifteen per cent altogether) had paid a modest 17 guilders to obtain their citizenship (Prak 1999: 36, 41). In most other Dutch towns, however, only the sons and daughters of citizens would inherit citizen status. Unfortunately, these individuals were only registered haphazardly. The records for Amsterdam and Utrecht for example, turn up suspiciously low numbers of locals in the citizens registers (Kuijpers and Prak 2001: 119; Rommes 1998: 47, 50).

In England, all urban citizens, whether locals or not, were generally required to register their claims. The figures in table 1 relate to three distinct urban environments: London, growing from 80,000 in 1550 to more than ten times that number in 1800, middle-sized Bristol that went from 10,000 to 64,000, and small Lincoln never passing the 5,000 mark during the entire period (Vries 1984: 270). Clearly, Lincoln was the most locally oriented of the three; only between a quarter and a third of its new citizens came from outside. In Bristol around half were outsiders, although in some occupations the percentage was much higher (table A1), in London the figures were half to two thirds, depending on which of the three guilds we explore here was involved.

For the continent, the best data come from Germany. These data have been compiled in table 2 (and table A2). Citizenship (*Bürgerschaft*) was one of the defining institutions of German and central European cities, and the basis of the (theoretical) self-government which many of them enjoyed. Its importance and practical value varied immensely between places, and over time during the early modern period. German Europe's complex patchwork of semi-autonomous imperial cities and various shades of provincial states, all with differing local governmental structures, and economic, political, and social rights, make discerning patterns of 'openness' difficult. Examining the background of those admitted to citizenship in early modern German cities reveals patterns as varied as the patchwork of German cities itself.

⁶ Cerutti, Descimon, and Prak 1995; Boone and Prak 1996; Bossenga 1997; Bader and Dilcher 1999; Barry 2000;



Table 1: New citizens and their background in English towns and cities, 16th-19th centuries

		(N)	Citizen Sons (%)	All local (%)
London				
Apothecaries' Company	1617-1700	1,695	19.5	33
Stationers' Company	1550-1799	7,130	24.2	45.4
Clothworkers' Company	1600-1799	10,912	27.2	43.5
Bristol	1684-95	922	n/a	53.8
Lincoln	1650-1799	2,031	n/a	68.3

Note: These figures relate to freemen entering by apprenticeship or patrimony and are weighted averages of the sub-periods in table A1. We lack information on the origins of those entering by redemption, but in none of these cases was this a large share. Further details of the sources and underlying figures are given in Appendix 1.

While a restrictive institution, the impact of early modern German Europe's relatively high levels of migration meant that in many towns 'outsiders' made up large proportions of new citizens. Generally, however, those 'outsiders' had to be men, of the 'right' religion, with good skills, and means of supporting themselves (and paying the community they wished to join). But that did not mean that those who did not meet those criteria – migrant women, Jews, those on the wrong side of the local confessional divide, and so on – could not participate in economic and social life, or were not even sometimes actively encouraged to settle and work in some cities.

The *Bürgerschaft* of many German cities was not dominated by locals or 'insider' families. In many large cities – such as seventeenth-century Danzig (Gdank), growing eighteenth-century Berlin, and long-standing commercial centre Frankfurt-am-Main – migrants made up large proportions of citizens, as can be seen in table 2.

Table 2: Background of new citizens in selected German towns and cities

City	years	N	Citizen Sons %	All Local %
Berlin	1500-1750	15,947	20	-
Berlin	1709-1750	7,788	25	31
Danzig	1640-1709	10,741	33	43
Frankfurt-a-M	1600-1735	20,393	-	43
Schleswig towns				
Tönning	1649-1750	1,722	-	16
Husum	1609-1750	3,603	-	27
Eckenförde	1610-1750	1,684	-	34
Tonern	1627-1750	1,381	-	29
Hadersleben	1630-1750	1,172	-	19

Source: see appendix table A2. The figures here are unweighted averages of the sub-periods in table A2

The proportion of locals and migrants, citizen sons and 'outsiders' could vary considerably by trade. In later seventeenth-century Danzig and early eighteenth-century Berlin (tables 3a and 3b), those producing and selling fish, meat, and bread were more likely to be locals than those producing or selling drinks, or working in textiles, who were much more likely to be migrants. While the *Bürgerschaft* and the economy of growing cities like



Berlin could be open to migrants, the pattern was not uniform, and was affected by developments in the local economy, trade and training practices and traditions, and of course guild policies.

Table 3a: Background of new Danzig citizens by selected occupations, 1640-1709

	Son of Citizen		Other Danziger		Immigrant	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Coopers	120	51%	16	7%	99	42%
Officials	40	50%	18	23%	22	28%
Bakers	203	49%	16	4%	197	47%
Butchers	79	44%	5	3%	97	54%
Metalworkers	160	41%	52	13%	175	45%
Amber Trade	46	37%	37	30%	40	33%
Textiles	706	31%	312	14%	1239	55%
Construction	49	24%	29	14%	125	62%
Maritime Trades	62	13%	72	15%	343	72%
Drinks Trade	1	0.50%	1	0.50%	214	99%

Source: Compiled and adapted from Penners-Ellward 1954: tables 4 and 5

Table 3b: Background of new Berlin citizens by selected occupations, 1709-1750

	Sons of Citizens		Berlin & Environs		Immigrants	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Fish Trade	51	39%	29	22%	130	50%
Butchers	110	36%	15	5%	178	59%
Metalwork	237	34%	51	7%	401	58%
Coopers	27	30%	14	16%	48	54%
Bakers	132	27%	24	5%	333	68%
Shoemakers	218	24%	75	8%	620	68%
Construction Trades	102	21%	33	7%	345	72%
Commerce	203	15%	134	10%	978	74%
Textiles	385	15%	168	7%	1946	78%
Drinks Trade	156	14%	117	10%	864	76%
Medicine/Healthcare	11	13%	6	7%	70	80%
Unskilled	23	8%	77	26%	192	66%

Source: compiled and adapted from *Die Bürgerbücher und die Bürgerprotokollbücher Berlins von 1701-50*, ed. Ernst Kaeber (Berlin, 1934), esp. tables 9-11.

Berlin, Vienna, and other large cities in German Europe do not seem to have been particularly 'closed'. Larger cities growing from migration were, however, not necessarily reflective of the dominance of 'insider' families in other German cities. Mack Walker's (1971) concept of the smaller 'German home towns' of central Germany, hostile to migration, posits a very different urban community to that presented by growing eighteenth-century Berlin and Vienna. Hochstadt (1983) and others, however, have shown that even in the prototypical 'home town', migration rates in the early modern period were quite high, and cities generally had 40-60 per cent of new citizens coming from outside. The importance of the *Wanderschaft* period of migration in a German artisan's training, and the difficulties faced by an early modern urban community maintaining its own population indicate that this does not necessarily mean such cities were 'open' in the sense of a free flow of migrant labour. Developments in German urban politics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – such as



the rise of local patriciates and ‘urban aristocracies’, and widely differing approaches to migration – must also be kept in mind.

Compared to English cities, German towns drew similar shares of new citizens from among the local population. The share who were sons of citizens was between 15 and 35 percent, not obviously different to the 20 to 28 percent in the three London guilds. We have no comparable figures for other countries yet, but a back of the envelope calculation for ‘s-Hertogenbosch, with its approximately 10,000 inhabitants, suggests similar levels in medium-sized cities in the Netherlands: if we assume that half the population were immigrants born outside the town, then the citizen numbers do not diverge very much from these German and English benchmarks. Citizenship in these towns and cities was not dominated purely by ‘insiders’, and was often ‘open’ – to varying degrees – to certain groups of ‘outsiders’. This may, of course, have been quite different when it comes to guilds and their membership.

3. OUTCOMES: SOCIAL PROFILES OF APPRENTICES AND MASTER ARTISANS

Substantial, albeit unsystematic, evidence allows us to see if the obstacles for entering the guild system did indeed lead to a structural exclusion of certain social groups. More specifically, we focus on whether they created a privileged position for the relatives of the established masters of the trade, who as a group we would expect *a priori* to be favoured. Much of the evidence relates to individual trades and the numbers can be, as a result, quite small, but in some instances, notably for the City of London, very large datasets allow us to test these results on a more substantial scale. In the following presentation of the data, a distinction has been made between apprentices and masters. The data on masters has been subdivided between data that relates to geographic mobility and data that relates to social mobility. Data on geographic mobility distinguish usually between local recruitment, recruitment from the immediate hinterland of a town, and recruitment from farther afield. Data on social mobility usually distinguish between masters’ sons and others. Separate attention is paid to the exclusion of females.

Apprentices

For Paris, we have a sample of 1,415 apprenticeship contracts and 82 *allouage* contracts.⁷ Our sample is drawn from an exhaustive survey of the 1761 notarial records conducted by the French National Archives. We presume that this sample is missing a significant group of apprenticeship contracts passed that year: records from a royal commission created to audit the finances of Parisian guilds reveal an average of 419 seamstress apprenticeship contracts each year, yet only 52 were noted in the 1761 survey. The seamstress contracts are missing because the guild’s notary habitually stored the guild’s contracts separately from other transactions. If this is the case for one large guild, it may well have been that clusters of contracts in other guilds are also missing. The real total of apprenticeship contracts drafted in Paris in 1761 was therefore probably closer to 1,800. For 815 apprentices presented by a family member (male or female), 588 or 72 per cent of the family members declared an address in Paris, 132 an address in what is now Paris or the 8 surrounding departments that make up the Ile de France, i.e. 16 per cent. Another 95 came from further away, ‘the provinces’. Only one of these was foreign (Swiss). This confirms earlier data reported by Kaplan (1993: 453-54), who investigated 316 apprenticeship contracts from eighteenth-century Paris. At least two thirds of the apprentices in his sample originated from Paris itself.

⁷ The *allouage* contract was a formal covenant governing vocational training for youths that resembled apprenticeship indenture in most particulars. The decisive difference was its express pre-emption of ascension into the guilds. The great preponderance of apprenticeship contracts compared to *allouage* contracts in the notarial contracts we surveyed suggests that apprenticeship was by far the preferred option, at least when parties signed formal contracts for trade training.



More data are available for Lyon, a city dominated by the silk industry. Although technically Lyon was a ‘free city’ (*ville libre*), this was no longer true in the eighteenth century, when local guilds boasted about their longevity and prominent role in local society (Garden 1970: 326, 551). The Grande Fabrique, the organization regulating the silk industry, was no exception (Pérez 2008: 237). In 1702 it was stipulated that apprentices in the silk industry had to be recruited from the city or its suburbs. In 1744 the net was cast wider, when another nine provinces from the same region were designated as areas of recruitment. This, however, did not change the patterns very much. Throughout the eighteenth century around 30 per cent of apprentices were born locally. The nine provinces made up over 50 per cent – before and after 1744, while another 10-15 per cent came from further afield in France despite these rules (Garden 1970: 47, 57). In all other trades the majority of apprentices came from outside Lyon or its suburbs (Garden 1970: 63).

In the Low Countries, we have data for Antwerp and several towns in Holland. Among the Antwerp apprentice silversmiths, the percentage of immigrants was low: in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the average was 20 per cent. Moreover, the trend was consistently downwards: whereas the immigrants had constituted 25 per cent in the first half of the seventeenth century, they were a mere 10 per cent in the second half of the eighteenth (De Kerf 2014: 77, tab. 1.13). The Antwerp coopers were more open to non-natives: between 1671 and 1790 it was consistently above twenty per cent and normally above 30 per cent. It, moreover, increased to 44 per cent during the years 1736-1790 (De Kerf 2014: 101). In the Haarlem coopers’ guild, 78 per cent of apprentices were born locally. Remarkably, this was true for only 3 per cent of the journeymen in the same guild (Tump 2012: 127-28, tab’s 13 and 14).

In Norwich, over a period of more than two centuries (1500-1752), a mere nine per cent of apprentices came from outside Norfolk. In Sheffield, over ninety per cent came from the surrounding area (1624-49, and 1775-99). And in late eighteenth-century Coventry (1781-1806), out of 3,888 apprentices, 78 per cent had been recruited locally, 17 per cent from Warwickshire and only 4.5 per cent from outside the county (Lane 1996: 56). Clearly, English provincial towns tended to recruit their apprentices in their immediate hinterland.

In the proto-industrial Wildberg district in Württemberg, investigated by Ogilvie (1997: 162-67), weavers’ apprentices came overwhelmingly from the area, and were the sons of citizens. Given the predominance of the textile-industry in the region, one must assume that a great many followed in their fathers’ professional footsteps. Wildberg itself was a small town, but most of the weavers lived in villages.

That apprentices were often drawn from within and near the cities they trained in does not necessarily imply they were benefiting from a bias towards insiders. In the Paris sample from 1761, as reported by Crowston, about 40 per cent of the apprentices had fathers who worked in the artisanal or merchant worlds, either as masters or as non-guild affiliated workers. Moreover, only 0.2 per cent of apprentices served with a direct relative.

In London we can see very similar patterns to Paris. Due to a uniquely large set of records, it is possible to investigate the characteristics of a very large population of apprentices and masters in detail. Leunig, Minns and Wallis explored the results of the connections between 35,838 apprentices and the 12,320 masters with whom they served. These data cover the one-and-a-half century between 1600 and 1749, a period in which London grew from approximately 200,000 to 675,000 inhabitants. The records (Leunig, Minns, and Wallis 2011: 423-26) show that only 0.5 per cent of apprentices served with a direct relative. Among local apprentices, i.e. those who originated from London, that percentage was 2.3, in other words relatively higher than among the immigrant workforce, but still marginal compared to those who were not directly related. More importantly, even among the apprentices who originated from London, only forty per cent had a father who worked in industry, and less than four per cent of these fathers were members of the guild into which they were placing their apprentice sons.



The same authors have tested if place of origin was perhaps the alternative connection that brought apprentice and master together (Leunig, Minns, and Wallis 2011: 431-32). London is an ideal testing ground for this, precisely because so many of its inhabitants, including apprentices and masters, came from elsewhere. It turns out that geographical origin was a stronger predictor than social origin – but not very much stronger. As many apprentices originated from small villages, matches at the level of individual communities were actually very weak. A stronger effect was observed on county-level, but even there the effect was not that strong. Over eighty per cent of the apprentices originated from a different county than their master.

Local masters

Dijon in the eighteenth century had 22,000 inhabitants and over eighty guilds. Most of these guilds had 10-30 members. Together the guilds of Dijon admitted dozens of new members every year (Shephard 1986: 118-22). In the majority of guilds, members came from outside the city, mostly from the hinterland of Dijon. Among these were also quite a few foreigners, from the Austrian Netherlands, from German principalities, from the Swiss Confederacy and from Italy. Immigrants were found in all guilds; among the bakers and weavers they were especially numerous.

This uneven pattern was also in evidence in Vienna (Ehmer 1997: 175, 177, 180-81, 184). The Habsburg capital was, of course, a much larger city than Dijon. Its size increased from 113,000 in 1710 to double that number by the end of the century. Initially, guilds were seen as a threat to the authorities, but from the 1730s the government changed tack, and started to promote incorporation. In a survey of guild masters from 1742 (see table 4), about a quarter were Viennese, with another third from Austria, and more from regions with established migration links to Vienna, such as Bohemia and southern Germany. The proportion of local and migrant masters, however, varied considerably by guild. Some, such as the sword cutlers, bookbinders, gardeners, goldsmiths, and butchers, had large proportions of locally born guild masters. The vast majority of master shoemakers, tailors, brewers, and drinks sellers, on the other hand, were not native Viennese. Some of the pattern reflects the variation of local and migrant in new citizens in Berlin and Danzig, with butchers and bakers again more likely to be local, and tailors, shoemakers, and those involved in the drinks trade much more likely to be migrants.

Table 4: Origins of Viennese guild masters, 1742

Origin of Guild Masters			Proportion of Local Masters in Selected Guilds		
	N	%		N	%
Vienna	1160	24	Sword Cutlers	36	70
Lower Austria	970	20	Bookbinders	18	56
Alpine Austria	478	10	Gardeners	113	55
Bohemia	366	8	Goldsmiths	116	48
Bavaria	324	7	Butchers	32	47
Palatinate	323	7	Bakers	102	26
Other German	905	19	Merchants	260	23
Hungary	100	2	Coopers	67	22
Others	147	3	Cabinetmakers	140	14
			Shoemakers	555	15
			Tailors	640	13
			Weavers	31	10
			Beer-sellers/Innkeepers	361	8
			Brewers	70	1

Source: Adapted from Thiel 1911: 430-31; Ehmer 1997: 180, 183.



Turning to the Netherlands, among over 2,700 tailors registered with the guild in eighteenth-century Amsterdam (1731-1811), 21 per cent were of local origin, whereas 37 per cent came from Germany. In nearby Haarlem about one third of the tailors was born locally, in 's-Hertogenbosch slightly more than half (Panhuysen 2000: 164). Among the masters in the Haarlem dyers guild, just over half had been born locally (1663 and 1714). Two-thirds of the goldsmiths active in Rotterdam in 1665 were of local origin (Tump 2012: 131,133, tab's 17 and 18).

Father to son

The transfer of membership from father to son was an even more exclusive mechanism than the preference of locals over outsiders. Guilds have often been portrayed as preferring this more exclusive mode. Perhaps they did, but were they capable of enforcing it, and to what extent? An early set of detailed data is provided by Stabel (2007: 170), who investigated the coopers' guild in late medieval Bruges. In the five quarter-centuries between 1375 and 1500 the percentage of masters' sons registered by the guild fluctuated between 11 and 31. The weighted average came to 22 per cent, or approximately one in five.

Table 5: Percentage of sons following the same occupation as their father in 16th-century Ghent

	Brewers (%)	Tailors (%)
1500-1540	99	77
1541-1578	54	60
1579-1584	90	76
1585-1600	63	27

Source: Dambruynne (1998) 51

In sixteenth-century Ghent the percentages were much higher than that, as is shown in table 5. The four periods are distinguished by two types of regimes. Before 1540, and again between 1579 and 1584, the guilds of Ghent had a strong voice in local government. Between 1541 and 1578, and again after 1584, the Habsburg government excluded guilds from local government and promoted an open-door policy for guild membership. These and other guilds in Ghent were forced to become more accessible to outsiders. The Ghent evidence suggests that, when left to their own devices, guilds preferred to exclude outsiders from their ranks.

This is also suggested by one of the most extreme cases of father-to-son transfers of mastership, reported by Ogilvie (1997: 170-74; 2004: 309-10). In the proto-industrial environment of the Wildberg district in Württemberg in southern Germany, about 90 per cent of the master weavers were sons of weavers. Unsurprisingly, these sons also shared the geographical and citizenship characteristics of their fathers. This obviously raises questions about the representativeness of the case. The Wildberg district was predominantly rural, even though Wildberg itself had 1,200-1,500 inhabitants. It still makes it one of the smallest towns investigated here. Incidentally, as Ogilvie (1997: 173) correctly observes, these numbers make short shrift of the argument that proto-industry emerged in the countryside to flee restrictions imposed by urban craft guilds.

Among the tailors of Amsterdam, the number of masters' sons joining the guild was very limited (Panhuysen 2000: 169). This was equally true among the tailors in the cities of Brabant, and in Turin, Italy (Deceulaer 1998: 495; Cerutti 1990: 160). In Aix-en-Provence, the tailors were among the more open guilds, and masters' sons were a minority among the members. This was equally true for the carders, tanners, and shoemakers of Aix. Only one out of eighteen tanners was a tanner's son. The weavers, however, tended to follow their fathers' profession and also frequently married weavers' daughters or women who were otherwise connected to the weaving community. This happened rarely in the more open guilds; for example, only three out of 36 shoemakers married a daughter or sister of another shoemaker (Dolan 1989: 181-85).



New data for Paris, reported by Crowston, show limited inter-generational transmission of masterships. Out of 13,426 new masters from January 1766 and December 1775, 3,490 (26%) were sons or daughters of masters, while 6,006 (45%) entered through apprenticeship and masterpiece or its equivalent (called *experience* or *suffisance* in merchant guilds). Another 1,895 (14%) entered by purchasing mastership letters, 653 (5%) entered through marriage to a daughter or widow of a master, 437 entered through the privileges of the *Hôpital de la Trinité* (an orphanage restricted usually to children of masters); 395 (3%) entered through the Académie de St Luc, the painter's academy; and finally 549 (4%) entered through some unknown path. The children of masters were a substantial minority, but we have to keep in mind that these figures also include masters in other trades than their children. Direct inheritance within the same craft must have taken place less frequently.

As in Paris, apprenticeships in Antwerp were showing a clear preference for natives over immigrants, but the recruitment of masters displays a very different pattern. From the final decades of the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth, the number of non-masters' sons in the coopers' guild exceeded the number of masters' sons in every single five-year period, but one, and was the same in two periods. In the other 28 periods there was a difference, sometimes as much as 3-5 times (during nine periods). In the course of the eighteenth century the percentage of masters' sons increased from 29 to 36 per cent, but they remained a substantial minority (De Kerf 2014: 191-92). Among the Antwerp carpenters the number of masters' sons was already low at the start of the eighteenth century and dwindled to insignificant in the course of the century. Among the cabinet makers of Antwerp the number of masters' sons increased during the first half of the eighteenth century but remained very small, compared to the non-masters' sons (De Munck 2007: 159).

In the provincial town of 's-Hertogenbosch the share of masters' sons among a range of crafts cannot have exceeded fifteen per cent in the second half of the eighteenth century (Prak 1999: 100). The number of masters' sons in Dijon was on the decline throughout the eighteenth century, from 23 per cent in the 1693-1730 cohort (N=1,822), to 13 per cent by the middle of the century (1731-1760, N=2,397) to nine per cent in the later decades (1761-90, N=3,661). Only in a handful of guilds did masters' sons account for half or more of the newly admitted members: plasterers, carpenters, gunsmiths, roofers, gilders, furriers, pewterers, dyers, and weavers. In most of these the percentage was just slightly over fifty (Shephard 1986: 123).

Finally, data for London show sons not necessarily following in their fathers' footsteps occupation-wise (proxied here by entering the same guild). Among clothworkers' father-to-son successions were the norm, but among apothecaries and stationers the opposite was true: only a quarter of freemen were following their father into these crafts. In the absence of data on more guilds and the actual occupations individuals' used we cannot be certain about the message of these data, but they do show that father-to-son successions were not the default situation. Rappaport (1989: 292-94, 397-98) has collected data for sixteenth-century London. London companies admitted members under three different categories: by completing an apprenticeship with a guild member, by redemption (purchase) and by patrimony (inheritance). It is the latter category that is important for our purposes, because this was the route into the companies reserved for masters' sons (Rappaport 1989: 24). In sixteen companies, all industrial with the exception of the Grocers and the Haberdashers, by far the most common way of entering the guild was through apprenticeship. Usually, more than eighty per cent of the members were using this route. Only a fraction of the membership, on the other hand, had accessed the guild through 'patrimony'. Only among the Butchers, the Coopers, Drapers, Ironmongers, and Skinners did the percentage regularly exceed ten. In none of the guilds did the percentage of members admitted through patrimony exceed thirteen across the century as a whole. In other words, entry through inherited right was limited to one in eight, more usually less than one in ten of the members.



Table 6: Father's occupation of new London freemen by selected occupation

		Sons of citizens		Immigrants	
		N	Same occupation (%)	N	Same occupation (%)
Apothecaries	1617-1700	357	27	995	3
Merchant Taylors	1600-1799			1,576	12
Stationers	1550-1799	888	20	3,004	3
Clothworkers	1600-1799	927	54	6,059	12

Note: see table A3 for sources and detailed data. This table presents unweighted averages of the sub-periods.

In eighteenth-century Berlin, the citizen book often listed new citizens' fathers' occupations (see table 7). While in some instances fathers may have been unlisted due to an assumption of sons following the same trade, for the 25 per cent of new citizens for whom the information is known, different patterns emerge about the likelihood of different groups following their 'family business'. Sons of citizens were much more likely than migrants to be doing the same job as their father. Those new citizens who were from Berlin or its environs but did not come from citizen families were the least likely to be following their father's trade (as well as the smallest group of new citizens), perhaps illustrating a pattern of mobility and openness more 'lateral' than 'upward'. The proportion of sons varied greatly by occupation. Of the 112 citizen sons who became butchers and bakers from 1709-50, over 80 per cent were following the same trade as their father. By contrast, of the 117 migrant citizens working in brewing, just 6 had a father who had done the same trade. More than two thirds of new citizens working in shoemaking were doing a different trade to their father, regardless of whether they were from citizen families or migrants. Some of the trades which tended to be more locally dominated – such as the food trades like bakers and butchers – also had high father-son continuity. But the patterns are not clear: while Berliner bakers were likely to be following their father's trade, migrant bakers were not.

Men and women

There can be no doubt that the great majority of guild members were men (Crowston 2001: 180-81). To some extent this was the result of a deliberate exclusion of females. Especially in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, partly as a result of the reinforcement of patriarchy during the Reformation, partly as a result of changes in the labour market, some guilds included clauses to this effect in their rule books (Wiesner 1989; Kluge 2007: 132-40). In many more places the gender imbalance was simply the result of shared biases among the membership. The precise contribution of guild policies – explicit or implicit – is difficult to measure because the distribution across the workforce would not be equal even if there had been no obstacles, and because guild policies were embedded in broader societal patterns (Nederveen Meerkerk 2007: 162-63).

Some crafts, however, give us a better sense of the effects of gender discrimination. The production of clothes was generally separated by gender: males were dressed by male tailors, females by female seamstresses who also made childrens' clothing. Access for females to the clothing trades, which were usually incorporated, was formatted in three distinct ways: subservience in male-dominated tailors' guilds, quasi-independence within tailors' guilds, or membership of an independent seamstress guild. Such an independent guild was established in Paris in 1675 and it quickly became the largest guild in the city, and home to the single largest group of apprentices. In Rouen a similar guild was set up, but in Caen, Aix-en-Provence, and Marseille seamstresses remained subordinate members of the tailors' guild (Crowston 2001: ch. 4, 402). Similar variations occurred in the Low Countries. In the Northern Netherlands seamstresses found it much easier to join guilds than in the South, where guilds were politically powerful and used their position to exclude women. As a result, the tailoring trade remained a male preserve in the South, where the ratio of tailors versus seamstresses was three or four to one in the smaller centres. This strongly suggests that guild regimes could make a difference. The



figures from the Low Countries also show that in the large centres (Brussels and Antwerp, but also Amsterdam) males and females were neatly balanced in the clothing trade, irrespective of the fact that in the latter city guilds had no direct role in local government and in the other two they did (Deceulaer & Panhuysen 2006, esp. tab. 5.1).

Table 7: New Berlin citizens following their father's trade, 1709-50

	Sons of Citizens			Immigrant Citizens		
	Same	Other	% same	Same	Other	% same
Fish Trade	15	0	100	11	6	65
Butchers	41	6	87	25	37	40
Bakers	52	13	80	19	81	19
Clothmakers	4	1	80	51	38	57
Copperworkers	23	8	74	1	27	4
Tailors	38	15	72	77	199	28
Carpenters	24	10	71	6	20	23
Merchants	23	20	53	14	58	19
Brewers	25	22	53	6	111	5
Buttonmakers	10	13	43	2	13	13
Distillers	5	16	24	1	33	3
Shoemakers	11	26	30	77	155	33
Total (known)	492	306	62	387	1184	25
Other Berliners				6	129	4

Source: compiled and adapted from *Die Bürgerbücher und die Bürgerprotokollbücher Berlins von 1701-50*, ed. Ernst Kaeber (Berlin, 1934), esp. tables 9-11.

Note: Father's occupation known for approximately 25% of new citizens.

4. BENCHMARKS AND COUNTERFACTUALS

The simple proportions of apprentices, masters or citizens who were connected to existing guild members or citizens that we discussed above have generally been the basic measures of monopoly explored in existing studies. One of the goals of this paper is to outline some possibilities for re-evaluating this measure that we expect to explore in later research. This is necessary given the complexities involved in understanding the simple proportions presented above: simply put, what figure would imply that insiders were benefiting from a monopoly?

One way of answering this might be to consider these proportions in light of the distribution of those with and without connections in the population of potential entrants. Thus, if only one in twenty children in a city were the sons of weavers, but they supplied half of new apprentice weavers, we might conclude that we are witnessing the effect of closure.

This approach is complicated by several issues, though. First, the population of potential entrants is not easily defined. In a growing city with high infant and child mortality, locals might only have been able to supply a small share of the next generation of apprentices and citizens, and we have – to make the situation even harder – very little information on urban residents' actual reproductive success. Arguably, this was a common situation in major European cities until the nineteenth century. Second, in most situations, individuals cluster



with families or remain in their localities due to preferences for familiarity, the value of social capital, emotional ties and so on. Their willingness to migrate into these urban settings depends on a complex balance of incentives that we cannot easily estimate (see Williamson 1990), resulting in additional uncertainty about the size of the pool of candidates. Third, work on historical and contemporary labour markets frequently observes quite high rates of occupational inheritance without guild or urban citizen regimes: sons often follow their fathers' trades, and very often start work in the same firms (Leunig, Minns and Wallis 2011: 414). To cite just one example, Crossick's study of the tendency of children to follow their father's trade in nineteenth-century London, long after England's apprenticeship laws had been repealed, found around 40 to 50 percent of sons had done so (table 8).

Table 8: Percentage of sons following the same occupation as their father in 19th-century London

	1851-3	1873-5
Engineering crafts	41.2%	42.7%
Building crafts	57.9	45.6
Shoemakers	37.6	49.1
Tailors	45.3	50.0

Source: Crossick (1978), tab's 6.4 and 6.5 (the version presented in More 1980: 66 was used, which includes several other references to this trait)

One strategy to overcome this barrier would be to identify natural experiments that might reveal the impact of the regulation system. Here, at least, the counterfactual can be specified in terms of the direction of impact that the presence or absence of guild and city regulations might have. The intuition of much of the critical literature on guilds and cities is that in the absence of monopolistic regulations those environments would become much more fluid and heterogeneous: without restrictions, labour would be more evenly distributed and flow to its place of highest return. The argument of some revisionist scholars, such as Epstein (1998), suggests exactly the opposite. Without guild structures to support apprentice recruitment in particular, the range of entry would narrow as the institutional scaffolding that facilitated long-term contracting between strangers weakened.

While we can specify the hypotheses to be tested, it is somewhat harder to identify what situations might provide realistic sites of study in the real world of early modern Europe. Such experiments might at least be developed over time or across space. Data on the nineteenth century, preferably in locations where the Industrial Revolution had not yet transformed the job market, could give us a sense of what happened to intergenerational mobility rates after the abolition of the guild system. For the early modern period itself, we might try to compare rates of 'within occupation' or 'within locality' entry into apprenticeships in selected major trades in non-corporate and *similar sized* corporate towns.

One example of the kind of narrative this might generate is given in table 9, which reports the shift that occurred between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth century in the modes by which individuals obtained citizenship in the city of London. Over this period, guild regulation weakened considerably in the city and a large share of people lived and worked in and around London without becoming citizens. In that sense the *economic* privileges and monopoly we have focused on here declined. However, the value of the political privileges brought by citizenship – particularly the ability to vote for Parliament (once a liveryman in a guild) – increased, as did the social benefits of guild membership. Arguably, the result was a narrowing of entry to those with the connections or funds to obtain the freedom. For the period in which economic access had been substantially affected by guild restriction, the system had been relatively open; the alternative would have been, presumably, stagnation as the supply of labour and new capital slowed. As these economic concerns lost their significance to political and social privileges that carried no similar trade-off between exclusivity and market efficiency, the citizenry and guilds narrowed and became more obviously oligarchic in nature.



Table 9: mode of entry to citizenship in London

	Apprenticeship %	Purchase %	Patrimony %	Ncitizens/year
1660-1679	83	8	13	2,095
1700-1719		6		1,468
1740-1759		16		1,097
1780-1799	55	26	17	1,023
1820-1839	43	35	23	998

Source: London Metropolitan Archives, COL/CHD/FR/10/1/1; COL/CHD/FR/10/1/4; COL/CHD/FR/10/1/9; COL/CHD/FR/10/1/15; *Second Report of Municipal Corporations in England and Wales*, p. 65

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

These data do not at all provide systematic coverage of Early Modern citizenship, apprenticeship recruitment, or guild admissions. They do, however, cover a broad range of early modern cities and trades, and they suggest a number of conclusions.

The first is that no clear-cut pattern immediately emerges from this data. The citizenship data suggest a pattern that did not always discriminate against immigrants. They are, however, limited in range, because mostly confined to England and the Holy Roman Empire. These observations are nonetheless significant, because urban citizenship in the German lands has been portrayed in the scholarly literature as highly selective, and England as the opposite.⁸ As far as the guilds were concerned, some of them were clearly extremely closed, and thus confirmed suspicions about their function as an instrument of privilege for the insiders, i.e. established guild masters and their off-spring. However, other guilds were the exact opposite, and seem to have favoured masters' sons very little or not at all.⁹ The number of masters' sons found in such guilds, below ten per cent, can be explained by rules of natural selection. Every pattern one can think of to explain the data, seems to run into serious exceptions.

This is true for Ogilvie's suggestion that England and the Low Countries had guilds that were too weak or unwilling to impose the sort of constraints that were prevalent in other regions. Recent research has cast doubt on this assumption about guild 'weakness' in these two countries (Prak et al. 2006; Berlin 2008). But even apart from such general issues, the material presented here does not suggest a pattern of open guilds in the countries bordering on the North Sea, and closed guilds everywhere else. As Shephard (1986: 177) observes about one French provincial town: 'During the eighteenth century the guilds of Dijon were remarkably open to non-Dijonnais'. And a similar conclusion is reached by Ehmer (1997: 172, 187) for Vienna.

All of this raises questions about the freedom that guilds might, or might not have had to set their own admission policies. Dambruyné's (1998) investigation of sixteenth-century Ghent clearly demonstrates that guilds were at least tempted to close their ranks, especially when the local political constellation permitted them to do so. In Ghent, guilds became more closed when guilds were in power. In the Wildberg district the authorities were willing to give the guilds what they wanted, including exclusive admission policies. In London,

⁸ For the German territories, Walker 1971 is the *locus classicus*, esp. ch. 3-4; but see Hochstadt 1983, esp. the map on 203, for a very different interpretation; for England Ogilvie 1996: 436-37.

⁹ A recent survey of the German guild literature comes to the same conclusion, without however presenting quantitative evidence: Kluge 2007: 242-45.



however, guilds were always an important political force, but this did not lead to a closing of ranks until their economic significance was weakened relative to their political privileges.

The ambiguity of the authorities vis-à-vis guild admission policies is underlined by several authors. They wanted strong guilds to help them impose political and social control, but they also feared the guilds as potential platforms for revolutionary activities. These ambivalent attitudes were also observed within the guilds themselves, as the work by Davids and De Munck (2011) has demonstrated. In the Habsburg, later Austrian Netherlands, guilds at one and the same time substantially increased their fees, making it much more difficult to join their ranks, but also encouraged people to join, because this was the only way they could reduce the guild's debt burden. They explain this seeming paradox by suggesting that obstacles such as high fees, were not necessarily instruments to exclude applicants, but attempts to raise funds for the activities of the guilds at the expense of new members who were 'buying into' the services provided by the guild. Moreover, any rents that guild members and citizens received need to be set against the burdens of local taxation, military service and participation in government that they incurred.

The question still remains: what could those new members expect in return? It would be reasonable to expect them to recoup this 'investment' in their business through extra sales which should have resulted from exclusive access to the market. The problem with this argument is that in many places that access turned out not to be so exclusive after all. Two types of solutions to this conundrum seem to suggest themselves. The first has to do with the economic environment. Garden (1986: 293) has suggested that in towns with a stable size it would make sense to enforce a 'closed shop' policy. In towns where industry was in decline, it would be more attractive to send one's son to more prosperous trades, and this might lead to pressures, even from among the craftsmen, for more open attitudes. In towns where the industry was expanding, it would be very difficult to maintain momentum without immigrants, so here too one might expect a more open attitude. An alternative reading of the material presented here would be to think about the other benefits that guild membership may have entailed, beyond the immediate advantages of less competition. Here one could think of access to apprentices, of shared information, in some cases of common acquisition of raw materials, of common sales rooms, of quality labels, of social benefits, of lobbying and political influence, of conflict resolution, and perhaps also legal status (it can be expensive to live outside the law). The problem is: it is as difficult to establish the 'value' of these benefits, as those insisting on the exclusiveness of guilds have found it to calculate the benefits of that exclusiveness.

When we classify organisations as 'closed' when two-thirds of apprentices or masters were 'insiders', as 'open' when two-thirds were 'outsiders', and as 'neutral' where the numbers fell between those values (table 10) something really interesting emerges: the pattern is remarkably different for masters and apprentices. The market for education was very local; in most places the guilds should be classified as 'closed' when we look at the place of origin of their apprentices. The majority of guilds were, however, 'open' when we look at the recruitment of masters, and this was true for place of origin as well as father-to-son successions. With the results thus classified, we can also say that of the three dimensions investigated here – chronology, size of population, political influence – the first (chronology) turns out to be the weakest predictor of openness. The pattern for none of the indicators is consistent: large towns are in both the 'closed' and the 'open' columns, as are towns with and without guild participation in local government. This – and especially the contradictory results for apprentices and masters – goes a long way to explain the continued confusion about this issue in the literature.



Table 10: Openness of European towns for immigrant citizens, and local guilds for apprentices and masters, fourteenth-eighteenth centuries

Open	Neutral	Closed
<i>Citizens:</i>		
	London C16-18 Bristol C17-18 Danzig C17-18 Frankfurt C17-18 Schleswig towns C17-18	Lincoln C17-18
<i>Apprentices:</i>		
Lyon C18 London C18	Antwerp coopers C18	Antwerp silversmiths C17-18 Norwich C17-18 Sheffield C17-18 Wildberg weavers C17-18 Haarlem coopers C17-18 Paris C18
<i>Masters:</i>		
*Bruges coopers C14-15 London C16	Aix/Provence tailors C16 *Ghent tailors C16	*Ghent brewers C16
*Brabant tailors C17-18		Rott'dam goldsmiths C17-18
*Turin tailors C17 Vienna C18 Amsterdam tailors C18 Haarlem tailors C18	*Antwerp coopers C17-18	*Wildberg weavers C17-18
*Antwerp carpenters C18 *Antwerp cabinetmakers C18 *s-Hertogenbosch C18 *Dijon C18 *Paris C18		

** figures relate to concerns father-to-son succession*

'open': < one third 'insiders', 'neutral': one-two thirds 'insiders', 'closed': > two thirds 'insiders'

The implication of the foregoing discussion is that simple references to guild 'monopolies' are very misleading in many places. Clearly, apprentices were recruited locally and from the areas closest to the town. For guild masters, on the other hand, the balance between locals and those from other regions suggests that entry barriers did not result in effective restrictions on numbers or their social or geographical background. No doubt all kinds of obstacle stood in the way of joining an urban community or guild as citizen or master, but those obstacles proved surmountable for large numbers. This means that talk of 'monopolies' is very misleading indeed: in many places, these so-called monopolies were accessible to so many people that the word loses its explanatory value. Although this has been said many times now, it still seems worth reiterating that a comprehensive understanding of guild admission policies requires a combination of the rule-book and the actual practices as we see them reflected in admission data.

An instructive parallel is suggesting itself with immigration policies in the twentieth century. Nation states have the capacity to use citizenship to bar prospective migrants from entering their labour markets. The policies states follow in practice have varied significantly, but the net effect in the present would seem to be very



substantial rents to developed world citizens if measured by unskilled wage differentials.¹⁰ This is reflected in much of the debate surrounding the introduction of restrictive immigration policies in the United States prior to 1917; attention was focused squarely on the potential effects of international population inflows on the high wages received by American workers (Walker, 1896). This offers a modern benchmark that is, one would guess, indicative of far larger labour market distortions today than one could imagine in the early modern world. There were good reasons for the authorities in pre-modern societies to be wary of closing their communities to outsiders, but two stand out in particular. One is that urban communities found it very difficult to reproduce themselves demographically. To maintain the size of the local population, not to mention ambitions of growth, an influx of immigrants was simply necessary. Again, there is an interesting parallel here with modern welfare states (Lindert 2004: 205-07). The second is that all these communities, but especially the larger ones, found it difficult to consistently monitor such complex policies. In this area too, modern concerns about the invasion of privacy that is required to apply restrictions on mobility provides an interesting parallel to those earlier situations analysed in this paper.

¹⁰ Hamilton and Whalley (1984) estimate that abolishing all restriction on international labour migration would increase world GDP per capita in the 1980s by approximately 150 percent.



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APPENDIX

Table A1

1a. Background of new citizens of London by selected occupations (apothecaries, stationers, and clothworkers)

		Sons of citizens (N)	Sons of citizens (%)	Local (N)	Local (%)	Immigrants (N)	Immigrants (%)
Apothecaries	1617-1700	259	19.5	556	33	1139	67
Stationers	1550-49	51	13	87	23	292	77
Stationers	1600-49	358	23	515	33	1054	67
Stationers	1650-99	630	33	882	46	1042	54
Stationers	1700-49	589	33	1012	57	761	43
Stationers	1750-99	388	19	1390	68	659	32
Stationers	1800-49	452	24	1412	76	455	24
<i>Stationers</i>	<i>1550-1849</i>	<i>2470</i>	<i>25.7</i>	<i>5325</i>	<i>55.5</i>	<i>4273</i>	<i>44.5</i>
Clothworkers	1600-49	576	17.3	729	23	2443	77
Clothworkers	1650-99	800	22.4	1086	31	2363	69
Clothworkers	1700-49	935	34.7	1376	54	1180	46
Clothworkers	1750-99	637	34.2	1139	66	596	34
Clothworkers	1800-49	569	61.1	792	87	121	13
<i>Clothworkers</i>	<i>1600-1849</i>	<i>3517</i>	<i>28.4</i>	<i>5122</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>6703</i>	<i>57</i>

Sources: Society of Apothecaries: Guildhall Library, MS 8200/1-3; Stationers Company: Turner 2006; Clothworkers: *Records of London's Livery Companies Online* <http://www.londonroll.org>.

Note: Figures for citizens are based on the share of apprentices who are later freed plus those freed by patrimony. This gives us the sons of citizens, and sons from London & environs (taken here as Middlesex). Freeman by redemption are a small share of freemen (less than 5%) and may be local or otherwise. We exclude this group here, as we lack information on their parental background.

1b. Background of new citizens of Bristol (entering by apprenticeship and inheritance) by selected occupations

Trade	Local (N)	Local (%)	Immigrants (N)	Immigrants (%)
Sailor	132	55.3	107	44.7
Shipwright	75	47.4	83	52.6
Cooper	63	39.7	95	60.3
Merchant	90	53.0	80	47.0
Soapmaker	29	37.0	50	63.0
Cordwainer	36	46.3	42	53.7
Weaver	53	72.6	20	27.4
Barber- surgeon	34	52.3	31	47.7
Grocer	17	31.2	38	68.8
Baker	21	39.1	32	60.9
<i>All</i>	<i>496</i>	<i>53.8</i>	<i>426</i>	<i>46.2</i>

Data is based on a sample of apprentices (1685-95) linked to the burgess books of the city, which also record entrants by patrimony. Sources: Bristol Record Office, MS 4353/2; Bristol and Avon Family History Society, 2004.



1c. Background of new citizens of Lincoln (by apprenticeship) by selected occupation

Trade	Local	Immigrant	Local (%)	Immigrant (%)
Grocer	9	53	14.5	85.5
Joiner	22	22	50.0	50.0
Carpenter	18	21	46.2	53.8
Plumber	12	20	37.5	62.5
Cabinetmaker	25	6	80.6	19.4
Printer	17	13	56.7	43.3
Mercer	4	17	19.0	81.0
Surgeon	1	17	5.6	94.4
Sadler	3	11	21.4	78.6
Barber	7	6	53.8	46.2
<i>All</i>	<i>206</i>	<i>315</i>	<i>39.5</i>	<i>60.5</i>

Source: Cole, forthcoming

1d. Background of new citizens of Lincoln (by apprenticeship and inheritance), all occupations

	Local (N)	Local (%)	Immigrant (N)	Immigrant (%)
1650-99	497	70	211	30
1700-49	490	63	288	37
1750-99	391	72	154	28

Source: Cole, forthcoming.



Table A2

Table 2: New citizens and their background in German towns and cities, 16th-18th centuries

2a. New Berlin Citizens with Citizen Fathers, 1500-1750

Years	New Citizens	Sons of Citizens
1500-1549	1207	7%*
1550-1599	1994	15%
1600-1649	2050	23%
1650-1699	1947	17%
1700-1750	8748	23%

* Significant numbers with no origin listed.

Source: compiled from *Das älteste Berliner Bürgerbuch*, ed. Peter Gebhardt (Berlin, 1927); *Die Bürgerbücher und die Bürgerprotokollbücher Berlins von 1701-50*, ed. Ernst Kaeber (Berlin, 1934)

2b. Background and origin of new Danzig (Gdansk) citizens, 1640-1709

Years	Total	Sons	Danzig	Prussia	Pomerania	Others
1640-49	1927	27%	8%	14%	14%	37%
1650-59	1665	31%	10%	13%	14%	32%
1660-69	1370	36%	14%	17%	7%	26%
1670-79	1458	33%	16%	19%	10%	22%
1680-89	1635	36%	16%	14%	10%	24%
1690-99	1481	36%	15%	15%	9%	25%
1700-1709	1205	36%	14%	18%	11%	21%

Source: compiled from Henning Penners-Ellward, *Die Bürgerschaft nach Herkunft und Beruf 1547-1709*, PhD-dissertation Marburg/Lahn, 1954, Appendices and tables after p. 453



2c. Origins of New Frankfurt Citizens, 1600-1735

	New Citizens	'Native Sons'	Immigrants
1600-1630	4776	35%	65%
1631-1650	2726	32%	68%
1651-1675	3400	45%	55%
1676-1704	4320	47%	53%
<u>1705-1735</u>	<u>5171</u>	<u>54%</u>	<u>56%</u>

Source: Soliday (1974), compiled from tables 3-4, p. 45

2d. Origins of new citizens in selected Schleswig towns, 17th and 18th centuries

	Years	New Citizens	From City	Schleswig
Tönning	1649-1721	1258	12%	30%
	1721-1750	464	27%	23%
Husum	1609-1627	1071	26%	49%
	1627-1660	1014	37%	38%
	1660-1721	1077	20%	28%
	1721-1750	441	20%	22%
Eckenförde	1610-1721	1250	34%	7%*
	1721-1750	434	33%	19%
Tondern	1627-1721	880	23%	18%
	1721-1750	501	41%	31%
Hadersleben	1630-1721	801	17%	45%
	1721-1750	371	24%	42%

* Significant numbers with no origin listed.

Source: Compiled from *Herkunft des Bürgertums in den Städten des Herzogtums Schleswig*, ed. Erich Hoffmann (Neumünster, 1953), Anhang A, 227-54



Table A3 Father's occupation of new London freemen by selected occupation

		Sons of citizens			Immigrants		
		Same occ	Other occ	% same	Same occ	Other occ	% same
Apothecaries	1617-1700	98	259	27%	33	962	3
Merchant Taylor	1600-49	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	18	18
Merchant Taylor	1650-99	n/a	n/a	n/a	63	384	14.1
Merchant Taylor	1700-49	n/a	n/a	n/a	33	233	12.4
Merchant Taylor	1750-99	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	86	4.44
Merchant Taylors	1600-1799					751	12.4
Stationers	1550-49	1	11	8.3	1	207	0.5
Stationers	1600-49	34	116	22.7	13	982	1.3
Stationers	1650-99	74	232	24.2	20	877	2.2
Stationers	1700-49	63	216	22.6	31	375	7.6
Stationers	1750-99	34	107	24.1	27	471	5.4
Stationers	1800-49	46	142	24.5	25	268	8.5
<i>Stationers</i>	<i>1550-1849</i>	<i>252</i>	<i>826</i>	<i>23.4</i>	<i>118</i>	<i>3187</i>	<i>3.6</i>
Clothworkers	1600-49	24	98	24.5	220	1958	11.2
Clothworkers	1650-99	82	173	47.4	195	1978	9.9
Clothworkers	1700-49	145	212	68.4	125	997	12.5
Clothworkers	1750-99	84	109	77.1	70	516	13.6
Clothworkers	1800-49	45	0	100.0	6	114	5
<i>Clothworkers</i>	<i>1600-1849</i>	<i>380</i>	<i>592</i>	<i>64.2</i>	<i>616</i>	<i>5563</i>	<i>11.1</i>

Sources: Society of Apothecaries: Guildhall Library, MS 8200/1-3; Stationers Company: Turner (2006); Clothworkers: *Records of London's Livery Companies Online*, <http://www.londonroll.org>.

Notes:

- 1) *Merchant Taylor data is based on a sample of apprentices in four counties (Bedfordshire, Surrey, Westmoreland and Somerset) supplied by Cliff Webb, linked to (Legon, n.d).*
- 2) *For stationers, immigrant parents are defined as in the same trade if they are printer, stationer, bookseller, bookbinder, engraver, copper plate printer, or letter founder).*
- 3) *For clothworkers, immigrant parents are defined as being in the same trade if their occupation is in cloth manufacture (defined as 2,20) in Wrigley's PST coding.*