

# The extent of citizenship in pre-industrial England, Germany, and the Low Countries

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Citizenship was the main vehicle through which urban authorities granted political and economic rights to their communities. This article estimates the size of the citizenry and citizenship rates for over 30 European towns and cities between 1550 and 1849. While the extent of citizenship varied between European regions and by city size, our estimates show that citizenship was more accessible than previously thought.

## 1. Introduction

The connection between state development and economic growth is central to recent debates in economic history.<sup>1</sup> Insofar as this literature is concerned with pre-industrial societies, two issues dominate.<sup>2</sup> The first turns on the causes and consequences of the ineffectiveness, or even outright hostility, of some states vis-à-vis economic actors when compared to the supportive stance of others. The second issue centres on the institutional obstacles that pre-modern states could put in the way of economic progress. These obstacles range from unpredictability, to internal borders, to limited access to institutions and markets. While much of the focus has been on the capacity and effectiveness of early nation states, when it comes to access, local polities often played a more significant role than central authorities in determining who could trade, work, or live in a particular place.<sup>3</sup> From a local perspective, analysis has focussed on the importance of autonomous towns and cities,

<sup>1</sup> See among others Acemoglu and Robinson (2000, 2005), Besley (2006), Epstein (2002), North *et al.* (2009).

<sup>2</sup> Recent surveys of an extensive literature can be found in Dincecco (2015) and Johnson and Koyama (2017).

<sup>3</sup> Gelderblom (2013); also Cox (2017), Dincecco (2015), Greif *et al.* (1994), Lindemann (2015), Lindert (2004).

particularly in their capacity to constrain the “princely predation” that could hold back pre-industrial growth, and on guilds limiting access to economic opportunities.<sup>4</sup> In this paper we investigate local citizenship as another dimension of the formal constraints on the economy, as well as a source of political agency for economic actors.

Although urban citizenship was a defining feature of pre-industrial European towns and cities, there is little evidence on how extensive citizenship actually was, how difficult it was to acquire citizenship, and how it varied between cities and over time. One of the few well-known examples suggests a dramatically unfavourable situation. In Venice, only 299 foreign merchants were granted citizenship between 1540 and 1632 in a city with a population of roughly 125,000 in 1582 (Bellavitis, 2004, Appendix). Was Venice representative of the general European pattern? This paper addresses the dearth of comparative quantitative evidence on the extent of citizenship in pre-modern Europe by producing estimates of the share of the urban population with citizenship for over 30 towns and cities in England, the Northern and Southern Netherlands and German Europe between 1550 and 1800. This comprises a large, relatively prosperous area of Northern Europe for which abundant historical evidence on citizenship can be exploited.<sup>5</sup> Many of the locations we study were relatively well integrated through proximity to the North Sea and associated trade routes, but there were also important institutional differences within the region that shaped citizenship. By and large, it is also a region that experienced a decline in urban political autonomy, and hence the potential importance of citizenship, later than in France or on the Italian Peninsula.<sup>6</sup>

Our quantitative profile of urban citizenship regimes in early modern Europe is based on a simple methodology that allows us to estimate the stock of citizens from data on inflows into citizenship harvested from a wide range of primary and secondary source materials. We then use available population data to generate estimates of citizenship rates between about 1550 and 1849. Following a discussion of the theoretical implications of narrow versus inclusive citizenship regimes, we show that citizenship carried valuable rights that make it an effective measure of civic inclusiveness, and discuss the variation in who could become a citizen in different parts of Europe.<sup>7</sup> We then present our methodological approach, and the estimates of the number of citizens and their share of population in the towns and cities for which we are able to apply our model. We show that citizenship was more widespread than many historians have assumed, particularly if one considers the share of the population living within a citizen-headed household. Our calculations imply that in the typical European city about a quarter of adults possessed citizenship, which in turn implies that a majority of households were citizen-headed. The results reveal notable differences in citizenship rates between the regions we study, as well as substantial variation within regions. We conclude by discussing the implications of these citizenship patterns for European economic development prior to industrialisation

<sup>4</sup> Bosker *et al.* (2013), Cox (2017), Ogilvie (2014), Stasavage (2014), Cox (2017).

<sup>5</sup> In previous versions of this paper we extended our comparisons to France (where citizenship in the sense experienced in other locations did not exist) by comparing the share of urban populations who were guild members. These results are available on request.

<sup>6</sup> Stasavage (2014, table 1, p. 344). While employing a more specific definition of city autonomy than the idea put forward here, Stasavage finds that most German cities in his sample ceased to be autonomous in the nineteenth century, and many in Belgium and the Netherlands ceased to be autonomous after 1800.

<sup>7</sup> See Wallis *et al.* (2015) for a more detailed analysis of differences between citizenship regimes around Europe.

## 2. Citizenship and economic development

Citizenship was the institution through which early modern towns and cities defined membership of their communities. Urban citizenship was a vehicle for economic rights and political enfranchisement in the early modern period, through its association with the ability to participate in a wide array of local institutions in European towns and cities.<sup>8</sup> Because cities had considerable agency in shaping economic outcomes, those individuals recognised as citizens also had strong incentives to limit the availability of full rights to the broader urban population. Precisely for this reason, French revolutionaries condemned urban citizenship as one of the feudal obstacles that national citizenship was designed to overcome. This condemnation of urban citizenship as an exclusive institution has continued to dominate the historical literature. It has also contributed to a broader image of pre-modern societies as characterised by exclusion.<sup>9</sup>

Urban citizenship was an important facet of the early modern economy. Citizenship was closely connected to urban corporate systems that regulated trade and production. Guilds and other urban entities licensed the rights to produce goods and to trade them in local markets over which they had jurisdiction. These rights were typically granted and enforced by urban authorities, and in most towns and cities were only available to people holding formal citizen status. Limiting access to citizenship would therefore produce economic rents.<sup>10</sup> Greif and Tabellini (2010) have argued that “the city is more efficient and attractive if more of its citizens value cooperation with non-kin”, implying that restrictive citizenship diminishes the effectiveness of cities. Exclusive citizenship regimes were sustainable in terms of generating and distributing more economic rents, but at the cost of lost opportunities through the exclusion of talented outsiders. The share of urban populations attaining citizenship can help establish to what degree economies were burdened in this way.

The extent of urban citizenship also had indirect implications for economic arrangements through political voice. In his influential study of the European city, Max Weber (1958) already argued that communities based on “oath-bound” citizenship distinguished cities of the West from those in Asia, contributing to what we now call the “great divergence”. More recently, Acemoglu and Robinson (2005, ch. 5) point out how un-democratic polities run a serious risk of violent revolutions. Knutsen (2013) has demonstrated, for modern sub-Saharan Africa, that democracy has a significant positive effect on economic growth, especially in places where state capacity is low. Narrow citizenship entitlements would have made towns and cities more susceptible to elite capture, with an institutional framework that reflected the ends of the socio-economic distribution more than the middle.<sup>11</sup> This view predicts that limited access to citizenship would sustain relatively high levels of inequality and lead to low levels of public spending.<sup>12</sup> Recent studies have typically used measures of autonomy and self-government as proxies for the quality of past institutions, but the extent of citizenship in the past offers a more appropriate measure of civic inclusiveness.<sup>13</sup>

We therefore claim that the extent of formal citizenship can be expected to have had a double impact on economic activities: directly, through the inclusion or exclusion of

<sup>8</sup> Prak (2018, chapter 1–2).

<sup>9</sup> Ogilvie (2011).

<sup>10</sup> North *et al.* (2009, p. 6, p. 255, p. 263); also Musgrave (1999, pp. 71–72), Ogilvie (2011, ch. 3), Fitzsimmons (2010).

<sup>11</sup> Epple and Romano (1996).

<sup>12</sup> Tabellini (2010), Guiso *et al.* (2016).

<sup>13</sup> See Bosker *et al.* (2013) and Stasavage (2014) for attempts to measure the political autonomy of cities.

“outsiders” in whatever shape or form from economic opportunities, and indirectly by providing or denying political agency to economic actors in the arena where such agency mattered most in commercial and industrial towns and cities.

### 3. Citizenship regimes: rights, access, barriers

What were the main characteristics of the different citizenship regimes that were present in early modern Europe? What rights did citizenship bring? How did one become a citizen? Any answer must begin with individual towns’ laws, which determined the extent of citizens’ rights, the ease with which one could become a citizen, and the attractiveness of citizenship to those able to attain the status. This local variation raises the risk that rights were inversely proportional to citizenship levels: high citizenship rates could be accompanied by relatively limited rights, implying that widespread citizenship could be present when political voice and economic and social entitlements conferred little advantage. However, this does not seem to be the case. While the regulations governing citizenship vary substantially across the cities we study, it is nonetheless possible to identify a common core of minimum political rights conferred on citizens. This matters because the extent of political rights in the population is critical for theories of how voice and enfranchisement translate into governance and the provision of public goods and services.

#### 3.1 Rights

*Political rights* were available to citizens in all European towns and cities. These rights usually include the ability to participate in urban decision making, for instance through voting for representatives on local councils, or the ability to hold some form of local political office.

Citizens possessed both voice and agency in all urban areas we study here. In German towns and cities with their own council, and especially in the free imperial cities, citizenship was legal membership of the community. Citizens were subject to local law, lived under its protections, and generally had a voice in local government, through either direct or indirect elections.<sup>14</sup> In parts of eighteenth-century Westphalia, for example, electoral committees were drawn from the local citizenry at an assembly, with the selected citizens then choosing council members.<sup>15</sup> Evidence from the Low Countries suggests similar local political rights and obligations: voice in local affairs, including voting when appropriate, and the ability to serve on councils. In the eastern provinces of the Dutch Republic, Sworn Councils represented the entire citizen community, while civic militias were used as an instrument for voice in western provinces, where councils did not provide direct representation of the citizenry.<sup>16</sup> Citizenship in England usually provided the ability to participate in local governance through the councils of urban corporations.<sup>17</sup>

Differences in political rights appear when we consider the ability of urban citizens to secure political representation at national level. Citizens of many urban corporations in England voted for representatives in the national Parliament. In the Dutch Republic,

<sup>14</sup> Dilcher (1996), Isenmann (2002).

<sup>15</sup> Walker (1971, p. 57).

<sup>16</sup> Van Zanden and Prak (2006, pp. 122–123).

<sup>17</sup> Liddy (2017).

citizens of individual cities were represented through urban councils in the States of Holland.<sup>18</sup> A similar system existed in the Southern Netherlands, although at this time the authorities in Brussels were ultimately answerable to the Habsburg monarchs.<sup>19</sup> At the other end of the spectrum, the Holy Roman Empire's complex institutional structure was not receptive to urban inputs on imperial policies.<sup>20</sup>

The *economic rights* associated with citizenship usually included access to regulated markets for production, trade, and employment. In specific sectors and trades, these rights were often also closely tied to guild membership. This made citizenship necessary, but not normally sufficient, for certain economic rights; guilds often added a further set of restrictions, based on skill, training or a financial penalty.<sup>21</sup> The implication is that while citizenship was strongly correlated with a certain set of economic rights, the status alone did not always grant access to these rights.

Citizenship was also connected to local entitlements and obligations, such as *welfare*, and taxation.<sup>22</sup> In the Dutch Republic, citizen families had access to more generous public goods than other inhabitants.<sup>23</sup> Citizens generally received preferential (or even exclusive) access to municipal poor relief in German towns and cities.<sup>24</sup> In Antwerp and Ghent, however, it was guild membership, rather than citizenship, that was key for access to additional provisions.<sup>25</sup>

While citizenship in Europe brought a similar set of valuable local political and economic rights in most jurisdictions, it should be noted that alternative formal statuses could provide more limited rights to non-citizen residents. In the Low Countries, the status of *ingezetenen* allowed holders to live and work in the urban community, as well as giving rudimentary access to public goods.<sup>26</sup> In eighteenth-century Hamburg numerous residents purchased the *Schutzbrief*, a legal document giving the right to work, while others possessed a *Fremdenkontrakt* ("foreigners" contract) that provided residential rights.<sup>27</sup> These alternative statuses were fairly inexpensive – becoming an inhabitant was free of charge in Amsterdam, and available after one year and one day of residence in Antwerp – but also provided few direct political rights.

### 3.2 Access

There are two potential implications of different entry routes into citizenship that need to be considered for our purposes. First, how did different ways to become a citizen influence the size of the citizenry and the population share that was able to attain citizenship? Second, to what extent did entry requirements permanently exclude some groups from citizenship?

Many towns and cities had some form of transmission of citizenship through entitlements based on *birth or inheritance*. Citizenship as a birth right was well-established in the

<sup>18</sup> Van Zanden and Prak (2006, p. 124).

<sup>19</sup> Van Honacker (1994, pp. 81–92).

<sup>20</sup> Buchstab (1976).

<sup>21</sup> Boone and Stabel (2002, p. 322), Dilcher (1996, pp. 153–154), Friedrichs (1985, p. 156), Isenmann (2002, pp. 237–239).

<sup>22</sup> In England, citizens sometimes had to pay additional taxation in the form of scot and lot.

<sup>23</sup> Van Zanden and Prak (2006, p. 124).

<sup>24</sup> Kintner (2003).

<sup>25</sup> Haemers and Ryckbosch (2010, p. 221), De Munck (2009).

<sup>26</sup> Van Zanden and Prak (2006, p. 124).

<sup>27</sup> Lindemann (1990, pp. 63–73).

Southern Netherlands, notably in Antwerp and 's-Hertogenbosch. Citizenship through inheritance was more common, and found in many places in England, Germany, in the Northern Netherlands in Amsterdam and Utrecht, and also in parts of the Southern Netherlands where birth right was not practiced.<sup>28</sup> The nature of inheritance, however, and whether those able to inherit registered as citizens in the first place, varied widely. In England and German Europe, citizenship was typically heritable from fathers, subject to payment of fees and formal registration. In the Northern Netherlands, inheritance was also transmitted along female lines, though eligible citizen heirs frequently chose not to register their status.

The *purchase* of citizenship was widespread, both as part of the process of inheritance and for outsiders willing and able to purchase rights directly. Abundant evidence survives on the price paid for citizenship in all the parts of Europe we examine here. The quantitative significance of purchase depended on the fees charged: in late seventeenth-century Liverpool, for instance, purchase at £7 accounted for the majority of new citizens, while in London, where the city's price of £25 (which might be matched by an obligatory guild fee) was far higher, only a small minority entered through purchase.<sup>29</sup>

*Service* through apprenticeship was the most frequently used route to acquiring citizenship in England. Elsewhere in Europe, apprenticeship was an important precondition for the linked status of guild membership, without which urban economic rights were limited, even if it was not a direct route into citizenship. Entrance through apprenticeship was not controlled by urban authorities alone, because most aspirants also had to be received by one of the associated guilds, which may have had an interest in limiting the number of entrants in order to preserve economic rents in protected markets. In the Holy Roman Empire and parts of the Northern Netherlands, apprenticeship was sometimes followed by a compulsory period (*Mutzeit*) working as a journeyman in the city one wished to join as a master and citizen.

In all towns of the Low Countries, men and women could acquire citizenship through *marriage* to a current citizen. In German cities, marrying a citizen often gave a migrant a discount on acquiring citizenship, but by the seventeenth-century cities generally required those marrying into the citizenry to meet the citizenship requirements beforehand.<sup>30</sup> In England, the Northern Netherlands, and parts of Germany, a male citizen's rights to live and work largely encompassed his spouse and were to some extent inherited by her.<sup>31</sup> Some communities allowed men who married the widows or daughters of citizens a more direct route to citizenship. Yet there were differences over whether female citizens conveyed citizenship to their husbands. In Antwerp, Utrecht, Deventer, Kampen, and Zwolle, immigrant men marrying citizen women still needed to buy citizenship. In Amsterdam, Ghent,

<sup>28</sup> In England, estimates for the share of new citizens who acquired their status through inheritance range from about 10 percent in Liverpool to about 50 percent in Lincoln. A similar range is present in German-speaking cities, from 10 to 20 percent for Berlin, to as high as 50 percent for early eighteenth century Frankfurt. von Gebhardt (1927), Penners-Elward (1954, Appendix), Soliday (1974, p. 45).

<sup>29</sup> Liverpool fee is the average of for 1700–9: calculated from data in Power *et al.* (1988). The London fee is the conventional sale price across the eighteenth century: London Metropolitan Archive, COL CHD/FR/12/048, #4.

<sup>30</sup> Wiesner (1986, p. 21), Soliday (1974, pp. 45–48), Whaley (2002, p. 12), Wallace (1995, p. 13).

<sup>31</sup> Whether citizen's wives were able to establish distinct enterprises or work in their husband's workshop could depend on guild rules.

or Bruges they did not.<sup>32</sup> In many English cities, men gained no rights from marriage to a citizen's widow or daughter, and instead expunged their wife's residual rights.

### 3.3 Barriers

Citizenship regime that offered generous rights to one part of the population could be highly exclusionary based on gender, religion, and other characteristics. In terms of the exercise we perform in this paper, the barriers and the treatment of major barred groups was roughly similar across all the European cities we examine here.

*Religion* served as a formal barrier in the regions we study. Citizenship in the Southern Netherlands required loyalty to the Catholic religion, while adherence to Calvinism was mandatory for newcomers in cities in the Eastern provinces of the Dutch Republic.<sup>33</sup> Having the appropriate local religion was also essential in most German towns and cities.

*Wealth and income* were strongly associated with citizenship in many early modern cities. Differential fees allowed the sons of citizens or locals to acquire citizenship either for free or at much lower price than migrants in most cities. In the 1600s and 1700s, those entitled to citizenship through birth or inheritance in the Low Countries did not pay for their status. In England and German towns, sons of citizens paid a fraction of the price for outsiders.

Citizenship was not formally restricted by *gender* in the cities we study. Yet few women acquired citizenship in any of them.<sup>34</sup> The highest densities of female citizenship came in German cities where migrant women were required to purchase citizenship. Even then, women did not exceed 20 percent to 25 percent of the citizenry.<sup>35</sup> While women were not formally excluded from citizenship, their status was generally dependent on their position as wife or daughter in a male-headed citizen household, and their access to political office was barred in practice. Due to cultural norms, work, and wealth, independent and active female citizenship was mostly an issue for widows, who traditionally retained their husband's legal and economic status, though not his political voice.<sup>36</sup>

## 4. Counting citizens

### 4.1 Estimating citizen stocks and citizen shares

We use evidence from urban records on the registration of new citizens to estimate the extent of citizenship across a large part of early modern Europe from about 1500. Details on source materials are outlined in the on-line Appendix. There were both commonalities and substantial differences between these regions. England had national legislation, while the Low Countries and German Europe featured a broad range of institutional arrangements. The German-speaking towns and cities range across what are now Germany, Denmark, Poland, Italy, and Russia, and include both free imperial cities and less

<sup>32</sup> For an overview, see Godding (1987, p. 58), De Meester (2011, p. 38), Boone and Stabel (2002, pp. 319–322), Deneweth (2010, pp. 28–39).

<sup>33</sup> Boone and Stabel (2002, p. 319), Prak (2002).

<sup>34</sup> Everrd and Aerts (2002, pp. 175–184).

<sup>35</sup> Calculated from Friedrichs (1979, Appendix 3).

<sup>36</sup> Wiesner (1998), Howell (1988, p. 40). Female citizen's rights diminished after the Reformation: see Wiesner (1986, pp. 13–35), Wiesner (1998), Roper (1987), Howell (1988). A similar pattern is present in the Southern Netherlands, with few women buying citizenship in the centuries under consideration here.

Table 1. *Towns and cities with citizen data*


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England
Bristol, Boston, Canterbury, Chester, Doncaster, Ipswich, Leicester, Lincoln, London, York
Northern Netherlands
Amsterdam, Deventer, Kampen, 's-Hertogenbosch, Utrecht, Zwolle
Southern Netherlands
Antwerp, Bruges, Ghent
German Europe
Berlin, Bozen, Danzig, Detmold, Flensburg, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Husum, Koeln, Königsberg, Muenster, Nördlingen, Strasbourg, Tondern, Toning, Werle

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Notes: See the on-line Appendix for source details.



Figure 1. *Towns and cities with citizenship data. Note: See text for details.*

autonomous urban areas, with a variety of legal and institutional structures. The towns and cities for which we have collected data are listed in table 1, and mapped in figure 1.

We use a variant of the perpetual inventory method to estimate of the stock of citizens.<sup>37</sup> This method relies on two pieces of information: (a) counts of annual flows into citizenship, and (b) the annual rate of attrition from citizenship:

$$C_t = (1 - d)C_{t-1} + F_t \quad (1)$$

In equation (1),  $C_t$  is the estimated stock of citizens at time  $t$ ,  $F_t$  the number of new citizens entering in time  $t$ , and  $d$  the attrition rate from the stock of citizens from the previous period.

<sup>37</sup> We use existing estimates of the count of citizens when such data is available ('s-Hertogenbosch, Strasbourg). Our approach is similar to that used in research estimating the stock of human capital from flow data on schooling attainment (Barro and Lee 2001).



While this method allows us to exploit relatively abundant data on annual flows into citizenship, it also has limitations. As we do not know initial citizen stocks, we execute these calculations with a starting value of zero for  $C_{t-1}$ . Our stock estimates are valid only once we hit a steady state where the initial lack of information is washed out by mortality and replacement. As a result, we do not report estimates of citizen stocks that are not underpinned by at least 50 years of continuous data on flows into citizenship.

The model also requires a suitable choice for the rate of attrition  $d$ . One way to come up with a plausible figure is to use the few available independent counts of citizen stocks for cities that also have data on citizen inflows to estimate the attrition rate. We apply this approach to five cities. For Bristol, Boston, Ipswich, and Lincoln in England we have a terminal estimate of the number of citizens in 1832.<sup>38</sup> For Hamburg, Lindemann (1990) gives an estimate of the citizen stock. In four cities, Bristol, Ipswich, Lincoln, and Hamburg, the fitted value of  $d$  is about 0.04. Lincoln, however, was reported to have many more citizens than our method would predict, with the total in 1832 exceeding the sum of all inflows observed over the previous 75 years.

An alternative approach to finding a value for  $d$  is to use available information on adult mortality. Attrition should be closely linked to the mortality rate of citizens – urban citizenship was not a portable qualification so we expect citizens to have low migration propensities except in rare circumstances, such as those of eighteenth-century Antwerp discussed later.<sup>39</sup> We do not expect that other reasons for losing citizenship (e.g., disenfranchisement as a judicial sentence) were quantitatively significant.<sup>40</sup>

One starting point for England is Wrigley and Schofield's (1981) age-adjusted mortality rate of about 30 per 1000 for the early eighteenth century. This figure likely understates urban mortality, particularly for larger centres.<sup>41</sup> Setting  $d$  equal to 0.04 should therefore perform fairly well as an upper bound for stock calculations in English cities up to about 1700. Counts of burials for Jena, Augsburg, and Dresden imply crude death rates in the order of 30–45 per thousand in the late eighteenth century, which is broadly in line with what Guinnane and Ogilvie (2014, p. 89) report for Auinen, Ebhausen, and Wildberg.<sup>42</sup> Mortality among adults, and among the relatively prosperous citizenry, would no doubt be lower. Friedrichs reports that in Nördlingen, 53–62 percent of citizens from cohorts of entrants from 1580–1585, 1598–1603, 1647–1652, and 1695–1700 were still alive 25 years after becoming citizens. For the 1622–1627 cohort, affected by war and plague, survival rates were only 25 percent.<sup>43</sup> A  $d$  of 0.04 in equation (1) implies a 25-year survival rate of 36 percent, which is somewhat higher than seen in Nördlingen in this period of crisis. To produce a survival rate in line with estimates for Nördlingen for other periods,  $d$  would need to be 0.025.

<sup>38</sup> See the Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Municipal Corporations of [England and Wales \(1835\)](#)

<sup>39</sup> Limited evidence from German Europe finds that citizens had far lower migration propensities than other urban residents, with outmigration rates of 2 percent for Oldenburg. [Hochstadt \(1983, p. 208\)](#).

<sup>40</sup> Large-scale migration before becoming a citizen was common, whether to serve an apprenticeship or a period of journeying between the formal training period and becoming a master and citizen.

<sup>41</sup> [Landers \(1993, p. 158\)](#) shows life expectancy for adults age 30 in London was a couple of years lower than reconstituted parishes in the early eighteenth century, but more or less at par between 1650 and 1699 and 1750 and 1799.

<sup>42</sup> Counts of burials are from [Gruner \(1783, p. 109\)](#) (Jena); [von Bibra and von Goeckink \(1787, p. 510\)](#) (Augsburg), and [Hunger \(1789, p. 176\)](#).

<sup>43</sup> [Friedrichs \(1985, Appendix 6\)](#).

Recent work shows adult mortality rates in European locations had fallen to 15–20 per 1000 towards the mid-nineteenth century, and parish reconstitutions show a similar decline in English mortality rates.<sup>44</sup> This raises the question of the possible effects of differences in mortality trends over time and across space.<sup>45</sup> Because we do not have sufficient evidence on adult mortality to make appropriate adjustments to differences in levels and trends between cities, we compute upper and lower end estimates of the stock of citizens assuming attrition rates of 0.025 and 0.040. We also examine the potential impact of a decline in mortality by testing the effect of shifting from a high attrition (0.04) to a low attrition (0.025) regime in the eighteenth century. This exercise gives an indication of the extent to which different trends between cities and regions are sensitive to how flows are converted to stocks.

One remaining issue is that our approach ignores mortality shocks: war and disease periodically decimated both the stock of citizens and the general population in European cities. There is no obvious way to provide a consistent solution to the problem of short-run fluctuations in mortality. Even when we are in possession of figures for inflows and plausible estimates of change in the total population, we do not have evidence of differential changes in the population of citizens relative to total population. Our stock estimates should thus be thought of as reflecting long-run trends in citizenship, rather than year-to-year movements. While most of our citizen share estimates use population figures outside of major conflicts or from cities not directly affected, we have chosen to omit citizen share estimates for cities such as Antwerp for periods heavily affected by known shocks such as the Eighty and Thirty Years' Wars.<sup>46</sup>

The estimation of citizen stocks through equation (1) works when lists of new citizens capture the entirety of those availing of the status. This is not the case in cities in the Low Countries where citizenship acquired by birth or inheritance tended not to be registered. It has been established that citizenship lists for Amsterdam are incomplete for this reason.<sup>47</sup> Non-registration could reflect the perception that the rights were of little value, but it is also possible that citizens only registered if they sought to exercise specific rights or expected their rights to be challenged in the future. In either case, it poses a challenge for our analysis. Because citizenship lists for many of these cities identify migrants and secondary source materials provide evidence on the migrant shares of both citizen registrations and city population, we can estimate the stock of migrants who acquired citizenship and *migrant citizenship* rates, which offer an indicator of accessibility to urban institutions by outsiders. We take this approach for cities in the Low Countries, and include this in comparison to overall citizenship rates in other locations.

We transform estimates of the stock of citizens into citizenship rates by dividing stock estimates by each city's total population for intervals from the sixteenth to nineteenth

<sup>44</sup> Wrigley *et al.* (1997, p. 303), Davenport (2015, p. 2).

<sup>45</sup> Wrigley *et al.* (1997, p. 281, p. 287), Bengtsson *et al.* (2004). Studies of Sart (Belgium), Scania, and two Italian towns do not provide evidence on time trends within the periods examined.

<sup>46</sup> While it is difficult to correct citizen share and stock estimates for mortality shocks, evidence that such events mattered is clear in the timing of inflows. Antwerp, for instance, saw a decline in new citizen inflows from 359 per year in the 1560s to 198 per year in the 1570s, during which the city was directly affected by the Eighty Years' War. Citizenship flows were lower in 1600–1620 with the relative decline of Antwerp versus other centres (about 80 new citizens per annum), but the later stages of the Thirty Years War see another sharp fall in the 1630s (49 new citizens per annum) before recovery in the 1640s and 1650s (87 new citizens per annum). These data suggest that the conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth century has both short and long-term effects on Antwerp's citizenry.

<sup>47</sup> Kuijpers and Prak (2001, p. 119).

century.<sup>48</sup> We produce one estimate per half century, subject to the availability of data on inflows into citizenship and city population.

#### 4.2 Citizen stocks, 1550–1849

Tables 2 and 3 present our estimates of the stock of citizens for the towns and cities for which we have sufficient data on inflows. In table 2, we use the higher attrition rate of 0.04, while table 3 uses the lower rate of rate of 0.025. We present estimates of the maximum size of the citizen (or migrant citizen) stock in each half-century.

The results show that the towns and cities we examine had large communities of citizens, and in the Low Countries, large numbers of migrant citizens. Even small towns often had body of several hundred citizens, while second tier cities such as Bristol or Strasbourg had a communities of several thousand. The granting of citizenship to migrants in the Low Countries meant that significant numbers of outsiders had access to urban rights in these cities. The citizenry typically grew in size in the eighteenth century, before beginning to decline in some cities sometime around 1800, if not a little earlier in the Low Countries. Using low attrition rates in table 3 raises the size of the estimated stock of citizens by 30–40 percent, but does not have large implications for the timing of expansion and contraction of the stock of citizens. In the event of a uniform switch from the high attrition rate of 0.04 to the low attrition rate of 0.025 in 1700, predicted stocks in 1800 would be extremely close to the low attrition rate model in table 3. We therefore focus on the high and low attrition rate scenarios in what follows, with idea that moving between the two sets of results is broadly consistent with the likely effects of mortality decline.

#### 4.3 Citizen shares, 1550–1849

Tables 4 and 5 convert the two sets of stock estimates into citizen population shares by dividing each by a population estimate for each half century. As population estimates are not always available for all cities, there are fewer estimates in these tables than in tables 2 and 3. Urban population counts include children who were too young to be citizens, and women who derived their rights from their husbands. Given the relative absence of “two-citizen households” across Europe, we also discuss the share of the population in citizen households, for which we assume that each inhabitant was part of a household of 4.5 members, and that a household contained at most one citizen.<sup>49</sup>

*4.3.1 England.* Our estimates show citizenship rates declining in England after 1800. Prior to the nineteenth century, citizenship rates in most towns and cities ranged from about 7 to 10 (Canterbury, Ipswich) to 15–25 (Bristol, Leicester, York). This implies that around half of the population of provincial English cities would live in citizen households. In London, the share of metropolitan population with citizenship was no more than five or six percent in the eighteenth century, before falling by about half by the 1830s. This was in large part because of the growth of its unincorporated suburbs where citizenship was unavailable.<sup>50</sup> Declining citizenship rates after 1800 are not driven entirely by a rise in urban

<sup>48</sup> Sources for population estimates are presented in the on-line Appendix.

<sup>49</sup> The household size we use is close to the median in Wall (1972, p. 192). We use the same assumptions when discussing household rates subsequently.

<sup>50</sup> Citizens were a much larger body when compared to the population of the City of London, which accounted for only about one-seventh of urban London by 1801.

Table 2. *Citizen stock estimates, 1550–1849, high attrition rates*

City	Citizenship stocks					
	1550–1599	1600–1649	1650–1699	1700–1749	1750–1799	1800–1849
<i>England</i>						
Bristol		2300	3900	5800	6800	6400
Boston		280	320	340	440	580
Canterbury	420	660	760	1200	1300	
Chester	820	920	1200	2000	1600	
Doncaster		190	270	290	310	200
Ipswich		380	470	680	790	970
Leicester	470	570	590	1600	2200	
Lincoln			410	540	680	360
York	1500	1700	1900			
London			23000	32000	28000	26000
<i>Northern Netherlands</i>						
Amsterdam (migrants)	1500	6200	6800			
Deventer (migrants)	690	660	710	580	380	
Kampen (migrants)	330	490	600	540	430	
's-Hertogenbosch (migrants)					400	
Utrecht (migrants)	750	1100	1000	580	790	
Zwolle (migrants)	520	500	650	680	560	
<i>Southern Netherlands</i>						
Antwerp (migrants)	5900	4100	2200	1200	1700	
Bruges (migrants)	370	220	470	340	340	
Ghent (migrants)	310	530	480	720	2100	
<i>German Europe</i>						
Berlin (inc. Cölln)	1500	1600	1900	5200		
Bozen	330	800	900	1500	1800	
Danzig			3500	3500		
Detmold			170	210	220	
Flensburg		640	590	690		
Frankfurt		3100	4800	5000		
Hamburg		5800	6300	9500	9400	
Husum		810	880	530		
Köln		6900	7800	7700	6000	
Königsberg					3100	3400
Münster		1900	1500			
Nördlingen	150		890	1100		
Strasbourg			3200	4000	4600	
Tondern		810	880	530		
Tønning		220	390	420	400	
Werle	90	30	70	150	160	140

Notes: See text for details.

population growth – tables 2–4 show that the stock of citizens in most cities began to fall in the interval between 1750 and 1850, though this trend would be less pronounced in the case of a late mortality decline after 1750.

Table 3. Citizen stock estimates, 1550–1849, low attrition rates

City	Citizenship stocks					
	1550–1599	1600–1649	1650–1699	1700–1749	1750–1799	1800–1849
<i>England</i>						
Bristol		3100	5300	8200	9800	9300
Boston		370	470	510	630	820
Canterbury	630	960	1140	1700	2000	
Chester	1100	1300	1700	2700	2500	
Doncaster		235	380	430	460	320
Ipswich		520	670	1000	1100	1400
Leicester	600	800	900	2100	2900	
Lincoln			500	730	920	620
York	2200	2600	3000			
London			26000	43000	42000	39000
<i>Northern Netherlands</i>						
Amsterdam (migrants)	1800	8400	9700			
Deventer (migrants)	970	1000	1100	960	680	
Kampen (migrants)	430	690	880	840	730	
's-Hertogenbosch (migrants)					400	
Utrecht (migrants)	1200	1600	1600	1000	1200	
Zwolle (migrants)	730	770	950	1040	920	
<i>Southern Netherlands</i>						
Antwerp (migrants)	7400	6400	3900	2100	2600	
Bruges (migrants)	470	370	630	530	530	
Ghent (migrants)	390	700	720	1000	2700	
Berlin (inc. Cölln)	1500	2400	2700	7100		
<i>German Europe</i>						
Bozen	440	1100	1400	2200	2700	
Danzig			4800	4800		
Detmold			230	310	330	
Flensburg		820	810	1000		
Frankfurt		4200	6700	7000		
Hamburg		7600	8700	14000	14000	
Husum		1000	1200	880		
Köln		9100	12000	12000	9900	
Königsberg					4100	4700
Münster		2500	2300			
Nördlingen	150		890	1100		
Strasbourg			3200	4000	4600	
Tondern		1000	1200	890		
Tonning		260	540	610	610	
Werle	100	60	100	220	230	220

Notes: See text for details.

*4.3.2 Northern Netherlands* For the Northern Netherlands, we construct citizen stock and population share estimates for migrants acquiring citizenship. As in the English case, there were significant differences between smaller towns and the metropolis of Amsterdam. Our calculations for Deventer, Kampen, and Zwolle show high citizenship rates, with

Table 4. *Citizenship rate estimates, 1550–1849, high attrition rates*

City	Citizenship rates					
	1550–1599	1600–1649	1650–1699	1700–1749	1750–1799	1800–1849
<i>England</i>						
Bristol		12		20	15	7
Boston		15	16	16	9–14	7
Canterbury		13	11			5
Chester			16	17	19	4–13
Doncaster			18			5
Ipswich				8	9	8
Leicester		12	16	15	22	
Lincoln						4–9
York	20	19	22	26		
London				5	6	3
<i>Northern Netherlands</i>						
Amsterdam (migrants)		5		6		
Deventer (migrants)		40	39–45	25	20	
Kampen (migrants)		20–21	35	37	30	
's-Hertogenbosch (migrants)					18	
Utrecht (migrants)	9		9			
Zwolle (migrants)		26–30	34	22	19	
<i>Southern Netherlands</i>						
Antwerp (migrants)			20	11–13	16–17	
Bruges (migrants)	4	5	7	6	6–7	
Ghent (migrants)	5	5–7	5	4–9	10–19	
<i>German Europe</i>						
Berlin (inc. Cölln)		8		5	7	
Bozen						28
Danzig				10		
Detmold					29	
Flensburg					9	
Frankfurt			25	24	15	
Hamburg			11	11	19	
Husum					21	
Köln			20	28	18	
Königsberg						7
Münster				24		
Nördlingen	17		20	19		
Strasbourg			12	12	9	
Tondern					21	
Tonning					42	
Werle			5	7		8

Notes: See text for details.

20–40 percent of migrants possessing citizenship in the late seventeenth century. These figures suggest that the majority of migrant households had a member who was a citizen. Citizenship rates in the town of 's-Hertogenbosch in 1775 are consistent with the other smaller towns. In Utrecht, migrant citizenship rates were much lower, with our most

Table 5. *Citizenship rate estimates, 1550–1849, low attrition rates*

City	Citizenship shares					
	1550–1599	1600–1649	1650–1699	1700–1749	1750–1799	1800–1849
<i>England</i>						
Bristol		10		15	12	6
Boston		11	11	11	6–9	7
Canterbury		8	7			2
Chester			10	11	13	2–7
Doncaster			13			3
Ipswich				6	7	4–5
Leicester		10	10	9	15	
Lincoln						2–5
York	15	13	14	17		
London				4	4	2
<i>Northern Netherlands</i>						
Amsterdam (migrants)		4		4		
Deventer (migrants)		26	25–29	14	12	
Kampen (migrants)		14–15	27	22	19	
's-Hertogenbosch (migrants)					18	
Utrecht (migrants)	6		7			
Zwolle (migrants)	3	16–20	22	14	11	
<i>Southern Netherlands</i>						
Antwerp (migrants)			11	5–7	10–11	
Bruges (migrants)	3	3	5	4	4	
Ghent (migrants)	4	4–5	3–4	3–6	7–14	
<i>German Europe</i>						
Berlin (inc. Cölln)		6		4	5	
Bozen						22
Danzig				7		
Detmold					19	
Flensburg					4	
Frankfurt			18	17	7	
Hamburg			9	7	12	
Husum					12	
Köln			15	18	11	
Königsberg						5
Münster				13		
Nördlingen	17		20	19		
Strasbourg			12	12	9	
Tondern					12	
Tonning					27	
Werle			4	5		5

Notes: See text for details.

generous estimates showing 9 percent of migrants with such rights. Only about 5 percent of Amsterdam’s migrants had citizenship. While the three smallest towns were remarkably open to outsiders, migrant access to citizenship rights had peaked by 1700 (Deventer and

Zwolle) or 1750 (Kampen). In all instances, citizenship was far more accessible for migrants than in the Venetian case (Bellavitis 2004).

Citizenship was inheritable in the Northern Netherlands, but was often not claimed formally. As a result, the overall citizenship rate was higher than the flows of recorded citizens implies. For Amsterdam, an upper bound estimate of the total citizenship rate can be formed by assuming that the third of Amsterdam's population who were born locally were entitled to citizenship through inheritance.<sup>51</sup> This would mean that just under half of all households contained a citizen, consistent with the estimates of Van Zanden and Prak.<sup>52</sup> As a small fraction of the locally-born population would be unable to inherit citizenship, we anticipate that this is a slight overestimate of the true citizenship rate.

*4.3.3 Southern Netherlands.* We estimate that 11–20 percent of Antwerp's migrant population were citizens in the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>53</sup> The migrant citizenship rate fell somewhat by the beginning of the eighteenth century. These estimates may be affected by population dynamics in Antwerp – its population fell rapidly between 1700 and 1750, a process that is likely to have reduced the number of migrant citizens further than predicted with constant attrition rates. Bruges and Ghent had much lower citizenship rates among migrants than Antwerp. For Ghent, migrant citizenship rates rose significantly due to large numbers of entrants in the last half of the eighteenth century.

As in the Northern Netherlands, we calculate migrant citizen stocks and citizenship rates. This period was one of economic and urban stagnation in the Southern Netherlands, with cities attracting relatively fewer migrants than those in the more prosperous North. By implication, total population citizenship rates in the cities of the Southern Netherlands were much higher, and above that of the larger cities in the Northern Netherlands.<sup>54</sup> The share of households that contained a citizen in these three cities the Southern Netherlands would have probably exceeded 75 percent in every period, and was close to 90 percent in Antwerp in the late seventeenth and late eighteenth centuries.

*4.3.4 German Europe.* Our estimates of citizenship rates in German Europe are somewhat larger than the literature has suggested.<sup>55</sup> In general, free imperial cities such as Hamburg, Frankfurt-am-Main, Köln, and Nördlingen, along with the urban prince-bishopric of Münster, had relatively high citizen shares, probably reflecting the importance of citizenship to the political and social structures of autonomous cities. Expressed as citizen households, several had shares exceeding eighty percent. We observe lower citizenship rates in cities part of territorial states, such as Berlin, Danzig, and Königsberg.

<sup>51</sup> In a population where the entitlement to citizenship is inherited from either mothers or fathers and “random” matching in marriage, over 95 percent of the locally born will be entitled to citizenship within five generations even with a low initial rate of citizenship. This extreme upper-bound case is unlikely to hold in reality due to endogamy in marriage and the practical difficulties in claiming ancestral citizenship rights.

<sup>52</sup> Van Zanden and Prak (2006). Assuming that about a third of Amsterdam's residents had the right to citizenship through inheritance, and that 5 percent of migrants had citizenship yields an estimate of the population citizenship rate estimate of 37 percent. If each migrant household had a unique (migrant) citizen and household size was 4.5 on average, we would predict that 50 percent of Amsterdam's households contained a citizen.

<sup>53</sup> Preliminary estimates suggest an even higher immigrant citizenship rate earlier, but we do not present these given the large degree of uncertainty regarding immigrant population shares up to about 1600.

<sup>54</sup> Note that in Ghent and Bruges, those entitled to citizenship through continuous residence were required to pay for this privilege.

<sup>55</sup> Hochstadt (1983).



The characteristics of territorial and urban law in Early Modern German Europe may explain some of the variation in citizenship rates observed. For example, limited access to citizenship in Werle is consistent with other political institutions in Mecklenberg. However, it is striking that citizenship rates could differ substantially even where towns are in the same territory. In Schleswig, the towns of Flensburg, Husum, Tondern and Tonnig had citizenship rates that ranged from nine to forty two percent. These four towns all followed different town law regimes. Tondern had adopted Lübeck law; while the others defined their own town laws upon incorporation. Conversely, the three locations that followed Lübeck law (Danzig, Hamburg and Tondern) had similar citizenship rates.

## 5. Discussion

Table 6 provides a summary of the results for the different regions we examine in this paper. We focus here on four dimensions: first, when the stock of citizens peaked, second, when citizenship rates peaked, third, the sensitivity of estimates to different attrition scenarios, and fourth, the pattern of within-region variation. In most English and German towns and cities, rates were in the order of 10–25 percent from about 1600 to 1750, with a slight decline towards the end of the eighteenth century. In the Low Countries, we find high rates of migrant citizenship in the smaller cities in the Northern Netherlands, and much lower rates in the larger centres Utrecht and Amsterdam. We also find relatively low rates in the three cities we study in the Southern Netherlands, which were large second tier cities in European terms. Alternative assumptions about mortality (assuming an attrition rate of 0.025 instead of 0.04 from 1700) would leave the timing of peak citizenship unchanged in England and the Northern Netherlands, but delay the decline in the other two regions. Citizenship rates varied as much within regions as between regions, and one reason for this is that the largest European cities were clearly different. London, Amsterdam (for migrants), and after 1700, Berlin, had markedly lower citizenship rates. If the largest cities also suffered higher mortality than provincial centres, this would raise the gap in citizenship rates between the largest cities and the rest beyond what our estimates show.

In table 7, we estimate an OLS regression to describe the broad patterns in citizenship rates across the entire time and geographical span of our study. The explanatory variables in the regression are time dummies for each half-century, regional dummy variables, and the log of city population size. The dependent variable in the regression is the citizenship rate from the high attrition scenario, and we use migrant citizenship rates for the Low Countries. The results of this regression yield partial correlations that are not necessarily causal. In addition, this regression should also be interpreted carefully in light of the difference in citizenship regimes between England, German Europe and the Low Countries.

The results in table 7 confirm that citizenship rates tailed off after 1800. Regional coefficients show that the Northern and Southern Netherlands were the main outliers. The implication is that national or regional characteristics did produce differences in citizenship. The statistically significant coefficients for the Northern and Southern Netherlands fits with other evidence that urban rights for outsiders (who could not inherit) were relatively accessible in the Dutch Republic. Recent research has established that parliaments were more active in England and the Dutch Republic (Bosker *et al.* 2012). Less constrained monarchs in the Southern Netherlands from the eighteenth century could help explain lower rates of local political enfranchisement through citizenship. The variation within German Europe

Table 6. *European citizenship regimes, 1550–1849*

	a) Peak Citizen Stocks	(b) Peak Citizenship Rates	(c) Would falling mortality change (b)?	(d) Patterns of Variation
England	End of 18th	Mid to late 18th	No	10 to 20 percent to 1800 for most locations, metropolitan London substantially lower
Northern Netherlands (migrants)	Late 17th/early 18th	Late 17th	No	20 to 40 percent for migrants in small towns, lower for Utrecht, lower still for metropolitan Amsterdam. Population citizenship rate much higher.
Southern Netherlands (migrants)	Late 17th/early 18th	Late 17th (except Ghent)	Yes, rates hold up better to 1800	Antwerp 10–20 percent, Bruges and Ghent much lower (5 to 10 percent) until late 18th C.
German Europe	Mid to late 18th	Varies	Not for cities	Small towns with low (~5 percent) or high (~20 to 40 percent) citizenship rates; cities from ~10 to ~25 percent; metropolitan Berlin 4 to 8 percent. City rates peak in 1749 if not earlier, uncertain for smaller towns.

Notes: See text for details.

suggests that differences in the direct political treatment of cities was important, with free imperial cities having much higher citizenship rates than cities in territorial states.

Table 7 also shows that population size is highly significant, but the magnitude of the coefficient implies that city size mattered in a substantive way mostly when comparing the largest metropolises with the rest. London's size accounts for much of the city's exceptionally low citizenship rate; a population of about 700 thousand in the early eighteenth century translates into a nearly 5 percentage points difference against provincial cities like Leicester

Table 7. *Correlates of citizenship rates, 1550–1849*

<i>Year</i>	
1550–99	1.51 (2.33)
1600–49	1.64 (2.01)
1650–99	3.98* (1.74)
1700–49	2.15 (1.68)
1750–99	3.41* (1.66)
1800–	—
<i>Region</i>	
England	—
Northern Netherlands	6.16*** (1.54)
Southern Netherlands	-4.74** (1.48)
German Europe	2.22 (1.31)
Population (0,000)	-0.007** (0.00)
Constant	7.63*** (1.23)
R-square	0.41
N	114

Notes: Dependent variable is citizen share under the high attrition rate scenario. Standard errors in parentheses, \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate statistical significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent level. Estimates for citizen stocks using high attrition rates are employed throughout, with migrant stocks for the Northern and Southern Netherlands used.

and York.<sup>56</sup> There are two main candidate explanations for this pattern, related to both the demand for citizenship and the willingness of urban authorities to supply the status. Demand for citizenship may have been lower in the largest cities, where economic activity was more diverse, and many profitable activities lay outside of the regulated sector (Amsterdam), or in extramural locations where the city had grown beyond its traditional boundaries (London). On the supply side, lower citizenship rates in the largest cities are also consistent with theoretical perspectives on collective action.<sup>57</sup> Even with fairly low citizenship rates the largest cities in Europe still had large numbers of citizens. Monitoring and enforcement costs to prevent rent dissipation and free riding will rise steeply as the size of groups increased in larger cities, where geographical scale and spatial complexity were barriers to control. In this setting, it is unsurprising that citizen numbers did not keep up with population growth beyond a certain threshold.

Earlier, we argued that early modern citizenship was important in terms of how economic rents and political voice were distributed within urban populations. If citizenship mattered for the distribution of economic rents, there are potential implications for income inequality. Our finding that there were substantially lower citizenship rates in the early nineteenth century than in the previous 150 years is in line with research showing that income inequality rose sharply towards the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.<sup>58</sup> The dynamics of citizenship rates within the period 1650 to 1800, however, do not align closely with reported inequality trends.<sup>59</sup> How patterns of equality in opportunity (as represented by citizenship)

<sup>56</sup> This regression pools observations from all time periods and countries/regions in our data. Similar patterns are evident if we exclude the Low Countries from the analysis, or examine gross bivariate correlations rather than the partial correlations emerging from OLS regressions estimates.

<sup>57</sup> Olson (1965, ch. 2).

<sup>58</sup> Hoffman *et al.* (2002), Alfani and Ryckbosch (2016).

<sup>59</sup> Alfani and Ryckbosch (2016, figure 2a).

correspond to equality of outcomes (in terms of income and wealth) is a fruitful topic for further research.

Did differences in the distribution of political voice through citizenship translate into patterns of public spending and the provision of public goods? This question is hard to answer definitively, given the limited evidence on spending at the sub-national level. However, the timing of the peak of urban citizenship in England and the Northern Netherlands is well matched to the pre-1850 peak of social spending as a share of GDP.<sup>60</sup>

How do the citizenship patterns we have uncovered fit into longer run changes in citizenship and political inclusiveness? While early-modern citizenship has well-established roots in the medieval period, evidence on citizenship prior to 1500 is too scarce to identify earlier trends.<sup>61</sup> In the nineteenth century, Europe moved from local urban citizenship to national citizenship regimes. This transition was a core element of the broader decline of urban autonomy in favour of the nation state. The reduced political autonomy of cities, particularly in parts of Europe directly affected by the French Revolution, made urban citizenship irrelevant for many aspects of economic and political life.<sup>62</sup> Comparisons of urban, corporate citizenship before 1850 and modern national citizenship must be made carefully. Citizens of modern national states typically enjoy a greater degree of political voice at a national level. The connection between citizenship and basic economic rights has also changed: before 1800, non-citizens were often able to access some parts of the labour market (as servants, waged workers or labourers), while being firmly excluded from others. Yet it is also important to recognise that in their first decades, national political rights were held by a minority of the population in most European states. Only about 35–45 percent of the adult population in Germany possessed national voting rights by the late nineteenth century, while the share in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom was between 10 and 30 percent (table 8).<sup>63</sup>

How do these figures compare to urban political rights prior to 1800? Assuming that about 60 percent of the population of early modern European cities were above the age of 20, one can derive adult citizenship rates for the cities listed in table 3.<sup>64</sup> Even under the assumption of high attrition rates from urban citizenship, the urban adult citizenship rates in most of the towns and cities we study match exceed national enfranchisement rates for the early nineteenth century. It is only in the twentieth century that national rates of political enfranchisement increased substantially beyond rates of urban citizenship observed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Of course, most early modern Europeans did not live in urban areas. The national rate of (urban) citizenship was substantially lower: one of the distinguishing features of the move from urban to national citizenship was a redistribution of political rights away from the cities towards the countryside. Returning to the earlier conjecture that public spending follows political enfranchisement, the decline in the share of urban populations with citizenship-based political rights after the move to national citizenship could offer an explanation for the decline in per capita spending on social security

<sup>60</sup> Van Bavel and Rijpma (2016, figure 2).

<sup>61</sup> The limited evidence that currently exists is surveyed in Ogilvie (2011, pp. 51–57). Data on flows into citizenship of the sort used here are available for only a small subset of the towns and cities examined in this paper.

<sup>62</sup> Prak (1997, pp. 414–415).

<sup>63</sup> Flora *et al.* (1983, chapter 3).

<sup>64</sup> Demographic data assembled by Wrigley and Schofield (1981, p. 218, table 7.10) show that 39.6 percent of the English population was under the age of 20 in 1696. We use this figure to convert total city population (the denominator in the calculation of the citizenship rate) to adult city population over the age of 20. This is equivalent to dividing population citizenship rates by 0.6 to compute adult citizenship rates.

Table 8. *Enfranchised population as percentage of the adult population, 1800–1910*

	1810s	1820s	1830s	1840s	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s
Austria							10.6	13.0	35.7	35.7
Belgium			1.9	3.1	3.3	3.6	3.7	3.9	37.3	37.7
Denmark				25.7	25.8	25.8	26.7	28.3	30.0	29.8
France	0.4	0.5	0.9	36.3	42.0	42.0	43.7	41.6	42.0	43.7
Germany							37.4	37.3	37.8	38.3
Ireland			2.1	2.7		7.4	7.7	28.9		
Italy						3.4	3.8	14.1	16.6	15.0
Netherlands					4.6		5.0	11.8	20.9	25.7
Norway	11.4	11.1	10.0	9.7	9.3	8.8	8.5	11.8	16.6	58.5
United Kingdom			6.0	6.8		14.5	14.9	29.3	29.3	28.5

Notes: Highest recorded values per decade are included in table. Adults consist of those aged 20 and above.

Source: Flora *et al.* (1983, ch. 3).

in England, the western provinces of the Netherlands, and Northern and Central Italy between the middle of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>65</sup>

Our estimates of citizenship rates, particularly if treated as the share of households with citizens, provide evidence of the surprising openness of markets and polities across much of urban Europe before the French Revolution, with many towns and cities willing to accept men from outside the established urban elite as full citizens. The details of what this openness meant, of course, depended on the rights possessed by citizens, the barriers to obtaining citizenship, and the restrictions imposed on outsiders. However, the inclusivity of early modern cities in England, the Low Countries, and Germany offers a powerful explanation for their economic success. That said, citizenship rates in many locations were in decline as the nineteenth century approached, which suggests that the urban regime that had served Europe effectively for several centuries was less suited to a world with the beginnings of steady population growth, increasing migration, and emergent new technological forms. But on our evidence it is indisputable that inclusive citizenship regimes were widespread within urban centres before they became a feature of nation states. In the long run, the dissolution of local citizenship did create more equal political and economic opportunities, but it took the best part of the nineteenth century before this became obvious.

### Supplementary material

Supplementary material is available at *European Review of Economic History* online.

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<sup>65</sup> van Bavel and Rijpma (2016), Lindert (2004, p. 46), Lindert (1994, p. 21).

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