

# Citizenship and Access to Higher Education

## *The Missing Piece*

*Gaële Goastellec*

### Abstract

Since the creation of the first European universities in the Middle Ages, the instrumentation of access to higher education has been associated with civil, political, and social citizenship differentiation. Still, research on higher education has largely let aside this dimension to mainly investigate the effect of cultural, social and economic resources. Sketching this articulation over the centuries this programmatic chapter documents the reciprocal relation between access to higher education and citizenship, reflecting both its empirical and theoretical added value as it allows to connect different scales of analysis and offers insights on the role of higher education in world historical development.

### Keywords

access – higher education – citizenship – global historical sociology

## 1 Introduction

A large body of research exists on higher education that interrogates the social characteristics of students as well as the determinants of access. Sociologists and historians have documented a differentiated access depending on social, economic, or ethnic background, as well as gender (to quote only a very few, Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964, 1970; Boudon, 1973; Anderson, 2004; Arumet al., 2007; Julia & Revel, 1989, etc.). But little research interrogates the relationship between higher education and citizenship and when it does, it is mainly with regard to how higher education might contribute to citizenship education (Zgaga, 2009; Horey et al., 2018; Cheng & Holton, 2018; Fernandez, 2005, etc.). How citizenship impinges on the opportunities to access and vice versa have been little discussed although as we will show using a European perspective it represents a historical and largely shared driver of the organization of access.

The concept of citizenship, understood in a broad sense, defines what relates an individual and their rights and duties to a political territory. It is disconnected from the type of political regime in place: citizenship “can exist without democracy: (...) the rights and duties associated with the status of citizen can be decided and allocated by those who govern (...)” (Bickel, 2007, p. 12). Consequently, “Regimes of rights and citizenship are not similar, and are not all national” (Burbank & Cooper, 2008), and citizenship is not only associated with modern states (Magnette, 2001). As a result, the concept of citizenship resume “multiple significations (...)” (Bickel, 2007, pp. 12–14), “concentrate[s] a complex stratification of multiple meanings dating back from different periods of time,” (Koselleck, 1979/1990, p. 109) and is variously associated with different social belongings over time.

Following Marshall, one can distinguish three dimensions of citizenship that are more or less separated depending on the epoch considered: the first one is the civil element, “composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom—liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice” (Marshall, 1950/2009, p. 148). As we will show through university history, the various elements composing civil citizenship are not necessarily granted simultaneously to all individuals within a social organization, and some have been at the core of the contractualization between university actors and external governing bodies.

The second one, the political element, characterizes the “right to participate in the exercise of political power (...)” (Marshall, 1950/2009, p. 149). And the third, the social element, comprehends “the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society” (Marshall, 1950/2009, p. 149). These elements variably compose citizenship depending on time and place. Interestingly, Marshall (1950/2009) associates different types of institutions with each of these elements, the educational system being related to the social element, along with the social services. Using a long-term perspective, the picture appears more complex with regard to higher education.

What can we learn from interrogating access to university through the citizenship issue? We advocate that the instrumentation of access relies on a grammar of citizenship that is both related to the social stratification of a social organization and the framing of geographical circulations.

In order to demonstrate this, this chapter is structured as follows: a first section recalls how the rights and duties of universities’ members have been the very first issue of the university–authority negotiations. A second section documents the dynamics circumscribing categories of citizens entitled to access

and the reciprocal effect of studies on access to citizenship. The third section focuses on the interactions between students' circulation and political citizenship. A fourth section contrasts the spread of a so-called universal citizenship with the permanence of a citizenship differentiation. The conclusion offers a synthesis of the processes identified and stresses how such research provides an opportunity to adopt a "relational stance" by identifying connections between different territories and scales articulated in access instrumentation and, by doing so, illuminates the contribution of access and citizenship articulation to world historical development (Go & Lawson, 2017).

## 2 Negotiating the Rights and Duties of Universities' Members, Defining Their Citizenship

From the Middle Ages to the present day, there has been a close interweaving of access to higher education and citizenship, especially due to circulations that structurally run across the university. Indeed, circulations can be considered as part of universities' DNA. *Studium Generale*, as the first universities were named, were characterized by the fact that they attracted students from various political territories (by contrast with the *Studium Particulare*, which only registered local students). As a result, the rights and duties of universities' students and teachers were central to the social order of the city hosting the university.

As a consequence, the contractualization of the university's relationship with those who governed the territory in which they were located first relied on the circumscription of the students and teachers' privileges going hand in hand with the identification of the "foreigner" and that individual's desirability for the institution. While the universities achieved exclusive jurisdiction over their members, they anchored themselves in a system of social relations that went beyond their initial collective and corporatist organization.

The privileges were a special feature of the university guild. By a jurisdictional exception, they exempted professors and students from ordinary justice by placing them under the responsibility of the rector of the university. They thus enjoyed a special status in the social organization, which not only made them independent from ordinary justice and exempt from taxes, but also required the citizens of their cities to protect them. For example, in Paris, the Royal Charter of 1200, then the papal bull *Parens scientiarum* of 1231, respectively required the citizens of Paris and the local representatives of the Pope to swear protection to Parisian academics (Ferruolo, 1988). It was on this condition that the Pope obtained the return of the university to Paris. Conversely, in

Bologna, when, at the beginning of the 13th century, the Podestà required the university, and in particular its rector, to swear an oath to the city, and thus to place itself under its jurisdiction, the university dispersed. The Statutes of 1245 and then of 1289 reflect the results of the negotiations which, in order to bring the students back to the city, granted them the private rights of the citizens of Bologna and further increased their protection and that of their property, also giving the rector the power to judge civil disputes concerning them. It also meant that at some level, students benefitted from a specific city citizenship as they were protected by the city law and allowed to appeal against a citizen of the city (Rait, 1931). These elements echo the social dimension identified by Marshall (1950/2009) as the first constituent of citizenship.

As a result, jurisdiction applied differently to members of the university according to their geographical origin: the type of citizenship allocated manifests itself in the treatment of the “foreigner”: in Bologna, only “foreigners” could be under the jurisdiction of the rector, while students from the city remained under the jurisdiction of the municipality (Hyde, 1988).

These privileges spread widely in the 14th century to most universities, for example conferred by the Dinis kings to the University of Lisbon in 1309 or Fernando III to the University of Salamanca in the mid-14th century (Barcala Muñoz, 1985). They were accompanied by the participation of local authorities in the governance of the university, which was then accountable to its main trusteeship, as in Bologna, where

The *commune* created a civil magistracy to rule the university directly and to serve as a buffer between *studium* and the higher ranks of government. In or about 1376 the *commune* appointed four citizens—a senator, a noble, a knight, and a merchant—to oversee the university (...) The *Reformatori* reported to the highest council of the *commune*. (Grendler, 1999, p. 477)

These very first dynamics suggest that the issue of the student’s citizenship and how it is intertwined with the circulations’ dimension is at the core of the relationship between the university and the social organization it is primarily inserted in (other territories and rulers being generally part of the negotiation as the involvement of the Papacy for example illustrated during the Middle Ages).

Along with legal privileges, economic advantages were an early springboard for the institutionalization of the Studia: to avoid losing its “foreign” professors, the Municipality of Bologna required, as early as the end of the 12th century, that they take an oath not to leave the city or teach elsewhere (Hyde, 1988). The

oath was soon accompanied by an economic incentive: as early as 1220, the municipality financed the salaries of law professors (whereas, in universities created by student associations, it was traditionally them who recruited and paid the teachers) under residence constraints. Here, the duties coming with citizenship come again to the fore, as the translation of this municipal desire to anchor the university into the contractualization of professors also illustrates. Those contracts could include an activity of advice to the municipal government and the training of its magistrates and jurists (Rashdall, 1895a), while from the beginning of the 13th century there was an explicit desire to make the university an instrument for strengthening the administration of local authorities. The control of universities over teachers' duties through the financing of their salaries was not peculiar to Bologna: in Salamanca, it was the king who financed the university's budget, in particular the salaries of professors, already underlining his particular interest in law by offering the best salaries to jurists (Rashdall, 1895b). In Oxford, it was also the Crown that financed the salaries. In Prague, it was first the royalty and then the income of the monasteries, and in Paris rather the Church. The economic resources of the university also came from taxes allocated to it, as in the case of the Spanish peninsula, from part of the ecclesiastical revenues conferred on the universities by royal authority (Rashdall, 1895b, as well as for Bologna, cf. Grendler, 1999, and more broadly Rashdall, 1895a, 1895b). The main powers that guaranteed the privileges of each university were thus united in the devolution of economic resources and legal and fiscal privileges to the universities through their members. These privileges—which articulated with the students and professors' geographical origin as well as their rights to circulate—were constitutive of their citizenship. They also made the university more or less accessible and attractive depending on one's social belongings.

### 3 Citizenship and Access: A Reciprocal Relation

If universities offered students a specific citizenship, the student's own original citizenship impinged on their ability to access universities. Here, citizenship appears first and foremost a matter of inherited qualities: one must attest the legitimacy of one's birth (not being born out of wedlock) and inherited citizenship, mainly acquired by birth (from the father), in order to be admitted to study. Again, this citizenship is mainly civil: more than the right to political participation, citizenship offers hope for social advancement (Riesenberg, 1974). This is how medieval jurists understood it, not through the right to

participate in political decisions, but through the ability to exercise rights and privileges, the latter being linked to property, residence, and tax requirements (Kirshner, 2017). But every city, like every university, had a hierarchy of citizens. And cities were one of the territorial units defining citizenship at this time.

As a result, although depending on the social position of the father, the grammar of citizenship was “elusive, mutable, and inflected by social hierarchies and local variations” (Kirshner, 2017, p. 12). In some places, for example Italian cities of the late Middle Ages, certain dimensions of civic citizenship were accessible to certain women from the aristocracy who were then also exceptionally able to access universities (Goastellec, 2019).

Already in the 14th and 15th centuries, the relationship between higher education and citizenship appears reciprocal: while obtaining a town citizenship was often long and demanding for a foreigner (e.g., residing in the city for ten years, acquiring real estate, staying a significant part of the year, obtaining approval from the city council, etc.), it was easier for people of some professions, particularly for “knowledgeable people”:

Some foreigners were especially sought-after: doctors, teachers and lawyers, could be granted not only citizenship but also fiscal and juridical advantages (exoneration from having to buy a house, suppression of the military service obligation, sometimes free housing). (Gilli, 1999, pp. 62–63)

Those advantages offered to the most educated were largely spread: they could apply to foreign guild masters but did not benefit workers from the same guild. In 14th century Sienna for example, the granting of citizenship mainly concerned knowledgeable people (Gilli, 1999).

This relation between citizenship and access to universities is not limited to Europe. The same can be observed in colonial universities. For example, in Mexico, where some “Indians” could study if they possessed imperial citizenship, that is, according to the social and cultural extraction they were recognized as having, and according to the position of their community in the military system of the Empire (McEnroe, 2012). Conversely, in the 17th and 18th centuries, their diplomas allowed them “to accede to political positions of authority on both sides of society: the local historical nobility and the imperial state” (Villegas, 2012). And if from the middle of the 18th century onwards the development of slavery changed the categorization of citizens, university charters were closed to all types of slaves but remained opened to free vassals such as the Indians (Alcántara Bojorge, 2009).

In sum, the reciprocity of the relation can be summed up as follows: the category of citizenship defines the right to study just as student status facilitates the right to citizenship.

This can also be documented through the example of Jewish students' access, which offers a window on the intertwinement of civil, political, and social citizenship.

Jewish students' access had been closely restricted since the Middle Ages. The introduction by the popes of a disciplinary exception in the 15th century that allowed Jewish converts to study medicine or obtain a degree only in Italian universities (De Ridder-Symoens, 2009) and the subsequent acceptance of some universities to register these students (especially Padua, later on Leiden), can be in part explained by the legal extra-territoriality inherited from Roman law and from a protective regime in canon law. Those are reflected both in the recognition of Talmudic law by the territorial authorities and in the levying of taxes specific to the community. Meaning that cities where the population included a significant proportion of persons of the Jewish faith therefore benefited from special financial resource, which was also used by universities, charging higher fees for registration and graduation than for students of other faiths, as illustrated by the University of Padua, the main medical school open to Jewish students since the Middle Ages, where they had to pay fees three times higher compared with other students.

Meanwhile, with the Reformation, citizenship—understood as the student's initial belonging to a specific political territory—became a limiting factor in universities' accessibility. Indeed, the subdivision of the European university space into families of denominational institutions, and within them into territorial families, had two consequences: on the one hand, the narrowing of the space for students' circulation, as the new legislations slowed down the movement of students; on the other hand, the transformation of the circulations, the denominational fracture being at the origin of intersecting flows of students (Ferté & Barrera, 2009).

These new legislations implemented a ban on studying anywhere other than in the universities of the sovereign's territory. This had previously been attempted several times: in 1224, when Emperor Frederick II forbade the students of Naples to study elsewhere than in the newly created university; in 1362, Galéas Visconti did the same for Pavia; in 1424, the King of Provence Louis III, founder of the University of Aix, took a similar position, etc. However, it was not followed by many actions. The situation was different at the end of the Reformation. In the 16th and 17th centuries, these bans taken by the rulers multiplied and further strengthened. They were intended to prevent the spread of religious currents considered heretical. In Spain in particular, the defense of the Counter-Reformation, which was endorsed by the Spanish monarchy

during the reign of Philip II (1556–1598), led to the closure of the borders and, consequently, to isolation. Promulgated by the King of Castile,

The Pragmatica of 1559 prohibited Castilians from studying in foreign universities, except for those in Rome and Naples, the Aragon's crown and Coimbra, as well as Bologna or rather the colleges of Saint Clement. (Peset, 1984, p. 78)

Anxious to maintain religious unity, the Spanish monarchy launched its persecution of the Protestants in circulation (*los circulos protestantes*) on the initiative of the founder of the University of Oviedo, the General Inquisitor Fernando de Valdés. These bans were renewed by Spanish monarchs during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. They also applied, from 1570, to Dutch subjects (De Ridder-Symoens, 2009), then to French subjects under Louis XIII, with the royal ordinance (known as the Michau Code) of January 1629, article 47 of which made the possibility of studying outside the kingdom subject to obtaining royal permission. As early as the first half of the 17th century, incentive schemes supported this prohibition, such as the *Berufsverbot*, practiced in the southern Netherlands (under Spanish domination), which refused foreign university graduates' access to administrative and judicial functions (Thireau, 1992). With the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), the strengthening of “absolutist states and the hardening of religious cleavages” increased the regulation of mobility and the control of access to training according to confessions and the recognition of diplomas between states (Charle & Verger, 2012, p. 57).

In many places, princes, anxious to avoid both the contagion of “heresy” and the outflow of cash while at the same time fully controlling the training conditions of the future elites of their states, issued orders forbidding their subjects to study abroad and declared that they no longer recognized the validity of diplomas obtained across borders. (Charle & Verger, 2012, p. 57)

This was not limited to Europe or to the 17th century. The same applied in colonial empires. For example, in the French Empire, degrees obtained in the colonies had no value outside of those same territories (Singaravelou, 2009). And more broadly, the limited geographical value of degrees remains a sensitive political issue worldwide for contemporary students. The political stakes linked to the training territories of the elites and their circulation thus appears, as early as the 17th century, as constitutive dimensions of the regulation of access, while citizenship shifted from a municipal embeddedness to a state one.



#### 4 Circulations and Political Citizenship

With the nationalization of citizenship, in the 19th century, circulations became a tool to build access for groups that did not benefit from full citizenship in their place of origin.

Indeed, in most countries, differentiated citizenship based on social background, religion, ethnicity, or gender came with limited access to universities (with quotas being implemented) or sometimes a total ban or access. To these groups, international circulation offered the possibility to access universities. Individuals from these groups circulated to access higher education, in a coming and going process between exclusion and inclusion by playing on other social belongings and economic resources.

Whether it was a question of opening access to social groups at the bottom of the social stratification or women and religious or political minorities, again, the question of the articulation between higher education and citizenship appears central. A large proportion of student mobility was motivated by the lack of citizenship in the country of origin and by the ambition to gain access to more rights through education. This is, for example, the case in

orthodox-South Eastern Europe, [Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, Herzegovina, Bosnia], where there were no university[ies] until the late 19th century, (...) and simply no national or local political class until the 19th century, as these had been banned by the Ottoman occupation of the Balkans since the 14th and 15th centuries. (Siupiur, 2014, p. 115)

In some social groups, one sent one's sons to train in French, German, and Austrian universities, as well as Swiss, Italian, and Belgian universities. Between 1821 and 1939, there were large waves of migration, especially Romanian, Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian, as well as Russian, German/Saxon/Hungarian, Armenian, and Jewish among those who had an immigrant status in the Romanian principalities or the Ottoman Empire (Siupiur, 2014). The absence of political citizenship in the country of origin supported the strategy of university education for the sons of families generally endowed with economic capital or benefiting from scholarships often financed by members of the diaspora. These graduates, particularly in law and management sciences or economics, would then swell the political class and populate the political structures of newly created states. The same was true for families of the Jewish faith, who in some countries were deprived of full citizenship, which guided their choice of studies: without access to the political class and administration, they abandoned law in favor of studies in medicine and pharmacy, and later philosophy (Siupiur,

2014). In Russia, citizenship and studies explicitly went hand in hand: higher education diplomas

enabled young people from the so-called 'subject states' (the peasantry and the *meshchanstvo*, i.e. the lower urban class) to acquire 'honorary citizenship,' improve their legal position, and gain access to the Rank Table and hence to the nobility. (Kassow, 1989, p. 18)

The closure of universities to women stemmed from this right granted to graduates: it was not conceivable that a woman could change her social status independently of her father or husband (Muravyeva, 2010). Also, students benefited from a reprieve and a reduction in the length of military service (Kassow, 1989). And while Jews were assigned to a residence zone by the imperial power—in the west of the Russian empire—(1791–1917), Jewish graduates were allowed to leave this zone. In a context where quotas restricted their access to university, their mobility as students and their status as graduates represented an instrument for expanding their rights. The same was true for women, whose mobility, a consequence of national prohibitions and local openings, linked in whole or in part to their gender, was supported by a social origin that was culturally and/or economically favored. In Austria-Hungary as in Germany, for example, the first female university graduates studied in Switzerland. They then used the visibility conferred by their diplomas to petition for and finally obtain the right to enter university in their home country at the end of the 19th century. In certain contexts, such as in England or Portugal, the diploma was also a tool for accessing political citizenship: women university graduates were the first women to gain access to suffrage by census (a system of suffrage whereby access to the vote depended on whether or not one paid taxes) in 1918 and 1931 respectively. Here, the processes were thus reversed according to a gendered dimension: the interest of men from the elites in higher education was fueled by the loss of their citizenship privileges, while for women, diplomas supported access to citizenship. In all cases, access policies, citizenship rights and social identities appear again intertwined and circulations central to the building of a shared development of a grammar of citizenship.

An illustration of this intertwinement can be found in the processes fueling women's access to universities in Sweden, the first country to grant women access.

This was made possible and desirable by a societal organization which provided them with juridical, political, and social citizenship: as soon as the beginning of the 19th century, the professional guilds regulation had opened up to women, who could practice most occupations. Over the same period, women

were granted the right to inherit, a right that they were previously denied with the adoption of the primogeniture principle by the Catholic Church, and unmarried women also obtain their legal majority.

At the same time, the process of nationalization of societies was accompanied by the development of a citizenship market, which had the effect of excluding or limiting access to university education for individuals according to their social, gender, or ethnic background. Access as an instrument thus contributed both to the structuring of the citizenship market and to its transformation: the opening of access to women thus highlights the importance of the legal dimension, a decisive technical dimension in the instrument of access, whether it applies to access to studies or to professions. The differentiated temporality of the opening up of professional spaces illustrates the gradual transformation of the conception of the social order, as well as the role played both by exceptions in access, creating legal precedents (Latourette, 2005), and by the intersectoral and international dissemination of a new gendered norm and, more broadly, of universal citizenship. The renegotiation of the right of access is constructed through circulations that contribute to putting the norms of different spaces in tension, and this at two levels: indirectly, by making a new norm emerge gradually and collectively and making it visible; and directly, when individuals, having graduated abroad, return to their country where they are forbidden to study.

This capacity to transform social norms through geographical circulation appears to be the prerogative of individuals with certain capitals, particularly cultural and economic. Social change thus stems from the resistance of individuals who, despite the discrimination to which they are subjected, benefit from significant social resources. Whether access to university evolves upstream or downstream of more inclusive citizenship, it is always rooted both in the question of the political and civil rights of individuals according to their social affiliations, and in the place allocated to education in the political and economic project.

## 5 Access between Universal Citizenship and Citizenship Differentiation

While higher education became meritocratic, replacing the social privileges linked to birth with the educational characteristics of individuals, societies became more egalitarian, with the generalization of citizenship to most social groups.

The development of a “universal” citizenship can be read, very schematically, as the long-term consequence of the French revolution as a historical event,

transforming both social structures and cultural categories of world understanding in Europe. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789, supplemented by the Declarations of 1793 and 1795, reflect this, in particular by enshrining the principle of equality in law: not only “all men are equal by nature and before the law” (France: Declaration, 1793, art. 3), but “it is the same for all” (France: Declaration, 1793, art. 4), and “Equality admits no distinction of birth, no heredity of power” (France: Declaration, 1795, art. 3). This project spread widely, leading also temporarily to the development of an imperial citizenship in the French Empire (Burbank & Cooper, 2008). Consequently, “all citizens are equally eligible for public employment” (France: Declaration 1793, art. 5). That is to say, eligible to participate in the administration of society. Civil servants were henceforth recruited by competitive examination, i.e. on the basis of their educational qualifications. The introduction of the principle of equality, by operating a selection by birth obsolete, introduced academic merit as a principle of selection, which should ensure equality of citizens. Although these principles were not immediately applied, the revolutionary break, the republican experience that followed it, and Bonaparte’s European domination, contributed to introducing a new conception of the nation and to the emergence in Europe, during the transition phase (1795–1802), of “elements of an international consensus (...) comprising ‘a new international political culture’” (Belissa, 2006), including the principle of equality as the foundation of democratic rule (Borrillo, 2002).

... the new organizing principle of the society that the Revolution brings to the world is that human rights, everywhere and always, are the only possible foundation for a society of free and equal individuals. (...) the idea of human rights contains the constitutive abstraction of modern democracy, the universalism of citizenship. (Furet, 1986, p. 6)

Subsequently, international declarations would systematically take up this principle. In particular, during the second half of the 20th century, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (Article 2), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 (Articles 2 and 26) and the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 14).

Very schematically, the egalitarian principle, driven by the French Revolution, later spread to university access procedures first in Prussia and Scotland, later under the dual impetus of the socialist project of social equality and the American project of ethno-racial equality (Goastellec, 2020). With the massification process, the university is increasingly perceived as playing an active redistributive role, echoing that of the welfare states (Neave, 2005) that

developed in the 1950s. This is reflected in the progressive national monitoring and organization of access in parallel with the development of a generic national citizenship and the formal opening of access to all social groups. For example, the French constitution of 1958 specifies that only one citizenship exists of

the French Republic and the Community. (...) This citizenship implies that all inhabitants of state members—Dahomey or Senegal for example—had the same right as every other citizen and could exercise them everywhere in the Community and thus—main repercussion—that any French African could come to the metropole, leave it, study there and look for work without any administrative authorization. (Cooper & Burbank, 2008, p. 525)

Almost always and everywhere, access to education is coupled with access to social, political, and ultimately cultural citizenship, with the massive increase in the number of universities after the Second World War illustrating, according to Turner, the expansion of cultural citizenship in terms of access rights to education (Turner, 1997, p. 12). The entry of the European Union into the concert of institutions participating in the definition of access can in this respect be analyzed as an attempt to make this cultural citizenship a constituent human right of the European project, university being accessible to all European citizens and degrees obtained in Europe recognized in all European countries.

Still, the relationship between citizenship and the right to study did not dissolve pending the development of more inclusive citizenship in contemporary democratic societies.

On the one hand, at the beginning of the 21st century, although access to the university is now part of social rights in some countries, where this is not the case, studies are not always compatible with the maintenance of social welfare, as illustrated by the Swiss example: In 2018, a Swiss municipality tried to prevent a young woman from Eritrean origin to access general high school (the path to university) because her parents received social aid, social services informing the parents that “children from families perceiving social aid must opt for studies that allow them to support themselves as early as possible” (Ambrus, 2008). This decision was totally legal, this level of policy decision being the competence of cantons. More broadly, university students are generally not eligible for ordinary social aid. Social citizenship can thus still affect the possibilities to access higher education.

On the other hand, circulations impinge on the type of citizenship people obtain in the country of residence: rights of access to studies vary according

to the category of citizenship allocated to asylum-seekers, refugees and other exiles (Détourbe & Goastellec, 2018). This is not a new issue: starting in the 16th century, Catholic students from the newly Protestant territories, persecuted in their countries, found refuge in universities located in Catholic territories (for example Irish Catholic students, registered in higher education institutions in Catholic European countries), and vice-versa (French Protestant students in Switzerland, Germany or the Netherlands (Charle & Verger, 2012)). But refugee students of the previous centuries were confronted with highly elitist higher education sectors, and, as a whole, albeit with national variations, still mainly dedicated to the training of “professionals” (law, medicine, teaching). But today, a good share of worldwide refugees arrives in countries where higher education is massified, has become the road to most middle and upper professional positions and thus the center of a wide race for degrees. In this context, refugees’ access represents a very sensitive political issue.

Moreover, in contemporary societies as in the Middle Ages, the ability to obtain citizenship for migrants varies according to their characteristics, especially with regard education, with a clear advantage for graduates. For example, in the United Kingdom, the criteria for defining migrants include a category of “outstanding talent” to attract individuals working “in the sciences, humanities, engineering and the arts” (Shachar & Hirschl, 2014, p. 253). The same type of discrimination can be found in many countries around the globe—Canada, China, India, etc.—and in many countries of the world. As a result, international circulation is very strongly indexed to human capital, human capital being the currency of acquisition of citizenship in the journeys of people in mobility.

This underscores the role of citizenship devolution procedures in social closure through the diploma. While the diploma is unequally distributed across countries, social and ethnic groups and gender, “the laws and practices defining citizenship produce desirable/undesirable categories of citizens” (Fargues & Winter, 2019, p. 297).

## 6 Conclusion

What do we learn from this exploration of the relation between citizenship and access to higher education over time?

From the very first centuries of the European universities, citizenship has been a central dimension of the instrumentation of access.

First as an instrument of government, when different rulers used the circumscription of students and professors’ civil citizenship to build and reinforce

their nodality. Then, as an instrument of public action, integrating the processes of renegotiation and appropriation of access by individuals from different social groups, access then expressing the relation between politics and society. The articulation between access and citizenship unveils and contributes to a process of territorialization—deterritorialization—reterritorialization and the projects of social organization that are associated with it.

At another level, questioning the relation between citizenship and access to universities allows the documentation of their reciprocal relationship, revealing its empirical and theoretical added value.

Because the grammar of citizenship is both related to the imbrication of multiple territories (and thus to the geopolitical situation in which the university is embedded), the social structuration of the immediate social organization, the value allocated by the rulers to degrees in accessing additional citizenship (social, juridical, and political), and the value of some specific student groups for the universities, analyzing access to higher education through the prism of the citizenship issue allows to connect different scales analysis. If the territories to which citizenship relates vary over time, focusing on citizenship instead of (or in addition to) social belongings, and thus adopting a “relational stance” to analyze the instrumentation of access offers a comprehensive understanding of the connections between different territories and scales.

It also shows how social forms are historically constituted through universities and students' circulations and the subsequent instrumentation of access that takes place everywhere the universities were developed. This was the case mostly everywhere, largely as an indirect consequence of the various colonization processes which took place with the European colonial empires. As Burbank and Cooper (2008) advocate,

Relations between the people and the state power had not been built once and for all in a national mold through revolutions or new forms of sovereignty during the XVIIIth or XIXth centuries, they remained opened, subject to polemic during the XXth century. To understand the very diverse modalities through which integration and differentiation has been combined in the past, it is essential to acknowledge that empires have been used to ground the elaboration and the transformation of citizenship and rights. (p. 497)

We advocate that “Examining the diverse interactions that take place between historically situated peoples, networks, institutions, and polities” (Norton, 2017, p. 23) as they take place through the instrumentation of citizenship in access is strategically important for a deeper understanding of how access to university

contributed to world historical development. That we hope to deeper explore in further historical and comparative research.

### References

- Alcántara Bojorge, D. A. (2009). Los bachilleres en teología de la universidad colonial (1553–1738). Un acercamiento cuantitativo. In E. González González, M. Hidalgo Pego, & A. Álvarez Sánchez (Eds.), *Del aula a la ciudad. Estudios sobre la universidad y la sociedad en el México virreinal* (pp. 55–85). Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- Ambrus, S. (2018). L'accès aux études supérieures n'est pas un droit garanti en Suisse. *RTS*. <https://www.rts.ch/info/suisse/9740754-l-acces-aux-etudes-superieures-n-est-pas-un-droit-garanti-en-suisse.html>
- Anderson, R. D. (2004). *European universities from the Enlightenment to 1914*. Oxford Scholarship Online.
- Arum, R., Gamoran, A., & Shavit, Y. (2007). More inclusion than diversion: Expansion, differentiation, and market structure in higher education. In Y. Shavit, R. Arum, & A. Gamoran (Eds.), *Stratification in higher education, A comparative study* (pp. 1–38). Stanford University Press.
- Barcala Muñoz, A. (1985). Las Universidades españolas durante la Edad Media. *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 15, 83–126.
- Belissa, M. (2006). Repenser l'ordre européen (1795–1802). De la société des rois aux droits des nations. *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, 343, 163–166. <http://journals.openedition.org/ahrf/10122>
- Bickel, J. (2007). Significations, histoire et renouvellement de la citoyenneté. *Gérontologie et Société*, 30/120(1), 11–28.
- Borrillo, D. (2002). Les instruments juridiques français et européens dans la mise en place du principe d'égalité et de non-discrimination. *Revue française des affaires sociales*, 1, 109–129.
- Boudon, R. (1973). *L'inégalité des chances, la mobilité sociale dans les sociétés industrielles*. Colin.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.-C. (1964). *Les héritiers. Les étudiants et la culture*. Éditions de Minuit.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron J.-C. (1970). *La reproduction. Éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement*. Éditions de Minuit.
- Burbank, J., & Cooper, F. (2008). Empire, droits et citoyenneté. *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 63(3), 495–531.
- Charle, C., & Verger, J. (2012). *Histoire des universités*. Presses Universitaires de France.



- Cheng, Y., & Holton, M. (2018). Geographies of citizenship in higher education: An introduction. *AREA*, 51(4), 613–617.
- De Ridder-Symoens, H. (2009). Les étudiants Marranes aux Pays-Bas (XVIe et XVIIe Siècle). In P. Ferté & C. Barrera (Eds.), *Etudiants de l'exil. Migrations internationales et universités refuges (xvie-xxe s.)* (pp. 21–35). Presses Universitaires du Mirail.
- Détourbe, M.-A., & Goastellec, G. (2018). Revisiting the issues of access to higher education and social stratification through the case of refugees: A comparative study of spaces of opportunity for refugee students in Germany and England. *Social Sciences*, 7(10), 186.
- Fargues, E., & Winter, E. (2019). Conditional membership: What revocation does to citizenship. *Citizenship Studies*, 23(4), 295–303.
- Fernandez, Ó. (2005). Towards European citizenship through higher education? *European Journal of Education*, 40(1), 59–68.
- Ferruolo, S. C. (1988). Parisius-Paradisus: The city, its schools, and the origins of the university of Paris. In T. Bender (Ed.), *The university and the city: From medieval origins to the present* (pp. 22–43). Oxford University Press.
- Ferté, P., & Barrera, C. (Eds.). (2009). *Étudiants de l'exil. Migrations internationales et universités refuges (XVIe-XXes.)*. Presses Universitaires du Mirail.
- Furet, F. (1986). Burke ou la fin d'une seule histoire de l'Europe. *Le Débat*, 39(2), 56–66.
- France: Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. (1789, August 26).  
<https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b52410.html>
- France: Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and Citizen from the Constitution of Year III. (1795). <https://www.worldhistorycommons.org/declaration-rights-and-duties-man-and-citizen-constitution-year-iii-1795>
- France: Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen from the Constitution of Year I. (1793). <http://www.columbia.edu/~iw6/docs/dec1793.html>
- Gilli, P. (1999). Comment cesser d'être étranger: citoyens et non-citoyens dans la pensée juridique italienne de la fin du Moyen Âge. In *Actes des congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public, 30e congrès, Göttingen, L'étranger au Moyen Âge* (pp. 59–77).
- Goastellec, G. (2019). L'accès à l'enseignement supérieur enjeu de l'organisation sociale: Quelques apports de la comparaison socio-historique. *Sociologies*.  
<https://journals.openedition.org/sociologies/12152>
- Goastellec, G. (2020). *Production de l'université, production de la société. Sociologie de l'accès à l'université depuis le moyen âge* [Habilitation à Diriger les Recherches]. Institut d'Étude Politique.
- Go, J., & Lawson, G. (2017). *Global historical sociology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Grendler, P. F. (1999). The University of Bologna, the city and the papacy. *Renaissance Studies*, 13(4), 475–485.

- Horey, D., Fortune, T., Nicolacopoulos, T., Kashima, E., & Mathisen, B. (2018). Global citizenship and higher education: A scoping review of the empirical evidence. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 22(5), 472–492.
- Hyde, J. K. (1988). Universities and cities in medieval Italy. In T. Bender (Ed.), *The university and the city: From medieval origins to the present* (pp. 13–21). Oxford University Press.
- Julia, D., & Revel, J. (Eds.). (1989). *Les universités européennes du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle. Histoire sociale des populations étudiantes* (Tome 2). Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales.
- Kassow, S. D. (1989). *Students, professors and the state in Tsarist Russia*. University of California Press.
- Kirshner, J. (2017). Hidden in plain sight: Citizen women in late medieval Italy [Working paper]. [https://www.academia.edu/30770102/Hidden\\_in\\_Plain\\_Sight\\_Citizen\\_Women\\_in\\_Late\\_Medieval\\_Italy](https://www.academia.edu/30770102/Hidden_in_Plain_Sight_Citizen_Women_in_Late_Medieval_Italy)
- Koselleck, R. (1990). *Le futur passé. Contribution à la sémantique des temps historiques*. Editions de l'EHESS. (Original work published 1979)
- Latourette, A. W. (2005). Sex discrimination in the legal profession: Historical and contemporary perspectives. *Valparaiso University Law Review*, 39(4), 859–909.
- Magnette, P. (2001). *La citoyenneté: Une histoire de l'idée de participation civique*. Bruylant.
- Marshall, T. H. (2009). Citizenship and social class. In J. Manza & M. Sauder (Eds.), *Inequality and society: Social science perspectives on social stratification* (pp. 148–154). W.W. Norton and Company. (Original work published 1950)
- McEnroe, S. F. (2012). *From colony to nationhood in Mexico. Laying the foundations, 1560–1840*. Cambridge University Press.
- Muravyeva, M. (2010). Russian women in European universities, 1864–1900. In J. Spence, S. J. Aiston, & M. M. Meikle (Eds.), *Women, education and agency, 1600–2000* (pp. 83–104). Routledge.
- Neave, G. (2005, January 26–28). *The social dimension and social cohesion. Or, reconciling Adam Smith with Thomas Hobbes* [Presentation]. The Social Dimension of the European Higher Education Area and Worldwide Competition. The Sorbonne, Paris.
- Norton, M. (2017). Real mythic histories: Circulatory networks and state-centrism. In J. Go & G. Lawson (Eds.), *Global historical sociology* (pp. 37–57). Cambridge University Press.
- Peset, M. (1984). Universidades españolas y universidades europeas. *Ius Commune*, 12, 71–89.
- Rait, R. S. (1931). *Life in the medieval university*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rashdall, H. (1895a). *The universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, Vol. I, Salerno, Bologna, Paris*. Oxford University Press Warehouse.

- Rashdall, H. (1895b). *The universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, Vol. II. Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Scotland, etc.* Clarendon Press
- Riesenberg, P. V. (1974). Citizenship at law in late medieval Italy. *Viator, Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 5, 333–346.
- Shachar, A., & Hirschl, R. (2014). On citizenship, states and markets. *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 22(2), 231–257.
- Singaravélou, P. (2009). L'enseignement supérieur colonial. Un état des lieux. *Histoire de l'éducation*, 122, 71–92.
- Siupiur, E. (2014). The role of European universities in shaping the Romanian and South-East European political elites in the 19th century. *Annals of the University of Bucharest/Political science series*, 16(1), 113–128.
- Thireau, J. L. (1992). Professeurs et étudiants étrangers dans les facultés de droit françaises (XVIe-XVIIe siècles). *Revue d'Histoire des Facultés de Droit et de la Science Juridique*, 2, 43–73.
- Turner, B. S. (1997). Citizenship studies: A general theory. *Citizenship Studies*, 1(1), 5–18.
- Villella, P. B. (2012). Indian lords, Hispanic gentlemen: The Salazars of colonial Tlaxcala. *The Americas*, 69(1), 1–36.
- Zgaga, P. (2009). Higher education and citizenship: “The full range of purposes.” *European Educational Research Journal*, 8(2), 175–188.