Extending the educational franchise: the social contract of Australia's public universities, 1850-1890

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Extending the educational franchise: the social contract of Australia's public universities, 1850–1890

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This article introduces the notion of the "educational franchise" of Australia's public universities established in the mid-nineteenth century. In his recently published study of the public university and social access in the United States, John Aubrey Douglass suggests that from the mid-nineteenth century a social contract was formed between American public universities and their social and political constituencies: institutions open to all who could qualify for admission, offering a relevant curriculum and related closely to public schools systems. The idea of the "public university" was not unique to North America. Across the Pacific, the settler societies of Australasia were creating public universities from 1850 – a decade before the Morrill Act which provided the land grants for many public universities in the USA. The Australasian universities also emerged almost simultaneously with the establishment of secondary schools in each of the colonies. This article explores questions of social stratification, meritocracy, social class and gender with a strong focus on the interaction between universities and schools. The social contract in Australia was developed as a form of educational franchise first granted to urban males principally of middle-class background, but of diverse social and religious origins, and then increasingly extended to those in the emerging public school system, those of rural and regional background, and then to women. The main focus of the article is on the University of Sydney, Australia's first public university established in 1850. Drawing on an extensive student biographical database we have compiled, the article examines how the "educational franchise" operated in the colony of New South Wales in the period 1850–1890.

Keywords: social contract; educational franchise; meritocracy; public universities; nineteenth century Australia

This lately too much neglected colony has, by the special Interposition of Providence, risen all at once into the state and consideration of a well-nigh independent people. And amidst the social and political revolution which is going on before our eyes, fraught in many respects with elements of anxiety and alarm, there is no circumstance more suggestive to a patriotic mind of sober exultation and rational hope, than the foundation in the bosom of our society, by the unaided, unsuggested act of that society itself, of the first colonial University in the British Empire. (Revd Dr John Woolley "Address at the Inauguration of the University of Sydney", October 1852)

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The "social contract"

In his Californian study, John Aubrey Douglass has argued that the American land grant and other state-endowed universities established from the 1860s "devised a *social contract* that included the profoundly progressive idea that any citizen who met a prescribed set of largely academic conditions would gain entrance to their state university". But the idea of the "public university" was not distinctive to North America. Across the Pacific, the settler societies of Australasia were creating public universities from 1850 – over a decade before the Morrill Act (1862) which provided the land grants for many public universities in the USA. The aim of this article is to explore the "social contract" of public universities in nineteenth-century Australia, and to propose the idea of "educational franchise" as a means to measure the success of the contract.

Douglass's conception of a "social contract" usefully describes the relationship between these new American public universities, such as the University of California (1868), and their social and political constituencies. Sectarianism, social caste, gender and eventually race were to play no part in the admission of students: in this sense, these new, public universities were to be for the public, the citizens for whom the state had created the university, with the contract extended to those citizens who passed certain academic criteria. In the process, universities came also to recognise and credential public schools, which meant that an important feature of the social contract came to include an accessible public education system.[1]

Such a view of American public universities overlays the earlier work of Jurgen Herbst, supported by others such as Labaree and Reese, that in the early republic the urban high school in such states as Massachusetts, New York and Philadelphia was a "People's College" helping to break down the social barriers to higher education by extending access to the sons and daughters of the urban middle and lower middle classes with the availability of publicly funded and modified fee structures and a broader curriculum. They offered, says Herbst, "a completed education in its own right", marked by the award of a diploma upon graduation, a prized credential which in certain cases created, says Labaree, an "informal hierarchy of control" within a decentralised school system. Much of this continued into the twentieth century even while public universities and colleges were establishing relations with public high schools.[2]

These views of public universities and public high schools prompt comparisons with other contexts where the idea of public education was being shaped from the mid-nineteenth century. In Australia, the development of a public school system was initially constrained by the presence of schools of the various religious denominations, which continued to receive aid from the state for much of the nineteenth century. It was not until the 1840s that governments in the five Australian colonies began to establish their own schools, often known as "national" (after the Irish national system of non-denominational instruction) or "common" schools and later as "state" or

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[1]John Aubrey Douglass, *The Conditions for Admission: Access, Equity, and the Social Contract of Public Universities* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 6, 8–9.
[2]Jurgen Herbst, "The American People's College: the Lost Promise of Democracy in Education," *American Journal of Education* 100, no. 3 (May 1992): 276, 278–79, 284–85, 287; David F. Labaree, *The Making of an American High School: the Credentials Market and the Central High School of Philadelphia 1838–1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 2–7.

"public" schools. It was only from 1870 that state aid began to be removed from religious schools throughout Australia and public school systems were fully developed.[3] In the area of secondary education, single-sex Church schools had been founded from the 1830s, were fee-paying and socially elite, and offered a curriculum akin to the English public school tradition.[4] In the colonial capitals such as Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide there were also a number of small private academies offering classical and other studies.[5]

In Australia, the idea of public education was more clearly formulated with the establishment of universities from 1850. Unlike colonial America, Australia had no tradition of private colleges such as Harvard. It was state, not private, endowment which brought into being the foundation of universities. This occurred in tandem with the mid-nineteenth-century moves towards colonial self-government and the establishment of a parliamentary democracy based on manhood suffrage rather than an electoral franchise determined by property ownership. The social contract in Australia was thus developed as a form of educational franchise first granted to urban males principally of middle-class background, but of diverse social and religious origins, and then increasingly extended to those in the emerging public school system, those of rural and regional background, and ultimately women. Much of this change had occurred by the 1880s. While Douglass suggests that the American contract extended social access through the public university by means of credentialing schools and thereby accepting students' qualifications, the educational franchise in Australia was extended through scholarships and, later, bursaries, extension and evening lectures on the principle of merit determined by a formal system of examinations conducted by universities.

The University of Sydney (1850) and the University of Melbourne (1853) were significant departures in the idea of the university within the British Empire.[6] For much of the early to mid-nineteenth century in North America and parts of Australia, the idea of the college was prominent, in which students of various ages and abilities often mingled. In New South Wales, a Sydney College and then an Australian College had been established as shareholder institutions in the 1830s, but both collapsed in the depression of the 1840s.[7] The discussion subsequently moved towards the creation of not a college but a state-endowed university. Both the University of Sydney and the later University of Melbourne shared features not previously seen in the British Empire, the distinctiveness of which education historian Richard Selleck explains: "A state university: urban, secular, professional, non-residential and noncollegiate, centralised in government, controlled by a laity, and possessing power to teach and

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[3]Geoffrey Sherington and Craig Campbell, "Middle Class Formations and the Emergence of National Schooling," in *Transformations in Schooling Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Kim Tolley (New York: Macmillan Palgrave, 2007), 15–40.

[4]Geoffrey Sherington, R.C. Petersen and Ian Brice, *Learning to Lead: A History of Girls' and Boys' Corporate Secondary Schools* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987).

[5]Christopher Mooney, "Securing a Classical Education In and Around Sydney," *History of Education Review* 25, no. 1 (1996): 38–53.

[6]J. Horne, R. Campbell and G. Sherington, "The Idea of the University in the British colonies" (paper presented at the International Conference on The Quest for Excellence: Great Universities and their cities, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai, Mumbai, India, January 17–19, 2007).

[7]Ibid. See also Clifford Turney, *Grammar: A History of Sydney Grammar School* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989).

examine. Other universities had some of these characteristics, but none had this particular combination."[8]

Such a form pre-dated most of the public universities in the United States. But this creation also gave rise to questions of who should be part of this educational franchise. Part of the answer lay in the origins of the first Australian universities. The momentum for the universities had come from colonial parliaments as a crucial step towards responsible government and was founded on the liberal progressive belief that self-government required educated men to take up leadership positions not necessarily in parliament, but certainly in other areas of colonial and civic life. Without a local university, colonial leadership, some feared, would become the province of the sons of gentlemen educated in England's institutions of privilege.

The question of social origins was especially sensitive in the Australian colonies since by the 1850s a sizeable proportion of the colonial population included recent immigrants, a consequence of the gold rushes, as well as the children of emancipated convicts, affectionately called "currency lads and lasses", the result of Australia's previous status as a British penal colony for over 50 years. Immigrants and currency lads populated all social classes, but whispers and gossip about their "true" origins could undermine their social position even in this relatively socially mobile society.[9] The challenge for the Australian legislators was to create a local university that would admit young men on academic merit alone without reference to their social origins or religious beliefs as still occurred at unreformed Oxbridge.

The question of religious faiths was especially relevant in this period. In England, Roman Catholics and Protestant dissenters were still barred from the older universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The question of religious beliefs was complicated by the relative strength of different religious sects in colonial society such as the Presbyterian Church, the Wesleyan-Methodists and the Congregationalists, and additionally in New South Wales, the Roman Catholic Church. Unlike in England, the Anglican Church was not the predominant sectarian voice in the Australian colonies.[10] All the religious sects had their views on the nature of the proposed University of Sydney but most were prepared to accept that the new institutions would be socially inclusive.

In introducing the original bill for the university, the conservative politician William Charles Wentworth, himself of convict heritage, spoke for the future when he declared that the measure was designed to allow "the child of every class, to become great and useful in the destinies of his country", and in his characteristically florid rhetorical style, he argued: "Its gates should be open to all, whether they are disciples of Moses, of Jesus, of Mahomed, of Vishnu, or of Buddha". Wentworth rationalised that if it led to "no higher achievements than the preparation of the youth of the colony for the departments of Government the money it asked for would be well applied".[11]

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[8]See R.J.W. Selleck, *The Shop: The University of Melbourne 1850–1939* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 27.
[9]Geoffrey Sherington, *Australia's Immigrants 1788–1978* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1980); James Jupp, ed., *The Australian People: an Encyclopaedia of the Nation, its People and their Origins* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[10]Brian Fletcher, *Australian Anglicanism and Australian History: The Need for Synthesis*, Occasional Paper No. 3, 2004, Australian College of Theology (Sydney, 2004).
[11]W.C. Wentworth in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, October 5, 1849; W.C. Wentworth in *Australia's First; A History of the University of Sydney*, ed. Cliff Turney, Peter Chippendale and Ursula Bygott (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1991), 1: 44.

As the views of Wentworth implied, the initial "social contract" established by Australia's first public universities in the mid-nineteenth century was relatively simple, expressed in terms of social inclusion regardless of class or religious origins, but intended to produce a male, middle-class meritocracy. The idea that the university should be open to "the child of every class" and any religion gives rise not only to the idea of a "social contract", but also to the notion of the "educational franchise". To investigate this "educational franchise", then, involves an examination of the social mix of the student population in order to judge the success of the social contract by determining which "publics" were, in fact, participating in the public education system.

Establishing the educational franchise

While the principles behind the establishment of the first Australian universities were socially inclusive in intent, the operation of such principles functioned on academic grounds. To be admitted to university, candidates were required to reveal merit. From the beginning admission to the degree programmes of colonial universities was on the basis of a written examination system which ranked students according to academic merit, and awarded university scholarships to the best performers. The scholarship system was central to the meritocratic aims of the institutions: though fees themselves were subsidised by the state, publicly funded scholarships were the means to provide a financial incentive to successful students who might otherwise embark on a different life path. In the 1850s scholarships generally paid £50 each year, enough to contribute something towards a family household budget, and certainly to reduce the burden of supporting a non-wage earner.

In the first decade, a third of the enrolled students at the University of Sydney received scholarships.[12] Scholarships were awarded on merit without consideration for social background. This might seem to favour those who had the cultural capital or family background to succeed in exams. Yet only about 40% of these scholarship-holders came from the types of social backgrounds traditionally associated with further education – the "educated classes" whose ranks were populated with clergymen, men of law, and of the professions.[13]

For the most part, the sons from educated backgrounds went to university, followed in their father's steps, and chose a career that maintained their family's social position. James William Johnson, one of the early graduates, went on to join his father's firm of solicitors soon after graduation. His English-born father, Robert Ebenezer Johnson, was from a family described as "'English gentlefolk', musical, bookish and affable". Robert Johnson migrated to Australia in the 1830s as a young man during the reinvention of the British penal colony as a "free society". Why he

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[12]Most of the student data used in this article comes from a database of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Sydney University students compiled by Roderic Campbell for our Australian Research Council-funded project, "The Public University in Australasia 1852–1914". The database largely comprises details of students who won monetary awards (usually as scholarships or bursaries) during their university career. It also includes details of all matriculants for the University's first decade, 1852–1861. Reference to this database hereafter is "USyd Student Database". In the first decade, there were 123 matriculants, of whom 39 received scholarships: "USyd Student Database".

[13]In this category (i.e. the "educated classes"), the majority of fathers were clergymen, lawyers, and high-ranking civil officers.

emigrated is not known, but it was becoming more usual for the sons of England's "genteel poor", or those unable to establish themselves in professions in Britain, to migrate to the colonies, take advantage of colonial family networks and, through these, establish themselves socially. He was articled to a solicitor and subsequently admitted as one. In partnership he founded a law firm – the antecedent of one of Australia's biggest – and became a politician noted for his interest in legal reform. By the time his son was admitted to Sydney University in 1852 Robert Johnson was associated with Sydney's top legal circles.[14] In this sense, for some the institution of university performed the role of social reproduction: lawyer fathers produced lawyer sons, clergy fathers produced clergy sons. The educational franchise was firmly secured to the educated few.

But as Figure 1 shows, the majority of scholarship holders did not fit this pattern of social reproduction. The column titled "Commercial, mercantile, skilled and unskilled trades" comprises all ranks of the mercantile and commercial classes including a number of small shopkeepers as well as the ranks of skilled and unskilled trades and, to a limited extent, the labouring classes. What defined this group, and separated them from the "educated classes", was the lack of expectation of a university education. Whereas the sons of the "educated classes" in mid-nineteenth-century Australia came from a background with some understanding and support for the idea of further formal education, the sons of "other classes" rarely did. Yet, the newly initiated public university offered the prospect to further one's formal education, and assisted through the award of scholarships, providing an opportunity pursued by a more socially
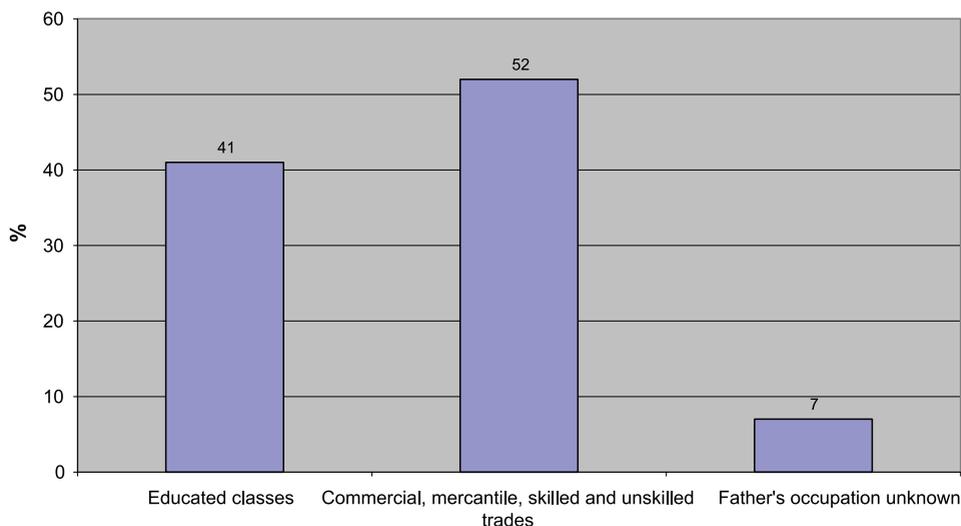
Figure 1.   Social origins of scholarship holders 1852–1861.
Source: R. Campbell, "USyd Student Database" (computer database, compiled for J. Horne and G. Sherington, "The Public University in Australasia", Australian Research Council Discovery Project, Department of History, University of Sydney, 2008).

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[14]Douglas Pike, ed., *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1972), 4: 484–85; B. Dyster, *Servant and Master: Building and Running the Grand Houses of Sydney 1788–1850* (Kensington: NSW University Press, 1989), 158; J.M. Bennett, ed., *A History of the New South Wales Bar* (Sydney: Law Book Co., 1969), 83–84, 159.

diverse group than modern studies on Australian universities have generally accepted to be the case.[15]

About 20% of scholarship-holders were the sons of farmers, skilled, and unskilled tradesmen.[16] One was the son of a bricklayer, suggesting the offer of scholarships worked, if in a limited way, as encouragement for the further education of the sons of lower middle- and working-class families. The bricklayer's son was Arthur Renwick, later Sir Arthur, who became a leading physician, generous philanthropist, and politician. He arrived in Australia in 1841 aged four with his parents, who were assisted Scottish emigrants. Arthur's father, George Renwick, had been a bricklayer in Glasgow. The 1840s economic depression in New South Wales probably created difficult employment prospects for the recently arrived immigrants, though we know that George eventually obtained work as a plasterer. Nonetheless, his sons were educated in the state-sponsored national schools, receiving scholarships on the basis of their examination results.[17] Students from these social backgrounds did not follow their father's occupations, generally choosing to go into the professions, thus their university education became a means of upward social mobility.

About 30% of scholarship-holders came from the commercial and mercantile classes (including the ranks of small shopkeepers). Some came from wealthy families, and on riches alone would ordinarily be classified as upper middle class. Others were from relatively comfortable if hard-working backgrounds. But none could readily be defined as belonging to the "educated classes". Rees Rutland Jones, another early graduate, was the son of a Welsh immigrant who had established a general store, soap-works, and flour mill in rural New South Wales, accumulating wealth and property in ways that mesmerised many such families of lower socio-economic background back in Britain. Rees was sent to Sydney to attend one of the private academies in preparation for the matriculation examination. He passed the exam easily and on the basis of his results received a scholarship. Upon graduation he was initially employed in a bank before pursuing a career as a country solicitor.[18] The university education of such sons was a new step in a family's social fortunes. We can see from these data that the scholarship system helped to extend the educational franchise into social groups which had little previous experience or expectation of "higher education".

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[15]For example, the University of Sydney in its foundation years has long been characterised as "The Gentlemen's University", a university for the sons of gentlemen: Turney, Bygott and Chippendale, *Australia's First*, 1. The same has been assumed for the University of Melbourne in the colony of Victoria: Selleck, *The Shop*. But in neither case has a detailed study of the social origins of early students – as opposed to university administrators – actually been conducted. While the social origins of early Melbourne University students as determined by their fathers' occupations is still unknown, our database of nineteenth-century Sydney University students goes some way to address the issue for the colony of New South Wales.

[16]For example, occupations included stonemason, undertaker, organ builder, bookbinder, and "settler" (which in the context of the Australian colonies generally indicated a small-time farmer).

[17]Bede Nairn, ed., *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1976), 6: 20; Douglas Pike, ed., *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967), 2: 269.

[18]Bede Nairn and Geoffrey Serle, eds, *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1983), 9: 519.
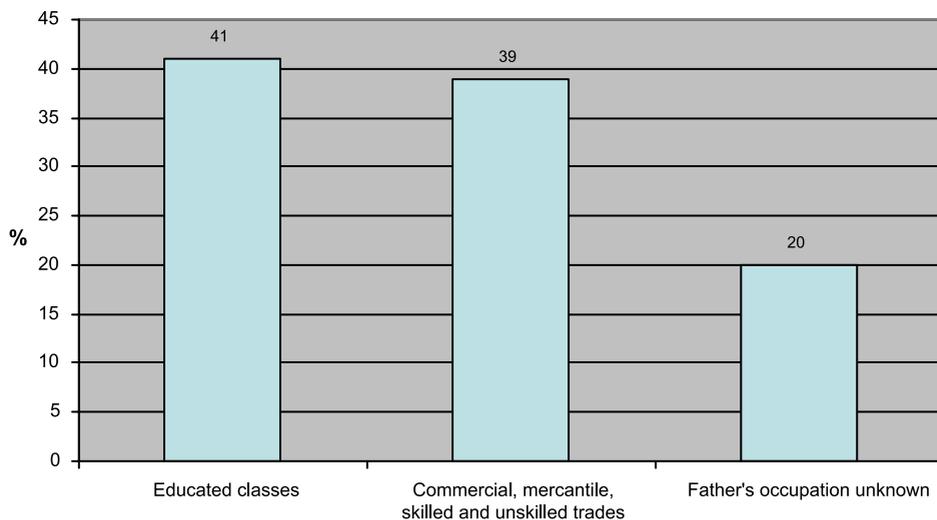
Figure 2.   Social origins of total student body 1852–1861.
Source: R. Campbell, comp., USyd Student Database.

In terms of the broader student body, the figures suggest that these new social groups were pursuing the opportunity to attend university even without the assistance of scholarships, as shown in Figure 2.

The "educated classes" are represented in the total student body at a slightly higher rate, but only slightly. If we take into account the large number of "unknowns" – those students whose fathers' occupations we have been unable to determine – the result becomes intriguing, though, ultimately, inconclusive. One could, however, reasonably argue that the "unknowns" are more likely to favour students from the lower ranks of the commercial and mercantile classes, and skilled and unskilled trades, because named people in these classes can be notoriously difficult to locate in nineteenth-century sources. If this were the case then the findings are all the more remarkable, revealing a socially diverse support for the university in its first decade even without the financial backing of scholarships.

The place of religion in colonial society provides another way of examining the character of the educational franchise in mid-nineteenth-century Australia. The colony of New South Wales is especially interesting because Irish Roman Catholics made up about one-third of the colonial population in a British-dominated society, where religious rivalry and tensions often ran high. As a settler society there was also a sizeable proportion of Protestant dissenters, resulting in further tensions with the Anglicans. As already indicated this placed constraints and limitations on the development of a public school system. Even the emerging national, soon-to-become public schools taught a form of non-denominational Christian values. But one of the founding principles of Australia's first public universities was not only the rejection of a "religious test", still mandatory in the ancient English and Scottish universities – but also the promise of a secular curriculum. In this sense, unlike the denominational and even the national schools, universities were both non-denominational and secular institutions. It was to be a place of social integration and sociability for members of all Christian faiths.
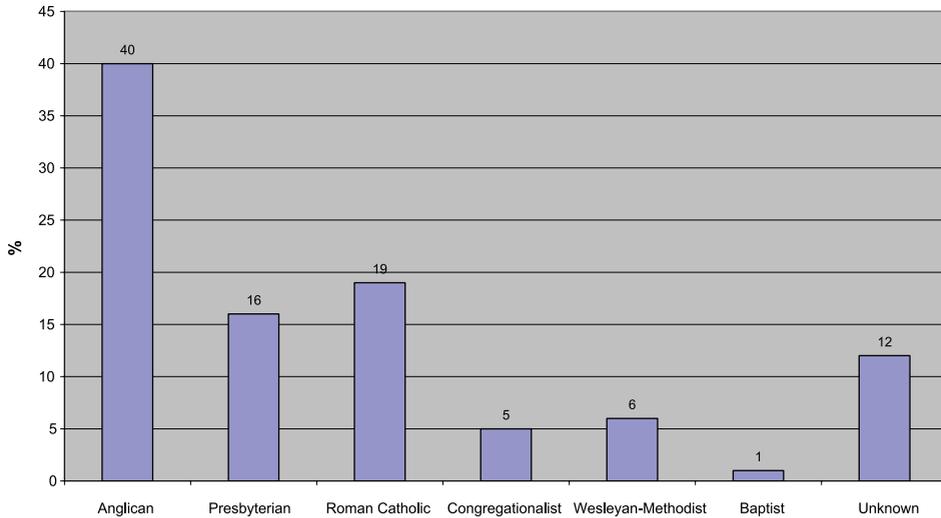
Figure 3.   Religious background of student body 1852–1861.
Source: R. Campbell, comp., USyd Student Database.

Part of this "social contract" was to ensure that no single church dominated the public university. More significantly, as data concerning the religious backgrounds of the students in the first decades demonstrate (Figure 3), this reasoning quickly had a long-lasting effect on the educational franchise. In 1852, however, the first year of matriculation, the student body reflected a significant Anglican bias. Of the total number of matriculants, 70% were Anglicans.[19] But thereafter students from other religious backgrounds quickly emerged to make the percentages between the Anglicans – the colony's dominant religion – and other Protestants roughly equivalent, and the Roman Catholics not too far behind.

At a time when Oxford and Cambridge were still discriminating against Catholics or Protestant dissenters, almost a third of the University of Sydney's student body were themselves from these religious groups. If we include the Presbyterians in this group, then the 40% of Anglicans were, it appears, outnumbered by the 47% of those of other denominations. Though the 12% of "unknowns" means definite conclusions are not possible, a reasonable conclusion is that a distribution of this figure would not greatly affect the current proportions, and may well create new categories representing the small proportions of other mid-nineteenth-century faiths in New South Wales. Especially noteworthy is the relatively high percentage of Roman Catholics, indicating cooperation with a public, non-denominational institution of secular education at a time when they did not support the national schools. Finally, unlike Oxford and Cambridge, the University of Sydney would never become a destination for those preparing to become Anglican clergy.

At the centre of the admission of students as well as their examination and award of scholarships was also the small group of foundation professors who supported and developed the secular nature of the new university. The most significant was Dr John Woolley, professor of classics and first principal of the university. Son of a physician, Woolley had attended a local grammar school and then the University of London,

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[19] R. Campbell, comp., "USyd Student Database".

where he gained a first class in every subject he studied and the first prize in logic. Winning a scholarship to Oxford, he graduated first class in Greats and was then elected in open competition to a fellowship at University College Oxford. Here he came into contact with Thomas Arnold's protégé A.P. Stanley, who was at the centre of the reform movement in Oxford. Ordained an Anglican priest in 1841, Woolley became headmaster of King Edward VI Grammar School, Hereford, and then foundation head of Rossall School in Lancashire, where he promoted the ideas of Thomas Arnold. In 1851, the University of Sydney appointed Woolley to the inaugural chair of classics, preferring him over the brilliant classicist and poet Arthur Clough, also one of Arnold's pupils at Rugby.[20] A model of the modern headmaster-don, he brought to Sydney, as some have argued, "the liberal principles of Thomas Arnold on issues of education, Church and State, and the principles of the Advanced party of the Oxford liberal revival idea on the idea of the university and the purposes of a university education".[21]

With his own high scholastic attainments, and being a follower of Plato as much as Arnold, Woolley believed not only in secular public education but also the responsibility of the state to find and foster talent: "we are now seeing it to be our duty earnestly to look out for those of 'golden natures', as one of old called them, who might be lurking at our doors in obscurity and do our outmost to place them on that prominent stage on which the God who gave them those high faculties fitted them to stand".[22]

Sir Charles Nicholson, the first vice-provost of the new university, was also a strong supporter of such ideas. A graduate of the University of Edinburgh with a degree in medicine, Nicholson had made his fortune in New South Wales land development. Already he had supported Wentworth in his endeavours to establish a university which Nicholson at least conceived would become an institution patterned on Oxford and Cambridge but without the religious tests.[23] At the inauguration of the university he claimed that it was the duty of the state to provide for not only elementary education but higher instruction, "by which men may be fitted to discharge the duties and offices belonging to the higher grades of society; to enable her citizens to discharge the duties to become enlightened statesmen, useful magistrates and learned and able lawyers, [and] judicious physicians".[24] Scholarships became the way to reward talent.

While promoting merit, Woolley could not tolerate "academic failure". Supported by Nicholson and others on the University Senate he discontinued many students and virtually "expelled" George Barton, the brother of the future first prime minister of Australia, because of poor performance. Woolley and the other two professors were also unimpressed with the standard of the first cohort of students blaming poor

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[20]Turney, Chippendale and Bygott, *Australia's First*, 1: 68–71.
[21]Ibid., 71.
[22]*Sydney Morning Herald*, February 28, 1856 cited in G.L. Simpson, "Reverend Dr John Woolley and Higher Education," in *Pioneers of Australian Education*, ed. C. Turney (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1969), 1: 84.
[23]Pike, ed., *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 2: 283–85.
[24]Nicholson quoted in Turney, Chippendale and Bygott, *Australia's First*, 1: 4.
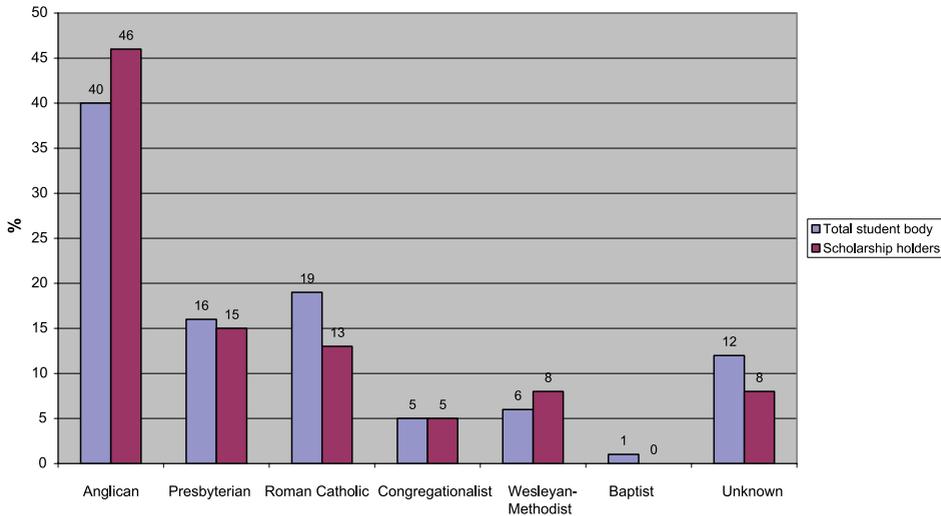
Figure 4. Religious background of scholarship holders compared with total student body, 1852–1861.
Source: R. Campbell, comp., USyd Student Database.

performances on their education in the private academies and grammar schools.[25] The question of awarding scholarships to proportionally more Anglicans (see Figure 4) might, after all, simply come down to a matter of predetermined academic standards.

Another significant educational franchise "moment" occurred in 1854, just two years after the university opened. Woolley, along with Nicholson and Pell, the professor of mathematics, joined a petition to the New South Wales Parliament, calling for a state-endowed public grammar school. The needs of the university were prominent, the new institution being said to be "manifestly retarded for want of efficient preparatory teaching". It was hoped that the proposed school would raise standards to those equivalent in English urban grammar schools providing a model for other colonial schools to follow.[26] Following a committee of enquiry, it was agreed to establish a school with an endowment of £20,000 for buildings and an annual endowment of £1500 which would allow for 50 scholarships. Sydney Grammar School opened in 1857 on the former site of the university, which now moved to acreage on the outskirts of the city. There was provision for the university professors to serve on the board of trustees and act as examiners of the school.

The original enrolment at the school comprised the "sons of merchants and professional men generally" but there were boys from outside Sydney. And while Woolley wanted academic merit to be the determining factor in the award of scholarships, lest this create "invidious distinction", it was arranged that any son of wealthy parents who

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[25]Examiners' Report 1854 in Simpson, "Reverend Dr John Woolley," 99. Our colleague Roderic Campbell is currently examining the relations between Woolley and the first cohort of University of Sydney matriculants in the 1850s. In the examiners' report Woolley spoke more highly of the few matriculants educated in English Public Schools but even they often faced his wrath over matters of standards and attendance at lectures. Roderic Campbell, "Identifying the Golden Natures; glimpses of student and staff relations at Sydney University in the 1850s" (working paper, Department of History, University of Sydney, 2008).
[26]Turney, *Grammar*, 31–32.

won a scholarship could retain the title "honorary scholar" while the deserving boy, who then received the monetary award, would remain anonymous. Increasingly, a number of boys also transferred to the school from the public schools.[27]

Sydney Grammar School was thus the first modern state-endowed grammar school in Australia. Its academic curriculum became an example for other secondary corporate schools of the various Church denominations which were now being established or reformed.[28] Of significance for the question of social access and scholarships, Sydney Grammar School became the inspiration for legislation in the northern colony of Queensland, which soon created a system of state and locally endowed grammar schools. The Queensland Grammar School Act 1860 was directly modelled on the Sydney Grammar School Act 1854. Sir Charles Nicholson, now President of the Legislative Council in Queensland, proposed a system of "public Grammar Schools" for "conferring on all classes and denominations" "the advantages of a regular and liberal course of education".[29]

The 10 Queensland grammar schools established under the 1860 Act without any mention of "religion and morality" were fully secular. They were established in the colonial capital Brisbane (1869) and in major regional centres inland such as Ipswich (1863) and Toowoomba (1875) and along the coast at Maryborough (1881), Rockhampton (1881), and Townsville (1888). The four independent girls' schools in Brisbane (1875), Maryborough (1885), Rockhampton (1892), and Ipswich (1892) were initially created as coeducational schools and then became single sex.[30] Whether these girls' schools should be academic in nature or more oriented to the social aspirations of parents would remain a matter of contention, particularly at Brisbane Girls' Grammar School.[31] But all these schools certainly had a competitive, meritocratic emphasis. The Act allowed for scholarships. Again it has been suggested this provision resulted from the continuing indirect influence of Woolley through his supporter Nicholson in his new role in Queensland.[32] Ipswich Grammar, the first school established, allowed for a number of scholarships in the 1860s. What evidence exists suggests that they were awarded to "children of the poorer classes", including the first scholarship holder, the "son of a bushman".[33] By 1873 a scholarship examination had been established throughout Queensland allowing students from the public elementary schools to sit for entrance into the city and regional grammar schools. Only a very small minority of students succeeded in gaining entry to the grammar schools through the scholarship exam, and there were continuing complaints that the exam served the interests of the urban or regional middle class rather than the poor. Overall, by the mid-1880s about 1% of students in Queensland elementary schools won scholarships.[34] But the exam did create a new demand and a supply of able students for the

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[27]Ibid., 28–65.

[28]Geoffrey Sherington, Bob Petersen and Ian Brice, *Learning to Lead*. Turney, *Grammar.*

[29]Nicholson quoted in Rupert Goodman, *Secondary Education in Queensland* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1960), 28.

[30]Ibid., 34–46. See also Martin Sullivan, "Fifty Years of Opposition to Queensland Grammar Schools," in *Melbourne Studies in Education*, ed. S. Murray-Smith (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1974), 181–221.

[31]Marjorie Theobald, *Knowing Women: Origins of Women's Education in Nineteenth Century Australia* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 91–113.

[32]Goodman, *Secondary Education in Queensland*, 73–75.

[33]Ibid., 76.

[34]Ibid., 93.

grammar schools with Brisbane Boys' Grammar School having over 40% of its enrolment on scholarships by the 1890s and Brisbane Girls 25%.[35] The exam also became a way of improving the academic standards of those intending to become pupil teachers.[36] And the scholarship exam did provide a way through the Queensland grammar schools into higher education. As Queensland did not have a university until the early twentieth century many potential students literally took the route south to Sydney or to Melbourne.

Widening the educational franchise

Within two decades of the foundation of the University of Sydney the application of the educational franchise had begun to widen. This occurred for a number of reasons. First, the university established public examinations designed initially to influence the curriculum and academic standards of secondary schools but also to serve as entry tests into both the university and paid occupations. Second, through a series of bursaries and other measures the university established closer relations with the emerging public school system in both the city and rural areas. Finally, the University of Sydney moved to extend educational opportunities for females culminating in the admission of women in 1881, following the precedents established by the New Zealand university colleges and Adelaide University in the colony of South Australia in admitting women from their foundations in the late 1860s and early 1870s. All these measures widened the educational franchise beyond its original ambit.

The context for much of this change was the general social perception that the university had failed to fulfil its original promise of appealing to a wide section of the population. Whereas the University of Melbourne had early established professional schools, the University of Sydney, partly under the influence of Woolley, concentrated on a general and classical curriculum. In 1876, Hercules Robinson, the Governor of New South Wales, pointed out that in Scotland one in 1000 of the population attended university, in Germany one in 2500, in the Australian colony of Victoria one in 4300, but in New South Wales only one in 10,000.[37] Caution is required in using these figures since Robinson was comparing total populations, rather than the more relevant populations of university-age young men, where Australia's immigrant colonies had very different demographic contours from those of Scotland and Germany: the figures helped him to make a political point that Sydney University was failing the citizens of New South Wales. By the 1870s, a little over a generation after the establishment of Australia's first public universities, the "social mix" that had in the 1850s shaken up previous preconceptions of who should be educated at university, now looked stale and conservative. The new generation of university academic-administrators sought to change this, and were determined to extend the educational franchise in new directions.

Associated with this generational "shake-up" was Charles Badham who had replaced Woolley as professor of classics following the latter's death at sea. Like Woolley, Badham was in the mould of the headmaster-don. Unlike Woolley, his own education was far from conventional. He had been educated at Pestalozzi's school,

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[35] Ibid., 97.
[36] Ibid., 78–107.
[37] Alan Barcan, *Two Centuries of Education in New South Wales* (Kensington: University of New South Wales, 1988), 130.

Yverdun, in Switzerland, before attending Eton and then Oxford. Considered the "first Greek Scholar of the day", including networks with Continental scholars, his ordination in the Church of England should have assured him a position at Oxbridge, denied, it seems, by his close association with dissenters. In 1854 he had been appointed headmaster of Birmingham and Edgbaston Proprietary School, the school founded by Unitarians with the aim of providing a good general education for boys for business (with the Unitarians also being in the forefront of supporting educational opportunities for women).[38] Whereas Woolley was focused on a male elite, Badham was interested in widening social access. Initially, looking to the student body itself, he recognised that many students discontinued their studies for lack of funds to cover basic living expenses. In homes where there were expectations of adult children contributing to the household's living wage the pressures for giving up study must have been immense. As part of these aims, he persuaded the university to award bursaries to provide financial assistance to country students. Rather than being awarded on the basis of competition like scholarships, bursaries were to be awarded by the Chancellor on the grounds of financial need for assistance without which students would be unable to attend university.[39] After all, the continuation of their studies was already subject to annual examination results.

Badham was also committed to extending the educational franchise in ways that complemented increasingly democratic impulses within colonial society. Elsewhere in Australasia the newly founded University College of Canterbury in Christchurch in New Zealand (1870) and the University of Adelaide (1874) in South Australia had been established as civic institutions in city centres, catering to office workers and others who could literally walk across the street to attend evening lectures. Evening lectures introduced at the University of Sydney in the 1850s were a failure even though the University of Sydney was still then in the centre of the city. Badham pressed for their re-introduction in his commemoration address in 1871; by 1883 he had convinced the university. Begun in 1884, just after Badham had died, evening lectures particularly attracted many school teachers from the public schools. Within a decade, evening students made up one-third of students in the Faculty of Arts.[40]

Widening access was most clearly achieved through the public examination system which the University of Sydney now established. The university had from its beginning conducted entry examinations, which became the basis for a school's curriculum for those intending to enter university. In this sense, from the early 1850s, the matriculation examinations of Australian universities were a form of leaving certificate examination for secondary schools.[41] But a public examination system was far more ambitious: no longer simply catering for university-bound students, it was a means to examine all pupils at certain stages in their schooling. The examinations determined what schools taught, examination results were used to rank pupils, and the rankings became a means of entry into the public service, the teaching profession, universities, and other public institutions.

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[38]D. Pike, ed., *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1969), 3: 68–71. See also Turney, Chippendale and Bygott, *Australia's First*, 144–45.
[39]Roderic Campbell, "'The modest hospitality of a scholar': Badham and the first bursaries," *Record* (Sydney: University of Sydney, 2005): 13–22.
[40]Turney, Chippendale and Bygott, *Australia's First*, 1: 188–93.
[41]P.W. Musgrave, *From Humanity to Utility Melbourne University and Public Examinations 1856–1964* (Melbourne: ACER, 1992).

The system was based in part on the Oxford and Cambridge "middle class" examinations established in 1857–1858 to improve the curriculum of endowed grammar schools in England.[42] As early as 1859, the Reverend Frederick Armitage, the headmaster of The King's School, the first Church corporate school established in Australia but then with few students, proposed to a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry that the university impose its influence "in the way in which Oxford and Cambridge now exert themselves – by middle class examinations".[43] In 1864, Woolley himself had written to his former student and now friend, W.C. Windeyer, proposing that "the middle class examinations be established throughout the country". Windeyer later conveyed this idea to the Senate, the governing body of the university.[44] In 1867, following the initiative of Windeyer, the University of Sydney established Junior and Senior exams with relevant by-laws and regulations at a special meeting of Senate held after Badham had arrived and assumed the office of principal.[45] The exams came to define academic standards for students and future teachers. Passes in Latin and one foreign language at the Senior Exam also allowed for matriculation to the university but until the 1880s failure rates in these subjects remained high.[46]

What further assisted the acceptance and expansion of the university was the overall growth of public education. The 1866 Public Schools Act in New South Wales created a Council of Education to oversee the existing denominational schools receiving state aid and have the authority to establish and maintain "public schools". Even before the passage of this Act, there was clear evidence that parts of the urban middle class preferred state schools over Church schools because they offered better and more efficient instruction.[47] By the early 1870s the balance had shifted towards the secular public schools. In 1867, 55% of pupils in Council schools were in denominational schools; by 1872, only 38% were.[48] The urban public school with the best performance in the public exams soon became Fort Street in the centre of Sydney – a school which prepared future teachers.[49] But with the university also establishing regional examination centres, from 1870 a number of rural public schools entered their students for the public exams.

Between 1875 and 1879 the most successful of the rural public schools at the public exams was Kiama Public School about 60 miles south of Sydney on the coast. The first head teacher of this public school, which opened in 1871, was J.G. Stewart, who held a science degree from the University of Glasgow and was also parliamentary representative for the area from 1871 to 1874. His successor H.G. Bent soon complained that parents expected a grammar school curriculum with success measured by results at the public examinations. And the exam route from Kiama led

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[42]John Roach*, Public Examinations in England 1850–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 1–102.
[43]Turney, Chippendale and Bygott, *Australia's First*, 1: 149.
[44]Turney, *Grammar*, 85.
[45]Turney, Chippendale and Bygott, *Australia's First*, 1: 150.
[46]E.W. Dunlop, "The Public High Schools of New South Wales 1883–1912," *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 51, Pt. 1 (1965), 62–63.
[47]Geoffrey Sherington and Craig Campbell, "Middle Class Formations and the Emergence of National Schooling," in *Transformations in Schooling Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Kim Tolley (New York: Macmillan Palgrave, 2007), 29.
[48]Barcan, *Two Centuries of Education,* 119.
[49]Ronald S. Horan, *Fort Street* (Sydney: Honeysett Publications, 1989), 55–84.

on to professional careers often via the university. A select list compiled in 1898 of 25 ex-Kiama Public Schools boys, all of whom had first studied under Stewart in 1871–1874, revealed at least two members of Parliament, a barrister, solicitor, medical practitioner, five bank managers, three members of the public service, and an inspector of schools.[50]

Badham and others attached to the university encouraged these developments, and were a substantial force in establishing the rural outreach of this newly developing public education system.[51] In 1876, a series of petitions to Parliament called for the establishment of "Colleges or Grammar or higher class schools, in all the principal cities of the Colony".[52] Two years later, William Windeyer, now the university's first representative in Parliament, introduced a motion calling for the establishment of "grammar schools at Maitland, Goulburn and Bathurst".[53] These actions came together in the New South Wales 1880 Public Instruction Act, which removed all state aid from denominational schools and gave greater educational authority to "superior" public schools, which did not charge fees but offered a stream of non-classical studies, and high schools with fees – separate schools for boys and girls in Sydney, and in the major rural centres of Bathurst, Goulburn, and Maitland.[54] The Sydney high schools survived; those at Bathurst and Goulburn soon folded because they charged fees and were in competition with local church corporate schools, which offered a similar curriculum. In contrast, the superior public schools, which had already been established by 1881, soon attracted a clientele because they charged minimal fees.[55]

The effect of the public exam system and the expansion of public education helped to transform the university. Enrolment grew from 76 in 1880 to 409 in 1890.[56] In size if not influence the antipodean University of Sydney could be compared to the later established University of California, where enrolment actually declined from 332 to 215 from 1879 to 1883 despite free tuition and a population larger than that of New South Wales; only in the 1890s did enrolment at the University of California grow to become 2906 at the turn of the century and while the University of Sydney suffered some effects of the 1890s Depression its enrolments were over 500 by 1900.[57]

We can see (Figure 5) how this overall widening of public education translated into the changing nature of university admissions by examining the scholarship system in the 1880s.

The large number of "unknowns" – where we have been unable to establish the father's occupations – means our conclusions at this stage are again tentative. But, as before, on the basis that the "educated classes" are more easily determined using common historical sources such as dictionaries of biographies and professional lists, a not unreasonable assumption is that the "unknowns" column should favour the

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[50]Winifred Mitchell and Geoffrey Sherington, "Families and Children in Nineteenth Century Illawarra," in *Families in Colonial Australia*, ed. P. Grimshaw, C. McConville and E. McEwen (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), 109.
[51]In the historiography, the NSW Premier, Henry Parkes, is usually portrayed as the major force in developing the public education system, with no reference to the effort of Badham and other university men: Barcan, *Two Centuries of Education.*
[52]Dunlop, "The Public High Schools of New South Wales 1883–1912," 60.
[53]Ibid.
[54]Ibid., 64.
[55]Ibid., 64–74; Barcan, *Two Centuries of Education*, 142.
[56]Ibid.
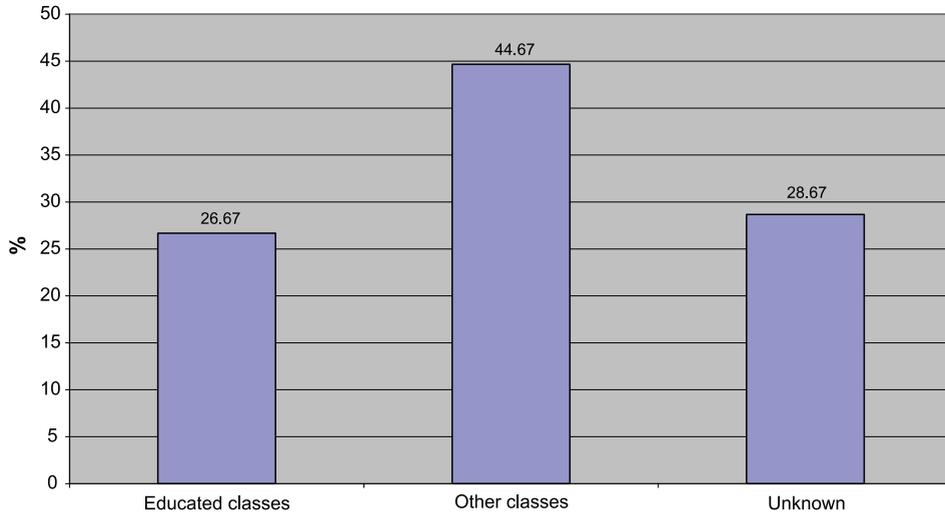[57]Douglass, *Conditions of Admission*, 28–29; Turney, Chippendale and Bygott, *Australia's First*, 642.

Figure 5. Social origins of scholarship holders 1880–1889.
Source: R. Campbell, comp., USyd Student Database.

"other classes". Even if the "unknowns" were distributed evenly between the two columns, the results show a marked increase in the number of students from backgrounds where university education was the exception rather than the rule. Fathers of 10% of the scholarship-holders were from the clerical classes, largely employed in the public service. Fathers of 15% worked in skilled and unskilled trades and labour: labourers, small farmers, boiler-plate rollers, tanners, and bootmakers were all represented amongst the fathers of scholarship-holders. Some 20% of fathers worked in mercantile and commercial occupations, almost a third of whom were small storekeepers. Ideals for "opening up" the university to those from all classes were now realised in more tangible ways than when the university first professed them three decades before.

The educational franchise can be shown to have grown in other directions. Of particular note was the increasing number of students from rural districts. Whereas minimal numbers of rural students attended the university in the 1850s, 20 years later this had begun to change. With the university's move to support exam centres in rural districts and agitate for the establishment and support of rural public schools, by the 1880s over 20% of scholarship-holders now came from outside a metropolitan centre. This percentage under-represented the total rural population, yet was a significant increase on earlier periods.

The establishment of public high schools (including the superior public high schools) widened the educational franchise throughout the colonial population more generally. About 15% of the scholarship holders matriculated from public schools, and a further 10% from Queensland urban and rural state-endowed grammar schools. Of the rest, at least 20%, but probably 30% if not more, were initially educated in public schools before moving to another school, such as Sydney Grammar, often on scholarship, for a year or two before sitting for the public examinations. At least 50% of the university scholarship-holders, but probably 60%, had spent the majority of their school years at a public school in contrast to under 9% who had only been educated at a corporate school or private academy. The remaining scholarship holders

were divided as follows: 24% from the non-denominational Sydney Grammar School; 14% from Sydney Catholic schools; and a very small percentage at the corporate Anglican schools, the Kings' School or a private academy run by an Anglican clergy-man. Sydney Grammar School and also the Catholic schools such as St Joseph's or the Methodist Newington College had scholarships in place, and all took in pupils from public schools. These figures are substantially different from the early 1850s when the scholarship holders came predominantly from Anglican-affiliated schools.[58]

The final development which affected the extension of the educational franchise in this period was the increasing educational opportunities for women. Again Badham was instrumental in two related developments. From 1871, women, and specifically schoolgirls, were allowed to sit the public examinations. As at the University of Melbourne, which allowed females to sit its matriculation exam from 1871, this move was initially designed to improve educational standards for girls' schools rather than widen social access.[59] One of the first group of schools to take advantage of this were the Catholic convent schools, which adopted an academic curriculum to attract a middle-class clientele, some of whom were Protestant parents. The second group was made up of private academies often established by women who had associations with higher education in Australia or overseas. Emily Baxter had been a pupil teacher employed by the Council of Education established under the 1866 Public Schools Act. She had then been a correspondence student in classics with Badham. By 1874 she had opened her own Argyle school with an academic curriculum. By 1884, the school had achieved a number of passes in the public exams and the Fairfax prize for female success in the Junior Examination.[60] An earlier established private academic academy was the Cambridge School, established in 1867, which also now prepared its students for the public exams.[61] By the late 1870s a group of women educated at the University of Cambridge had arrived in Sydney and were opening private academies. The best known were the two Clarke sisters, Ellen and Marion, who founded two schools, Normanhurst and Abbotsleigh, in the early 1880s. Marion had been educated partly in Germany and in University College Bristol as well as being awarded honours at the Cambridge Higher Local Examinations in 1880. By 1876, more than a third of the candidates at the Senior Exam were female, and one-fifth at the Junior. But pass rates for women were lower than for males, indicating the still "deficient" standards in girls' schools.[62]

The most significant academic girls' school in Sydney was Sydney Girls' High School established under the 1880 Act. In some ways it was a female version of Sydney Grammar School although there was a complementary Sydney Boys' High School, which initially existed alongside the Girls' School in the same building. Fee-paying but with provision for scholarships, Sydney Girls' High soon placed a focus on academic attainments and examination success. Sydney Girls' High was also oriented towards the emerging public school system of which it was a part. Girls had to sit entrance exams and scholarship and later bursaries were awarded on the results. Professor Badham presided at the opening ceremony in 1883, where the

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[58]R. Campbell, comp., "USyd Student Database".

[59]Theobald, *Knowing Women,* 60–61.

[60]Noeline Kyle, *Her Natural Destiny; The Education of Women in New South Wales* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1986), 101.

[61]Ibid., 160.

[62]Barcan, *Two Centuries of Education in New South Wales*, 134.

first scholarships were awarded "not as a charity but as a distinction". Those who passed the entrance exams but could not afford to pay could seek remission of fees.[63] Sydney Girls' High School soon became a female model of meritocracy in action.[64]

And beyond females sitting for exams was entry to the university. Douglass has pointed out that the decision to admit women to the University of California was made as early as 1871; within a decade there were 62 out of a total undergraduate enrolment of 244, though most enrolled in nursing and teacher training programmes rather than attempting to cross the daunting barrier raised by male faculty to study traditional university subjects.[65] It has also been suggested for Australia that, in contrast to Britain, state funding of universities as well as democratic liberal principles allowed for a generally easier extension of the educational franchise to females.[66] And there were always the examples across the Tasman Sea of the University of Otago (1869) and the University College of Canterbury (1870), which admitted women at their inception.[67] At the University of Melbourne a woman tried to matriculate to the University of Melbourne as early as 1871. But when the University of Adelaide opened in 1874 women just turned up and were welcomed into classes even if they had not matriculated. Women students were a source of fee income, but there was also a strong commitment to higher education amongst many of the professors.[68] At the University of Sydney, Badham, who had associations with Unitarianism, was a supporter of women's access to university. The Chancellor, Sir William Manning, also promoted the women's higher education movement. Women's admission was formally approved in 1881 with the first matriculants commencing in 1882.[69]

Elsewhere, in Australia and North America many of these early women matriculants and later graduates were pursuing careers, often in teaching, but also in other professions such as medicine. Even if they did not have scholarships women students sometimes came from family backgrounds with fathers who were in the lower ranked but educated professions. Isola Florence Thompson, the daughter of a public school teacher, was one of the first two graduates from the University of Sydney; she made her career teaching at Sydney Girls' High. The other, Mary Elizabeth Brown, was the daughter of a Methodist clergyman; she also began in teaching at Brisbane Girls' Grammar School, before returning to Sydney to help her father write his autobiography.[70]

Conclusion

From 1850, universities in Australia were founded on the principle of a "social contract" with the "people": enacted by the state they were also publicly funded, and much was made of social class and religious faith not being a barrier to admission.

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[63]Theobald, *Knowing Women*, 122.
[64]Helen Proctor, "Gender and merit: A history of coeducation and gender at an academically selective public secondary school, Parramatta High, New South Wales, 1913–1958" (Ph.D. diss., University of Sydney, 2004).
[65]Douglass, *Conditions for Admission*, 21–22.
[66]Theobald, *Knowing Women*, 55–56.
[67]W.J. Gardner, *Colonial Cap and Gown* (Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1979).
[68]Theobald, *Knowing Women*, 55–64.
[69]Turney, Chippendale and Bygott, *Australia's First*, 183–88.
[70]Ibid., 186. See also Theobald, *Knowing Women*, 55.

Australian universities were to be institutions that, through scholarships and fee subsidies (and later, bursaries), as well as night-time lectures and other innovations, were intended to provide a cost-effective higher education to equip graduates for future public or professional service. The "contract" was to provide for the education of citizens who would then return the "service" by contributing their civic and professional knowledge to maintaining and strengthening the social fabric. The public university in Australia was an investment in a colony's future.

The idea of the "social contract" is useful in defining the purpose of public universities. But, often, such defined purposes did not match the realities of who was admitted to university to reap the rewards of a higher education. University admission policies could create illusions of meritocracy while socially privileged groups continued to be more likely to gain admission. The idea of the "educational franchise", however, shows how this contract was often limited at the foundation of a public university, despite proclamations of "open to all", yet extended to the "people" in stages. In this sense, the "educational franchise" helps to explain the "social contract" through examination of the admission processes.

Enacted and funded by the state, the Australian public university was established prior to the full creation of public school systems in the Australian colonies. Through the early development of notions of educational franchise, the university helped to define the meaning of "public education" in nineteenth-century Australia. Despite a "social contract" to admit people by academic selection rather than social class or religious belief, in the early years the franchise was often self-limiting. In the absence of a public education system that extended the type of curriculum required for university admission, many children were excluded from sitting for matriculation examinations, especially those from the lower social classes, as well as those from outside metropolitan regions, and, of course, Aboriginal children. The franchise was also limited because of social prejudice against the education of girls. Yet, in the 1850s, we can see the beginnings of the University of Sydney's social contract, with a wider educational franchise than then existed in the majority of English or North American universities, one where the numbers of Anglicans were at least matched by the numbers of other faiths, and those from the "educated" classes were outnumbered by those from other social classes. Rather than reproducing privilege, from the beginning, the university had some success, on the basis of academic selection, in creating privilege anew.

So, even in its early stages, the university created a powerful discourse around notions of "public" with promises of an education partially or fully funded by the state. The examination system was crucial to this conceptualisation. It determined admission as well as the award of scholarships and, later, the admission to evening lectures and for bursaries on the basis of need. Such state benevolence helped shape a new tradition of collective public responsibility of these "educated citizens", a sense of public duty to return in kind some of what they had been given as students of a public university. And with new generations of university academics and administrators, there were often renewed efforts to extend the educational franchise further in order to satisfy the promise of the "social contract", though none has ever successfully addressed the question of Indigenous inclusion. In Australia, from the 1870s these subsequent generations sought to establish a public system of education in which universities had a central role in examining school students for many walks of life, including the public service, universities, and technical colleges. This newly envisaged system, in which the universities were crucial, reached further into rural districts

and outlying towns, and for the first time, began to educate girls on a similar basis to boys and encouraged the same meritocratic principles for the admission to university. A university's "social contract" will often promise more than it achieves. But coupled with the idea of the "educational franchise" the two together can help enlightened university leaders to keep up with the challenge of trying to prevent universities from becoming bastions only for the socially privileged.

Acknowledgements

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