Abstract

In this thesis, I analyse justifications for preferential admission to citizenship based upon ethno-cultural grounds. My point of departure is the puzzling observation that, in matters of membership, states not only differentiate between citizens and foreigners, but also between different categories of foreigners, as well as between different categories of citizens. In the first part of this work, I explore possible justifications for boundaries of membership. I look into arguments of justice, nationalism, liberalism and democracy in order to identify principles for demarcating boundaries and for assessing various claims of inclusion/exclusion. In the second part, I address more specific questions related to the regulation of admission to citizenship. For this purpose, I examine a set of concrete rules of citizenship presently enforced by 27 EU countries.

My proposal is to overcome the boundary problem by shifting the focus from the constitution of the boundary towards policies of boundary making. I affirm the principle of general openness of membership that is intended to provide normative corrections to the actual structure of boundaries. Against the common view that perceives citizenship as a fruit that is soft on the inside and hard on the outside, I argue that citizenship should be seen as soft on the inside and even
softer on the outside. In order to respond to different claims of admission, I suggest breaking up the unitary concept of citizenship and distinguishing between legal, political, and identity memberships. This proposal is not meant to weaken or devaluate citizenship, but to reaffirm its essentially political value. By rejecting ideas of automatic and inherited citizenship and by insisting upon democratic recognition and commitment to political membership, I aim at recasting admission to citizenship as a transformative process through which individuals not merely receive membership but become members in a political community.

**Jury:** Rainer Bauböck (EUI) (Supervisor), Ruth Rubio Marín (EUI), Joseph Carens (University of Toronto) (via videolink), David Owen (University of Southampton) (via videolink)

**Bio**

Costica Dumbrava wrote a PhD thesis on normative justifications for citizenship regulations (EUI). He has previously completed a master degree in European Union Studies (Leiden U.) and a master degree and in Nationalism Studies (CEU). He has been evolved as citizenship expert in several research projects at EUDO Citizenship Observatory (RSCAS, EUI). His main research interests lie in applied normative theory, especially with regard to issues such as citizenship, migration, nationalism, and European integration.