

I. THESIS PROJECT:

Economic Effects of Granting Rights upon the Welfare State:

The object of my research, what I wish to ascertain, are *the economic effects upon the Welfare State of granting rights to immigrants*. Thus, my independent variable is the granting of rights to immigrants, and my dependent one is the economic effects that this has upon the Welfare State.

This research topic has been motivated by the increasing theoretical and political salience of the issues and problems associated with immigration and with the way to deal with it. The answers and the reactions to these challenges vary widely. In one extreme of the spectre, we may find, say, the discourse of radical right-wing parties, which emphasize the adverse consequences of immigration, and which have received increasing support in some countries in Europe in the last years.

In the opposite extreme of the spectre, there is a series of proposals, usually related to a Human Rights perspective, which claims for greater integration of immigrants and which, in its most radical versions, demands the granting of not only the possibility of moving transnationally, but of the status of citizenship, which grants the largest range of rights to those who hold it.

The importance of such proposals is so profound that I believe that it is convenient to assemble all the possible arguments for and against them, which, ultimately, means to assemble all the possible arguments in favour and against immigration and the granting of rights to immigrants. I have decided to focus on a particular type of positive implications, those of economic nature. Since even this is too big a field of study, I have reflected upon which are the most important areas where there might be consequences of economic nature, and I have reached the conclusion that labour markets and Welfare States are two among the most

important ones. Given that labour markets have been more thoroughly studied in this respect, I have decided to focus on Welfare States.

Getting more precise with the independent variable:

My central independent variable, as I have often referred to it thus far, is the flexibilization in the treatment of the phenomenon of immigration and/or in the concession of rights to the non-citizens / immigrants. Nevertheless, decisions with respect to immigration are not the same as those regarding the concession of rights or of citizenship. There exist, in principle, three different alternatives:

1) to focus on the “facilitation of the access of immigrants, independently of their status (let’s call it ‘FLEX-IMMIGRATION’). The precise, practical meaning of this variable is complex and somewhat diffuse, both from a theoretical perspective and, especially, regarding its practical measures. The “facilitation of the access of immigrants “is not a directly measurable variable; I could try to approach to it by conceiving it as a latent variable, directly unobservable, but measurable through a series of measures of it. These measures would be constituted by observable variables which, theoretically, should impinge upon the latent variable (upon the facilitation of the access of immigrants).

The most important way of facilitating it is by making it easier for immigrants to gain territorial access to the receiving country. It may be thought that one of the most obvious ways of facilitating such access is by means of the establishment of bilateral treaties with countries that “export labour factor”.¹ Perhaps a different

¹ For what I have managed to read up to the moment, this procedure has been especially important in the epoch of high economic growth of the 1960s, in which Germany, England and France, among other countries, embarked in active policies of promotion of immigration (think, for instance, about the system of ‘guestworkers’ in Germany, mainly from Turkey) Another area in which this system has been very active is that of China, and of some countries of the Southeast of Asia, such as Korea, which, interested in exporting labor, reached agreements with other, richer countries of the area (and of the Persian Gulf, especially somewhat later, after the boom in oil prices), in which there were important scarcities of labor.

version of this mechanism would be by means of policies which permitted and incentivated the coming of students. Yet another option would be by making it easier to get to the country as a refugee. Another of the ways is related with the diminution of the mechanisms of control of illegal immigration; although there exist more or less reliable measures (depending on the case) of the size and of the nature of such immigration, I suppose that it would be difficult to measure the degree of informal “permissivity” of this type of immigration (as well as the establishment of a threshold of illegal immigration or of control with which to compare the existing levels).² Finally, immigration may result ‘facilitated’ to the extent to which rights were conceded to immigrants, an issue which is related with the second alternative.³

It should be noted that, in spite of being theoretically possible to measure a latent theoretical variable as those which interest me here, this requires, in practice, to dispose of some type of data which permit to establish the magnitude of the measurement variables, and this is not always results possible; in fact, I fear that, in the case of these variables, it would result quite difficult – or impossible – to dispose of such data. Moreover, even if I disposed of such data, it is probable that they were of bad quality and difficult to compare in time and in space; the more imperfect these measures were, the more error it would be introduced in the measurement of the latent variable. I actually fear that the measurement would be of so low a quality – it would introduce so much error – that it would be of little help.

2) to focus on the “facilitation or flexibilization of the concession of rights to such immigrants, or ‘non-citizens’ “; It should be noted that, in this case, such rights tend to be associated to different status (let’s call this variable “FLEX-RIGHTS-STATUS”); and

² It would be, moreover, difficult to measure the mechanism of control in itself. In some cases, it may center in the immigrants themselves; in others, in the firms that contract them, for instance.

³ However, in the second alternative, the rights are the proposed independent variable; here, they are a measure of the ‘flexibilization’ in the treatment of immigration. Note that, here, it would be necessary to relate the effects of the rights conceded – the measures – to the facilitation of immigration – the measured variable –, a task which does not seems to be anything close to easy, if doable at all.

3) to focus on the “facilitation of the access to the specific status of citizenship”, the more ‘generous’ in terms of associated rights, rather than in specific rights that may be acceded to via different statuses (let’s call this variable “DE-NATIONALIZATION”).⁴

Recapitulating: it seems that there are three alternative ways of concreting the formulation of my central independent variable: 1) ‘FLEX-IMMIGRATION’); 2) FLEX-RIGHTS-STATUS); and 3) “DE-NATIONALIZATION”. The option in favour of one or another alternative will be conditioned by the choice of a concrete object of study. But, irrespectively of which may be the chosen alternative, the usage of these variables will be problematic, given the following reasons.

In the first place, the concrete meaning of each of the alternatives is, probably, very complex and debatable. I suppose that researchers who work with these concepts write whole thesis on how important it is to define properly these terms, and how relevant it is to distinguish between this or that one of them. And they will surely be right, but, in any case, getting deeply involved in those discussions is not the most adequate strategy for the object of my research. In the second place, the meaning of each of these terms probably tends to travel quite badly in time and space, an issue which is concreted in a complicated legal casuistic which is, foreseeably, plenty of exceptions.

In any case, for what interests me for this research, ¿what do I gain precisely from using these terms instead of referring to the more simple and straightforward one of “accessibility to the benefits of the nationals, in terms of participation in the labour market, social coverage, etc”? By clinging to this variable of accessibility (let’s call it ‘ACCESS’), I gain in simplicity of my argument – and in clarifying what is that that I am studying to those who are not experts in these questions.

⁴ Obviously, it would be possible to focus instead in any other status, such as “permanent residence”, instead of in citizenship.

In effect: It should be noted that, for example, the access to the nationality in USA is a very complicated matter, but that the participation in the labour market isn't that much (it is somewhat as well, of course!). The idea is to see which type of rights facilitate or make it more difficult the access to the labour market (or to the benefits and the obligations of the Welfare State), in spite of focusing the attention in statuses, such as citizenship.

More generally, as I am studying (certain types of) economic consequences, I should look for the rights (perhaps, "net of duties") that can lead to this type of consequences, rather independently from the fact that the access to such rights depended on the possession of the status of citizenship, of residence, or of any other type of status. Statuses, in the end, may be conceived of as "packages" or sets of rights, contingent in time and space, and with effects upon multiple variables, most of which unrelated with my dependent variable.⁵ It seems more relevant to look at the direct consequences of rights, which should be the driving motion of causal mechanisms, than to grant too much attention to statuses, the total effect of which depends, among other things, on which particular "package" of rights enters in each status.

In the light of the previous discussion, I will stick to this "accessibility to the benefits of the nationals, in terms of social coverage, participation in the labour market, etc", that is, to the "*granting of rights to immigrants or non-citizens*" (= 'ACCESS') as my key independent variable. The object of the next section is to start to work in the relationship between this key independent variable and the dependent variable.

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⁵ Statuses may be understood as much more than that (see my footnote on citizenship and nationality, two sections later), but it is in this sense that they interest me here for the purpose of this project.

The object of my research, what I wish to ascertain, are *the economic effects upon the Welfare State of granting rights to immigrants*. My intention is to set up a series of steps, each of which should be as straightforward and simple as possible, in order to design the strategy of trying to provide and answer to this issue.

Step 1: Nearly by definition, the economic effects of any variable upon the Welfare State will be a function of the effect upon its *expenses* and upon its *revenues*. Naturally, this holds also for the issue that interests me here, the economic effects of granting rights to immigrants.

Step 2: In order to study the economic effects of any variable upon the expenses and revenues of the Welfare State, it will be necessary to have some knowledge of the main expenditures and sources of revenue of the Welfare State. Again, this holds also for the issue of granting rights to immigrants.

Step 3: The main expenditures Welfare State divide into *expenditures* directly made in *cash* and expenditures via subsidized or free *services*. The main expenditures directly in cash are unemployment benefits and retirement pensions, to which some other, usually second-order ones may be added, as a minimum income wage, or as an allocation to mothers just after birth, to families for their children, etcetera. The main expenditures in services stem from the health and education system, although there are also other chapters, usually of a much smaller order. The main source of revenue of revenue of the Welfare State is taxation, either directly linked to some of the benefits, as it is the case with social contributions, or from other sources.⁶

Step 4: In order to study the economic effects of granting rights to immigrants upon these expenses and revenues of the Welfare State, it will be necessary to

⁶ I have not studied this in detail yet, since an impressionistic idea suffices for the present purposes, and since, moreover, I do not consider it one of the most difficult tasks, where I would need more help now.

define more accurately these rights and the link between them and the sources of expenditures and revenues outlined above.

Step 5: In any case, Step 3 provides us with useful hints as to the granting of which kind of rights should be necessary (though most possibly not sufficient) to study, i.e.: it provides us directly with hints of some potentially relevant rights and with the link between them and the sources of expenditures and revenues outlined above. To start with, we should think of the right to unemployment benefits, to retirement pensions, to a minimum income wage, to allocations for child-birth, to allocations for children, to access to the education system, to access to health services, etcetera. We should also think of the right to work, since this has an impact upon their contributions.

Before advancing more, some comments are in order:

Comment 1: It is important to notice that some variables have effects that spread among more than one period. Some of these variables that have lasting economic effects upon the Welfare State will have a certain effect upon the expenses and revenues of the Welfare State in time t , and a different effect upon them at time $t+1$. In the case I am concerned with here, it is very likely that granting certain rights to immigrants will have lasting effects, among other reasons because many rights last several periods. It is very likely as well that their effects upon the expenses and revenues of the Welfare State vary in time, so it may be necessary to take into account different time-horizons, such as the short and the long run.

Comment 2: To the extent that Welfare States differ among each other in the nature, absolute size and relative size of the various sources of their revenues and expenditures, we will be very likely to expect theoretically different effects of granting the same rights for 'different Welfare States', that is to say, we should most possibly

expect that the effects differ both across countries and along time.⁷ To the extent that there exist appropriate data to do it, it should be possible to test empirically any theoretical prediction of this kind.

Comment 3: Given that holding formally a right does not necessarily translate into the effective usage of it (f. eg.: having the right to an unemployment benefit does not translate into 'enjoying' the right unless one is actually unemployed⁸), to the extent that different individuals (and groups of individuals) have a different propensity to making effective use of the rights they hold, we should most possibly expect theoretically that the economic effects upon the Welfare State of granting rights to immigrants should differ among individuals (and groups or 'types' of individuals).⁹ To the extent that there exist appropriate data to do it, it should be possible to test empirically any theoretical prediction of this kind.¹⁰

Comment 4: Sometimes, we should think not only of the rights that may be directly used by the individual, but of rights that may be used by his or her associates, most specially their family: in effect, the right to education, for instance, may be important both personally and for the relatives who have moved with them, and, indeed, one of the rights that *may* bring along more costs to the Welfare State is that of family re-unification, since it opens the door to children using the public education system, of elderly using the public health service, and so on. Sometimes, we should think of how the rights allocated to an immigrant have an economic impact upon the Welfare State through interaction with already-citizens: this is the case, for example, of the right to work, where the expected increase in revenues via

⁷ Given that the nature, absolute size and relative size of the various sources of revenues and expenditures of Welfare States differ both across countries and along time.

⁸ And perhaps not even in this case, if the right to unemployment is tied to certain requisites. But this is not interesting for the argument, thus I abstract from it now.

⁹ Given that the nature, absolute size and relative size of the various sources of the revenues and expenditures of Welfare States differ both across countries and along time.

¹⁰ This is quite important, since I expect that there will be many studies pointing to the importance of, say, the origin, gender or age of migrants. Thus, taking this into account may allow me to dialogue with these studies. [*I have not been able yet to check whether this literature actually exists.]

contributions should be netted of (or complement) by the substitution (complementary) effect upon local work and, thus, local contributions.

In the previous section, I defended my option of focusing on the impact of granting rights to immigrants (=ACCESS) instead of in any other of the alternatives I had considered. In this section, I argued it would be necessary to define more accurately these rights and the link between them and the sources of expenditures and revenues of the Welfare State, which I outlined just above. I moreover gave an initial idea of some of the rights that, a priori, seem at any rate interesting to study.

Now, even if the focus is in rights (instead of in statuses, for instance), rights tend to be susceptible of being acquired depending, among other things, on statuses. Different statuses grant different sets of rights. Thus, in order to study rights properly, it will be necessary to survey, at least, which are the rights that are associated to different statuses. This will be the goal of the next section. Moreover, this coming section will be necessary in order to understand and model in a proper way the effects pointed out in the literature, which, in many cases, will deal with statuses instead of with specific rights.

Statuses and Rights: a Focus on the Condition of Citizenship:

The aim of this section is to survey which are the rights that are associated to different statuses. With this goal, I will try to define with precision the properties – in terms of rights – of the most relevant statuses. I will show here how I have dealt with this with regard to citizenship.¹¹

¹¹ The only one in which I have been able to work on for the time being. Notice that this task would have also been necessary if the focus would have been in statuses rather than in rights. In order to research upon the potential or supposed (economic) effects of, say, citizenship upon the Welfare State (notice: this would have been precisely the idea if I had chosen to focus on “DENATIONALIZATION”) a *necessary prerequisite* would have been as well to *define the properties of*

Let us *define* the properties of citizenship in terms of rights. The fundamental here is to see which (marginal) rights are associated to citizenship.¹² As long as there is variance in marginal rights, it is to be expected that there will be variance in the effects of a given status, given that it is these rights which give place to effects and to causal mechanisms related both with respect to 1) their economic consequences; and to 2) the decisions of conceding them or not.¹³

The main task of this section is to inquire about the source of the marginal value (in terms of rights) of citizenship for those who possess it.¹⁴ Notice that, with regard to the economic effects upon the Welfare State, this apparent switch in focus towards the potential receivers of grants is justified, in that we should expect effects upon the expenditures and revenues of the Welfare State from the granting of rights inasmuch as the effect of receiving those rights for the individuals who receive them have to do with access to entitlements linked to the Welfare State, either via expenditures (rights of enjoying transferences or services from the Welfare State) or via revenues (rights of generating revenues which, to some extent, are bound to be taxed to finance the Welfare State). Therefore, it is unavoidable to pay attention to the (marginal) contribution in rights for the potential receiver. Let us, then, inquire about the source of the marginal value (in terms of rights) of citizenship for those who possess it:

citizenship.

¹² The same strategy should be followed for other statuses.

¹³ Granting citizenship to foreigners does not only impinge on the dimension of rights. Such a granting constitutes, at least partially, a (practical) disentangling of the concepts of citizenship and nationality. Thus, it constitutes an important issue or subject in the field of Political Theory, and a focus on citizenship may have called the attention for both a) citizenship (and its consequences); and b) the nation-state, nationality, and their (administrative) consequences.

A note is in order, however, regarding the “partial disentangling” to which I alluded before. Although citizenship tends to be intimately linked to nationality (understanding the latter as a political concept with administrative consequences), whereas nationality implies always the potential citizenship, it does not necessarily imply effective citizenship. This difference is manifested in the following cases: a) Restrictions to judicial capacity (or the capacity of acting): example: those in the minority of age; b) Dual Nationality (which entails the absence of protection in the territory of the other State of which one is national); c) Nationals of the Commonwealth (and similar situations); d) E.L.A. To this, some pathologies of the Nation-State, such as the de-nationalisation of the State (EU or similar) and its Externalisation (case of the “community of donors”), should also be added.

¹⁴ Notice that it will be these rights what will determine the possible causal paths which lead to the

Access to public positions

Access to the election (*)

Access to the status of public servant (*)

Access to justice (protection of rights) (**)

Access to public subventions (***)

Access to rights in third States (****)

(*): In 2) and in 3), it must be taken into account that there exist different levels. Some of them do not necessarily require the possession of the status of citizenship of the country (example: the citizens of other countries of the EU may accede to the election at the local level).

(**): In 4), it must be taken into account that there exist different types of trials; the access to the status of citizen can be crucial for a specific case among them: the penal one. Probably, there will be some variance among countries regarding the conditions of access to different levels of justice. It should be noted that the access to penal justice (which, generally, depends on the status of citizen) does probably have a certain impact upon public finances (although possibly not upon the Welfare State).

(***): In 5), it must be taken into account that that depends also on the nature of such subventions and, in concrete, of a) their object; b) their financial source; and c) the potential receiver of it. Many (public) subventions do not require the status of citizenship.

(****): In 6), one of the most clear examples is the case of the EU. It is pure ellucubration, since I do not know the legislation yet, but I have the impression that, whereas the residence in a State *j* of the Union does not usually bring along the right of residence in other States, the status of citizenship does confer that right.

Let us comment a little bit the relationship between these rights and their plausible effects, focusing the attention upon the likelihood that they are important in generating economic effects upon the Welfare State.

economic consequences derived from flexibilizing the access to the possession of citizenship.

Comment i: At first sight, it seems that what is “valuable” that is derived from the possession of *citizenship* is related with factors that only have economic consequences of second order (the *political access*, access to *penal justice*, or *certain public employments*¹⁵).

Comment ii: Therefore, *it is probable that the economic consequences of “ACCESS”, shown in Table.1 do not have much to do with citizenship; such consequences follow, probably, from other statuses, such as:*

Being contributor to taxes and to the social security.¹⁶

Holding the legal residence for a(n) (un)limited period of time.

Holding a license of work, of refugee, or even of tourism,

And, even, being in the situation of illegal immigration.¹⁷

Comment iii: For the same reason, and as a special case of the previous comment (since the economic consequences upon the Welfare State are a subset of the economic consequences pointed at in Table 1), *it is probable that the economic consequences of “ACCESS”, upon the Welfare State again have little to do with citizenship.*

Comment iv: More generally, it seems to follow that it would be interesting to focus a study in 1) the political consequences of the access to citizenship and, hence, 2) the process of political decisions regarding the facilitation (or strengthening) of the access to citizenship; or in 2) the economic consequences of the access to – say – residence.

Comment iv bis: It should be noted that, whereas it seems that it would not be so interesting to focus the study in 3) the economic consequences of the access to citizenship (for many of the things I mention, probably the *residence* will be much

¹⁵ Some of these rights may be economically important for the receiver, but it is unlikely – I suppose – that a substantial proportion of immigrant profit from them. Assuming this is true, it is even less likely that the fact that they have this right had a substantial effect upon members of the receiving country. A different issue would be, perhaps, if all immigrants were granted citizenship.

¹⁶ Note: this is related with the general theory of financial law, which I may have to consult.

¹⁷ Incidentally, it should be noted that it is perhaps this latter status the one that has a closer correlation

more important), it does seem plausible to believe that it could be potentially interesting to focus the study in 4) the political decision of flexibilizing the treatment of immigration in itself ('FLEX-IMMIGRATION'), or the access to other particular statuses.

Comment iv tris: The previous comments highlight a well-known point: the choice of different dependent variables strongly conditions – as it is usually the case – the appropriateness of the focus in different (even if closely related, as here) variables, and in different sources of evidence. One of the initial lessons from this preliminary mapping of the situation is that, most possibly, I should rather concentrate in reading literature regarding other statuses different than citizenship (to the extent that I will need to complement what I will be able to gather from literature directly dealing with rights).

The model:

The previous section should serve, when all the necessary work is done, to deepening touch with reality and allowing for theory to be well-grounded in empirical, existing rights. By surveying the rights that I may potentially study, I expect to be able to select the ones which are more relevant for the goals of this research.

Now, once I have those rights, I may choose to put forward a series of causal claims, each specific to a given right, linking its conferral (to certain individuals of certain types in certain polities at certain moments in time) to some expected effects upon the expenditures and/or revenues of (given) Welfare States. I may alternatively try to build a general model, apt to be applied to all or most of these rights, and then “fill it” in different ways with the aid of what I have learned about some of the particularities of each of them.

with social exclusion, poverty and crime, where those correlations are found.

This latter option is the one that attracts me by far more than the other. Although I cannot know at this stage how such a model may look like, I have already played a bit with concepts and ideas that, a priori, seem to me abstract enough so that they may be likely to be applied to a wide range of rights. Thus, I can suggest a **tentative** first illustration of the model I will perhaps attempt to construct.

I will construct a simple model of rights in which a right to access to certain benefits of the Welfare State has a value of V (which I will initially suppose constant and equal for all those who enjoy the right), where V will be equal to the value of the 'net right', i.e.; to the value of the right in itself minus the cost of the duties associated to holding such a right. In this simplest model, I will assume that it will be possible to maintain only a number of holders equal or smaller to X (which I will also assume, for the moment, to be constant), in order for that right to keep on being valuable.

I will then point to the dependency that X imposes to the level of rigor in the requisite of access to that right (in connection with the value of that right), and I will comment how would those criteria translate in the case that access only took into account the degree of cultural integration or integrability, as well as the adverse effects that such a system would be likely to have upon immigrants and refugees from distant cultures.

Next, I will enrich the model by dropping assumptions and augmenting the number of variables. For instance, I will accept that V be no more constant for all individuals, a modification which would imply that the curve of demand of the good "right of country x " would depend on each individual.¹⁸ I will work further in this line of thinking and analyse some of the factors susceptible of affecting the value that each actor assigns to the right (such as the cultural distance, the value of a similar right in the country of origin, the age and gender, etc.), with the aim of discussing the advantages (think, f.eg. on refugees) and disadvantages of a mechanism of access

¹⁸ Thus, to determine the rigor of the requisites of access, this heterogeneity should be taken into account and then infer an aggregated demand curve.

that discriminated in rigor depending on the type of individuals that may 'solicit' access to such a right.

It would be even more complicated to discuss the practical and moral consequences of a model in which X depended on V , but in which neither of them were constant (although a transformed of its product could be constant if, for example, there were a *trade-off* between the value of the right and the number of individuals who enjoyed it).

Finally, I will take into account dynamic considerations, such as the influence of the number (and "type") of individuals to which the right has been allocated upon variables affect the present and future value of the right of the potentially giving country.

Methodology:

Among the four basic types of research design – critical or limit case; comparative method for two countries; multivariate analysis and modelling – I opt for the last of them, and I will try hard so that the model may be followed by statistical analysis that serve to contrast the theoretical conclusions with the results furnished by the analysis of empirical data.

I have not decided yet the countries and the period of time that in which I will focus, but I deem that I will stick to EU countries from 1985 on. This is due to the fact that Welfare States are, perhaps, specially important in Europe; to the fact that we can compare countries that are influenced by both common and country-specific trends. Specially important countries from 1985 on (date in which the present, "third" stage of migration fluxes starts, approximately) may be Southern European countries, which only now are experiencing large-scale migration but which carried out migration policies designed for countries with a different migration timing due to the influence of the EU. In any case, I must think more about this.

Advantages of my research strategy:

It is not easy to see advantages to one's project in such an early moment of research; one tends to see many flows and possible difficulties, to think that most is done regarding one's topic, and so on. And, possibly, most of these feelings are rather accurate. Looking closely at my project, however, I have ended up with the feeling that there are one or two points which may render it interesting and valuable, in case I were able to carry it out properly.

The first of these things is my choice of "ACCESS". By focusing in rights themselves, in the accessibility to specific benefits of nationals regarding issues related to the Welfare State, I believe that I am targeting the key of the matter. It is not this one the only advantage that, in my opinion, derives from that choice; other potential advantages of it are:

a) I would be able to avoid getting too deep and paying too much attention to the legal complexities associated to statuses in the real world: to their criteria of access, to the rights and obligations they have attached, perhaps in contingent and changing ways, etcetera.

b) I would therefore be able to avoid the problem that, in some countries, in some periods, for some (types of) individual(s), some effects would derive from granting access to a given status, while, in some other countries, periods, etcetera, similar effects would derive from another, different status.

c) By looking at each right by itself, instead than looking at a status – which, as I argued, can be seen, at least partially, as a set, package or bundle of rights –, I would be able to reduce the multidimensionality of the concept. Each right, as independent variable, may be – perhaps – seen as single-dimensional, whereas this is pretty surely not the case for each 'bundle', or status.

d) The recurs to somewhat idealized, or standardized rights, instead of statuses defined in complex legal texts would moreover enable me to reduce the importance of exceptions and specificities.

e) This, in turn, may help me even more to standardize among countries and, therefore, to attempt at proposing a general model, which, I believe, is more lacking in the present state of the art.

The most important advantage that derives from that choice, however, is that I would be able to go more directly for the variables that generate causal mechanisms, instead than for variables (as citizenship) which are i) fuzzy; ii) multidimensional; iii) changing in place and time; iv) with multiple exceptions and specificities; and, most importantly, v) whose causal connections are difficult to understand as stemming directly from it.

The second potential advantage of my thesis is related to point e) above, i.e.: to the possibility of generating a general model which, I believe, is more lacking in the present state of the art, and in opposition to a large part of the traditional approaches towards these issues, which, by emphasizing in properly defining empirical, as opposed to idealized terms to construct their causal variables, usually find that these terms and variables do not travel well across time and space and thus end up, in many occasions, in case studies.

It is not that this type of approach is less interesting, accurate or whatever; what I like of the possibility of modelling it more generally is that, inasmuch as my perception is right and this kind of analysis is less common, I may have the possibility of contributing to something that is especially lacking in the present stage of the discipline.

Moreover, a theoretical model may be useful to integrate and set to dialogue – in case I manage to do it – a series of diverse theoretical propositions in a model of the same rationale. Secondly, the model will be structured by an autonomous line of

thought, which will structure it from its beginning until its end, since I will have little on which to look for a guide of the sort applied to this field.

Thirdly, the restrictive assumptions which will aid the model to depart will allow for a high degree of formality and abstraction, but, by dropping assumptions, the model will have enough flexibility to incorporate ever more specific aspects of the reality under study, so that the variations in these aspects and factors may be compared with the ones resulting from the initial, abstract frame, and be interpreted with a high degree of formality and of conceptual precision. Fourthly, a good modelling strategy allows to express with great clarity the assumptions used, so that it may be stated very precisely the ambit of application of each conclusion, which are the limitations inherent to them, and how should the model be modified in order to treat with realities that do not match those assumptions.

The third and last potentially positive aspect of my research is that I will try my best so that analysis are developed until the level of specificity that permits to relate the theoretical variables of the model with the variables relevant in the processes of political decision-making, an issue that is often neglected in academic circles. This task will mostly be accomplished by the establishment of close relationships between the model and each of the rights which, in themselves, may be susceptible of being the locus of political decisions; but, when necessary, I will work further in this direction.