200 years of a South American Citizenship: 
Continuity and Change on Migration and Mobility in the Region

This presentation has two aims. First, it introduces current discussions on the construction of a South American Citizenship in the region, both at the level of UNASUR and MERCOSUR. The MERCOSUR Residence agreement, by which citizens of 9 out of the 12 States in South America may move to another country and enjoy equal treatment and rights with nationals, will be assessed. New liberal migration laws including principles such as non-criminalization of irregular migrants or the right to migrate will also be discussed.

Second, both these developments will be considered as falling within the remit of theories on post-national forms of membership, where the individual, even if not a citizen of a particular state where he or she resides, enjoys treatment close to that of nationals. Scholars working on these theories have located their origins in Europe after the Second World War. This will be problematized by looking at the rich history of agreements that were adopted in South America since the 19th Century and which anticipate post-national forms of membership in Europe by more than a century and which create a regional citizen.

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