

“The politicization of high courts in hybrid regimes: A Discussion focused on the Venezuelan Case

(Raul Sanchez-Urribarri)

(Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in Legal Studies - La Trobe University)

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Courts are meant to uphold the rule of law in new democracies, yet a growing number of examples show this is not always the case. This project explores how hybrid regimes – i.e. political systems where democratic institutions coexist with authoritarian practices – employ judicial institutions to stifle dissent and enact policy. Building on the candidate’s research about constitutional review in Venezuela under the Bolivarian Revolution (post-1998), the project uses a mixed-methods research design to assess the politicization of courts in Venezuela, with brief references to the Bolivian and Ecuadorian cases as well.

This presentation includes a brief summary of my research to date on this topic, plus a description of the work carried out during my stay at the Institute. I briefly discuss the role of courts under authoritarian rule, and share reflections about the new 'proactive' role performed by the Venezuelan Supreme Court in 2016 to support the regime during an ongoing, protracted economic and political crisis.



Raul Sanchez-Urribarri is lecturer of the La Trobe University. His work focuses on law and politics in comparative perspective, with an emphasis on Latin America. His research interests include judicial politics, law and development and judicial reform, using qualitative and quantitative methods.