

PLSC 473: American Judicial Behavior

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Planning to go to law school or maybe thinking about a career in law?

Meet professionals to get your questions answered.

Penn State alumni share the ups and downs of law school; the pros and cons of working in private firms, corporations, and the government; and the implications of the contraction in the law field

Panel Presentation and Q&A

The Contraction in the Law Field and its Implications

7:30 pm, Thursday, October 15, 101 Chamber Building

One-on-one Appointments

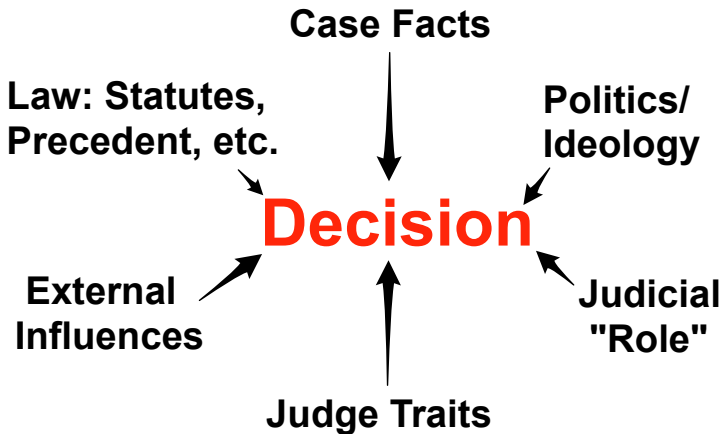
(advanced sign-up required)

9:00 a.m. to noon, Friday, October 16, 321 HUB

...to ask any questions you'd like, in a no-pressure setting, about law school, what it's like in the courtroom, balancing work and family. Get résumé suggestions and interview tips.

<http://www.la.psu.edu/alumni/get-involved/alumni-lawyers-mentoring>

Influences on SCOTUS Decisions



“Personal Attribute” Influences

The idea that “pre-court life experiences play a prominent role in shaping the personal values and policy preferences of judges, and that such biographical factors can be useful in predicting judicial decisions.”

– Brudney et al. (1999, 1682)

Why Personal Attributes?

- “Direct” Effects
- *Socialization* (values \rightarrow policy positions)
- Measurement Challenge: Circularity

Personal Attributes: Mechanism



- Personal Attributes' effects on SCOTUS voting / behavior
- Aggregate data on 25 justices' (1946-1978) voting liberalism in *civil rights/liberties* & *economics* cases
- Personal attributes: 21 of them:
 1. Birth/upbringing
 2. Career
 3. Age and tenure
 4. Partisanship
- Methods: *Linear regression*

Tate (1981, Table 3)

Table 3. Personal Attribute Models of Liberalism in Voting in Civil Rights and Liberties and Economics Cases for U.S. Supreme Court Justices, 1946-1978

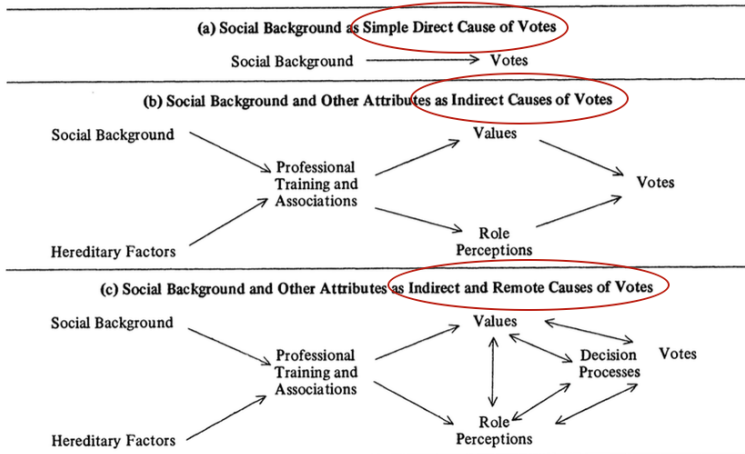
Liberalism on Civil Rights and Liberties Cases (% LIBCL)				Liberalism on Economics Cases (% LIBECON)			
Independent Variable	Beta	B	t	Independent Variable	Beta	B	t
Party Identification	.48	29.1	4.58	Party Identification	.73	38.4	4.78
Appointing President:				Appointing President:			
Truman	-.54	-43.9	-5.65	Truman	-.26	-18.5	-1.92
Johnson	.14	14.9	1.45	Nixon	-.19	-13.4	-1.34
Nixon	-.24	-19.2	-2.27	Prestige of Prelaw			
Appointment Region	-.34	-22.2	-3.14	Education	.19	10.0	1.37
Extent of Judicial				Appointed from			
Experience	.17	6.3	1.89	Elective Office	.34	27.0	2.20
Type of Prosecutorial				Extent of Judicial			
Experience	.56	24.2	5.95	Experience	.31	9.9	2.33
				Type of Prosecutorial			
				Experience	.29	10.7	1.97
Intercept		12.0				4.3	
R ²		.87				.72	
Adjusted R ²		.82				.61	
Standard Error of Estimate		13.0				16.5	
F (d.f.)		16.12 (7,17)				6.27 (7,17)	
Probability of F		<.00005				<.00005	
Determinant of Correlation							
Matrix of Predictors		.45				.44	

Association Between Attribute
and Liberal Voting Record

"Variance in Votes Explained"
by Attributes.

Source: Computed from data accompanying John Paul Ryan and C. Neal Tate, *The Supreme Court in American Politics: Policy Through Law*, 2nd ed., Washington, D.C., American Political Science Association, 1980.

Tate (1981, Figure 1)



Source: Slightly adapted from Walter F. Murphy and Joseph Tanenhaus, *The Study of Public Law*, New York, Random House, 1972, p. 109.

Figure 1. Potential Models of Judges' Voting Behavior