European courts.[1] The US Supreme Court Database, for instance, is one of the most successful social science databases and facilitates quantitative research on judicial politics in the United States (Epstein et al. 2015). There is no equivalent for the main court of the European Union, the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU). This article introduces The CJEU Database Platform: Decisions and Decision-Makers, which aims to fill that gap.

An easily accessible and comprehensive database of CJEU decisions and decision-makers is critical to the development of the empirical literature on the judicial politics of the EU. There has been an increase in the availability of data on the CJEU in recent years, but these data-collection efforts have been overlapping, uncoordinated, and not always easily accessible. The CJEU Database Platform provides a central platform for data on the CJEU and data from this database can easily be integrated with existing datasets on EU law and politics, such as Derlén and Lindholm (2014), Carrubba and Gabel (2015), Larsson and Naurin (2016), Fjelstul (2019), and Ovádek (2021).

By providing data on the key features of cases, decisions, and decision-makers at the CJEU, which is the court at the heart of the process of judicialization in Europe (Alter 2010), we aim to improve the opportunities to study a range of questions central to the field of judicial politics. We believe this will facilitate better empirical research on the CJEU and open the door to studying new questions about legal mobilisation in the EU (e.g., Hofmann and Naurin 2020; Pavone 2022), judicial bargaining and the internal politics of the Court (e.g., Frankenreiter 2017, 2018; Cheruvu 2019; Hermansen 2020; Fjelstul 2022), the politics of judicial appointments (e.g., Bobek 2015), the sources and impact of judges' attitudes (Vauchez 2012; Larsson and Naurin 2019), and the sensitivity of the Court to its political and social environment, including the politics of noncompliance and legislative override (e.g., Carrubba, Gabel, and Hankla 2008; Alter 2010; Carrubba and Gabel 2015; Martinsen 2015; Larsson and Naurin 2016; Larsson et al. 2017; Fjelstul and Carrubba 2018; Blauberger and Martinsen 2020). Previous research on the CJEU has long debated the power and autonomy of the Court in relation to the EU member states, but theory development has been hampered by the treatment of the Court as a unitary actor. The CJEU Database Platform provides opportunities for scholars to make progress by combining data on the external relations, internal processes, and members of the Court.

An important obstacle to research on the decision-making of the CJEU is the fact that the Court does not publish judges' votes. The Court conducts its deliberations in secret, and no votes or dissenting opinions are ever published. This means that it is difficult to estimate the ideological positions of individual judges. As a result, the CJEU has almost invariably been studied as a unitary actor (Pollack 2003, 2013).[2] However, the CJEU does publish information on its individual members that, with some creativity, can be used by scholars to address core research questions relating to judicial behavior. The Court's database of cases (InfoCuria) and the EU's database of legal documents (EUR-Lex) include information on chamber presidents, Judge-Rapporteurs, Advocates General (AGs), and the composition of chambers.

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[1]A recent exception is the Georgetown/PluriCourts European Court of Human Rights Database (Stiansen and Voeten 2020).

[2]For important recent exceptions see Malecki (2012), Frankenreiter (2017), and Cheruvu (2019).

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ARTICLE

The CJEU Database Platform: Decisions and Decision-Makers

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Abstract
This article presents the CJEU Database Platform, which provides scholars with an extensive collection of easily accessible, research-ready data on the the universe of cases, decisions, and judges at the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). The CJEU Database Platform provides a foundation for the broader CJEU Database currently being developed by The IUROPA Project, a multidisciplinary group of scholars researching judicial politics in the European Union (EU). In this article, we illustrate how the CJEU Database Platform opens the door to new areas of theoretical and empirical research on judicial politics in the EU.

The judicialization of politics and the rise of courts as important allocators of societal values have repeatedly been identified as key features of the 21st century (Vallinder 1994;Ferejohn 2002;Hirschl 2004; Stone Sweet2004;Alter 2014). Judicialization is an international trend, but anyone who surveys the literature on judicial politics will be struck by the overwhelming dominance of research originating in — and focusing on — the United States. For example, a recent handbook on judicial behavior includes nineteen chapters exclusively concentrating on US courts, five chapters on comparative research, and three chapters on international courts (Howard and Randazzo 2017).

One of the main reasons why research on European courts is lagging behind research on American courts — besides different traditions with respect to law and politics on the two sides of the Atlantic (Kelemen 2011) — is the lack of accessible multi-user databases that provide scholars visibility into the decision-making of

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