The U.S. Supreme Court
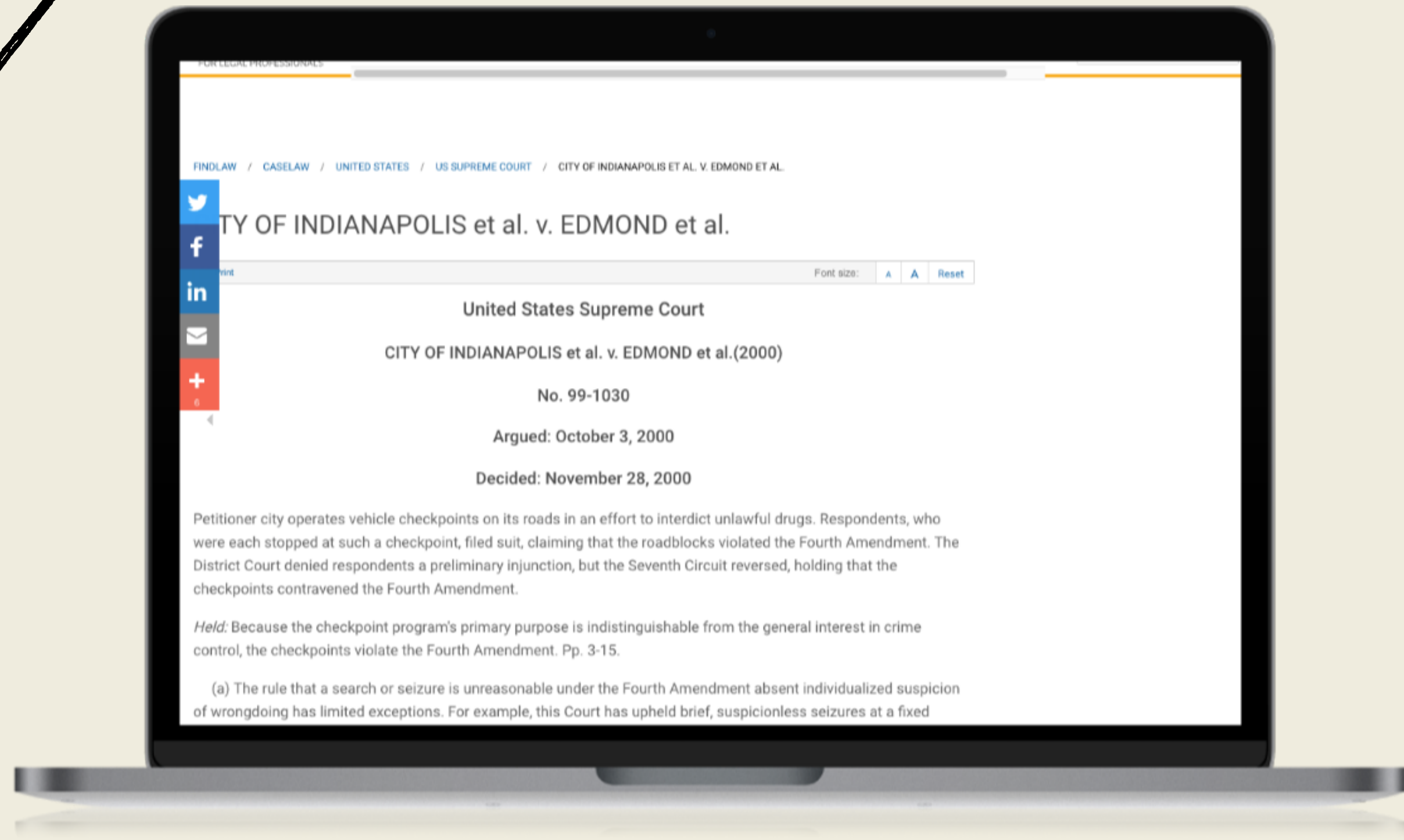
Decoding the opinions that have shaped the legal landscape in the modern political era.

The Problem

The Opinions

TY OF INDIANAPOLIS et al. v. EDMOND et al.

Font size: A A Reset

United States Supreme Court

CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS et al. v. EDMOND et al.(2000)

No. 99-1030

Argued: October 3, 2000

Decided: November 28, 2000

Petitioner city operates vehicle checkpoints on its roads in an effort to interdict unlawful drugs. Respondents, who were each stopped at such a checkpoint, filed suit, claiming that the roadblocks violated the Fourth Amendment. The District Court denied respondents a preliminary injunction, but the Seventh Circuit reversed, holding that the checkpoints contravened the Fourth Amendment.

Held: Because the checkpoint program's primary purpose is indistinguishable from the general interest in crime control, the checkpoints violate the Fourth Amendment. Pp. 3-15.

   (a) The rule that a search or seizure is unreasonable under the Fourth Amendment absent individualized suspicion of wrongdoing has limited exceptions. For example, this Court has upheld brief, suspicionless seizures at a fixed

Goal Topic Modeling

Navigate the online library of cases.

Acquire opinions relevant to the modern political landscape.

Uncover hidden semantic relationships and themes.

Data

7,741 opinions
[1968 - present]

Preprocessing

1. Removed footnotes and in text citations
2. Fixed Unicode encoding errors
3. Removed '\n', punctuation, numbers and custom stop words
4. Converted all characters to lowercase
5. Applied lemmatization with NLTK

Workflow

PREPROCESS

Pandas, Numpy, Gensim, NLTK

VECTORIZE

Gensim.corpora, sklearn.CountVectorizer, sklearn.TfidfVectorizer

TOPIC MODEL

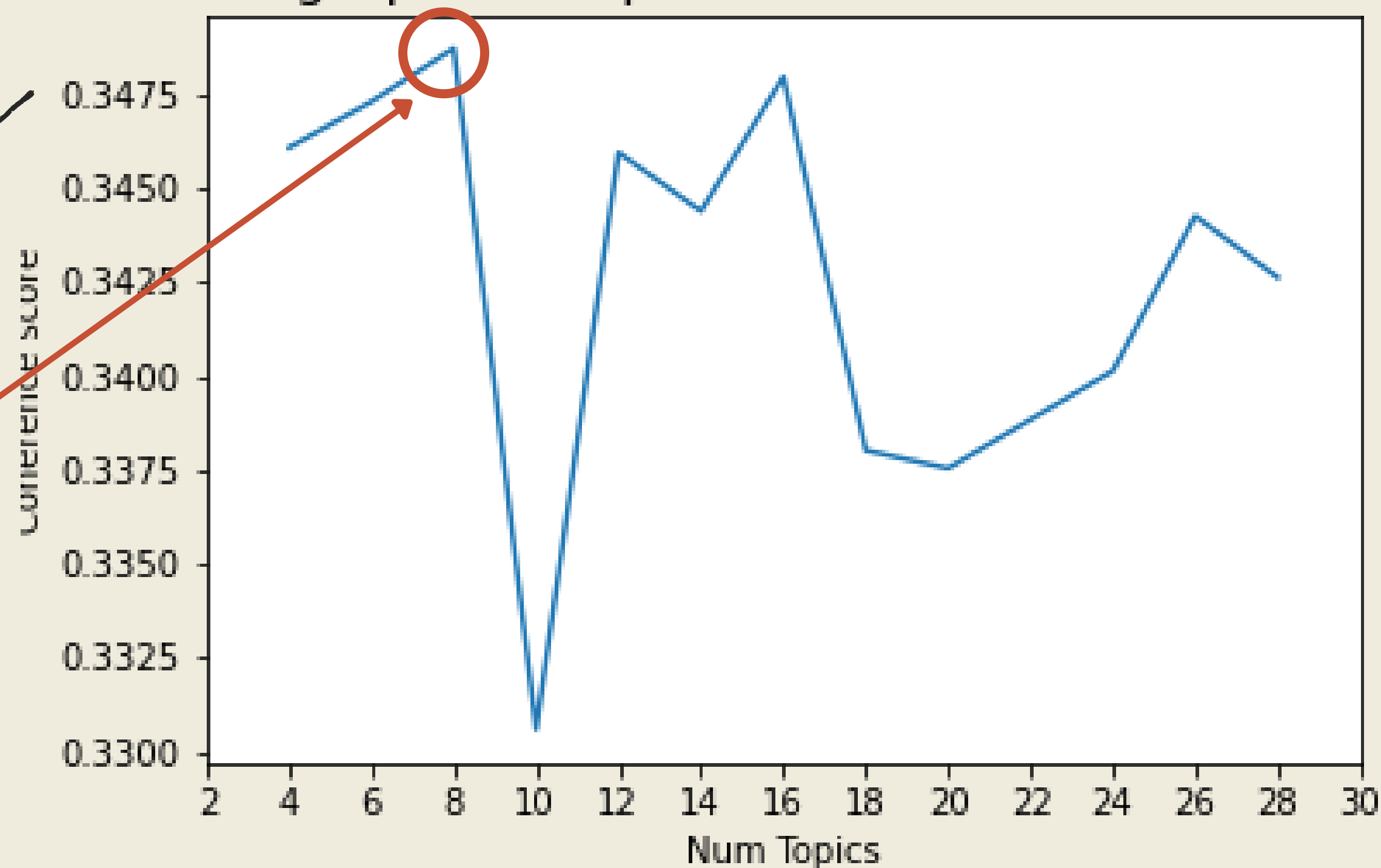gensim.LDAMulticore, sklearn.LDA, CorEx

EVALUATE AND INTERPRET

Matplotlib, pyLDAvis

Tuning the Model

Choosing Optimal Topic Model with Coherence Scores

Optimal Number of topics = 8

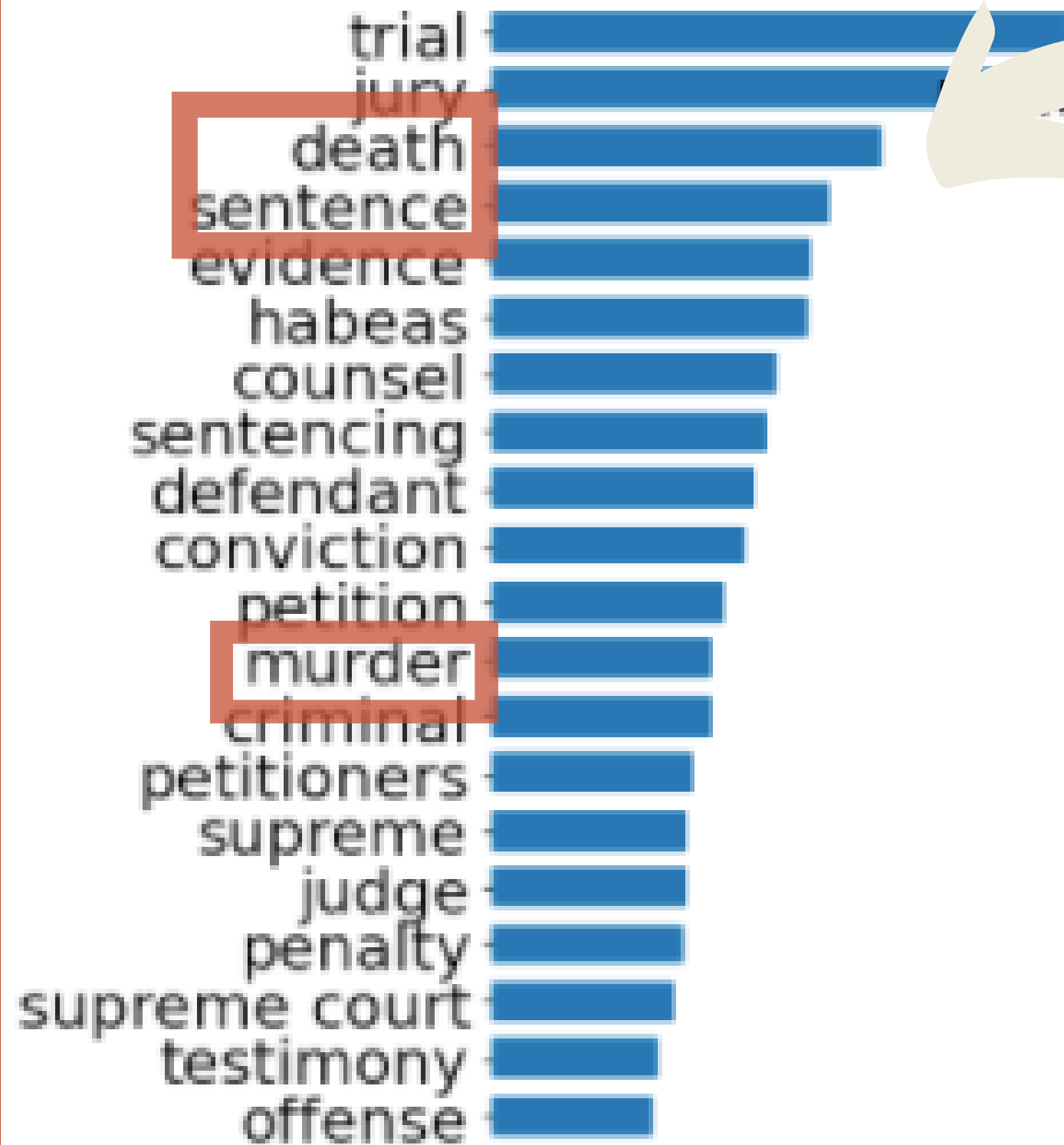# Topic 3:

Unlawful Search and Seizure

Top 20 Words for Topic 3

Word	
search	████████
fourth amendment	███████
police	██████
fourth	█████
officers	█████
warrant	█████
arrest	████
probable cause	████
officer	████
probable	███
car	██
stop	█
vehicle	█
amendment	█
home	█
arrested	█
board	█
reasonable	█
law enforcement	█
county	█

Top 20 Words for Topic 8

trial
jury
death
sentence
evidence
habeas
counsel
sentencing
defendant
conviction
petition
murder
criminal
petitioners
supreme
judge
penalty
supreme court
testimony
offense

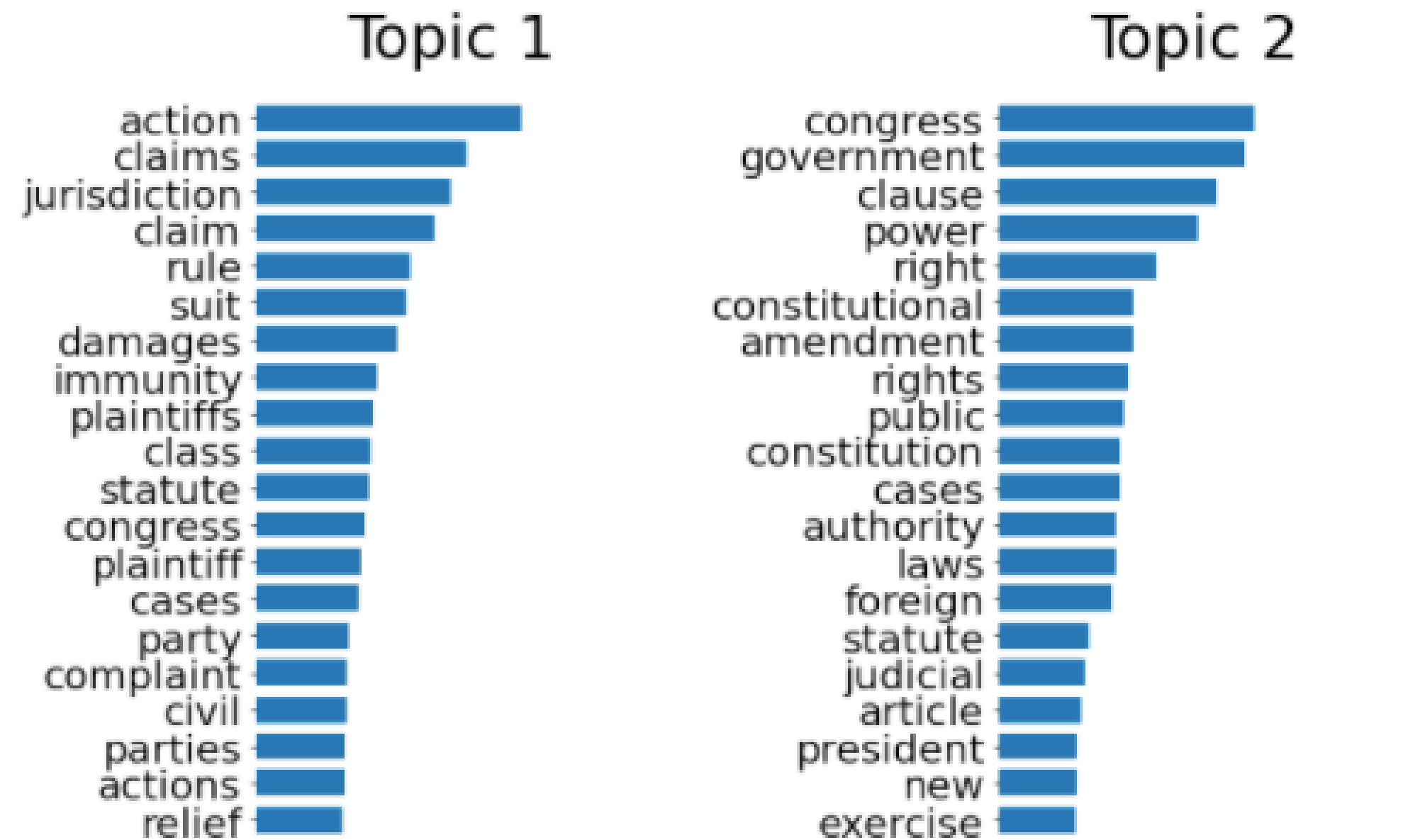*Topic 8*

Eighth Amendment: Death Sentence

Topics 1 and 2:

Shows need for model improvement.

Top 20 Words for Topics 1 & 2

Topic 1

- action
- claims
- jurisdiction
- claim
- rule
- suit
- damages
- immunity
- plaintiffs
- class
- statute
- congress
- plaintiff
- cases
- party
- complaint
- civil
- parties
- actions
- relief

Topic 2

- congress
- government
- clause
- power
- right
- constitutional
- amendment
- rights
- public
- constitution
- cases
- authority
- laws
- foreign
- statute
- judicial
- article
- president
- new
- exercise

Future Work
Tuning and Modeling

Perform additional preprocessing to eliminate common legal terms.

Tune LDA model further and build topic models for specific time periods.

Analyze data through clustering techniques and linear regression with additional data

Thank you!