

# Draft of Methods Section

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## Model

I assume that the observed indicators for each state-year are functions of a unidimensional latent variable that represents the level of *de jure* judicial independence. For each state-year observation, let  $i$  index the state and  $t$  index the year. For each model, there are  $J$  indicators  $J = 1, \dots, J$  each of which is ordinal. My goal is to estimate each  $\theta_{it}$ , which is the latent level of *de jure* judicial independence of each state  $i$  in year  $t$ .

Let  $i = 1, \dots, N$  index cross-sectional units and  $t = 1, \dots, T$  index time periods. In each time period, I observe values  $y_{ij}$  for each of  $j = 1, \dots, J$  indicators for each unit. Each indicator is ordinal in nature and can take on  $K_j$  values. The responses to each of the items depend on a single latent variable  $\theta_{it}$ , which may vary across units and over time. I assume that all indicators are independently drawn from a logistic distribution.