

## 58 The Vote in the Case

Variable Name vote	Spaeth Name HARV to BRYV	Normalizations varVote (8)
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This variable provides information about each justice's vote in the case. It appears in the Justice Centered Datasets only. A regular concurrence is when the justice agrees with the Court's opinion as well as its disposition. A special concurrence (i.e., a concurrence in the judgment) is when the justice agrees with the Court's disposition but not its opinion. A jurisdictional dissent is when the justice disagrees with the Court's assertion or denial of jurisdiction. Such votes are counted as nonparticipations.

Determination of how a given justice voted is by no means a simple matter of culling the Reports. The justices do not always make their options clear.

Two problems, in particular, afflict efforts to specify votes: 1) whether the vote is a regular or a special concurrence, and 2) the treatment to be accorded a vote "concurring in part and dissenting in part."

The first typically manifests itself when a justice joins the opinion of the Court "except for . . ." Because such exceptions typically tend to approach de minimis status, these are coded as regular concurrences. For example, Chief Justice Burger concurred in the opinion of the Court in *New York Gaslight Club, Inc. v. Carey*, except for "footnote 6 thereof." 447 U.S. 54, at 71. Similarly, Blackmun's agreement with the Court in *Pruneyard Shopping Center v. Robins*, except for "that sentence thereof . . ." 447 U.S. 74, at 88. Where the Reports identify a justice as "concurring" or "concurring in part" said justice is treated as a member of the majority opinion coalition (i.e., as = 3), rather than a merely concurring in the result (i.e., as = 4).

Whereas the preceding problem pertains to determining which type of concurrence a vote is, the problem with votes concurring and dissenting in part is whether they are special concurrences (= 4) or dissents (= 2). This matter was addressed previously in connection with the variable *voteUnclear* (vote not clearly specified). A vote concurring and dissenting in part is listed as a special concurrence if the justice(s) doing so does not disagree with the majority's disposition of the case. This may occur when: 1) the justice concurring and dissenting in part only voices disagreement with some or all of the majority's reasoning; 2) when said justice disapproves of the majority's deciding or refusing to decide additional issues involved in the case; or 3) when in a case in which dissent has been voiced, the justice(s) concurring and dissenting in part votes to dispose of the case in a manner more closely approximating that of the majority than that of the dissenter(s).

In cases where determination of whether a vote concurring and dissenting in part is the former or the latter is not beyond cavil, an entry will appear in the *voteUnclear* variable of the affected case to allow users to make an independent judgment, if they are so minded. Note, however, that listing such votes as dissents (= 2) or special concurrences (= 4) has no effect on whether or not an opinion is written (the *opinion* variable).

See also notes under the majority vote (*majVote*) variable.

- End of Content for Variable 58. The Vote in the Case -

## 59 Opinion

Variable Name opinion	Spaeth Name HARO to BRYO	Normalizations varJusticeOpinion (3)
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This variable indicates the opinion, if any, that the justice wrote. It appears in the Justice Centered Datasets only.

Because determination of whether a justice wrote an opinion is no simple matter, rules must be formulated.

1. A justice authors no opinion unless he or she specifies a reason for his or her vote. A bare citation to a previously decided case or a simple statement that the author concurs or dissents because of agreement with a lower court's opinion suffices as an opinion
2. Where a justice specifies that the opinion applies to an additional case or cases, the opinion is counted as so many separate ones. Thus, the opinions of Brennan and Marshall in *Mobile v. Bolden*, 446 U.S. 55, also apply to *Williams v. Brown*, 446 U.S. 236. Hence, each of these opinions is counted as though it were two separate opinions.
3. When a justice joins the substance of another justice's opinion, without any personal expression of views, that justice is listed as joining the other's opinion (see variables firstAgreement and secondAgreement) and not as an author unless he or she also writes an opinion.

Thus, in *United States v. Havens*, 446 U.S. 620, Justices Stewart and Stevens are listed as joining Brennan's dissenting opinion notwithstanding that the pertinent language reads: "Mr. Justice Brennan, joined by Mr. Justice Marshall and joined in Part I by Mr. Justice Stewart and Mr. Justice Stevens, dissenting." 446 U.S. at 629. The opinion contains two parts of roughly equal length. Failure to list the latter pair as joiners would have required that they appear as dissenting without opinion, a manifestly inaccurate result. Similarly, Justice White's language in *Parratt v. Taylor*, 451 U.S. 527, at 545: "I join the opinion of the Court but with the reservations stated by my Brother Blackmun in his concurring opinion," is not listed as an opinion by White. He rather appears as joining Blackmun's concurrence. Conversely, where a justice, in his or her own words only partially agrees with one or more opinions authored by others, he or she is listed as an author. Two examples of Justice Stewart illustrate: "Mr. Justice Stewart dissents for the reasons expressed in Part I of the dissenting opinion of Mr. Justice Powell." (*Dougherty County Board of Education v. White*, 439 U.S. 32, at 47) "Mr. Justice Stewart concurs in the judgment, agreeing with all but Part II of the opinion of the Court, and with Part I of the concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Stevens." (*Jenkins v. Anderson*, 447 U.S. 231, at 241).

4. When two or more justices jointly author an opinion, an entry will so indicate. Joint authorship, however, does not include per curiam opinions.

- End of Content for Variable 59. Opinion -

## 60 Direction of the Individual Justice's Votes

Variable Name direction	Spaeth Name HARDIR-BRYDIR	Normalizations varJusticeDirection (2)
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This variable indicates whether the justice cast a liberal or conservative vote. For the definitions of liberal and conservative, see variable decisionDirection. A missing value code indicates that the decisionDirection was unspecifiable or that that justice did not participate.

This variable appears in the Justice Centered Datasets only.

- *End of Content for Variable 60. Direction of the Individual Justice's Votes -*

## 61 Majority and Minority Voting by Justice

Variable Name	Spaeth Name	Normalizations
majority	HARM - BRYM	varJusticeMajority (2)

Analysts commonly want to know the frequency with which given justices vote with the majority and/or in dissent overall or in certain sets of circumstances. This variable provides that information for each justice.

This variable appears in the Justice Centered Datasets only.

- *End of Content for Variable 61. Majority and Minority Voting by Justice* -