

# Judicial Ideology in Response to Electoral Systems

Quant IV

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MIT

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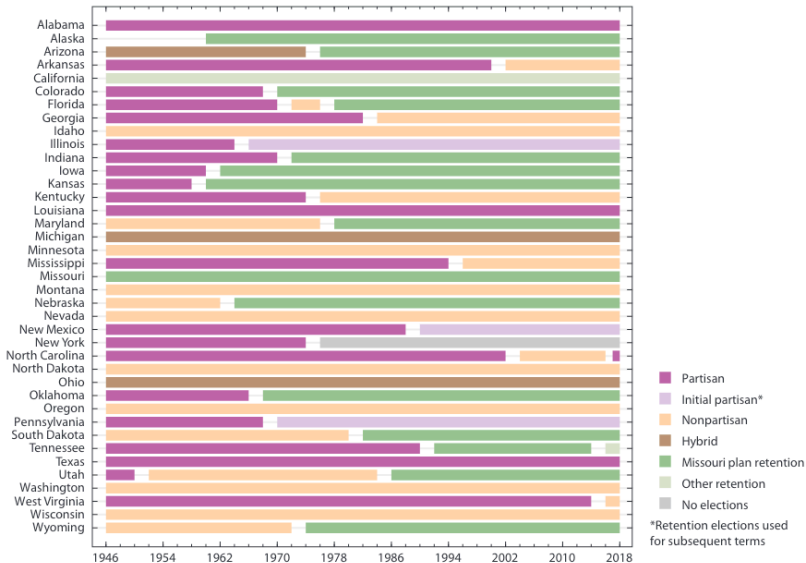
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**What influences a judge's ideology? Do features of the electoral system matter?**

# Judicial Selection Systems



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I expect that, dependent on the type of electoral system in place, judges are responsive to the body selecting them and become more sensitive closer to the selection date

# Estimating Judicial Ideology

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- This does not work as well for judges. In some states, judges do not run for election nor do they regularly contribute to other campaigns
- DIME instead imputes data for appointed judges who have not contributed, based on the score of the appointing governor or median member of the appointing legislative body (Bonica and Woodruff 2015)

# Proposed Methodology

The most common information available from judges are the decisions and written opinions they issue

- Using decisions was the original method for estimating judicial ideology (Brace, Langer, and Hall 2000; Martin and Quinn 2002; Epstein et al. 2007)
  - Using opinions has empirically challenging, but recent computer science advances have made this more possible (Fagni and Cresci 2022)
- Decisions and opinions are also theoretically important

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Represents 26,000 judicial opinions, with an average of 25,000 tokens per opinion. These are then split into sentences to pass to the model



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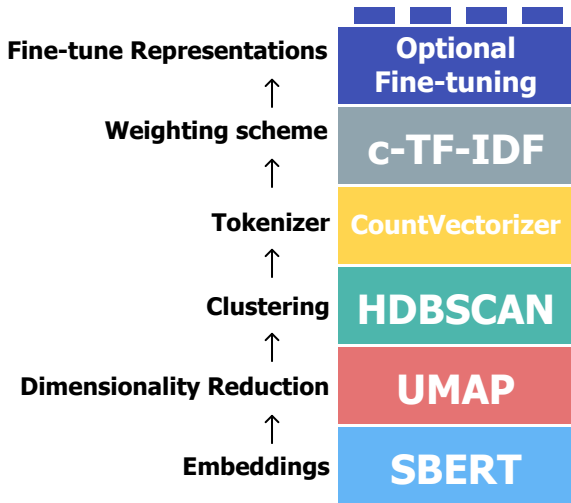
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- **BERTopic** (Grootendorst 2022)
  - Semi-supervised topic modeling based on registered parties
  - Dynamic topic modeling over time



Pending...

## References

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