

SUPREME COURT DATABASE SCHEMA

SUMMARY

A schema for data from the Supreme Court Database ([SCDB](#)). Data was pulled from two different versions of the database:

- **Case-Centered Data** organized by Issue/Legal Provision
- **Justice-Centered Data** organized by Issue/Legal Provision

Using both databases allows us to encompass variables specific to the case-centered version and information on supreme court justices and their votes on cases since 1791.

In the schema below, we will use a total of **10 relational tables**. Three of those tables will categorize the data into **CASES**, **OUTCOMES**, and **JUSTICES**. **All three tables contain caseID, which is the primary reference key in this schema.**

- **CASES:** data on each case, including the petitioner and respondent and the date of the decision
- **OUTCOMES:** information on case outcomes useful for analysis like voting distributions and issue involved
- **JUSTICES:** data pertaining to the court: justices, opinion writers, vote direction (liberal, conservative)

The seven keys are to reference normalized variables. Across all three tables, **15** are normalized. Of those fifteen, eight will be manually decoded during data-preprocessing. Seven will be linked to **key tables**, which include the normalized variable and its corresponding value according to the [database codebook](#). Each key table is linked to one of the three main tables that contain its normalized variable.

SCDB SCHEMA

PRIMARY KEY	
caseID	VARCHAR

KEY -- STENCIL	
Key (NORM)	INT
Val (from CodeBook)	STRING

CASES	
caseID	VARCHAR
usCite	VARCHAR
caseName	STRING
caseOrigin (COURT-NORM)	INT
dateArgument (MM/DD/YYYY)	DATE
dateDecision (MM/DD/YYYY)	DATE
petitioner (NORM)	INT
respondent (NORM)	INT
jurisdiction (NORM)	INT

OUTCOMES	
caseID	VARCHAR
caseDisposition (NORM)	INT
decisionType (NORM)	INT
decisionDirection (NORM)	INT
majVotes	INT
minVotes	INT
issue (NORM)	INT
issueArea (NORM)	INT

JUSTICES_BY_CASE	
caseID	VARCHAR
term	INT
chief	STRING
dateDecision (MM/DD/YYYY)	DATE
majOpinionWriter (NORM)	INT
justiceName (NORM)	STRING
vote (NORM)	INT
direction (NORM)	INT
majority	BOOL
opinion (NORM)	INT

issueKey

petitionerKey

respondentKey

caseOriginKey

majOpinionWriterKey

justiceNameKey