Agenda Setting on the Vinson Court

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The paper that follows is one of a series of papers I wrote regarding agenda setting on the Vinson Court. As each paper was completed updates and corrections may have changed some of the specific numbers presented in earlier papers, but the general results did not change. The papers were eventually combined into a book titled, *Supreme Court Agenda Setting: The Vinson Court* (available on Amazon.com). The individual papers became chapters in the book and the updated numbers were used for that version.

Again, the paper that follows is the original version. Some numbers may have been updated for the version included as a chapter in the book version, but the changes were usually minor and did not affect the overall results.

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Paper 14: Full and Summary Dispositions in Cases Granted Review

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Abstract

Prior papers in this series focused specifically on the Court's decision to grant review. Factors related to whether the Court grants review are also related to how the Court disposes of cases on the merits. More specifically, this study examines whether certain factors affect the Court's decision to summarily dispose of a case on the merits or to give it a full review.

Drawing from an ongoing database project this study examines all cases granted review during the Vinson Court (1946 to 1952 Terms) on its appellate docket. Three basic factors are considered: whether the cases was filed as a petition for a writ of certiorari or an appeal, whether the case was affirmed or reversed (including those vacated) by the Court, and whether the lower court decision was liberal or conservative. The results show a clear difference in disposition (summary or full) of cases on certiorari versus those on appeal. Although there was no statistical difference in the type of disposition between cases affirmed and those reversed, when the cases are separated into those on certiorari and those on appeal a significant difference appears. There is also a difference in the Court's method of disposition depending on the ideological direction of the lower court decision with affirmed liberal lower court decisions receiving a larger percentage of summary dispositions.

Agenda Setting on the Vinson Court
Paper 14: Full and Summary Dispositions in Cases Granted Review

This is the fourteenth paper in a series examining agenda setting on the Vinson Court. The examinations are largely empirical, but with a general grounding in familiar aspects of behavioral judicial politics. Although part of a series, I would like each paper to stand on its own. Thus, some explanatory material will be repeated from one paper to the next to provide background or context.

The prior 13 papers in the series each examined whether a particular factor or set of factors was related to the Court's decision to grant review. As such, those papers contained information on the basic theoretical framework underlying that type of examination. In this paper I change focus somewhat and examine what the Court does with the cases it accepts for review. Rather than whether the Court granted or denied review to a case, the distinction being examined here is whether the Court disposed of it in a summary manner or gave it some form of full (plenary) review.

For every case filed the Court initially makes a review decision. If the Court grants review to the case, it must then make a decision on the merits. For most cases, there is a period of time between the grant of review and the decision on the merits. This is when the parties submit their briefs, arguments are heard, and the justices write their opinions. These are what I will refer to as "full dispositions" or "full review" regardless of the length of the actual opinion announcing the Court's decision. In contrast, for a substantial number of cases the Court grants review and issues a decision on the merits, often in a very short per curiam. Sometimes this per curiam is as short as

a single word (e.g., "Affirmed"). Even if the opinions for these "one and done" cases are a bit longer, they are what I refer to as "summary" dispositions.

Although the focus for this paper is on cases that have been granted review, the factors examined nevertheless relate to the Court's agenda setting. For example, in prior papers, particularly the second paper in the series,[1] we saw differences in Court's acceptance rate for cases coming before the Court on petitions for writs of certiorari versus those on technical appeals.[2] Although there are certainly mechanisms for the Court to deny review to cases on appeal, there did seem to be a greater obligation on the part of the Court to accept cases on appeal for review as opposed to those on petitions for writs of certiorari ("on certiorari").[3] To the extent that the Court is obligated to accept cases on appeal for review (or at least feels it is), it is reasonable for one to wonder whether the difference between cases on appeal and those on certiorari also affects how the Court disposes of them. More specifically, is the Court more likely to summarily dispose of a case on appeal than a case for which the Court has granted certiorari?

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[1] The paper is titled, "Certiorari and Appeal on the Vinson Court Agenda."

[2] Cases come before the Supreme Court via two basic methods: petitions for writs of certiorari and appeals. Although I hesitate to wade too deeply into their differences, in brief cert petitions are discretionary, which means that the justices are free to grant or deny them as they see fit. No legal meaning is attached to a denial except that the Supreme Court chose not to hear the case. Technically, the Supreme Court must hear cases that come as appeals, but the justices may avoid review by indicating that a case was not properly presented as an appeal for one reason or another. The Court may then treat the appeal papers as a petition for a writ of certiorari and grant or deny the petition. See Perry (1991, Chapter 2) for more on the difference between cert petitions and appeals. See also Stern and Gressman (1978) for a more extended discussion of the topic. Of course, changes to the law in 1988 (Public Law No: 100-352) removed several categories of the Supreme Court's mandatory jurisdiction in appeals.

[3] Perry (1991, 29-32) speaks to this issue.

Stern and Gressman (1978, 377-379) provide some reasons for why the Court might summarily affirm or reverse cases on appeal. Summary affirmance might be because the justices believe the decision below to be correct and no substantial issue on the merits has been raised. Summary reversal might be because the justices believe it is required by another case the Court decided that is on point or that the decision below rested on a point that is "so unsubstantial as to be frivolous" (Stern and Gressman 1978, 378). Perry (1991, 100) echoes this latter point by noting the suggestion that summary reversals were appropriate when the lower court decision was so egregious that the justices could not let it stand but did not want to deal with it more fully.

In addition to the possible distinction between cases on certiorari and appeal, we might also wonder whether the Court is more likely to use a summary disposition when it plans to affirm the lower court case. In other words, the Court might be more likely to explain its decision reversing or vacating a lower court decision than when it affirms one. This might be particularly so for cases on appeal. Stern and Gressman do not address this question directly, but in discussing summary affirmances of appeals they note that "[w]hen the Court feels that the decision below is correct and that no substantial question on the merits has been raised, it will affirm an appeal from a federal court. . . ." (1978, 377). One might read into this statement that a similar case on certiorari would just be denied review. In addition, it would seem that should the Court wish to reverse a lower court decision the obvious question is "why"? Answering that question might still be done in a summary fashion (Stern and Gressman

1978, 378-379) but it is also reasonable to think that the Court would be more likely to issue a fuller explanation.

A final consideration worth examining is whether there was a difference in how the Vinson Court disposed of cases based on whether the lower court decision was considered liberal or conservative. The thirteenth paper in this series considered ideological error correction as a factor in agenda setting.[4] The results presented in that paper found some instances when the ideological direction of the lower court opinion—liberal or conservative—was related to the Court's acceptance rates for certain types of cases. To the extent the direction of the lower court decision might influence the Court's review decision, it is worth examining whether that direction is also related to whether the Court gives a full or summary disposition to the case.

Data

Data for this study were drawn from an ongoing database project involving all cases on the Supreme Court's appellate docket from the 1946 Term on. Data are complete for the Vinson Court (1946 through 1952 Terms) and provide a relatively stable period in which to examine the Court's docket.

Information on the cases in the database was drawn from several sources including the *United States Law Week*, various reporters for the state and federal courts, LEXIS, and other online sources. Every case that received an appellate docket number

[4] The paper is titled, "Agenda Setting on the Vinson Court: Paper 13: Ideological Error Correction as a Factor."

during the 1946-1952 Terms is included in the database. This results in 5,905 cases. Included in this number are 156 cases originally filed before the 1946 Term (the first term of the Vinson Court). The review decision for 95 of these 156 cases was made prior to the 1946 Term and those cases are not included in the dataset for this study. At the end of the Vinson Court 121 cases eventually received a 1953 Term (the first term of the Warren Court) or later docket number.[5] The review decisions for 72 of these 121 cases were made after the 1952 Term but are included in the dataset given that those cases were initially filed during the Vinson Court. Also, included in the dataset are 67 cases that originally appeared on the Court's miscellaneous docket and were moved to the appellate docket.[6] Not included in the dataset are 64 cases that were dismissed on the motion of the petitioner prior to the review decision, 18 cases that were dismissed by a Supreme Court rule (e.g., late filing, failure to pay fees), and one case where no review decision could be found.[7] This results in a dataset of 5,727 cases. Because of the

[5] Prior to the 1971 Term cases held over to the next term, before or after a review decision, were renumbered at the start of each term and there was no two-digit term indicator. For example, *Brown v. Board of Education* was initially filed during the Court's 1951 Term and given the docket number 436. It was held over to the 1952 Term with the new docket number 8, and again for the 1953 Term with the docket number 1.

[6] Through the Vinson and Warren Courts, cases originating on the miscellaneous docket (sometimes referred to as the "pauper's docket") that were granted review were usually moved to the appellate docket (sometimes referred to as the "paid docket") and given a new docket number. The Expanded United States Supreme Court Judicial Database, Harold J. Spaeth principal investigator, lists 26 cases with a miscellaneous docket number (with an "M" in the DOCKET field, meaning they were not transferred to the appellate docket) during the 1946-1952 Terms. Of these, 17 were granted review (with eight of those disposed of in a short per curiam), but are not included here. On the other hand, this dataset includes 19 cases initially filed on the appellate docket for which the Court granted *in forma pauperis* status to one of the parties (only one of which was granted review). (This is an older version of the Supreme Court Database before it was moved online, which, as of this writing, can be viewed at http://scdb.wustl.edu.)

[7] Without going into great detail, it appears that the case in question was withdrawn shortly after filing and refiled a month later with a new docket number. The latter case, *Deena Products Co. v. National Labor Relations Board* (1952) is included in the database and was denied review.

differing criteria used for the tables to follow, the number of cases included for any given comparison will vary from that total number.

An additional note on the coding for this examination is worthwhile before proceeding. The focus in this paper is on cases granted review and decided on the merits by the Court. That means that any cases granted review but then dismissed by a Supreme Court rule, which includes being dismissed on the motion of the petitioner, are not included. The primary distinction between "full" and "summary" disposition is drawn from examining the review and merits citations for the cases granted review. Thus, when the review and merits citations are the same the case is considered to have been disposed of summarily. If the review and merits citations are different the case is considered to have had a full disposition. The lack of time between the review and merits decisions is the key, rather than the actual length of the opinion announcing the decision on the merits.[8]

Regarding the substantive dispositions of the cases to which the Court granted review the comparison will be between those cases affirmed and those cases "reversed," meaning those the Court either reversed, reversed and remanded, vacated, or vacated and remanded. Mixed dispositions (e.g., affirmed in part and reversed or vacated in part) will not be included.

[8] In a few instances the Court granted review to a case on certiorari or on appeal and then decided the merits in a signed opinion at the same time (e.g., *Stack v. Boyle* (1951)). This occurred so rarely, however, that the results of using the citation method for identifying summary or full dispositions was not affected.

The ideological classification, liberal or conservative, of the lower court and Supreme Court dispositions follows the principles of Spaeth's coding for the United States Supreme Court Judicial Database.

Results

Table 1 shows the number of full and summary dispositions for cases on petitions for writs of certiorari and appeal for the Vinson Court. As noted above, there were 1,161 cases granted review and disposed of on the merits during the Vinson Court. Five of these cases were before the Court on certification from a lower court (i.e., not on certiorari or appeal) and are not included in this table.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

There were 827 certiorari cases granted review of which 748 (90.4%) were given full dispositions and only 79 (9.6%) disposed of summarily. In sharp contrast, of the 329 cases on appeal that were granted review 192 (58.4%) were given full dispositions while the remaining 137 (41.6%) were disposed of summarily. As indicated in the table, this difference in the dispositions between cases on certiorari and appeal was significant at $p < .001$ using a difference of means test (Wonnacott and Wonnacott 1972, 178).

The much higher percentage of cases on appeal disposed of summarily is consistent with the suggestion that the Court might be more likely to deal with appeals summarily because it has less discretion in whether to hear them. In addition to the method of disposition (full or summary) a related question is what the Court does with

the cases substantively. Table 2 shows the disposition method for the cases the Court affirmed as well as the method for those cases the Court reversed.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Table 2 shows that of the 518 cases the Court affirmed, 407 (78.6%) were given a full disposition while 111 (21.4%) were disposed of summarily. The number of cases reversed was greater at 608 and the number of these given a full disposition was 505 (83.1%). The Court summarily disposed of the remaining 103 cases (16.9%).[9] Although this difference falls just below a $p < .05$ level of significance, the slightly higher percentage of summary dispositions for cases affirmed seems to fit with the idea that if the Court feels obligated to take some cases (e.g., appeals) it may not feel as great a need to explain when it affirms them. On the other hand, this runs counter to the notion that some cases so clearly should be reversed that an explanation is not necessary (Perry 1991, 100).

Given the results of Table 2 it makes sense to examine cases on certiorari and appeal separately. Tables 3 and 4 do this.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Table 3 examines the disposition of cases before the Court on certiorari. Here we see that the vast majority of certiorari cases—90.2% (731 of 810)—were given full

[9] Not included in this table are those cases in which the Court affirmed in part and reversed or vacated in part, or other types of dispositions, such as if the Court remanded with no decision on the merits. That results in 30 fewer cases than in Table 1.

review.[10] Of the cases affirmed by the Court, 317 of 321 (98.8%) were given full review. Of course, that leaves only 4 cases (1.2%) that were disposed of summarily.

There were 489 certiorari cases reversed by the Court. Of these, 414 (84.7%) were given full review and 75 (15.3%) were disposed of summarily. Although the summary disposition percentage for reversed cases is higher than for affirmed cases, it is still fairly low.

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Turning to the cases on appeal, Table 4 shows that there were 314 of these cases and 179 (57.0%) were given a full disposition while 135 (43.0%) were disposed of summarily. The Court reversed 118 of these appeals and gave full review to 90 (76.3%) of them. The remaining 28 (23.7%) reversed cases were disposed of summarily. The percentage of summary reversals on appeal is higher than for those on certiorari, but not tremendously so. In sharp contrast, however, are the cases on appeal that the Court affirmed. There were 196 such cases and the Court gave full review to only 89 (45.4%) of them. Thus, the Court summarily disposed of 107 (54.6%) cases on appeal it affirmed.

The summary disposition of a majority of the cases on appeal that were affirmed is quite different from the cases on appeal that were reversed as well as the cases on certiorari, affirmed or reversed. At the very least, this result lends support to the notion

[10] As previously noted the numbers here and in later tables are lower than those indicated in Table 1 because cases with mixed or unusual dispositions are not included when considering those cases affirmed versus those reversed or vacated.

that some of the cases on appeal to which the Court grants review are less likely to merit explanation when affirmed by the Court.

The thirteenth paper in the series focused on ideological error correction and found statistically significant differences in some aspects of the Court's grant of review related to whether the lower court decision was conservative or liberal.[11] Given the findings of that paper it is worthwhile to examine whether the ideological direction of the lower court decision is related to whether the Court disposes of a case in a full or summary manner.

TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

Table 5 shows the comparison between lower court decisions that are liberal or conservative and whether they received a full or summary disposition. Of the 1,161 cases granted review 451 (38.8%) had a lower court decision that was liberal while the remaining 710 (61.2%) were conservative. Of the liberal lower court decisions, the Court gave a full disposition to 353 (78.3%) and a summary disposition to 98 (21.7%). Of the conservative lower court decisions, the Court gave a full disposition to 592 (83.4%) and a summary disposition to 118 (16.6%). That the Court was more likely to give a full disposition to a conservative lower court decision was statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.

[11] As a reminder, the coding for "liberal" and "conservative" follows the principles of Spaeth's coding for the United States Supreme Court Judicial Database.

The next step is to separate the liberal and conservative lower court decisions to see how the court substantively disposed of them as well as whether they received a full or summary disposition. Tables 6 and 7 do this.

TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE

Table 6 examines the dispositions of cases with a liberal lower court decision. Of the 430 cases with a liberal lower court decision, 212 (49.3%) were affirmed and 218 (50.7%) were reversed. Although the distribution between cases affirmed or reversed was nearly even, whether they were given a full or summary disposition was not. Of the cases affirmed, 151 (71.2%) were given a full disposition and 61 (28.8%) were disposed of summarily. Of the cases with a liberal lower court decision that the Court reversed, 183 (83.9%) were given a full disposition while only 35 (16.1%) were disposed of summarily. The higher percentage of cases given full disposition that were reversed is statistically significant at $p < .002$. Again, the Court seemed more likely to issue summary dispositions for cases it affirmed than those it reversed.

TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE

Finally, Table 7 examines the disposition differences in cases with conservative lower court decisions. The Court granted review to 696 cases with a conservative lower court opinion. Of these, the Court affirmed 306 (44.0%) and reversed 390 (56.0%). Although the distribution of the substantive disposition (affirmed or reversed) was not as even for the cases with a conservative lower court decision as it was for those with a liberal lower court decision, it turned out that the procedural disposition was much more so. Of the cases with a conservative lower court decision that the Court affirmed,

256 (83.7%) were given a full disposition while only 50 (16.3%) were disposed of summarily. Of the cases with a conservative lower court decision that the Court reversed, 322 (82.6%) were given a full disposition and only 68 (17.4%) were disposed of summarily.

Although only slightly more than a percentage point separates the Court's procedural disposition of conservative lower court decisions between those cases it affirmed or reversed, it is worth noting the percentages compared to the liberal dispositions from Table 6. In particular, notice that for the cases reversed, the percentage of cases given a full disposition was nearly equal for liberal lower court decisions (83.9%) and conservative lower court decisions (82.6%). In contrast, the percentage of liberal lower court decisions that the Court affirmed to which the Court gave a full disposition was 71.2% but the percentage of affirmed conservative lower court decisions given a full disposition was 83.7%. The outlier in these percentages is affirmed cases with a liberal lower court decision which the Court was much more likely to dispose of summarily.

Concluding Comments

Overall the results suggest that there are some differences in the types of cases to which the Court provides a full or summary disposition. The clear distinction in dispositions between cases on certiorari and those on appeal should not have been a particular surprise given what we know about the differences between those two methods of seeking Court review. Although there will likely be times when the Court

feels the need to grant review to a case on certiorari but not necessarily explain the accompanying decision on the merits, the number of summary dispositions is no doubt greater for cases on appeal given the lesser amount of discretion in the review of them. It will be interesting to see if this percentage changes when the Court is given more discretion in cases on appeal in later terms.

From Table 2 we saw that although cases reversed had a slightly higher percentage of full dispositions than those affirmed, the difference did not reach a traditional level of statistical significance. On the other hand, when cases on certiorari and those on appeal were examined separately (Tables 3 and 4) we saw a significant difference in their treatment. Not only were the differences in each table statistically significant, but there were so in opposite directions. For cases on certiorari the Court was very unlikely to summarily dispose of a case it affirmed. In sharp contrast, for cases on appeal the Court summarily disposed of a majority of the cases it affirmed. Aside from what this indicates about the Court's method of disposition, it is another example of the difference in the Court's treatment of cases on certiorari and those on appeal.

The final three tables examined the Court's method of disposition in relation to the ideological direction of the lower court decision. The results from Table 5 indicated that the Court was more likely to issue a summary disposition in cases with a liberal lower court decision. In looking specifically at those cases with a liberal lower court decision in Table 6 we saw that the Court was more likely to issue a summary disposition in the cases it affirmed. On the other hand, for cases with a conservative lower court decision

the Court was nearly equally likely to summarily dispose of a case regardless of whether it affirmed or reversed the lower court. Of additional interest was that the Court was nearly equally likely to issue a summary disposition for cases with a conservative lower court decision, affirmed or reversed, and liberal lower court decisions it reversed. The outlier was with liberal lower court decisions the Court affirmed, which was about a dozen percentage points more likely to be a summary disposition.

Before concluding this paper there are a few additional points worth mentioning. The first concerns the number of full versus summary dispositions. Although I did not emphasize the point, Table 1 shows that of the 1,156 cases on certiorari or appeal, 940 (81.3%) were full dispositions and 216 (18.7%) were summary dispositions.[12] That percentage of full dispositions is much higher than Perry indicates for the terms he examined. More specifically, in his Figure 4.1 Perry shows that for many of the terms between 1970 and 1982 the summary dispositions outnumbered the plenary ones on both the paid and *in forma pauperis* dockets (1991, 99). In the text he notes that a "common reason given for summary treatment implied that the increasing caseload required it" (1991, 100). Aside from any differences in coding between the data used here and that used by Perry, it is certainly true that the Court's caseload has increased dramatically since the Vinson Court. Aside from the first term of the Vinson Court (1946) which was an outlier with 1,512 cases filed on the paid docket, the remainder of

[12] Recall that Table 1 did not include five cases on certification. Table 5 includes these and all five had full dispositions.

the six terms ranged from a high of 782 (1948 Term) to a low of 672 (1950 Term). In contrast, by the 1970 Term (the first listed in Perry's figure) there were 1,589 cases on the paid docket and the number continued to grow, hitting a peak in the 1981 Term of 2,413.

Even with more discretion in whether to grant review to cases on appeal, the dramatically increasing number of cases filed suggests, as Perry notes, the possibility that a higher percentage of cases in the Warren and Burger Court eras will be disposed of summarily.

A second point worth mentioning is whether the Court treated appeals from state and federal courts differently. More specifically, both Stern and Gressman (1978, 377-378) and Perry (1991, 30; citing Stern and Gressman) note that the Court will summarily affirm an appeal from a federal court but dismiss "for want of a substantial federal question" a similar case on appeal from a state court. To the extent this is true it presents a problem in terms of both the results presented here and those of prior papers in the series that considered differences between cases on certiorari and appeal. On the other hand, during the Vinson Court years the Court granted review and summarily disposed of 20 state cases on appeal and 16 of these were affirmed. During the same period there were 226 state cases on appeal that were denied review by the Court. Even if all of them were denied "for want of a substantial federal question," there is no way of telling how many did not actually involve a substantial federal question versus the reason Stern and Gressman (and Perry) suggest.

The concern with the meaning of a rejection of a state case on appeal also raises the question of the meaning of a full versus summary disposition. The topic is primarily beyond the scope of this paper, but the short version is that a summary disposition of a case on appeal has precedential value, though perhaps not as much as a full disposition.[13] At a practical level, the written opinions of a full disposition provide explanation and guidance that a summary disposition does not, so it is not surprising that they would have greater value as precedent.

Of course, to the extent that the point of writing opinions is to clarify the law, Perry notes that some have criticized the use of summary dispositions (1991, 100). He also notes the justices' use of the convention of a "rule of six." This means that it takes the votes of six justices at conference to dispose of a case summarily. Perry notes that some justices regularly dissent from the use of summary dispositions on general principle (1991, 100), but the reasons for approving a summary disposition are varied. As noted previously, a prime reason for the use of summary dispositions, particularly in later terms, could simply be an increasing caseload (Perry 1991, 100). Also previously mentioned was the possibility that a case should so clearly be either affirmed or reversed that no further explanation is necessary (Perry 1991, 39 and 100). A third reason might be that although the justices could agree on a result, if the case were argued they might not be able to agree on reasoning (Perry 1991, 102).

Regardless of the reason for a summary disposition, it does put attorneys in a difficult situation. As Perry notes, although attorneys are advised not to argue the

[13] See Perry (1991, Chapter 2) for more on this topic.

merits in their petitions, even some justices recognize that some discussion of the merits may be warranted, particularly given the number of summary dispositions (1991, 101-102).

Finally, despite the general dislike of summary dispositions by justices and attorneys, Perry notes that "[t]here are instances where summary judgments are clearly appropriate" (1991, 100 n6). These instances are where the Court reaches a decision in one cases and then vacates and remands several others based on that case. Although not part of the Vinson Court era, a good example of this was the Court's major obscenity decision in *Miller v. California* (1973). After announcing its decision in *Miller* the Court vacated and remanded many cases for lower courts to reevaluate in light of the newly announced test for obscenity. One could make a reasonable argument that vacating a decision in light of a case with a newly announced rule or procedure should be treated differently than others, and particularly summary reversals. I did not make that distinction for this paper, but it might be something worth examining in the future.

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Table 1

Full and Summary Dispositions in Cases on Certiorari and Appeal for Cases Granted Review on the Vinson Court's Appellate Docket

	Full	Summary	Row Total	Full Disposition Rate (%)
Certiorari	748	79	827	90.4%*
Appeal	192	137	329	58.4%
Column Total	940	216	1,156	81.3%

* $p < .001$, two-tail difference of means test (see Wonnacott and Wonnacott 1972, 178).

Table 2

Full and Summary Dispositions for Cases Affirmed or Reversed on the Vinson Court's Appellate Docket

	Full	Summary	Row Total	Full Disposition Rate (%)
Affirmed	407	111	518	78.6%
Reversed	505	103	608	83.1%
Column Total	912	214	1,126	81.0%

Table 3

Full and Summary Dispositions for Cases on Certiorari that were Affirmed or Reversed on the Vinson Court's Appellate Docket

	Full	Summary	Row Total	Full Disposition Rate (%)
Affirmed	317	4	321	98.8%*
Reversed	414	75	489	84.7%
Column Total	731	79	810	90.2%

* $p < .001$, two-tail difference of means test (see Wonnacott and Wonnacott 1972, 178).

Table 4

Full and Summary Dispositions for Cases on Appeal that were Affirmed or Reversed on the Vinson Court's Appellate Docket

	Full	Summary	Row Total	Full Disposition Rate (%)
Affirmed	89	107	196	45.4%*
Reversed	90	28	118	76.3%
Column Total	179	135	314	57.0%

* $p < .001$, two-tail difference of means test (see Wonnacott and Wonnacott 1972, 178).

Table 5

Full and Summary Dispositions for Cases with Conservative and Liberal Lower Court Decisions for Cases Granted Review on the Vinson Court's Appellate Docket

	Full	Summary	Row Total	Full Disposition Rate (%)
Liberal	353	98	451	78.3%*
Conservative	592	118	710	83.4%
Column Total	945	216	1,161	81.4%

* $p < .05$, two-tail difference of means test (see Wonnacott and Wonnacott 1972, 178).

Table 6

Full and Summary Dispositions for Cases with Liberal Lower Court Decisions that were Affirmed or Reversed on the Vinson Court's Appellate Docket

	Full	Summary	Row Total	Full Disposition Rate (%)
Affirmed	151	61	212	71.2%*
Reversed	183	35	218	83.9%
Column Total	334	96	430	77.7%

* $p < .002$, two-tail difference of means test (see Wonnacott and Wonnacott 1972, 178).

Table 7

Full and Summary Dispositions for Cases with Conservative Lower Court Decisions that were Affirmed or Reversed on the Vinson Court's Appellate Docket

	Full	Summary	Row Total	Full Disposition Rate (%)
Affirmed	256	50	306	83.7%
Reversed	322	68	390	82.6%
Column Total	578	118	696	83.0%