EMOTIONS AND ADVOCACY COALITIONS:

AN ANALYSIS OF AMICUS CURIAE BRIEFS IN

MCGIRT V. OKLAHOMA

By

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Bachelor of Science in Political Science

Oklahoma State University

Stillwater, Oklahoma

2020

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
Master of Arts
May, 2023

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this paper would not have been possible without the guidance and support of several people. First and foremost, thank you to my husband, Jed Cochran, for keeping me appropriately caffeinated and providing me moments to catch my breath. Your support is everything. Thank you to Dr. Kristin Olofsson for demonstrating not only what it means to be a creative scholar, but also a kind one. Your mentorship and continued trust in me throughout this project mean more than you could ever know. Thank you to the ACF working group at UC Denver, but especially Allegra Fullerton, Kayla Gabehart, and Dr. Chris Weible, for freely training me in theory and coding used in this paper. You have all inspired me to continue my education. Lastly, thank you to my cat Gustav. The writing process way infinitely more enjoyable with you in my lap.

Name: Makenzie Newton

Date of Degree: May, 2023

Title of Study: EMOTIONS AND ADVOCACY COLAITIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF
                AMICUS CURIAE BRIEFS IN MCGIRT V. OKLAHOMA

Major Field: Political Science

Abstract: The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) integrated with emotional expression analysis gives researchers the opportunity to study policy signaling and coalitions' policy beliefs in a novel way. Using the 13 amicus curiae briefs filed in the Supreme Court case McGirt v. Oklahoma, I explore how emotions are used by advocacy coalitions as they relate to policy beliefs. I hand coded 725 observations in Discourse Network Analysis (DNA), to identify the actor, tribal jurisdiction policy position, emotional expressions, and beliefs for each observation. Within the tribal jurisdiction policy subsystem, I found two predominant coalitions–the support tribal jurisdiction and oppose tribal jurisdiction coalition. I suggest the alignment of coalitions is explained by the belief homophily hypothesis–the idea that coalitions form around shared threats or opponents. The belief homophily hypothesis is characterized by trust and fear. I found that the frequency of emotional expressions was highest for the oppose-tribal jurisdiction coalition and this coalition was more likely to use fear-based emotions. The support-coalition used more enthusiasm-based emotions. This paper contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it uniquely uses amicus briefs as a data source to explore emotions. Second, this works contributes to interpretive framework combining components of the ACF and emotion expression analysis. Lastly, it expands venues of policy signaling from more conventional spaces like the legislative branch to the judicial process within the ACF.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Our reality is shaped by narratives, stories, and collective memories, especially as it relates to our political reality. This is related to the idea that people make sense of the world through stories–Shanahan, Jones, and McBeth (2011) call this narrative theory. The political story of tribal jurisdiction is possibly as old as the first time Indigenous communities came into contact with settlers of the new America. With continued domination by the settlers and what I call the oppose-tribal jurisdiction coalition, conflict continued to heighten as the United States became a nation through the Indian Removal Acts and then eventually came to a head with the Supreme Court case of McGirt v. Oklahoma.

McGirt v. Oklahoma spans back to 1997 when Jimcy McGirt, a tribal citizen, was convicted by the State of Oklahoma of crimes committed on historic Muscogee (Creek) Nation reservation land. The crimes committed were violent, and the victim was also a tribal citizen. This is an example of a policy narrative within the policy issue of tribal jurisdiction. The dominant coalition is currently the oppose-tribal jurisdiction because the state convicted McGirt rather than the tribe itself. Twenty years later, McGirt was denied post-conviction relief from the Oklahoma Court of

Criminal Appeals (OCCA). Here enters the other coalition in the policy issue–the support-tribal jurisdiction coalition attempting to change the status quo systemically, thus changing the story. The case made it to the Supreme Court, and in 2020 the Supreme Court reversed the OCCA's decisions, effectively handing "victory" to the support-tribal jurisdiction coalition. The dominant coalition changed, and the support-tribal jurisdiction now has power.

Reality, as we know it, is communicated through discourse (Vieira, 2020). Discourses are interactive policy stories used by actors in policy subsystems. The policy subsystem is a subjective unit of analysis within the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) commonly characterized by an issue topic. In the case used for this study, the coalitions in the tribal jurisdiction subsystem use amicus briefs to tell their political realities. As new discourses enter the policy subsystem or emerge as the dominating policy story, policy change takes place (Shanahan et al., 2011). Discourses are the means by which emotions are shared, creating "collective emotions" (Yordy et al., 2023; Bonansinga, 2022; Kinnvall, 2018, p 531). Collective emotions are the foundation of political values and cultivate attachment to shared identities (Yordy et al., 2023; Bonansinga 2022, Kinnvall, 2018, p 531). In the policy-making process, advocacy coalitions use discourses persuasively to express their policy positions and beliefs (Vieira, 2020) with the intent of becoming the dominant policy subsystem (Shanahan et al., 2011). This study understands discourse to be intentional policy stories within policy subsystems; while emotional appeals laced throughout the discourse are not necessarily intentional, they are telling of the greater policy subsystems and the relationships between advocacy coalitions.

Using the foundational work of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) and emotional expression analysis, this paper contributes to three significant areas of study. First, it expands the substantive understanding of emotions in amicus briefs and how they are used in building coalitions around policy positions. More generally, this works contributes to the ACF theory's use of emotions. Second, it theoretically builds upon the ACF by identifying policy signaling

within the judicial process. Lastly, it is methodologically novel in its analysis of amicus briefs as the primary data source. When actors sign on to amicus briefs, it costs significant social and political capital, is a highly coordinated activity, and has the potential to indicate coalitions that are relatively undetectable in policy arenas outside of the judicial branch. Using amicus briefs presents policy process scholars the opportunity to track political coordination and coalition building that is unequivocally reliable.

Using the thirteen amicus curiae briefs submitted in the SCOTUS case *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, this study identifies and analyzes coalitions formed around their position on tribal jurisdiction of the contested land. I ask the following question*: How are emotions in Amicus Curiae Briefs filed in McGirt v. Oklahoma used by advocacy coalitions?* More in-depth details outlining the case's background are discussed later in the paper. After inductively creating a corpus of belief, I analyze each sentence in the briefs by the implicit or explicit emotional expression and the actor and policy core belief it is connected to. I found that actors are driven together and form advocacy coalitions when they share a common enemy. This is characterized by a higher frequency of emotional expressions and greater diversity of policy beliefs. This is particularly true of anti-tribal jurisdiction coalitions. Pro-tribal jurisdiction coalitions expressed fewer emotions and a more pointed focus on a smaller scope of policy core beliefs.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND THE ADVOCACY COALITION FRAMEWORK

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) is a widely accepted and common framework used in the study of policy processes (Olofsson et al. 2018; Nowlin 2011). The ACF's main goal is identifying policy learning and policy change within a policy subsystem (Olofsson et al. 2018; Nowlin 2011). The policy subsystem comprises advocacy coalitions situated around different beliefs concerning the policy. The ACF suggests beliefs fall under a hierarchical model of cognition with three tiers– "deep core," "policy core," and "secondary" beliefs (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014; Henry et al., 2011). This study is interested in identifying policy core beliefs, which are generally considered to a primary driver of coalition formation. Several assumptions are important to the ACF literature (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014). First, advocacy coalitions are "homogenous" in their shared policy "core" beliefs and are made evident through political coordination (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014; Nowlin, 2011, p. 46).

Even though subsystems are relatively stable in their core beliefs and policy positions, scholarship has cited one endogenous shock and two main exogenous shocks that can alter the subsystem– public opinion (endogenous), salience disruptions (exogenous), and dimension-shifts

(exogenous) (Nowlin 2011; Jones and Jenkins-Smith, 2009). Jones and Jenkins-Smith (2009) expanded the policy subsystems to a more macro-level called "policy topography" thus creating theoretical space for endogenous and exogenous shocks from the broader linked subsystems (p. 37). This is an important shift in the ACF literature, creating room for institutional explanations.

Second, under the ACF framework, behavior is guided by three important factors: "relevant institutions", "intensity of conflict", and "the severity of threats posed by opponents" (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014, p. 190). Conflict intensity and threat severity are connected to the "devil shift", or the exaggerated perception of opponent power and intended harm (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014). At a latent level, emotions are common concepts and behavior explained under the ACF framework. The emergence and use of emotions as a tool to identify processes in protest studies, executed by Yordy et al. (2023), is the inspiration behind the methods seen here. The novel and successful use of emotions as an analytical tool in policy process work and the ACF is the vital next step in exploring policy learning and success. This further justifies this study's incorporation and expansion of emotions as an analytical tool within the ACF.

Third, subsystem advocacy coalitions demonstrate long-term core belief stability. When and if this stability is altered, it is typically a result of the dominant advocacy coalition changing their beliefs or a shift in resources and, thus, power (Montefrio 2014; Sabatier and Weible 2007). Furthermore, changes in resources are presumed to shift slowly (Sabatier and Weible 2007), but what happens when a single policy decision has the potential to alter fundamental resource distribution immediately? This is a necessary question opening the door to conceptual considerations progressing the general application of the ACF. In this case, I am largely interested in how advocacy coalitions use emotions to influence policy change and how these emotions are connected to subsystem policy core beliefs amidst resource changes.

Another noteworthy assumption is that actors are bounded rationally and "motivated by [their] belief systems" (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014, 190). Actors make up coalitions and drive policy change (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014). This is a conceptual distinction made to highlight policy change is driven by individuals (policy actors), not coalitions. Sommerville et al. (2021) define advocacy coalitions as a group of policy actors connected informally by shared policy beliefs. Advocacy coalitions are characterized by long-term stability, being relatively "self-aware" (p. 184), sharing "policy core beliefs" (p. 195), coordinating activity, and taking action to dominate the policy subsystem (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014). Within the ACF, there are many hypotheses explaining the basis of coalition formation, but the one best suited for this study is the belief homophily hypothesis (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014).

Identifying coalitions with the belief homophily

Although shared beliefs are an indispensable component within the ACF, more traditional studies focus on coalition stability between allies and opponents even amidst conflict with policy core beliefs (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014). The belief homophily hypothesis starts with beliefs, rather than stability, and suggests actors form alliances based on shared policy beliefs or ideology (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014; Henry et al., 2011). At a linguistic level, Henry, Lubell and McCoy (2011) specify that "homophily" means the natural tendency to bond with individuals that share preferences (p. 426).

The belief homophily hypothesis creates space for explanatory factors, like resources and perceived opponents, that alter the stability of the subsystem and coalitional alignment (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014). Some scholars suggest, under the belief homophily framework, coalitions more readily form based on shared opponents rather than their shared beliefs (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014; Henry et al., 2011). Given that my case is situated around advocacy coalitions supporting or opposing a legal decision, assuming coalition formation based on shared opponents

is better suited than long-term coalition stability. This is connected to the advocacy coalition

concept of the "devil shift" where actors have a heightened perception of opponent malice,

creating more fear (Allegra et al., 2023; Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014; Henry et al., 2011). Outside

of fear, trust is another important emotion (Durnova, 2018) that should be incorporated into the

analysis of belief homophily. Trust is vital for two reasons. First, coalitional action specifically

against opponents would be unsuccessful without trust. Second, signing onto the amicus curiae

briefs requires significant trust between allies, as will be discussed later. All of this is not to say

that the coalitions of interest do not demonstrate stability. Rather, this emphasizes that resource

changes cause shifts in perceived allies and opponents, and coalitions form based on shared

opponents.

> *Expectation 1: (A)Actors that share a common enemy are likely to form coalitions even if their policy core beliefs do not completely align. (B) This relationship is defined by fear or trust as the primary emotions*

Emotions and conflict in the policy making process

The interplay of values, emotions, and discourse

As previously mentioned, emotions are deeply tied to the creation of shared experiences through

narration and language. This is the idea of discourse, or stories (Shanahan et al., 2011). Emotions

mediate the relationship between actors and the social bonds used to form coalitions (Yordy et al.,

2023; Kinnvall, 2018), further emphasizing how important emotions are in analyzing advocacy

coalitions. Following the lead of Fullerton, Gabehart, and Weible (2023), this paper builds upon

the advocacy coalition literature (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014) by incorporating the study of

emotions as done by Yordy et al. (2023) in the study of protests. Another goal of this paper is to

expand upon the conventional notion that emotions have a delegitimizing effect in legal briefs

and decrease the likelihood of success in the court (Black et al., 2016).

If emotions are the gas for coalition building, values are the driver and policy subsystems are the vehicle. Values are understood and analyzed through emotions (Durnova 2018). Certain emotions like disdain and trust, particularly interesting for this paper, strengthen identity and value formation (Durnova, 2018). Values play a significant role in the policy process as they are the basis of policy positions, group formation of actors, and social identities (Durnova 2018). Verhoeven and Duyvendak (2016) emphasize the direct relationship between emotional appeals and political discourse.

From an interpretive lens, values displayed through emotions are *shared* through discourse (Durnova 2018; Verhoeven and Duyvendak 2016). As defined by Durnova (2018), discourses are "a cluster of meanings and values shared by a collective" (722). In this case, discourses are the amicus briefs, and the values are assessed in how they are interactively discordant. More specifically, I am interested in identifying how policy actors are situated around tribal sovereignty and why they oppose other policy actors' positions. Policy actors in advocacy coalitions are anything from legislators, agency officials, interest groups, researchers, journalists to judicial officials (Sabatier and Weible, 2007). Emotional appeals in discourses are not only indicative of collective values and beliefs, but they are also inherently persuasive. Emotional appeals functionally attempt to garner support against a policy position (Verhoeven and Duyvendak 2016).

When there is increased conflict in the policy process, the overall intensity of emotions used to frame the issue is expected to be higher (Verhoeven and Duyvendak, 2016). This is all constrained by the concept of bounded rationality (Simon 1983) or the idea that in an uncertain world, it is improbable to calculate risk accurately; therefore, we rely on heuristics. The emotions thus become a disruptor in heuristical certainty and stability *when* the emotion experienced is outside of what is common or expected (Verhoeven & Duyvendak, 2016). The concept of bounded rationality is a major assumption in the ACF (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014), thus

presenting the opportunity to include emotions as a heuristical disruptor in the framework to better understand actor and coalition behavior.

The behavioral approach suggests political stimuli trigger emotional responses, and these emotions are the underlying feature influencing political behavior (Huddy and Bankert 2017; Brader and Valentino 2007). Conventional knowledge within political psychology suggests stimuli that elicit fear-based responses cause individuals to base their political attitudes on their present circumstances rather than prior beliefs (Brader and Valentino 2007). Where current circumstances are typically connected to material well-being represented by economic factors. On the flip side, this paper is built upon the interpretive approach presented by Durnova (2018), suggesting outcomes are precipitated by "interactions" between actors "within discourses" (p. 720). Emotions in this context are expressions, not a physiological response elicited from stimuli (Fullerton et al., 2023). Using components from the behavioral approach, the interpretative framework sees emotions as reactions while also looking beyond this at their social and cultural context (Yordy et al., 2023). In other words, this study is looking at the interactive effect of emotions.

Scholars typically differentiate emotions into two broad categories of affect: hope and enthusiasm or fear and anxiety (Gerstlé and Nai 2019; Ridout and Searles 2011). This type of political psychology work is commonly used in voter behavior and campaign strategy work. Both categories of emotions have different impacts on the policy process. For example, fear/anxiety-driven individuals are more likely to be persuaded by new information (Gerstlé and Nai 2019), whereas hope/enthusiasm-driven individuals are more likely to rely on prior "beliefs and attitudes" (Gerstlé and Nai 2019, 413; Brader 2006). As explained by Affective Intelligence Theory (AIT), fear creates the opportunity for increased receptivity to persuasion as individuals try and find the best solution to solve their unprecedented circumstances (Marcus et al. 2019; Gerstlé and Nai 2019; Kinnvall 2018). Furthermore, emotions like enthusiasm are shown to

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create stronger group identities (Brader and Valentino 2007) as prior beliefs become further entrenched. Maintaining coalitions relies on shared beliefs, but ultimately, shared beliefs did not spring the formation. This study will attempt to provide evidence of emotions that advocacy coalitions can experience outside of just fear. With this in mind, we should expect stronger and more congruent beliefs in coalitions that express emotions under the umbrella of enthusiasm. In coalitions where more beliefs are expressed (i.e., belief incongruence), we expect more fear-based emotional appeals. This brings up the second set of expectations:

Expectation 2: Oppositional coalitions express more fear-based emotions and have a more diverse range of beliefs.

Expectation 3: Supportive coalitions express more enthusiasm-based emotions and have greater belief congruence.

CHAPTER III

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision of McGirt v. Oklahoma in 2020 is a decision over twenty

years in the making, and arguably, one of the most important cases for tribal citizens in the last

decade. The case revolves around the question of jurisdiction, and, in particular, questions of

jurisdiction arising between U.S. states and Tribal land. Terminology is important here–many of

the disputes between state and tribal governments are due to vague language in treaties and laws

established in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Before delving into the contentious legal components of McGirt v. Oklahoma, it is important to

first grasp the facts of the case. Jimcy McGirt is a tribal citizen of the Seminole Nation of

Oklahoma. In 1997, McGirt was convicted of raping, molesting, and sodomizing a child and was

therefore sentenced to "1,000 years plus life" by the State of Oklahoma (Miller and Dolan 2021,

2069; Ruben and Frampton 2020). These violent crimes were committed on the Muscogee

(Creek) Nation Reservation which is now considered Indian Country. The most important facts of

the case briefly described here are 1) the crimes occurred in Indian Country 2) the crimes

committed were violent and 3) the perpetrator and victim are tribal citizens.

After serving twenty years of a life sentence, Jimcy McGirt applied for post-conviction relief with

the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals in 2018, claiming the state did not have jurisdiction

because the crime occurred in Indian Country (OCCA 2019). After the OCCA denied McGirt's

petition in 2019, McGirt petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS) to review the case in a

writ of certiorari (SCOTUS, 2019). McGirt presented the question:

> Whether Oklahoma Courts can continue to unlawfully exercise, under state law, criminal
> jurisdiction as a "justiciable matter" in Indian country over Indians accused of major
> crimes enumerated under the Indian Major Crimes Act–which are under exclusive federal
> jurisdiction (SCOTUS 2019).

Ultimately, the Supreme Court reversed OCCA's judgement in a 5-4 opinion (SCOTUS 2020).

SCOTUS determined that the territorial boundaries outlined in the Creek Nation 1866 Treaty

constitute Indian Country, or Muscogee Creek reservation land (SCOTUS 2020). Additionally,

SCOTUS decided Oklahoma did not have jurisdiction to try a tribal citizen committing a criminal

act in Creek reservation land under the Indian Major Crimes Act (SCOTUS 2020). Since the

Supreme Court's ruling, reservation status has been determined for the Cherokee, Choctaw,

Chickasaw, Seminole and Quapaw tribes.

The History of Treaties, Laws, and Statutes

During the 1830s and 1840s, after the Indian Removal Act, indigenous people were forcibly

relocated to Indian Territory, now present-day Oklahoma. This journey of forced relocation is

called the "Trail of Tears" (Frank 2022). The Muscogee (Creek) Nation, among The Cherokee,

Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole Nations, (Frank 2022) now reside in federally allocated

Indian Territory, or Indian Country. According to the Office of the Law Revision Counsel of the

United States House of Representative, "Indian Country" includes all "federally created

reservation land" (including fee land), "dependent indian communities", and "Indian allotments"

(18 U.S. Code § 1151). The inclusive nature of Indian Country's definition is important to note

because jurisdiction hinges on its interpretation.

McGirt v. Oklahoma is fundamentally a case asking the question–is the Muscogee Creek Nation tribal land still a federally recognized reservation? Third-party actors in support of the petitioner (McGirt) would say yes using the Creek Nation 1866 Treaty as the legal grounds (Miller and Dolan 2022).

Those in support of the respondent (Oklahoma) would say no, citing the Curtis Act of 1898 and the Creek Allotment Agreement of 1901 (Miller and Dolan 2022). The Curtis Act marked a period called "The Allotment Era" where the Creek's were coerced into breaking up their land, registering for the Dawes rolls, and then receiving the land allotment (Miller and Dolan 2022, 2065). Coinciding with the Curtis Act, non-tribal individuals flocked to tribal territory to claim parcels of land for private settlement during the 1898 land runs (Miller and Dolan 2022). The culmination of the Curtis Act, the Dawes Act, land runs, and the pressure of statehood from non-tribal settlers set the stage for the Creek Nation entering a land allotment agreement with the federal government in 1901 (Miller and Dolan 2022). This meant that all the federally allocated tribal territory was separated into parcels of land to be distributed among tribal and non-tribal citizens alike. Shortly after this, Oklahoma became a state in 1907.

The Use of Amicus Curiae

This paper utilizes amicus curiae briefs, or "friend of the court" briefs, submitted during McGirt v. Oklahoma court proceedings. The primary purpose of the amicus curiae is to provide additional information, whether it is relevant laws or facts about the case, to help aid in the presiding judge's decision (Kearney and Merrill 2000, Krislov 1963). Box-Steffensmeier and Christenson (2014) suggest amicus curiae briefs require extensive coordination and negotiation between interested parties, as each party signs on to the brief, becoming a "cosigner" (p. 83. Signing on, or being a "co-signer," to a brief means you agree and support everything the brief outlines. Early legal research observes the apparent shift of amicus curiae from a legal act of neutrality to one of

advocacy by interested third-party actors (Krislov, 1963). According to Kearney and Merrill (2000), amicus briefs are "self-interested" by nature and "reflect a form of interest group lobbying directed at the Court" (p. 746). In fact, amicus curiae briefs are mostly used by interest groups (Box-Steffensmeier and Christenson, 2014). Even though amicus briefs are directed at judges, they do reveal actor coordination and can indicate signaling between coalitions because discourses are interactive, as I have defined. Due to the explicit nature of the briefs, they also outline the policy preferences of coalitions. As previously mentioned, coordination is one of the key indicators of an advocacy coalition under the ACF, and it is typically hard to capture.

The first formal use of amicus curiae took place in 1821 during the Green v. Biddle case–a case involving disputed land in Kentucky (Krislov, 1963). After this case, the amicus curiae "continued to be used to protect governmental interests, notably in connection with grants of the land" (Krislov, 1963, p. 702). For two reasons, Amicus curiae briefs are an appropriate means to explore coalitions and subsystem beliefs related to McGirt v. Oklahoma. First, the historical use of the amicus curiae as a means of advocacy in cases primarily involving land disputes. And second, signing briefs are a public signifier of actor coordination (Box-Steffensmeier and Christenson, 2014), indicating agreement on beliefs expressed in the document.

CHAPTER IV

DATA AND METHODS

There were thirteen amicus briefs filed for McGirt v. Oklahoma–six supporting McGirt

(petitioner), six supporting the State of Oklahoma (respondent), and one that was neutral (The

Tribal Supreme Court Project). Each brief was carefully analyzed for any mention of beliefs. The

beliefs found in each amicus brief were compared to create a corpus of beliefs. The corpus of

beliefs informed the dictionary used to create the codebook. This was an inductive way to

organize and aggregate the beliefs that would then be used for coding.

This work uses and builds upon the emotion categorization created by Yordy et al. (2023) and

then integrates this emotional categorization with Discourse Network Analysis (DNA) as done by

Fullerton et al. (2023). As both studies have suggested, this process synthesizes the strengths of

the interpretative methods with a solid grounding in efficient methodology (Yordy et al., 2023;

Fullerton et al., 2023). This allows me to have explicit expectations while leaving room for

inductive outcomes.

Using Discourse Network Analysis software v2, developed by Leifeld (2013), the "Interest of

Amici Curiae" and "Summary of Argument" were uploaded for each brief. There were certain

cases where briefs included another section before the main body of the "Argument" that were also uploaded. The entire brief was not coded because of constraints on time and available coders, presenting an opportunity for future work to build upon this study. After reaching 85% intercoder reliability, each brief was hand-coded by statement based on emotions expressed concerning conflict arising over tribal jurisdiction and reservation status in the Supreme Court Case McGirt v. Oklahoma. For the context of this study a statement is a *sentence* in the brief where the authors (narrator) explicitly or implicitly express an emotion attributed to themselves or another individual or group (actor) pertaining to the McGirt v. Oklahoma case. Here is an example of a statement with variables indicated in bold:

> The **State's** claims ignore the **threat** disestablishment poses to this governance while exaggerating the implications of Reservation affirmation.

Statement variables are noted in Table 1 along with an example of how the sentence above was coded. In most cases the narrator was not explicitly mentioned in the sentence, rather the narrator was assumed to be the cosigner(s) of the brief.

There are many cases where the narrator and actor are the same individual or entity. This is the case when a group like the Muscogee (Creek) Nation is talking and ascribing their own emotions to different beliefs about McGirt. In other statements, like the example above, the *Muscogee (Creek) Nation* ascribes the emotion of *fear* through the word *threat* to the *State of Oklahoma* as Oklahoma ignores threats arising from the *disestablishment* of tribal reservations. Due to the importance and use of the word *disestablishment*, this word was added to Yordy et al.'s (2023) thesaurus and is associated with the primary emotions of approval, dissatisfaction, and obligation. Several emotions and/or policy core beliefs can be expressed within a statement. Because an observation can only consist of one actor to one emotion connected to one policy core belief, statements containing several components are coded as multiple observations capturing any additional variables (i.e., actors, emotions, beliefs). For example, if the statement above said,

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"The *State* and the ***City of Tulsa*'s** claims…", then another observation with all the same

components seen in the example column in Table 1 would be inputted along with the City of

Tulsa as the actor. Actor affiliation and organization change according to the actor.
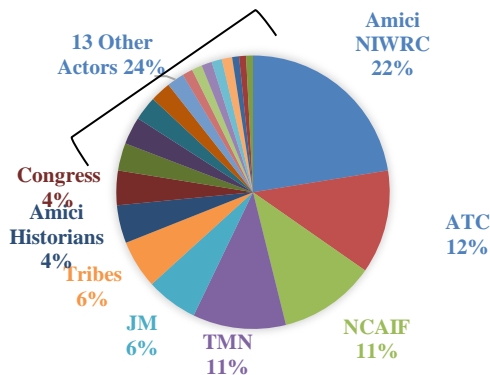
Table 1. Statement Variables

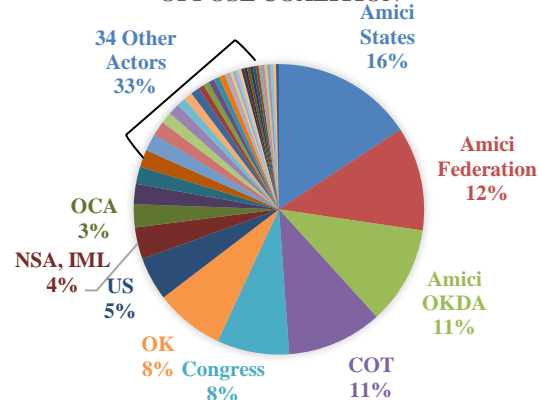| Variable	Description	Example
Narrator	The name of the actor narrating the emotion (s)	Muscogee (Creek) Nation (TMN)
Narrator affiliation	Organizational affiliation of the narrator	TMN
Narrator position	Whether the narrator supports of opposes overturning McGirt.	Support
Narrator organization	Organizational categorization of the narrator.	Tribal government
Actor	The actor who is attributed to feeling the emotion.	Oklahoma (OK)
Actor affiliation	Organizational affiliation of the actor	OK
Actor position	Whether the actor supports of opposes overturning McGirt.	Oppose
Actor organization	Organizational categorization of the actor.	State government
Emotion	Word(s) from the statement indicating emotion.	Threat (fear)
Explicit/Implicit	Whether the emotion expressed is explicit or implicit.	Explicit
Emotional tense	The categorization of the emotion's expression in the past or ongoing.	Ongoing
Belief(s)	The policy core belief(s) attached to the emotion.	Not a present-day reservation
Context	Any contextual details that help identify the relationship between the actor and narrator and/or the actor and belief(s).	Mentions disestablishment

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

After coding the "interest" and "summary" of each of the thirteen amicus briefs in the McGirt v.

Oklahoma case, there are a total of 422 statements that broke down into 725 observations. These

observations are put into coalitions based on the identified actor supporting or opposing the

SCOTUS overturning the OCCA decision. In essence, those that support overturning *McGirt*

believe that the geographical boundaries in question are a present-day reservation and under the

jurisdiction of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Those that oppose overturning *McGirt* believe the

geographical boundaries are not part of the present-day reservation and the State of Oklahoma has

jurisdiction over that land. There are nuances in beliefs concerning jurisdiction (i.e., civil versus

criminal jurisdiction) that this paper will go into greater detail later. One major benefit of using

Amicus Curiae briefs is that actors state their interests and who/what they support explicitly. In

most cases, this is stated in the title of the brief (e.g., *BRIEF FOR AMICUS CURIAE*

MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION IN SUPPORT OF PETITIONER"). Jimcy McGirt is the

petitioner, and the State of Oklahoma is the respondent. Of the thirteen briefs, twelve explicitly

stated their position in the title of the brief. Position was thus coded as support if petitioner

(McGirt) was stated or oppose when respondent (OK) was stated (as pictured in Figures 1 and 2).

**FIGURE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF ACTORS: SUPPORT COALITION**

Amici NIWRC 22%
13 Other Actors 24%
Congress 4%
Amici Historians 4%
Tribes 6%
JM 6%
TMN 11%
NCAIF 11%
ATC 12%

FIGURE 2. DISTRIUTION OF ACTORS: OPPOSE COALITION

Amici States 16%
34 Other Actors 33%
OCA 3%
NSA, IML 4%
US 5%
OK 8%
Congress 8%
COT 11%
Amici OKDA 11%
Amici Federation 12%

The most prominent actors in the pro-tribal jurisdiction ("support") coalition are the Amici NIWRC, Amici Tom Cole, The National Congress of American Indians Fund (NCAIF), and The Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The most common actors in the anti-tribal jurisdiction ("oppose") coalition were the Amici States, Amici Federation, Amici of Oklahoma District Attorneys, and the City of Tulsa. The pro-tribal jurisdiction coalition has almost half of the actors (21) that the anti-tribal jurisdiction coalition (43) has. There are 21 unique actors associated with the "non-specified" coalitions. Overall, there are a total of 85 unique actors identified in this study. It is important to note that some of these actors encompass multiple individuals or organizations. More information on this can be found in the appendix.

The only brief that did not take a position was the "BRIEF AMICI CURIAE OF FORMER UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS TROY A. EID, BARRY R. GRISSOM, THOMAS B. HEFFELFINGER, DAVID C. IGLESIAS, BRENDAN V. JOHNSON, WENDY OLSON, TOMOTHY Q PURDON, AND DANNY C. WILLIAMS" (14). This brief's actors and any other actors whose positions are unclear are to be coded as "not specified." A distribution of actors that fall into this category is outlined in Figure 3.

**FIGURE 3. DISTRIBUTION OF ACTORS: NOT SPECIFIED**
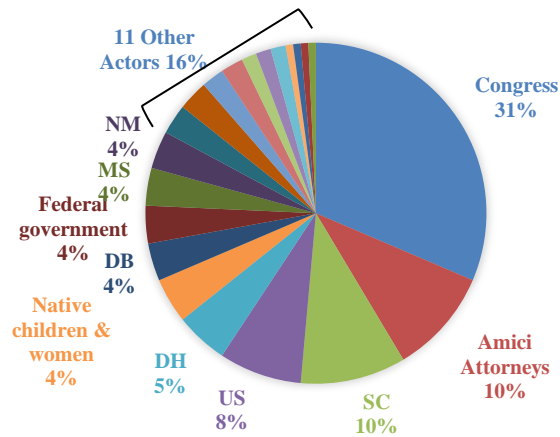
Approval, obligation, and dissatisfaction were the emotional categories that were most frequently expressed across all coalitions. This is also true for statements that mention disestablishment (obligation 36%, dissatisfaction 36%, and approval 25%). The oppositional coalition expressed more emotion. The pro-tribal jurisdiction expressed obligation (23%), approval (19%), and compassion (15%) more than the other 9 emotions. The anti-tribal jurisdiction coalition expressed approval (28%), dissatisfaction (18%), and fear (16%) most frequently. The distribution of coalitions within each emotional category is outlined in Figure 4, whereas the distribution of emotions expressed within each coalition is outlined in Figure 5.

What is most striking about Figure 4 is the evidence that the oppose coalition is most present in the emotional categories of uncertainty (83%), fear (69%), and dissatisfaction (59%) compared to the support and not specified coalitions. This substantiates part of the expectations under the belief homophily hypothesis that coalitions that form based on a shared opponent express fear as a primary emotion. This is further justified since dissatisfaction and fear are of the top emotions the anti-tribal coalition expressed (Figure 5), satisfying part of Expectation 2, that *oppositional coalitions express more fear-based emotions.* Overall, the oppose coalition was more emotional and had a higher frequency of belief statements.

The support coalition dominates the emotional categories of content (60%) and trust (55%). Even though the support coalition is most present in categories of content and trust, they mostly express obligation, approval, and compassion. All these emotions fall under the classification of a more enthusiasm-base, satisfying part of Expectation 3. Furthermore, this coalitional behavior is consistent with the belief homophily hypothesis and provides evidence that trust is an important emotion alongside fear. This substantiates Expectation 1. Because the belief homophily hypothesis is more complex than being a coalition of opposition, including trust as an identifier allows for greater and more diverse application. To emphasize, the belief homophily, for my purposes, is more so about coalition alignment based on a common threat than being explicitly oppositional.

Figure 4. Distribution of Coalitions by Emotional Category
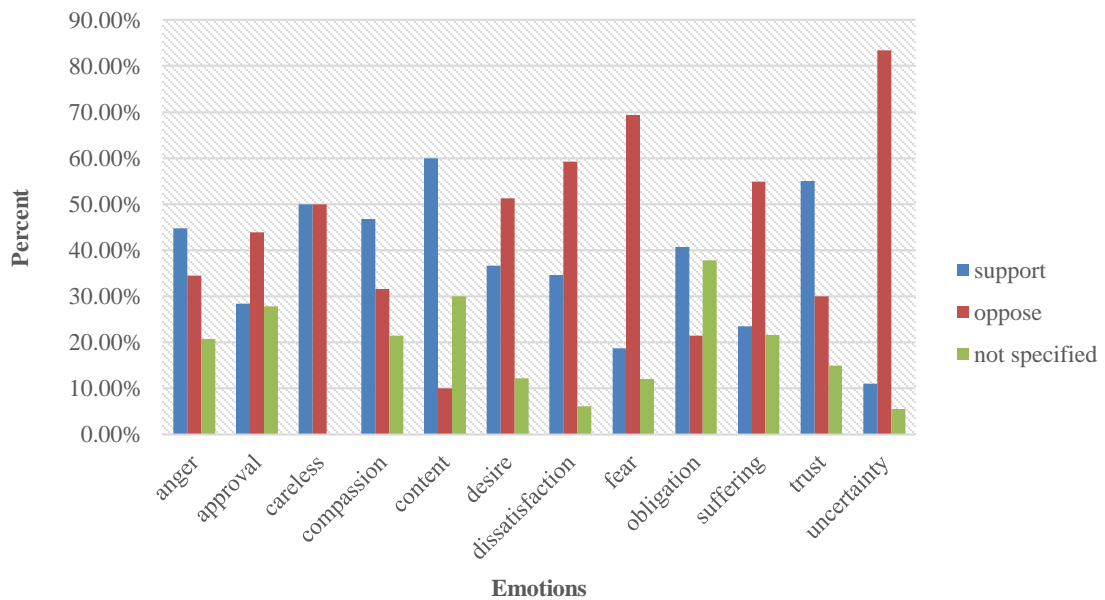
*The sum within each emotional category is 100%

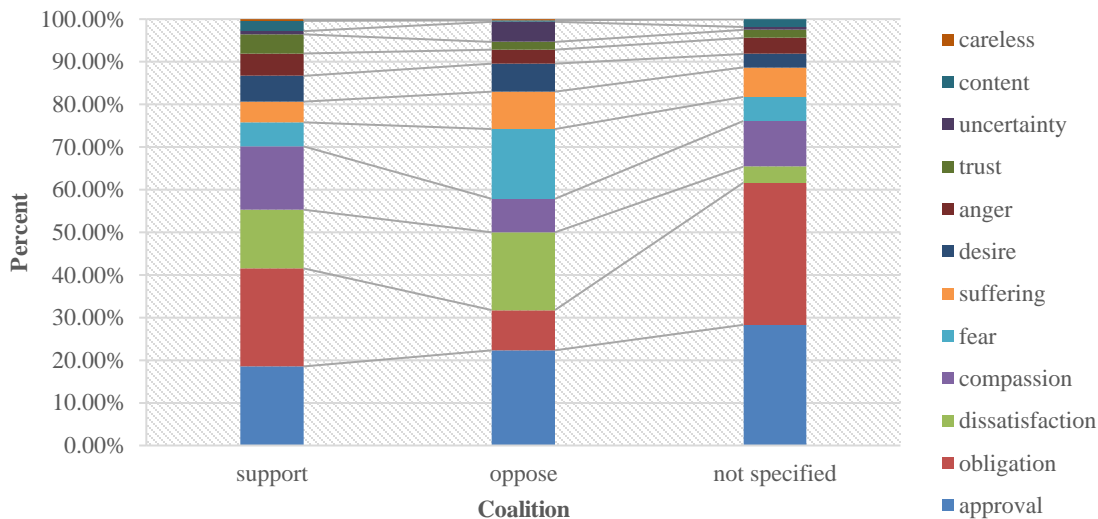**Figure 5. Distribution of Emotions within Coalitions**

Figure 6 shows the beliefs most expressed throughout the thirteen amicus briefs. Overall, there

were a total of thirty-six beliefs expressed for the oppose coalition with a total of 318 belief

observations. The support coalition had twenty-eight beliefs, revealed in over 248 belief

observations. As to be expected, most of the statements discuss reservation status. Of the

reservation status observations, 39% came from the oppose coalition, conveying that the disputed

geographical boundaries are not present-day reservations. On the flip side, the support coalition

communicated that the land is a present-day reservation at a rate of 41% (of the reservation status

observations). The actors belonging to neither coalition in the "not specified" camp had more

general questions about reservation status but did signify the disputed land was a present-day

reservation at a rate of 6% of all reservation status observations.

Figure 6. Tribal Jurisdiction Coalitional Beliefs
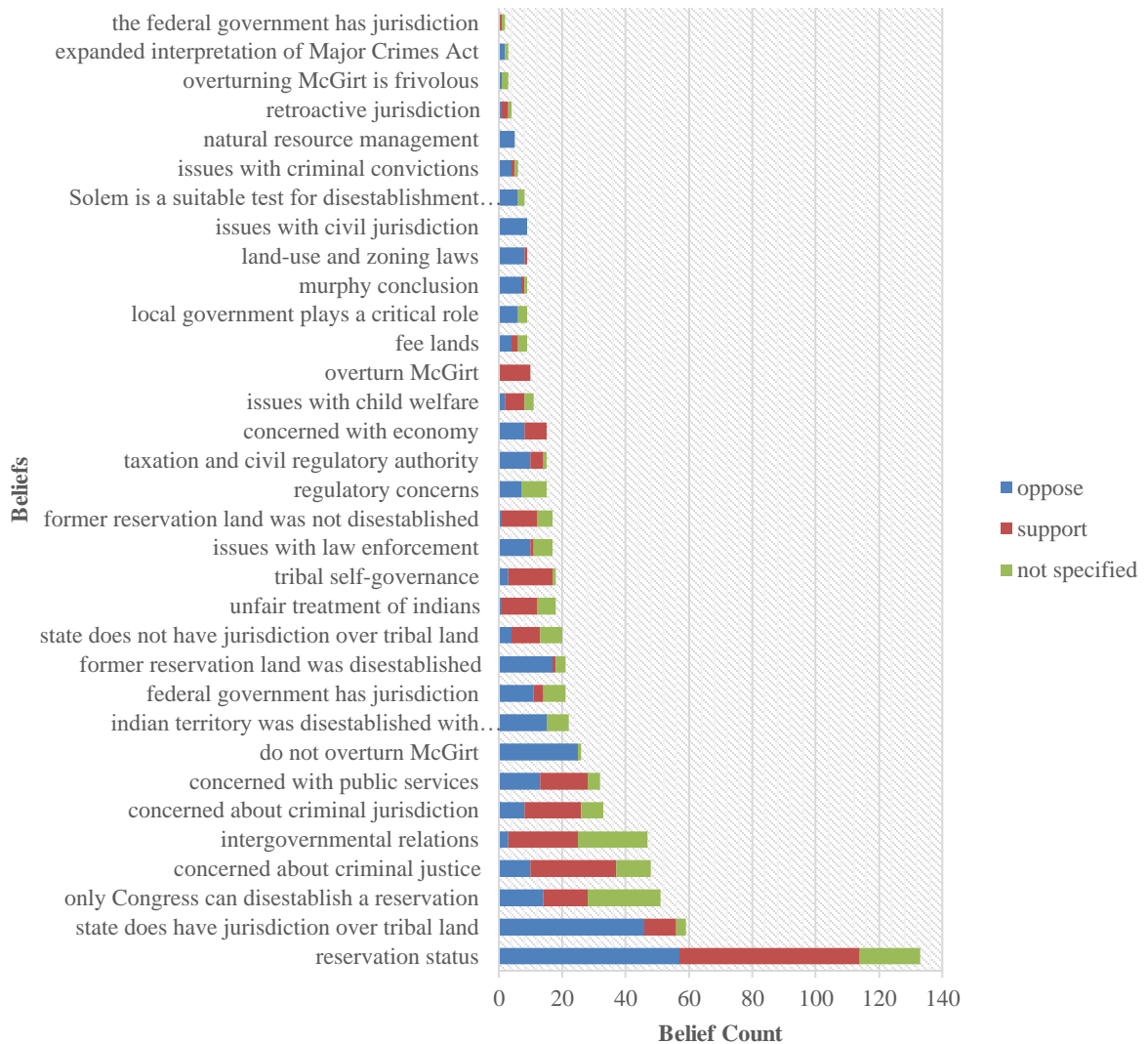
The primary beliefs communicated by the anti-tribal jurisdiction coalition outside of reservation status were 1) the state does have jurisdiction over tribal lands, 2) do not overturn the OCCA decision of McGirt, and 3) the former reservation land was disestablished. In most cases, disestablishment was cited as taking place with statehood. The primary beliefs of the pro-tribal jurisdiction coalition were concern over 1) criminal jurisdiction, 2) intergovernmental relations, and 3) criminal justice. Outside of reservation status, the actors in the "not-specified" coalition were mostly concerned with 1) only congress being able to disestablish a reservation, 2) intergovernmental relations, and 3) criminal justice. This signals that the oppositional coalition's

discourse was centered around the status of the land in question, whereas the supportive coalition was more concerned with how tribal and state governments will effectively navigate criminal issues. The actors outside of both coalitions seemed to be more concerned with statutory precedent and the powers of Congress.

These findings provide some evidence that Expectations 2 and 3 are sound. After analysis, we can see that the oppositional coalition does have a higher and more diverse frequency of beliefs, where the supportive coalition demonstrates greater congruence. Testing the alignment of policy core beliefs in order to substantiate the expectations of belief congruence and incongruence associated with the belief homophily hypothesis requires a greater scope and temporal analysis of actor and coalition beliefs before the McGirt v. Oklahoma court case. But, we did find that the oppose coalition had a greater diversity of beliefs identified throughout the amicus briefs than the support coalition. Even though this is not strong evidence of the lifespan and adoption of beliefs, it gives some indication that the scope of beliefs for coalitions formed based on a common threat are more incongruent. This presents an opportunity to study belief congruence and incongruence as a means of analyzing coalition formation for future studies.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This paper expands upon the use of emotional expression analysis within advocacy coalitions.

This paper builds upon the work of Fullerton et al.'s (2023) novel approach incorporating Yordy

et al.'s (2023) use of emotional expression analysis with Discourse Network Analysis (Leifeld,

2013). After creating an inductive codebook from the thirteen submitted amicus briefs, this paper

successfully traces pro- ("support") and anti- ("oppose") tribal jurisdiction coalitions in the case

of *McGirt v. Oklahoma*. Because the ACF has received criticism that it is hard to test or

substantiate hypotheses, the focus of this paper lies not only in emotions but also in coalitional

alignment. This paper finds some key reoccurring themes by analyzing beliefs and emotional

expressions among coalitions.

The policy core belief for each coalition revolves around the argument of reservation status, but

the focus for each coalition is different. The support-tribal coalition asserted that the Muscogee

(Creek) Nation land in question is a present-day reservation, but it also emphasizes the policy

concerns of criminal justice and jurisdiction and how tribal, municipal, state, and federal

governments will work together. The oppose-tribal jurisdiction coalition believes the land is not a

present-day reservation, and their discourse is centered around the historical evidence and the

potential negative repercussions of overturning the OCCA decision. The not-specified coalition is

also concerned with intergovernmental relations and the statutory law that only Congress can disestablish a reservation.

This paper tests the belief homophily hypothesis, which states that coalitions form based on common enemies and are then maintained through shared beliefs. Taking a belief homophily approach allowed me to see that fear and trust are significant emotions that are expressed and can even contribute to coalition formation when there is a strong common enemy. Additionally, coalitions that form, first and foremost, because of shared threats are more likely to exhibit belief incongruence (a broader scope of beliefs that leads to a weaker policy core belief focus). This provided evidence needed to accept Expectation 1 that common enemies bring actors together even when policy core beliefs are not strongly aligned, and this is characterized by the emotions of fear and trust. More cases need to be studied to say with confidence that belief incongruence has a negative relationship with policy success, but in this case the OCCA decision for McGirt v. Oklahoma was overturned, so the support coalition with stronger belief congruence was successful. As follows, a limitation of this study is that analysis is confined only to what is stated in the amicus briefs and this is a relatively short window of time. Tracing coalitional formation and possible realignment was not possible for this study. The belief homophily framework is most appropriate considering the use of amicus curia briefs for this study. Analyzing amicus briefs for emotional expressions under the ACF is not common. Exploring legal documents and the judicial process is a ripe area for tracing policy processes that is relatively underdeveloped.

The discourse surrounding tribal jurisdiction expressed approval, obligation, and dissatisfaction at the highest frequency across all coalitions. Because disestablishment was a common component in the discourse, it was included in the thesaurus and associated with the primary emotions of approval, obligation, and dissatisfaction. In most instances, disestablishment was not the only emotion coded per statement, meaning a separate observation would be coded to account for disestablishment and one of the primary emotions (approval, obligation, dissatisfaction). This

coding was an inductive decision based on the reoccurrence of certain implicit emotional appeals. Regarding analyzing emotions, this may be a possible limitation since disestablishment is not a generalized concept that has been tested and validated in other studies. When all observations that identify disestablishment and either approval, obligation or dissatisfaction are removed from the analysis, approval, and obligation still have the highest expression frequencies. Dissatisfaction falls from 13.52% to 11.66%, and compassion takes the place as the third leading emotion at 11.81%. Fear is closely couched after compassion and dissatisfaction at 11.21%. The differences with and without disestablishment observations are subtle but notable, nonetheless.

After analyzing the emotions expressed throughout the entire discourse and then by coalitions, I looked at the distribution of coalition expression within each emotional category. This provided evidence for Expectations 1, 2 and 3. The oppose coalition controlled the fear-based emotions of uncertainty, fear, and dissatisfaction (Expectations 1B and 2). The contentment and trust emotional categories were commanded by the support coalition (Expectations 1B and 3). This points back to the validity of the belief homophily hypothesis and highlights the potential of emotional expression analysis to provide more concrete evidence of coalition alignment and policy signaling within the ACF. Another interesting takeaway that was not a primary focus of this study is that the more emotional coalition (the opposing coalition) was not ultimately successful in winning this case. Even though I cannot make statistically significant claims, this trend is consistent with Black et al.'s (2013) finding that emotion has a negative relationship with courtroom success. As Black et al. (2013) suggest, so much of judicial behavior is outside of legal professionals' control, but the legal brief, or amicus brief for my case, is one area that can be used to influence judicial behavior. Because emotion reduces credibility and can delegitimize legal success (Black et al., 2013), professionals should attempt to express as little emotion as possible.

This study shows that integrating methodology and taking unique approaches to trace policy can be useful in advocacy coalition studies. This research expands ACF theory by building on

emotional expression analysis. Using amicus briefs and broadening analysis of advocacy

coalitions to other cases outside of news media presents an incredible opportunity for growth for

the ACF.

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APPENDICES

Actor Org Code	Name	Cosigners (If Applicable)	Generic Org Type
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union Foundation		Nonprofit organization
ACLU OK	American Civil Liberties Union of Oklahoma Foundation		Nonprofit organization
Alliance	The Petroleum Alliance of Oklahoma		Industry (Professional) Organization
Amici Attorneys	Amici Attorneys	Former United States Attorneys Itroy A. Eid; Barry R. Grissom; Thomas B. Heffelfinger; David C. Iglesias; Brendan V. Johnson; Wendy Olson; Timothy Q. Purdon; Danny C. Williams)	Legal
Amici Federation	The Environmental Federation of Oklahoma, Inc. and Amici	Environmental Federation of Oklahoma, Inc.; Oklahoma Farm Bureau Legal Foundation and Affiliated County Farm Bureaus; Oklahoma Cattleman's Association; The Petroleum Alliance of Oklahoma; Oklahoma State Union of the Farmers Educations and Cooperation Union of America, Inc.; Oklahoma Rural Water Association of Electric Cooperatives; State Chamber of Oklahoma	Hybrid Organization
Amici Historians	Amici Historians	Historians; Legal Scholars; Cherokee Nation	Hybrid Organization
Amici NIWRC	Amici NIWRC	National Indigenous Women's Resource Center; Tribal Nations; Additional Advocacy Organizations for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Assault	Hybrid Organization
Amici OKDA	Amici of Oklahoma District Attorneys	Seventeen Oklahoma District Attorneys; The Oklahoma District Attorneys Association	State Government
Amici States	Amici States	Kansas; Louisiana; Montana; Nebraska; Texas	State Government
ATC	Amici Tom Cole	Tom Cole; Brad Henry; Glenn Coffee; Mike Turpen; Neal McCaleb; Danny Hilliard; Michael Steele; Daniel Boren; T.W. Shannon; Lisa Johnson Billy; The Chickasaw Nation; The Chocktaw Nation of Oklahoma	Hybrid Organization
BO	Business Owners		General public
Congress	Congress		Federal Government
COT	City of Tulsa		Local Government
CTUIR	Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla)		Tribal Government
DAAG	District Attorney Allan Grub		State Government

DABH	District Attorney Brian Hermanson		State Government
DACI	District Attorney Carol Iski		State Government
DACS	District Attorney Chuck Sullivan		State Government
DADT	District Attorney David Thomas		State Government
DAJH	District Attorney Jason Hicks		State Government
DAJS	District Attorney Jeff Smith		State Government
DAJT	District Attorney Jack Thorp		State Government
DAKB	District Attorney Kevin Buchanan		State Government
DALAT	District Attorney Lauren Austin Thomas		State Government
DAMB	District Attorney Matt Sullivan		State Government
DAMC	District Attorney Max Cook		State Government
DAMF	District Attorney Mike Fields		State Government
DAMM	District Attorney Mark Matloff		State Government
DAOL	District Attorney Max Cook		State Government
DAPS	District Attorney Paul Smith		State Government
DASK	District Attorney Steve Kunzwiler		State Government
DB	Daniel Boren		State Government
DH	Danny Hilliard		State Government
EFO	Environmental Federation of Oklahoma		Advocacy Organization

Farmers & Rachers	Farmers & Ranchers		General public
Federal government	Federal government		Federal Government
FK	Frank Keating		State Government
IMLA	The International Municipal Lawyers Association	International Municipal Lawyers Association; National Sheriffs' Association	Advocacy Organization
ITWG	Intertribal Technical-Assistance Work Group		Advocacy Organization
JM	Jimcy McGirt		Tribal Member
Justice Van Devanter	Justice Van Devanter		Federal Government
Kansas	The State of Kansas		State Government
LB	Lisa Johnson Billy		State Government
Local governments	Local government		Local Government
MS	Michael Steele		State Government
NACDL	The National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers		Nonprofit organization
NCAIF	The National Congress of American Indians Fund		Advocacy Organization
NHBP	The Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi		Tribal Government
NIWRC	The National Indigenous Women's Resource Center		Advocacy Organization
NM	Neal McCaleb		State Government
OAEC	Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives		Hybrid Organization

OCA	Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association		Industry (Professional) Organization
OCCA	The Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals		State Government
OFU	Oklahoma State Union of the Farmers Educational and Co-Operative Union of American, Inc. (Oklahoma Farmer's Union)		Nonprofit organization
OKFB Legal	Oklahoma Farm Bureau Legal Foundation		Legal Professional Organization
ONGD	Oil and Gas Developers		Industry
ORWA	Oklahoma Rural Water Association		Hybrid Organization
OSMRE	Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation, and Enforcement		Federal Government
Pokagon Band	Pokagon Band		Tribal Government
Ranchers	Ranchers		General public
Sault Tribe	Sault Tribe		tribal government
SC	Supreme Court		Federal Government
SCO	State Chamber of Oklahoma		Industry (Professional) Organization
STW	Tahrohon Wayne Shannon		State Government
TC	Tom Cole		Federal Government
TCHN	Choctaw Nation		Tribal Government
TCIN	Chickasaw Nation		Tribal Government
TCN	Cherokee Nation		Tribal Government
Tenth Circuit	United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit		Federal Government
TMN	Muscogee (Creek) Nation		Tribal Government
TRIBE	General tribes		Tribal Government
TSN	Seminole Nation		Tribal Government
Tulalip Tribe	Tulalip Tribe (Snohomoish, Snoqualmie, Skykomish)		Tribal Government

US	The United States		Federal Government

VITA

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