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Emotion work in animal rights activism A moral-sociological perspective

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Abstract

Social movement activism requires emotional motivation and entails emotional costs, and, because of this, activists tend to be deeply involved in the management of emotions – or emotion work – and not just in connection with protest events, but also on an everyday basis. Based on a case study of animal rights activism in Sweden, this article identifies five types of emotion work that animal rights activists typically perform: containing, ventilation, ritualization, micro-shocking and normalization of guilt. The emotion work performed by activists, it is argued, is best understood from a moral-sociological perspective building on Durkheim's sociology of morality, based on which the article then outlines key elements of a comprehensive theoretical framework for the study of emotion work in social movements.

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