



# **The role of emotions in social movement participation: a comparative case study of animal rights and welfare activists in the UK and US.**

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## **Abstract**

The aims of this research are to explore the role of emotions in social movements, specifically the dynamic properties of emotions and the various ways in which they can provoke, sustain, or end activism. The case studies involved animal rights and welfare groups in the UK and US. The concept of emotions is one which has come to the fore in recent years as part of the 'cultural turn,' but it still suffers from unclear definitions and the remnants of stigma. In this thesis I propose to study emotions by focusing on their role as activators, part of protestors' agency and intrinsically linked to their thoughts and actions. To do so I look at the 'life cycle' of activism and the various roles played by the different emotions inherent in each stage; growing interest, finding likeminded others, joining a group, the process of bonding, the establishment of ties, then the eventual dissolution or constant reaffirmation of identification as an activist. By exploring the part played by emotions in these various stages, we can better understand the motivations and experience of those involved, in order to broaden our understanding of social movement participation more widely.

This thesis compares three groups of activists; SHAC, ARAUNY, and NYARA, which span the whole spectrum of philosophies in this area from rights to welfare. By comparing the different groups we can see the differences in the way they attract people, how they fight for their goals, and how they create an emotional atmosphere that keeps people involved; essentially the comparison allows for a new understanding of the emotional dynamics of protest.

**Jury:**



Prof Donatella delal Porta (EUI, Supervisor), Catriona Marie Louise Roberts (Candidate), Dr Brian Doherty (Keele University), Prof Michael Keating (formerly EUI-University of Aberdeen, internal member, by videolink), Prof James M Jasper (City University of New York, by videolink)

**Bio**

Catriona Roberts obtained her M.A. in Sociology and Social Research at the University of Newcastle, writing her dissertation on the role played by anger and fear in the anti-war demonstrations of 2002-2003 in London. An interest in social movements more generally narrowed to a focus on animal rights and welfare groups for her thesis, and the ways in which emotions can both promote and prolong activism. Fieldwork was conducted in the US and UK, comparing groups within and between the countries