

The Learning of Emotion in/as Sociocultural Practice:

The Case of Animal Rights Activism

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Abstract

Background: Learning sciences researchers, including those in the sociocultural tradition, often address emotion on motivation's terms, as a condition or quality of being that propels or mediates learning activity. Other times, emotion remains implicit in analyses of learning.

Methods: Toward a more robust theorization of the relationship between learning and emotion, I present a sociocultural analysis of ethnographic fieldnotes and interviews with animal rights activists. **Findings:** I present a sociocultural practice view on emotion, introducing "emotional configurations" to denote how emotion, rather than comprising universal and internal states, only becomes meaningful through entanglement with sense-making and situated practice in social activity. Analysis reveals two modes for emotion in learning: (1) as a condition of learning that drives learning along and (2) as a target of teaching and learning in its own right. I name "guided emotion participation" as a genre of activity that approaches emotional configurations as a learning target. **Contribution:** Integrating sociocultural practice theory with emotion research provides new tools for analyzing emotion in learning. This study highlights how emotion is subject to norms, ideology, and power relations. For researchers studying the politics of learning, this study demonstrates how emotion shapes political possibilities and collective action as learning phenomena.

**The Learning of Emotion in/as Sociocultural Practice:
The Case of Animal Rights Activism**

On a cool May evening, I gathered with about 20 animal rights activists on a sidewalk in Berkeley, California. They had just completed a protest outside a butcher shop, where the proprietors had been holding a butchering workshop for their customers. The protesters had brought large signs bearing photographed faces of animals and the phrase “I want to live.” An activist with a megaphone had led a “mic check” call and response. Employees from the shop had come outside with a white tarp, tying it to the railing between the shop and the sidewalk to serve as a makeshift privacy shield before going back inside. The police were called, and they watched from down the sidewalk but did not intervene. Now, with the protest concluded, Ilana, a young Latina woman who had served as lead organizer for this protest gathered everyone to debrief:

She asked if anyone wanted to share about how it went. Tamar [a White woman who had been an assigned leafleteer during the protest] said she’d just had some of the most difficult conversations with people she’d maybe ever had.

I just went through hell, she said.

Carlos and Ethan and a couple of other people swarmed her in a giant hug, and Carlos said, Let’s make it so she can’t breathe!

The group laughed. After the hug loosened and people went back to their spots in the circle, Tamar explained that there were a couple of really angry people.

(Researcher fieldnote, May 21, 2017)

This moment crystalizes interactions between multiple social units of learning: First, Tamar was a developing activist who had been with the group for about a year and a half. Second, the protest group together was reflecting on what went well and what could be improved. Third, the neighborhood was wrestling with a political conflict—growing more visible over repeated protests at this location—over what it meant to use nonhuman animals for food and profit.

This moment also illuminates the role that emotion played in this learning for and in social change. What did emotion help accomplish in this learning? For Tamar as an individual, feeling supported by her peers in the face of public opposition enabled her to go “through hell” and persist in her growing activist practice. For the group, identifying with the suffering of individuals who “want to live” provided purpose and urgency to protesting and sustaining vegan practices. As I will argue, this view of emotion as a support for learning and practice is common in the literature. However, it is only part of the story. The other part involves the ways in which the work of animal rights activism includes emotion, in various meaning-laden configurations with practice, as a learning target itself. Enveloping hugs confirm social bonding and support feelings of perseverance. Carrying signs with the faces of individual animals reinforces an emotional commitment to the cause for activists at the same time it frames the issue emotionally for bystanders and protest targets.

This dual role of emotion with the practices of animal rights activism, as a condition of learning—a state or quality of being in which learning occurs—and as learning’s target, is the subject of this article. I explore two questions: First, how does emotion serve as a condition for shifting or sustaining activists’ participation in the practices of social change-making? Second,

given the instrumental understandings about emotion that activists describe and enact, how do they organize practice to cultivate particular ways of feeling and of understanding emotion?

I position these questions relative to learning science research, which tends to understand emotion as a condition of learning, akin to motivation. Next, I lay a framework for understanding emotion in broader terms. Building on previous sociocultural research on learning, I develop the notion of *emotional configurations*, the relationships that participants in social activity construct between feeling, sense-making, and practice. Drawing on research on social movements, the politics of emotion, and the politics of learning, I suggest how emotion is subject to norms, ideology, and power relations, and how it shapes the political field as a matter of collective learning. Examining ethnographic data from fieldwork with an animal rights activist group in California, I illustrate the dual-mode role of emotion in learning through an analysis of the understandings that activists form about emotional configurations in their work. I show how instrumental knowledge is acted on through processes of what I call *guided emotion participation*, techniques for cultivating arrangements between feeling, sense-making, and practice. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the implications of approaching emotion as a dual-mode phenomenon in learning, particularly for understanding and supporting learning in projects of sociopolitical change.

Background: Locating Emotion's Relationship to Learning

Mode 1: Emotion as a Condition of Learning

In research on learning, we often examine affect and emotion as psychological constructs distinct from the substance of learning proper. Motivation is sometimes considered an affective phenomenon (Pintrich, 2003) driving learning or other activity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When

researchers emphasize a reciprocal relationship between cognition and motivation (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Jaber & Hammer, 2015; Pintrich, 2003), affect as motivation is still primarily positioned as an external force on activity. I argue that this pattern holds even for learning sciences research in the sociocultural tradition. Jaber and Hammer (2015), for example, characterize their constructs of “epistemic affect” and “epistemic motivation” in terms of how they “play a central role in driving engagement” (p. 159). Even when “motivation” is not explicitly invoked, affect and emotion are considered in relation to their impact on learning goals that lie elsewhere. Emotion and embodied feelings can support transfer of learning (Nemirovsky, 2011). Affect, in interaction with cognition, can support mathematical problem-solving (DeBellis & Goldin, 2006) and can stabilize and destabilize engineering students’ “epistemological stances” in reasoning (Gupta et al., 2010). Through processes of “placemaking” in learning settings, affect can sustain the communities that make learning possible (Ehret & Hollett, 2016). In justice-oriented pedagogy, emotion can help learners make sense of politics and ethics in relation to traditional disciplinary knowledge (Davis & Schaeffer, 2019).

Mode 2: Emotion as a Learning Target

While we have numerous learning studies investigating how affect and emotion can support *other* learning goals, there is a dearth of learning sciences research considering how affect and emotion can be said to form a learning target in their own right. Research on social and emotional learning (SEL) programs indicates a scholarly and popular understanding that uses of emotion can be part of educational goals (Elias et al., 1997; Weissberg et al., 2015). How people come to emote and be affected in particular ways may comprise an important form that learning takes. Jaber and Hammer (2015) gesture in this direction when they suggest that

cultivating students' feelings in science “becomes a fundamental instructional goal” in light of the important role that epistemic affect and motivation may play (p. 191). Hollett and Ehret (2016) similarly identify the “affective know-how” that develops as youth come to care for one another and their work over time (p. 2). Sakr, Jewitt, and Price (2016) also explored “emotional engagement” as a learning goal in history education. In this article, I aim to build on this work by analyzing emotion in/as sociocultural practice in learning among animal rights activists.

Framework: Emotion in/as Sociocultural Practice

Emotion and its role in learning can be fruitfully understood by expanding the terms of sociocultural theory. As others have noted (Bakhurst, 2007; Herrenkohl & Mertl, 2010), Vygotsky (1934/1987) himself was concerned with the relation between affect and thinking (p. 50). Sociocultural approaches have productively theorized the interrelationships between cognition and practice, but affect and emotion have too often been set aside—either through outright exclusion or through ways of thinking that separate emotion as an external force on learning. In this section, I theorize the relationship between emotion and sociocultural views of learning.

In doing so, I aim to advance understanding of a dimension of learning that has sometimes been implicit or underdeveloped in the sociocultural learning sciences tradition. Previously, Ratner (2000), building on Vygotsky, saw feeling and thinking as two sides of the same coin and conceptualized emotions as “thoughtful feelings” (p. 6). Holodyski (2013) also applied Vygotskian principles to understanding emotional development as the internalization of signs. Considering the relationship between emotion and activity, Roth (2007) rejected the idea that they could be external to one another and instead saw emotion as “a constitutive element” of

activity (p. 45). Research approaching motivation from a situative perspective—foregrounding its contextual embeddedness in particular practices, identities, and power relations—also provides helpful direction (see Nolen, Horn, & Ward, 2015; Paris & Turner, 1994).

I present three dimensions of emotion in sociocultural activity that guide the analysis of learning in this article:

1. Emotion is implicated in the learning of social practice, both *as* practice (of expression/emoting and emotional management) and *in* its relations with other forms of practice.
2. Through its entanglement in practice, emotion is shaped by norms, ideology, and power relations.
3. Emotion shapes political possibilities and opportunities for collective action.

Implicated in Practice

Sociocultural theorizations of learning have emphasized human engagement in changing practices as a conceptualization of learning (Chaiklin & Lave, 1993; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Sociocultural theories argue that “bodies of knowledge” do not exist as stable, unproblematic entities. Instead, knowledge only becomes meaningful within situations of activity. Learning, within this view, is understood as “changing participation and understanding in practice” (Lave, 1993, p. 5). On the one hand, activity is historical in that learners arrive into situations of activity already in process, with practices and material places and tools that are at least partly given by others who came before (Cole, 1995, 1996; Wertsch, 1998). On the other hand, activity itself introduces innovation and improvisation as actors transform practices in use and introduce new kinds of practices (Holland, Lachiotte Jr., Skinner, & Cain, 1998).

I argue for a view within sociocultural learning sciences research that understands emotion in similar terms. Like “knowledge,” emotion involves not merely pre-given internal states, but rather in-process configurations that include meaning-making and embodied practices in the social world. By *emotional configurations* I name these situated and reciprocal interrelationships between feeling, conceptual sense-making, and practice (including linguistic practice) that give emotion social meaning in the learning of individuals and collectives. An emotional configuration does not label the supposed interior content or subjective experience of an emotion, but rather names a set of meaningful relationships between emotionality and the ongoing making of social reality in a particular situation.

Emotion bears several relationships to practice. First, emotion is itself a form of practice. People learn the practices of emoting in certain ways (Mesquita & Leu, 2007). Second, ways of feeling can serve as “felicity conditions” for the effective performance of other practices (Hirschkind, 2006, p. 85; see also Austin, 1975). Hochschild’s (1983/2012) foundational concept of “emotional labor” indicates how emotional forms can also gain exchange value in the labor market, particularly for workers in service roles who smooth capitalist exchange. This aspect suggests a third relation between emotion and practice. An instrumental awareness of emotional configurations leads to the development of yet other practices—those aimed at emotional management. Consider the development of “higher mental functions” in the Vygotskian tradition, which links knowing with mastery (Cole & Scribner, 1978). Vygotsky (1987) wrote, “If we are to master something, we must have at our disposal what is to be subordinated to our will” (p. 189). Just as the developing child comes to understand attention and memory as means for complex thought and action, emotion may be seen to play a similar role. People in a broad range of contexts use emotional management strategies to enable, support, and sustain the

practices of social life (e.g., Cahill & Eggleston, 1994; Hochschild, 1983/2012; Smith & Kleinman, 1989), including in relation to nonhuman animals (Arluke, 1994). Within a sociocultural approach, Holland and Valsiner (1988) extended Vygotsky's notion of "mediating devices," tools or means for transforming one's mental state, to the management of emotion. Emotion in and as practice takes up a recursive position, both feeding into other forms of practice and resulting from other forms of practice in an interdependent and always-ongoing fashion.

Shaped by Norms, Ideology, and Power

If emotion is implicated in practice in various ways, how can we understand its situated nature? Learning in sociocultural settings is governed by patterns of practice, and shared practices evolve over time (Holland et al., 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). We can think of these patterns as norms, reflecting not only the practices themselves but also epistemic positions on what forms of action are valued and expected (Kuhn et al., 2013). Norms in a classroom can develop over an extended course of social interaction (Kuhn et al., 2013) and "give directionality" to the learning that happens by supporting certain forms of thinking and practice (McClain & Cobb, 2001, p. 264). However, norms should not be understood as merely imposed or static, but rather negotiated through practice itself.

Norms of practice are also linked to ideology and power. Drawing on the work of Stuart Hall, Philip, Gupta, Elby, and Turpen (2017) define ideology as systems of representation that guide sense-making about how society works and how resources are distributed. In organizing sense-making about symbolic and material resources, ideology expresses and reproduces relations of power. It positions learners differentially relative to those resources, often along

racialized and gendered dimensions (Bell, Tzou, Bricker, & Baines, 2012; Langer-Osuna, 2011; Nasir, Snyder, Shah, & Ross, 2012; Rosebery, Warren, & Conant, 1992; Wortham, 2004).

Emotion in/as sociocultural practice is subject to similar normative, ideological, and power-laden dynamics.

My thinking in this area is influenced by the contributions of feminist scholars who first explored the politics of emotion. The felt dimensions of experience have long been marginalized or excluded as partial or untrustworthy in scholarly accounts, in part by way of their supposed connection to women and the feminine (Lloyd, 1984). Feminist epistemologies have made space for emotion in scholarship by problematizing the objectivity/subjectivity binary (Bordo, 1987; Collins, 1986; Haraway, 1991). Just as the association of emotionality with femininity was wielded to exclude emotion as a legitimate topic of study, feminist scholars also showed how emotional expression was governed by biased expectations. Feminist philosophers argued that the silencing of women's anger at injustice helped maintain their subordination (Spelman, 1989) and that forms of "emotional hegemony" hampered the ability to envision alternate possibilities (Jaggar, 1989).

Following this scholarship, researchers have expanded consideration of emotional norms. Hochschild (1983/2012) referred to these norms governing appropriate emotional expression as "feeling rules." Such rules are the result of social and historical dynamics, becoming expectations through repeated enactment. Gould (2009), drawing on Bourdieu (1977, 1990), opted for the term "emotional habitus," denoting the "socially constituted, prevailing ways of feeling and emoting, as well as the embodied, axiomatic understandings and norms about feelings and their expression" (p. 10; see also Abu-Lughod & Lutz, 1990, p. 12; Kane, 2001, pp. 253-254). Emotional norms apply differentially according to social identities, considering

gendered, classed, raced, and other dimensions of perceived difference (Ahmed, 2004; Boler, 1999; Hochschild, 2012; Lutz, 1990). In navigating these norms, people use strategies of emotion management (Hochschild, 1983/2012). Further, norms shape what *objects* of emotion are sanctioned for what kinds of emotional expression. For example, Groves (2001) showed how some animal rights activists shunned emotionality to avoid being seen as unprofessional or irrational. Norms are at stake when Butler (2004) writes that “certain human lives are more grievable than others” (p. 30), though we might also take a multispecies sensibility and broaden our problematization of which forms of life are grievable and which are not. In this article, emotional norms help to reveal power relations between humans and animals of other species.

Together, this body of work shows that norms, ideology, and relations of power shape who is allowed to emote, about what, and under what circumstances. This is one sense in which emotional configurations may be considered “political.” Here, I follow the definition of politics offered by Gee (2005), referring to the ways social goods are understood, contested, and distributed. Similarly, Armstrong and Bernstein (2008) wrote that politics concerns “classification” and “allocation” (p. 84). These definitions highlight the centrality of contested social meanings. Emotion is political in that patterned expectations about *who* gets *what* in social life provide meaningful frames for the practice and interpretation of emotion. In the context of the learning sciences, these insights suggest the importance of a sensitivity to how power relations provide differential access or differential sanction to the varieties of emotional practice in learning.

Shaping Political Possibilities and Collective Action

There is a second sense in which emotional configurations can be understood as political. Just as norms shape what forms of emotion are recognized as socially acceptable, emotional configurations can shape political possibilities and forms of collective action. For Gould (2009), emotion is critical to how ideas “about what is politically possible, desirable, and necessary... get established, consolidated, stabilized, and reproduced over time” (p. 3). In learning research on scale-making (Jurow & Shea, 2015), how social actors produce relations between people, practices, and tools across spaces and times is central to organizing more just futures. How might we find emotion to be productive within scale-making efforts for social transformation?

First, emotion is critical to the formation and tactics of social movements (Goodwin et al., 2001). To help explain participation in social movements, Jasper & Poulsen (1995) proposed the concept of “moral shocks” as arising “when an event or situation raises such a sense of outrage in people that they become inclined toward political action” (p. 498). Sense-making about feeling is related to what is often called “grievances” within social movement studies (for a review, see Snow & Soule, 2010), though Jasper (1998) pointed out that “grievance” has often been treated as “primarily cognitive” without attention to emotional dimensions (p. 409). In a study of youth activism around unfair treatment in school, Kwon (2008) described a process of “moving from complaints to action.” Youth in Kwon’s study surfaced their complaints as a way, according to a staff member, to “feel the issue” (Kwon, 2008, p. 64). The youths’ anger about their personal experiences became linked to understandings of power. I see this as an example of emotional configuration, as feelings about experiences of injustice attach to social meaning-making about racism and poverty. MacKinnon (1982) reflected on this potential in twentieth-century radical feminist activism. Consciousness-raising techniques, through which participants

named and became collectively aware of their shared experiences (including their emotions), allowed women to “grasp the collective reality of women’s condition from within the perspective of that experience, not from outside it” (MacKinnon, 1982, p. 536). Consciousness-raising involves a kind of emotional configuration—a set of arrangements between feeling, sense-making, and practice. The practices of consciousness-raising evoke the felt texture of oppression within a framework of shared injustice that shapes the meaning that gets made of those feelings. This shared naming and sense-making also enabled new forms of collective action.

The emotional shaping of political possibilities and collective action also has implications for learning in its intersections with ideology. Philip *et al.* (2017) show how, rather than existing as static systems of representation, ideological convergences are achieved through interaction in learning settings, shaping the possibilities for becoming, meaning making, and action. In addition to the ways in which ideology may shape affective norms, Philip *et al.* (2017) suggest that “affective stances” (pp. 200, 202) taken in interaction help to achieve ideological convergence. Learning scientists should further examine how the sense-making of ideology is shaped by the feelings that emerge in the practice of social life.

Emotional Configurations in Animal Rights Activism

Sociocultural research in other fields has long turned to human-nonhuman relationships for insights about human politics and cultural meaning (Mullin, 1999). As Lévi-Strauss (1963) famously wrote, animals are not just “good to eat” (according to some), but “good to think” (p. 89). Human cultural meanings attached to nonhuman animals not only vary cross-culturally but also shift dynamically over time (Jerolmack, 2008). They are also part of emotional configurations. Elsewhere, I have written about animal rights activists’ semiotic interpretations

of felt encounters with animals (Vea, 2019). The practices of emotion that arise in relation to other human-nonhuman practices such as petting, playing, or eating are guided by norms. Do we make sense of the animal other as a being with needs and desires, or as an object? It is clear that our relations to nonhuman others are powered social relations. They are also political in that ways of interacting come with associated positionings of nonhuman others relative to the social good of moral consideration. The matter of what consideration nonhuman animals are owed is one of collective contestation and collective learning. The configuration of emotion in relation to sense-making and practice has consequences for the kinds of multispecies futures humans can envision as possible and desirable—and for the forms of collective action that may emerge in efforts to realize those futures.

Methods

This study used an ethnographic case study approach. In this section, I introduce DxE as an organization, describe my fieldwork and interview methods, address my positionality as a researcher, and describe my approach to analyzing emotion.

Activism in Direct Action Everywhere

Direct Action Everywhere (DxE) is an international animal rights activist network founded in 2012. This research was conducted in the activity settings of the flagship SF Bay Area chapter. In this section, I describe the development of the group and its practices.

Drawing on past social movements to justify an “abolitionist” orientation to animal rights, early members of DxE believed contemporary animal rights activism was too passive. They described tactics like leafleting as insufficient and instead used protests and other forms of

direct action to confront grocery stores, food producers, and organizations that use animals instrumentally. DxE organizers argued that change would require transforming social norms, not simply convincing individuals to become vegans. Protesting in “places of violence” was seen as a way to challenge those norms. Another tactic used by DxE was open rescue. In this practice, activists conducted video-recorded investigations of a facility, removed animals they considered injured or seriously ill, and disclosed their identities publicly (Shapiro, 2001). In January 2015, DxE’s first open rescue investigation was released. DxE activists entered a farm they claimed had supplied “Certified Humane” eggs. The group released a YouTube video (Direct Action Everywhere, 2015a) showing activists removing a sick hen from the farm.

In order to shift social norms through confrontational protests and rescues, DxE organizers argued that transforming vegans into activists would produce large-scale social change more quickly. Non-activist vegans would need to reinterpret their personal choices within a frame of collective struggle. Activists were encouraged to stand up for animals in interactions with family members, friends, and colleagues, even when these situations occurred outside of DxE-sanctioned events. Therefore, emotion was important to the internal dynamics of DxE, too. Activists needed to feel supported to speak out strongly for the cause, even in the face of countervailing normative pressure from their non-activist social ties. The group fostered connections between members and provided learning opportunities through an annual conference, active social media engagement, and regular socializing events and trainings. The internal development of activists through these efforts was central to DxE’s project.

In the SF Bay Area chapter, members could participate in events or protests ad hoc and get more deeply involved through a system of Working Groups and Committees. In 2017, DxE SF Bay Area had approximately 150 active members according to organizers, though the number

of participants at individual events was usually much lower. The membership was mostly White but included people representing many races and ethnicities. My data corpus of fieldnotes and interview transcripts included 152 named individuals (using pseudonyms), along with a large number of unnamed participants. While I was not able to ask all of these individuals how they identified themselves, based on self-identification, social positioning, and my perception, individuals named in the dataset were approximately 70% non-Latinx White, 16% Asian, 11% Latinx, and 2% Black (any ethnic background). Given the circumstances, it is difficult to disentangle race and ethnicity in these rough estimates. Regarding gender, the 152 individuals included approximately 74 women (including one trans-identified woman), 73 men, and 5 non-binary people. In addition to participating in DxE, members were involved in a range of other activist activities, involving immigrants' rights, ending police violence against Black people, and climate justice.

Ethnographic Fieldwork

This study on the learning of emotional configurations is part of a larger research project on learning in animal rights activism. I conducted in-person fieldwork with DxE through participant observation, which foregrounds interaction and joint activity in situ. Learning scientists have used participant observation to build grounded understandings of life in communities of practice (Barab et al., 2002). This method is particularly useful for understanding learning and participation across settings (K. Jackson, 2011) and the ways in which participants make sense of their experiences (Nasir & Vakil, 2017). Ethnographic methods also help researchers to document developmental changes that occur over extended durations (Roth, 2001).

In this study, participant observation was split into two phases, a pilot phase from December 2014 to May 2015 and a second more intensive phase between October 2016 and July 2017, with the majority of engagement taking place in 2017. The extended overall duration of fieldwork provided a longitudinal sense of how DxE was developing and changing. The more intensive engagement allowed me to get a feel for the day-to-day rhythms of life in DxE, including the emotional texture of deep activist engagement. I observed a range of settings and activities, including protests and protest rehearsals, meetups, trainings, outreach efforts, Working Group meetings, talks and presentations, a slaughterhouse vigil, the DxE Forum annual conference, and casual hangouts. I wrote fieldnotes, which became objects for analysis (Emerson et al., 2011). Toward the beginning of the project, fieldnotes were relatively unfocused and geared toward creating as full of a narrative account of each day of fieldwork as possible. I paid careful attention to trying to find “learning” and wrote about how people supported others to become more involved in DxE. In recording speech during fieldwork, I did not use a mechanical recorder but rather relied on headnotes and abbreviated jottings, which I then expanded into full fieldnotes on the BART train or after returning home. During lectures or trainings where openly taking notes would not appear out of the ordinary, I wrote more expansively as events unfolded. Following conventions suggested by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011), I wrote speech in quotation marks only when I was confident I had contemporaneously captured them verbatim. Speech appearing without quotation marks may be interpreted as a high-confidence paraphrase.

Emotion came into the fieldnotes in various ways. Especially in the early days, I wrote many reflections about what struck me as surprising or interesting as a newcomer. Emotion also became apparent through my descriptions of emotional displays, such as when an activist started crying in a meeting or during a protest. I wrote about what seemed to precipitate emotionally

charged moments and how others seemed to react to them in order to try to understand their local meaning. I also wrote about my perceptions of how others were feeling, sometimes attributing my own labels, such as when someone seemed “frustrated” by an interaction with a bystander. My theoretical understanding of emotion developed over the course of the fieldwork—and after it had concluded—through an ongoing conversation between the literature and data I had created.

I also engaged substantially with DxE across a range of web-based settings, including their website and social media channels, especially Facebook. Online, I mostly observed, though I would occasionally “like” or share DxE-related and other animal rights content on my personal Facebook account. Since much of DxE members’ own interaction with each other and with the organizational structure of DxE takes place online, I simply considered this another form of fieldwork (Hine, 2015). More generally, and like DxE members themselves, I used the internet to keep up-to-date on news from the network and to plan for upcoming events. This engagement occurred on a more or less daily basis throughout the two-and-a-half-year period of my research, and it filled in a sense of ongoing activity in DxE when I was not co-present with them.

Interviews

I also conducted formal, open-ended interviews with 20 current and former activists. These interviews ranged between 41 minutes and 2 hours and 10 minutes, with a median duration of 1 hour and 7 minutes, and were audio-recorded and transcribed. They supplemented participant observation with an in-depth view into individual members’ experiences with the group. Interview participants were identified in two ways. First, DxE organizers in the SF Bay Area chapter included a note in their regularly scheduled email announcements that I was conducting this study. I then introduced myself to the group in person at two weekly meetups

events and invited people to talk to me if they would be interested in participating in an interview. Second, I mentioned the study to members during observations and invited them directly to participate in interviews. To support informed consent, I provided full consent materials to those who initially expressed interest and allowed them to review them independently before deciding whether to schedule an interview. The final group of interview participants included 10 women and 10 men, including one queer woman and one gay man, and ranged in age from early adulthood to middle age. Two interviewees were identified as Latinx, one as Asian, one as biracial, and the remainder as White, based on a combination of self-identification and positionings by social others observed in day-to-day fieldwork. Two interviewees were former activists who had been involved with DxE for less than a year. Two interviewees were relatively new activists and had been involved for about half a year. Eight activists had been involved for about a year to a year and a half. Five activists had been involved for about two to three years. The remaining three activists I interviewed had been involved with DxE for about three and a half to four years, since shortly after DxE's founding. The interviews covered the activists' trajectories in relation to vegetarianism, veganism, animal rights, and activism more generally. I asked about the various aspects of their participation in DxE and the ways in which they believed they had learned over the course of that participation.

These interviews provided additional data for understanding emotional configurations. As an embodied experience, the felt aspects of emotion are impossible to observe directly (Scherer, 2009, p. 1321). Examining discourse and accounts of emotional experiences in language can reveal how people experience emotion in social life and the meanings that attach to them (Hufnagel & Kelly, 2017; Lutz & Abu-Lughod, 1990). I elicited descriptions of emotional dynamics with prompts such as "What was that like?" in follow-up to interviewees' stories.

Despite the limitations of retrospective accounts, they nonetheless revealed how people thought about the relations between emotion and social practice.

Researcher Positionality

During my research, I identified myself to participants as a non-member vegan, whose purpose for participating was to document and understand the group's learning practices. I believe my shared interest in animal rights supported my rapport with DxE members. I have identified as a vegan since early 2014, prior to my first encounter with DxE. Participant observation enabled me to gain a reflexive sense of what it meant for people to be moved along vectors of learning and change. In my fieldwork, I aimed only to participate in ways I would have anyway, had I not been conducting research. As such, the balance between the stances of participating and observing shifted according to the situation. I participated in trainings, built fences at an animal sanctuary, and followed and interacted with DxE and its members on social media. At disruptive protests, I took a more observational stance. In one instance, early in my fieldwork, I joined a protest because I believed at the time that it would be helpful for me to understand this practice first-hand. Before and after that time, I stood to the side of protests, separate from the activists. The ways in which I actively participated sometimes allowed me to write emotionally, like I did about the satisfaction I felt when I gathered with activists for a water break at the end of a sweltering afternoon of work at a sanctuary.

Some aspects of DxE practice, namely open rescue, I observed only at a distance through the media record. There were also things I was not able to observe at all, such as investigation planning and network-wide strategizing. Of course, these observational lacunae could lead to analytical ones or to a view that "too closely" follows DxE's official narratives. However,

official narratives were frequently in play in interactions with my interlocutors. I was often struck by interviewees' echoing of lead organizers' explanations for particular tactics, for example. Part of learning in a social movement may inherently involve taking up ways of talking and practicing that comport with those of your activist peers, and dissenters may simply leave. There is also an affirmative case for these absences. For instance, I declined to sign a non-disclosure agreement (and thus declined to participate in the open rescue training that was covered by it). This choice clarified the nature of my role to my interlocutors and to myself, and it was part of maintaining ethical relations. There are circumstances in which absences in the record can offer a form of protection.

Nonetheless, I sometimes felt I was the target of recruitment efforts, in a way that I believe indicates something important about what it means to learn in a setting such as this one. People also often talked to me as they would an inbound activist, which provided opportunities for explicit explanation for how things were done and why. Even my efforts to hold off at a distance became opportunities for making explicit the proper ways of activist life. Such moments created instructive frictions (Hasse, 2015) for an ethnographer hoping to understand what it meant to be a learner in this activity system. One insight these instances provided—such as when an activist saw me lurking on the edges of a mournful sing-along at a slaughterhouse vigil, drew me into the group with a hand on my shoulder, and shared a lyric sheet with me—was how often emotion operated through relational accountability. My rapport with and care for those with whom I interacted in DxE made it difficult to refuse such normative gestures, as uncomfortable as they often were. Therefore, my positionality offers the affordance of leading “not into miniature bubbles of navel-gazing, but into the enormous sea of serious social issues,” as Behar

(1996) put it (p. 14). In short, it opened up an important view into the power and politics of emotional configurations in learning.

The purpose of this article is not to argue a position on animal rights, but to uncover what the learning of people who advocate for animal rights can tell us about the nature of emotion as a dimension of learning in sociocultural practice. As Philip *et al.* (2017) note, it is impossible to engage in research where ideology is explicitly contested without “being political.” This axiom applies to the reader as much as it does to myself. Other analyses of this research context would be possible, but not without taking an explicit or implicit position (Freire, 1970) and—crucially—not without feeling the frictions that reveal to oneself where that position lies (Hasse, 2015). All learning is political, as the political is a fundamental aspect of human activity in social settings (The Politics of Learning Writing Collective, 2017).

Analytical Approach

My analysis of emotion in this study involved a combination of the “plugging in” approach described by Jackson and Mazzei (2012) with a recursive thematic analysis through coding. Rather than being neatly deductive or fully inductive, the framework emerged in an ongoing process of analysis that brought additional literatures into conversation with created data during and after the fieldwork period. Here, I describe in further detail how this process unfolded.

Using qualitative analysis software, I started by open coding a subset of interviews and fieldnotes and then consolidated and refined coding categories over time (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The purpose of this coding was not to count frequencies, but rather to aid in drawing together disparate instances that represented emerging themes and patterns so that I could write

analytical memos that synthesized and triangulated across participants, settings, and data sources. In the initial coding phase, which served as a starting point for this and other analyses, my codes included such diverse concepts as *anger*, *conscience*, *death*, *legal issues*, *Netflix*, *pigs*, *polyamory*, *rodeos*, *training*, and *vegetarianism*. After coding for many distinct emotional states that were either named explicitly or appeared to me as the valence of interactions recorded in my fieldnotes and interviews, I began to group these emotion states roughly according to whether they seemed to be positive, negative, or neutral/ambivalent states.

Through this process, however, it became apparent that this grouping was not capturing the complex of meanings that attached to particular emotion words. For example, on the surface “an emotion” like anger might seem to be straightforwardly negative. As I examined the diverse contexts in which it came up, I saw that anger also had positive dimensions—as part of empowerment, for example. I turned my attention within the category of *emotion* toward the strategic uses to which emotion was put, the practices in which it was embedded, and the strategies that were used to bring it about. This analytical shift also led me away from trying to index internal states—which I came to understand as problematic—and toward the descriptions made by my interlocutors themselves, how they named and explained the ways that emotion was meaningful in their work. In subsequent “focused coding” (Emerson et al., 2011, pp. 191-193), I identified subthemes including “importance of emotion,” “desirable affect,” “inappropriate emotion,” and “social shaping of affect.” As I wrote analytic memos on these subthemes (Glaser, 1978, pp. 83-84) the connections between feeling, sense-making, and practice started to become salient.

Seeking new possibilities for understanding these connections, I remained in conversation with the literature. In this way, my empirical analysis and reading reciprocally

informed one another. As I navigated between emotion psychology, sociocultural studies of emotion, and affect theoretical approaches, my thinking opened up in new ways, and my terminology started to shift—then to settle. For example, though influenced by the “affective turn” (Clough, 2007), I eventually opted primarily to use the term “emotion” because I became more focused on its situated social meanings (Op ’t Eynde et al., 2006) in learning. For Massumi (2002), “affect” emphasized embodied experience outside of symbolic representation and orders of meaning, whereas “emotion is a subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of experience” (p. 28). Rather than make such a strong distinction, I came to see emotion as a process that involves both the potentiality of sensing bodies and the ordering or capture of that potential through sense-making. I started to understand the way that “affect” becomes mediated, categorized, and meaningful to individuals and collectives as a matter of learning, so I retained the term “affect” in my analysis to refer heuristically to ambiguous felt intensity as a mode or moment in the process of emotion. Following Anderson (2016), I set aside the characterization of affects “in themselves” as an empirical project. Rather, affect became visible in my analysis in the process of becoming structured and mediated.

I stopped conceiving of emotion in individualizing and interiorizing terms and started attuning to social processes of configuration. Because emotional configurations are not universal, we can understand their particular meanings by attending to the ways in which language use indicates cultural values and assumptions (Boler, 1999; Lutz & Abu-Lughod, 1990). The ways DxE activists talked about emotion can help us understand its importance to life in DxE and its relation to changing practices. At the same time, I agree with Reckwitz’s (2012) warning against the total “discoursivation” of emotions (p. 244). How people work materially with artifacts, spaces, and other embodied actors can provide evidence of the felt texture of social life that

exceeds its presentation in language. While I explored emotion by looking across both interviews and the observations of activity captured in fieldnotes, I also drew on my experience as an embodied participant in many of the activities represented, corroborating patterns I observed.

New-to-me insights about emotion snapped into place alongside more settled ones I had taken up much earlier from sociocultural studies of learning. Situativist ideas about the nature of knowledge (Greeno, 1997) started to make sense to me as clues toward theorizing emotion. I “plugged in” what I read about emoting and emotion management into theorizations of learning as changing participation in practice. From there, new connections became possible between emotion in learning and ideas about norms, ideology, and power. Plugging in ideas from social movement studies led me to new ways of understanding how the learning of emotion in and as practice shapes political possibilities and collective action. As a step toward manuscript writing, I brought together these developing ideas with data within each coded subtheme in “integrative memos” (Emerson et al., 2011, pp. 193-197). What appears now as a finished object (framework) was really an unfolding process (puzzlework). Coding, rather than the simple application of a frame, was a practice that helped me puzzle through how the pieces fit together.

Findings

In DxE, the learning of emotion in/as practice was oriented toward the achievement of world-changing goals: ending the instrumental use of nonhuman animals and achieving “total animal liberation.” Findings of this study indicated that emotion was tightly interwoven with both these larger goals and the everyday practices and tactics of animal rights activist life. Here, I draw on ethnographic examples and excerpts from interviews to elucidate the concept of emotional configurations. First, I explore how emotion worked as a condition of learning,

enabling and supporting the individual and collective uptake of activist practices. While this orientation to emotion is more common in learning research, I make explicit connections to the politics of learning through the notion of “grievances” in social movement studies and attention to ideology and scale-making. Second, I detail how emotion became an explicit target for teaching and learning in DxE. I introduce *guided emotion participation* as a form of teaching and learning practice.

Understanding Emotion as a Condition of Learning

What does an emotional configuration look like? Looking for emotional configurations in social life means identifying the ways that social actors express—through their language and material activity—the relations between feeling, sense-making, and practice. In such expressions, it is possible to see how social actors themselves understand emotion as a condition of learning akin to motivation.

Reconfiguring emotion and diet in inbound trajectories. Unlike many human-focused social movements, in the case of animal rights, the human agitators are not themselves the aggrieved party. Would-be activists first had to come to see the instrumental use of animal others as grievously wrong. Here I examine how shifting emotional configurations spurred individuals’ pathways into activism. When I interviewed current and former DxE activists about their stories of evolving participation in activism, I found emotion was central to supporting their practice, but often in a more gradual manner than the image of a “moral shock” (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995) might imply. An instructive set of examples involved the five (out of twenty) activists who cited health concerns as the primary reason they initially became vegetarians or vegans. For them,

becoming activists entailed a process of reconfiguring the emotional meanings attached to dietary practices in ways that ran counter to hegemonic social norms.

Carlos, who also appeared in the opening vignette, was a university student whose parents were from Argentina and Mexico. He had been participating in DxE for about a year. Carlos grew up eating a combination of traditional cuisines that contained a lot of pork, lard, and sheep intestine. At the same time, he argued that the use of animal products in Mexican cooking in particular was partially the result of European conquest of his family's homelands. "It's like now the Mexican cuisine's been very tainted by colonialization and these imposed poverties and stuff," he said. In this sense, he positioned veganism as a kind of anticolonial practice. Speaking about his family's eating patterns, he said, "You look back and it's weird how normalized it was. [...] You can argue about physical dependence, but really people do develop emotional dependence on it." Things began to change after his parents went through a divorce. Initially, he said, "I used food a lot to cope with things." In this emotional configuration of eating, Carlos ate a lot of fast food and pizza, but it was only making things worse. "I was gaining weight. I felt bad. I told myself, let's try feeling better and stuff."

Eventually, Carlos was accepted to transfer to Berkeley from his community college, and he made up his mind to go vegan for health reasons as soon as he arrived. He thought that once he had regained his health, he would reincorporate meat into his diet. However, his emotional meanings shifted in the process of learning how to feed himself:

Coming from a meat-eating family, it wasn't like I knew what to do. I'd look up people and recipes and shit, like ideas, simple vegan recipes because I had no idea and shit. I'd find YouTubers and I'd subscribe to them and then they'd come up with recommended videos and other YouTubers and then you're bound to run into— You go through enough

vegan YouTubers, one of them's going to be an animal rights advocate. Whether or not their channel's all about it, they're going to bring it up. You end up click, click, click, click, click. Gary Yourofsky. Click, click, click, click, click. You know. [...] I didn't really consider myself an activist initially. I just watched *Earthlings*, watched *Cowspiracy*. You just watch this stuff. I don't know how to put it. It sounds like cliché. You just watch it, and you realize. I don't know. That's what it WAS for me. You just watch it and the more you watch... Maybe you just can't stop watching. It's not like you're watching *Earthlings*, it's done. You watch *Cowspiracy*, it's done. You kind of watch them all as a series like YouTube videos and these undercover investigations and all this. It's like... Eventually it just starts to click.

Both *Earthlings* and *Cowspiracy* are documentaries that include graphic imagery of slaughter in the context of animal agriculture, which could trigger the kind of "moral shock" that Jasper & Poulsen (1995) described. What is striking, though, is how a concern for his own health is what initially disrupted Carlos's emotional attachment to his family's dietary practices. He described the reconfiguration of emotion around eating a vegan diet as a gradual process of getting drawn into the stream of YouTube recommendations and building new emotional connections. Carlos captured the starkness of this reconfiguration when recalling the death of his family dog: "As I was holding him in my arms, I thought to myself, 'Wow. To somebody this is food.'" His previous position on what forms of emotion were appropriate in the context of eating animals had shifted as he formed new relations of meaning with eating practice. Where once he used eating junk food to seek comfort from his parents' divorce, he now interpreted the death of slaughtered food animals in the same frame as the death of his dog. This shift in interpretation was political in that it involved changes in the classification and allocation of moral

consideration. His understanding of power relations between humans and nonhumans became destabilized as he took up new patterned expectations of what animals deserve and what forms of emotion were appropriate in relation to their deaths.

A similar pattern appeared for several other activists. Gunnar was an online marketer who joined DxE several months before our interview. He volunteered for the Tech Working Group. Before becoming an activist, Gunnar had high cholesterol. He went vegan to address it after reading *The Beauty Detox Solution*. After a month, his cholesterol was back to normal. Encouraged to keep learning, he eventually made an emotional connection between being vegan and taking care of his four cats, one of whom had a serious medical issue:

I just started exploring it more and I was like, “Oh, like being vegan has all these other benefits beyond my own health. It’s good for the environment and obviously animals really benefit from that.” Honestly, the animal thing is probably like why I stuck with it for so long, and why I’m very passionate about it, because if you have a cat or a dog, then you know they have personalities and you don’t want to hurt them. To me, that was important.

For Gunnar, drawing a new emotional relation between being vegan and caring for a sick cat enabled a new political understanding of his eating practice and feeling “passionate” for animal rights. He came to see his four particular cats as part of a more general “animal thing,” which included animals raised for food as well. In this context, his daily caretaking practice of his chronically ill cat eventually became difficult to reconcile with the practices of animal agriculture. In both cases, “you don’t want to hurt” individuals who are worthy of care. In these and similar cases, pursuing health through a vegetarian or vegan diet led to additional learning activities that reconfigured the activists’ emotional meanings in relation to their dietary practices.

This sense-making moved the practice of eating from a personal health frame into a collective political frame, a matter of contestation about social goods and what kinds of social others have inherent value. For health-focused vegetarians or vegans, this emotional reconfiguration was a necessary precursor to joining in collective action. Yet while the stories are individualized, when understood through sociocultural learning perspectives, they do not fit popular narratives of “self-radicalization.” Carlos and Gunnar shifted their emotional configurations of eating using resources produced by social others (e.g., book authors and YouTubers), even if their relationships with those social others were mediated across space and time. Considering ideological “rearticulation” in learning (Hall, 1996; Philip et al., 2017), emotion was key to how the common-sense meaning of eating was rearticulated for individuals. Reconfiguring the emotional meanings of eating entailed situating one’s individual practices within broader political questions about what nonhuman animals deserve. Reconfigured emotional meanings and norms were expressions of shifting politics and power relations. They helped answer the question: who gets what in social life?

Movement grievances and emotional configurations. If, as Jurow & Shea (2015) write, “Scale making highlights the work that actors do to create and disrupt flows of ideas, practices, and people” (p. 288) then emotion also appears central to scale-making in animal rights activism. In the cases above, changing emotion primed people to see their individual practices as questions of moral and political concern. Then, DxE provided the collective means for disrupting the entire system of animal agriculture. Once people joined DxE, emotional configurations supported collective learning as part of movement grievances. A common protest chant encapsulated an overarching emotional configuration central to DxE’s political project: “It’s not food! It’s

violence!” “Violence” implied a perpetrator and a victim, evoked moral emotion, and demanded a remedy. This linkage between particular forms of feeling, particular social practices, and semiotic resources for sense-making into an emotional configuration served as an organizing driver for a variety of learning activities both within the movement and between the movement and bystanders.

This emotional configuration of grievance led to particular possibilities for collective action. First, it shaped potentially counter-intuitive decisions in the group about who the targets of protest should be. For instance, early campaigns focused on the Chipotle restaurant chain and Whole Foods Markets. A different grievance formation, one focused for example on the most egregious practices of animal agriculture, might have led the group to single out targets deemed to be especially bad actors. Instead, DxE oriented to what they considered the fundamental harm in all animal-based foods. As one DxE organizer argued about Chipotle in *Salon*:

Sure, it offers a vegan burrito. Yes, it pays lip service to animal welfare. But it is one of the fastest growing animal killers in the world. It spends millions of dollars every year on ‘humane washing’—deceiving the public with fraudulent claims of ‘respectful’ conditions. But killing is inherently a violent, not humane, act. (Gazzola, 2014)

Chipotle and Whole Foods became preferred targets precisely because their marketing suggested they were among the best options for consumers who cared about animal welfare. Second, the emotional configuration shaped particular protest practices. For example, in one day of protests at Chipotle and Whole Foods locations in February 2015, organizers handed out black blindfolds to protesters, symbolizing the “deception” involved in humane marketing. Understanding “violence” as fundamental to animal agriculture, and feeling the urgency of that violence as a group norm, meant that incrementalist approaches to animal rights activism were nonviable in

DxE. Focusing on the supposed “humane” marketers was understood strategically as a more efficient route to social change. These practices also demonstrate the disruption of scale relations in at least two ways. First, the activists physically inserted themselves into stores and restaurants, disrupting points of linkage between sites of animal agriculture and sites of everyday shopping and eating. Second, they disrupted scale relations by highlighting and problematizing the spatiotemporal linkage itself, implicating the everyday in the conduct of “violence.” Configuring emotion was therefore a central practice of scale-making.

Targeting the Learning of Emotion: Guided Emotion Participation

Part of learning in DxE involved developing strategic knowledge about how emotional configurations supported the complex of practices in DxE. As know-how developed about the strategic value of emotion, evolving practices of emotion work (Hochschild, 1983/2012) emerged to shape and direct the ambiguous intensity of affects into valued emotional configurations.

Rogoff (1995, 2003) introduced the concept of “guided participation” to describe how children become involved in sociocultural practice: “The ‘guidance’ referred to in guided participation involves the direction offered by cultural and social values, as well as social partners; the ‘participation’ in guided participation refers to observation, as well as hands-on involvement in an activity” (Rogoff, 1995, p. 142). Guidance was “meant broadly, to include but go beyond interactions that are intended as instructional” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 284). Guided participation does not describe a single method for supporting learning, but rather a range of practices that involve learners as active participants. One common underlying process Rogoff (2003) identified is “the mutual bridging of meanings” (pp. 285-286). This process is central to

the learning of cultural practices and values because situational meanings are often ambiguous. Verbal and nonverbal cues and the joint manipulation of objects allow more and less experienced participants to establish shared understandings. Kirshner (2008) previously explored guided participation in youth activism, showing the ways adults and youth managed expertise to expand possibilities for the youths' participation.

Here, I extend this notion to describe the interpersonal involvement in emotional configurations as a form of sociocultural practice. Rogoff (2003) argued that emotional facial expression and verbal tone are important practices for bridging social meanings (p. 286). I use the term *guided emotion participation* to describe ways in which experienced practitioners engage in a provision of opportunities, along with normative pressure, for others to participate in particular ways of feeling. By eliciting affects, which may be ambiguous in their meaning, and shaping them into emotional configurations that have strategic value, activists target emotion for learning. Below I present three representative instances of guided emotion participation that demonstrate the relationship between emotional configurations and ideology. Though these instances are facilitated by a single activist, the other people present are active participants in the practices of emoting and of building relations between feeling, conceptual sense-making, and other forms of sociocultural practice.

“Carter’s crying activity.” In late May 2017 as part of the Forum, an annual network-wide conference, Carter facilitated an activity for approximately 60 to 70 activists.

Carter distributed pink, paperboard cards printed with two perpendicular lines splitting them into four quadrants. The top-left quadrant had the headline “MEMORIALIZING THE NONHUMANS IN OUR LIVES” with text below reading, “Animals play a profound role in shaping our lives, and making us better persons for it. Today we

memorialize them.” In the other three quadrants were numbered headlines, with space to write under them: “1. An animal who loved me,” “2. An animal I helped,” and “3. An animal I failed.” Carter took the stage with a microphone in hand, joking that some people called a similar event last year “Carter’s crying activity.” But, he said, group sadness can be a bonding experience. He recalled a recent protest march down the Embarcadero in San Francisco. As the group of DxE activists marched, they passed a dead bird at the side of the street. “No one stopped,” he lamented. But he added, “I don’t blame anyone.”

(Researcher fieldnote, May 28, 2017)

In the setup to the activity, Carter’s comments indicate how power relations between humans and animals led the protesters on the Embarcadero to pass by a dead bird without remark (“No one stopped”). His follow-up stipulation, “I don’t blame anyone,” suggests that the cause of the protesters’ failure to properly emote was not an individual problem, but one of norms. According to the prevailing emotional norms on a San Francisco street, a dead bird is not grievable, and paying one’s respects is not a form of emotional practice that would be expected. However, Carter suggested that this failure remained problematic and needed to be addressed. The activity continued:

He instructed everyone to think of an individual animal for each section of the card and “write something about them they would be proud of.” As an example, he brought up his own family’s dog, Gremlin, who had passed away. He said Gremlin was “extroverted” but had few friends because of how his life unfolded, living with his parents. “He deserved so much more,” Carter said, adding that animals have “lives beyond what we give them.” Again, he said, “I’m not blaming anyone.” Some people in the audience

started snapping their fingers in agreement. After some time to write quietly on their own, Carter instructed everyone to pair up with another person for each of the three sections to share what they had written. After that, Carter opened up the floor for whole-group sharing. People became especially emotive when sharing their experiences from the “animal I failed” category. One woman cried as she told the story of a dog her parents put down when she was a child. A young man shared about an injured rat he found in his apartment building and nursed back to health, only to have it escape from its cage, be found by a neighbor, and end up back in a dumpster, dead. After the sharing session, Carter instructed the activists to tape their cards to the wall of the conference hall, where everyone could read them.

(Researcher fieldnote, May 28, 2017)

The remainder of the activity demonstrates how social actors draw together relationships of meaning between feeling and practice in collaborative sense-making and how these relationships contribute to ideological formation. Carter’s preamble to the activity included both an anonymous wild bird and a domesticated dog. By suggesting both animals deserved more, and by creating a parallel verbal construction in which each instance was followed by a statement about not blaming individuals, Carter established a moral equivalence between the cases. The unspoken ideological assumption was that both wild and domesticated animals should be treated with dignity. A dead bird on the street should at least be responded to by stopping in acknowledgement. The sadness of this kind of mourning practice is configured in relationship to a conceptualization of nonhumans as individuals with needs and desires. Carter’s emotional configuration in language—his way of bringing together feeling, sense-making, and practice—was a way of disrupting prevailing ways that the social good of moral consideration was

distributed unequally to different categories of nonhuman animals upon death. The snapping from the audience that followed represents a moment of ideological convergence. Snapping indicated that Carter's emotional configuration about animal death was shared, giving it additional social force as a legitimate way of making sense of the social world.

The prompts on the cards were also designed to guide participants into practicing particular emotional configurations. The first prompt, "An animal who loved me," highlighted the capacity of animals to feel social connectedness and care for humans. The term "love" drew a line of similarity between humans and nonhumans, which worked ideologically to elevate the ethical status of nonhumans. If they were capable of "loving" like humans, why wouldn't they be deserving of moral consideration like humans? More than that, however, this prompt highlighted how humans benefit from relationships of emotional exchange (Hochschild, 1983/2012) with nonhumans. Norms dictate that certain gestures of emotion are due to others according to their roles. In the case of "An animal who loved me," the prompt extended that common sense to emotional gestures paid to humans by members of other species. Then, "An animal I helped" and "An animal I failed" drew out the other side of the exchange, gestures owed by humans in return.

Together, these three prompts involved an ideological frame orienting activists toward an ethic of responsibility for animal welfare. The ideological nudge provided by the prompts was then recursively reinforced. Compounding the snapping in agreement that took place in the lead up to the activity, the emotional displays attendees paid nonhuman honorees (the euthanized dog, the injured rat) validated the logic of responsibility that elicited them in the first place. Like the parallel that Carter had created between the dead bird on the Embarcadero and his dog, Gremlin, these mourning displays represented additional cases that were to be understood within the same emotional configuration. Each one affirmed the relation between feeling, sense-making, and

practice that Carter established—a small-scale shift in norms with political implications. Carter did not merely take an “affective stance” (Philip, Gupta, Elby, & Turpen, 2017, p. 200), but rather reified the ideological convergence of the group through a designed opportunity to take an affective stance together. Within this meeting hall, a new normative position on the question of who gets what was established, and guided emotion participation helped secure it.

Protest rehearsal. Activists in DxE frequently described protest as a way to disrupt social norms in settings where nonhuman animals were being used instrumentally. Part of the disruption involved injecting moral emotional configurations into contexts like grocery stores that were not normally considered ethically problematic. These emotional stances were rehearsed prior to demonstrating them in public.

During one campaign in early 2015 against Chipotle restaurants and Whole Foods stores, aimed at challenging the brands’ use of “humane” marketing messages, a series of protests around San Francisco was preceded by a rehearsal in a public plaza.

[The organizer] instructed everyone to cue their positions off the main speaker. He put the main speaker in place and then organized the rest of the activists into a couple of lines next to and behind the speaker. He wanted everyone to be staggered so that each person was visible between the two people in front of them. When the speaker gave the cue (“It’s not food! It’s violence!”) everyone was to switch from being pretend customers to getting into place as quickly as possible. [The organizer] explained that this made for a really striking visual. [...] After one of the run-throughs, [he] stopped and said, “When you do the chant, think about the animals that are being harmed.” He explained they didn’t want to just mumble it, that they had to sound strong. But they also shouldn’t shriek it because it would look melodramatic.

(Researcher fieldnote, February 28, 2015)

Here, bringing to mind thoughts about violence committed against animals on farms was used for tuning oneself to the emotional configuration appropriate for the occasion. Protests represent an interface between the group's internally focused emotion development and externally focused efforts at shifting the moral emotion of the public. The direction to visualize "the animals that are being harmed" is given with other instructions for creating the correct impression for bystanders, from standing in position so their bodies would be visible to coordinating the timing of staged transitions to produce a striking visual display. The practice of visualizing suffering was made meaningful by the other practices of protest within which it was situated. As an embodied emotional practice, this visualization made the intersecting embodied practices (of chanting and creating a striking visual) more effective. If the activists wanted to be taken seriously, they needed to communicate with the sonic quality of their voices the seriousness of their cause.

This configuration of feeling, sense-making, and practice would help the protesters disrupt the emotional norms operating inside restaurants and grocery stores where the protests were later carried out. In such settings, norms shaped by power relations between humans and nonhuman animals dictated that the presence of meat should be emotionally unremarkable. To visualize "animals that being harmed" was to bring the unremarkable context of the grocery aisle into conceptual relation with the distant context of the slaughterhouse. Understanding these as related was key to the ideological reframing in the words of the chant itself ("It's not food! It's violence!"). The visualization of harm therefore helped the protesters contest the hegemonic distribution of moral consideration as a social good. It also provided an opportunity for ideological reification among the protesters. The practice of visualization coordinated their convergence around an ideological stance that problematized animal agriculture as morally

wrong. Chanting in unison provided normative support for each protester's individual stance. It conveyed to the protesters that the way they felt as individuals, and what those feelings meant about the arrangement of the world, was legitimate.

Visualizing goat slaughter. In an interview, Tamar shared a story with me about an experience she had while working at a Jewish urban farm. As a vegan, she felt conflicted about their use of animals and eventually resigned. Before leaving, however, she convinced the farm to allow her to give a workshop for other employees on ethics and animals:

So I started off the class ... It was like an hour-long workshop, where I had everyone close their eyes and think about a time when they had an experience with one of the goats, because people at [the farm] rave about these goats. Everyone loves these goats. So I was like, think about a time when you played with a goat, or when you saw one of them do something and you thought that they were happy, like whatever, just something fun, or even if you saw them being sad, just really saw them as an individual. Was it Shlomo, was it JoJo, which goat were they? Just really remember that moment. So everyone kind of did this meditation where they remembered that moment.

Next, she walked them through a visualization of slaughtering the goat they remembered.

I think I said like, "Now it's time to slaughter them. Are you holding the knife or are you watching someone else hold the knife?" I gave them a lot of room to imagine what this whole thing would be like. "Are you making eye contact with the goat?" I didn't tell them how to feel, but I'm like, "What are you feeling as someone is slitting this goat's throat?" And then, people were tearing up. Then I had everyone open their eyes and go around the room and say how they felt. Everyone was like, "angry," "sad," "like I betrayed them," "horrified," "disgusted," "disturbed," like all awful, awful things. Not

one person was like, “I felt cool about it.” And that was a really formative moment that all of these people who wake up at 6 AM to milk these goats, and who love to argue me about this whole set of issues, I just saw them really agree with me for a minute. Not even agree with me, but just like really recognize what it means to use an animal, and to kill an animal.

She said that two of the farmers later decided to go vegan, and both had since attended DxE events.

Tamar was disturbed by the emotional norms in place on the farm where she worked, and what they said about the instrumental use of animals there. The goat slaughter visualization was a practice for constructing new relations of meaning between feeling, sense-making, and practice. Despite this overt goal, I was struck by Tamar’s insistence that she “didn’t tell them how to feel.” In this instance of guided emotion participation, Tamar primed the farmers to think about their intimate relationships of care to individual goats, and then to connect that knowledge with an aspect of animal agriculture, slaughter, which is normally conceived in abstract terms. Visualizing oneself holding a blade, slicing into the throat of a goat one knows, and “making eye contact with” them as blood flows—one is bound to feel something. But the follow-up question (What are you feeling?) is not as open-ended as it may seem. Guiding participants into anger, sadness, or guilt in an emotional configuration linking slaughter with the intimacy of personal relationships was the very point of this practice. Only then would they “really recognize what it means” in DxE to kill an animal. “What it means” entails not only a certain relation among concepts, but also a certain emotional configuration woven into the experience of visualizing animal slaughter. That two of her fellow workers later attended DxE events points to the recursive position that the learning of emotion takes. Here, an emotional configuration about

slaughter was the outcome of practice. Yet it also became consequential for future learning. If the way you learn to feel tells you the world is unjust, you might take up new forms of practice to change the world.

Discussion

In this article, I proposed a way of theorizing emotion in/as sociocultural practice that sees emotion as practices (e.g., of emoting, of emotion work) that are also bound up in other forms of practice. This perspective entails a shift from viewing emotions as natural, internal states to *emotional configurations*, an analytical tool for seeing the situated and reciprocal interrelationships between feeling, sense-making, and practice that give emotion social meaning for learning. I introduced *guided emotion participation* as a genre of practice in which emotion became a target for teaching and learning in DxE. The analysis of emotional configurations in this article has several implications for the learning sciences.

First, emotion in learning is more complex than a mere driver or mediator of the “true” substance of learning. Emotion in learning is recursive, sometimes acting like a condition of learning and sometimes becoming a learning target. The dual modes shift in the flow of time as learning is lived and practiced. Shifting the focus from “an emotion” to the idea of emotional configurations foregrounds the importance of situating the meaning of emotion within sociocultural context. Emotion can function as a learning target in its own right. It can also bear multiple and complex relationships in the learning of other practices and conceptual meaning making. Future learning sciences research may seek other ways that emotion’s dual-mode possibilities shape learning. Though DxE is a radical case, learning researchers are liable to find similarly complex emotional configurations in more mundane learning environments, within and

beyond schools. Tracing emotion's dual modes in learning raises issues of method as well.

Ethnographic approaches seem well suited to unpacking the situated social and cultural meanings that cohere around emotion in practice. The participant observation and interview methods pursued in this study enabled sensitivity to how emotional configurations shift in learning and development both over the lifecourse and in moment-to-moment social interaction.

Second, this article contributes to an expansion of possibilities for considering power in learning. A key dimension of power considered in this article is the way emotional configurations play a role in individual and collective learning about how to organize powered relations between humans and members of other species. Because I have focused in this article on the activity of humans, this sense of power may appear to lurk beyond the edges of the page. Yet in the practices of DxE, aimed at shaping particular emotional configurations in relation to notions of "violence," to human uses of animals, and to "grievability" (Butler, 2004), power is firmly in the crosshairs. To make a rat grievable in Carter's crying activity or to extend the grievability of a goat you know to a general category of slaughter is to use emotion as a tool for disrupting the scale relations (Jurow & Shea, 2015) that undergird humans' power over others. This study suggests that the learning of emotional configurations could be more broadly useful in other projects where the transformation of power relations is at issue, in grievances that link the feelings of oppression to a conceptual understanding of structural inequities (Kwon, 2008) or as a factor in sociocultural processes of politicization (Curnow et al., 2018). Further, power operates through normativity. Esmonde and Booker (2017) write that one of the things learners learn is "normativity: how to recognize it, how to perform it... and even, how to marginalize people who don't meet normative standards" (p. 168). The way humans come to assess the

emotional configurations of others as normative or not also has power implications, such as in the historical associations between women's emotional practices and charges of irrationality.

Third, this study points to an important role for emotion in ideological convergence as a part of learning. The findings build on the suggestion by Philip *et al.* (2017) that taking an “affective stance” in interaction can help secure an ideological position that is under negotiation. My analysis revealed an instrumentalization of this emotional affordance. For instance, in Carter's crying activity, guided emotion participation both elicited a particular way of feeling through reference to an ideological frame and recursively bolstered that frame through the evidence that collective emoting provided. This study showed how emotion was central to ideological “rearticulation” (Hall, 1996; Philip *et al.*, 2017), the ongoing process of disrupting and reforming connotative associations. In Tamar's visualization of animal slaughter, the farmers' associations between goats and care were exploited to rearticulate their associations with slaughter, imbuing it with feelings they called anger, horror, or disgust. This kind of sense-making was not only conceptual and felt, but also involved complex entanglement with sociocultural practice. It required historical relationships of caretaking, for example, and Tamar and the farmers' guided emotion participation. Further, discourse alone cannot capture the embodied dimensions of practice (Reckwitz, 2012). This study showed how crying together, taping stories of mourning and guilt to a wall together, and tuning the sonic qualities of one's voice were embodied ways of achieving ideological convergence and of disrupting norms.

Finally, this study suggests implications for design. Sociocultural learning theories temper the individualized and autonomous figure of “the learner” common in more cognitivist accounts. They point to the ways learning takes place within shared systems of meaning and activity that always predate the arrival of any individual on the scene. Sociocultural theories have

also emphasized the extent to which social others contribute to an individual's learning. Despite this, sociocultural theories may require further revision if we are to take emotion seriously. Emotion's relationality perforates the supposedly stable boundaries of learners and interweaves in them the specter of fundamental susceptibility. In the examples of guided emotion participation presented in this article, other activists and non-activists participated actively alongside facilitators, but the susceptibility of emotion colors what it means to be "active" in such contexts. This form of participation is not "hands-on" as in Rogoff's (1995) formulation, but it certainly is "bodies-in." If we take seriously affect theorists' insight about the dual capacity of bodies both "to affect" and "to be affected," guided emotion participation entails a form of participation that is not under fully autonomous control. As designers of learning environments, learning scientists should attend to this vulnerability as part of responsible professional practice. When emotional configurations are made the target of teaching or design, the line between productive cultivation and unethical manipulation may be difficult to locate; it matters whether learners are "in on the game." Designers should be as explicit as possible about how designed-for emotional configurations may contribute to other ends learners themselves may care about. Transparency offers learners an opportunity to make agentic choices about their participation, limiting the potential for unethical manipulation.

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