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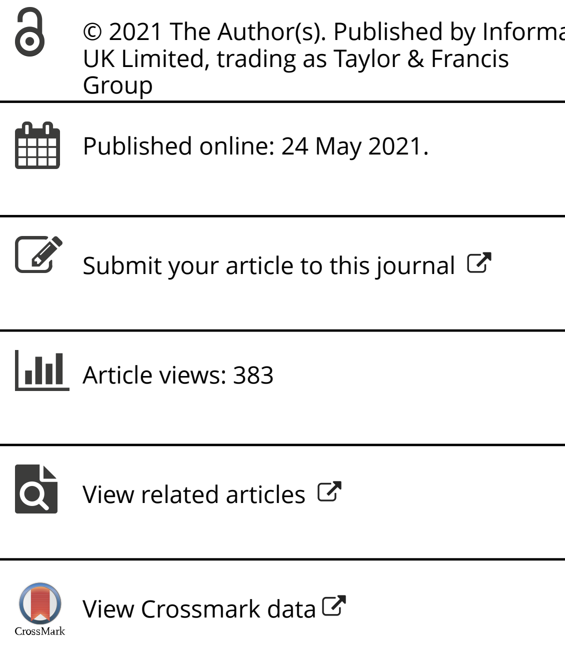

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Bridging the gap between affect and reason: on thinking-feeling in politics

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ABSTRACT
This article addresses the role of thinking in politics by engaging with two radically different literatures: theorizing on affect and sociological research into reflexivity through internal conversation. Brian Massumi and his fellow affect theorists have made an important contribution to dismantling overly rationalist conceptions of thought, by conceptualizing the embeddedness of humans in processes beyond cognitive control. At the same time, the turn to affect has been criticized for its 'anti-intentionalist' tendencies. These are said to undermine the role of ideas, beliefs, and judgements in politics. In response, the article turns to emerging debates on reflexivity. Associated with the work of Margaret Archer, they aim to formulate a middle ground between the entrenched positions of 'rational' deliberation and non-cognitive affectedness. Put in conversation, the two literatures point to the potential of affective thinking, or thinking-feeling, in politics. The article gauges the relevance by discussing the theoretical advancements in relation to leading scholar of protest and emotions, James Jasper.

KEYWORDS
Affect theory; reflexivity; intensity; internal conversation; protest; Margaret Archer; Brian Massumi; James Jasper

Introduction

The last few years have seen the climate crisis become a key issue in elections and public debate, at times displacing a concern in Western democracies with immigration, security, and welfare. The ongoing climate catastrophe has also spawned countless scholarly interventions dedicated to the technical challenges of developing a greener economy, as well as to overcoming the nihilism that shields the privileged from the need for radical social change. Indeed, the existential threat to our conditions for survival has brought home the kind of categorical shift needed in relation to our conceptual being-in-the-world. One such project can be found in the turn to affect in the humanities and social sciences, which convincingly argues for the benefits of foregrounding human affectedness (Bennett 2009; Clough and Halley 2007; Connolly 2017; Gregg and Seigworth 2009). By this I mean that affect theory has proven useful in unsettling problematic approaches to society and politics by placing forces and processes other than human reason and

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intentionality at the centre of ethico-political considerations. Yet there has been a persistent stream of critical voices that identify in the embrace of affectivity a continuation of traditional binaries. As Linda Zerilli observes, 'far from the radical departure from modern philosophical accounts of human action and judgement that its advocates often claim it to be', affect theory can be interpreted as 'another chapter in a familiar debate about the relationship between conceptual and nonconceptual modes of orientation to the world' (Zerilli 2016, 241). Affect theory is perceived critically as merely another instalment of the Cartesian dualism, which consists of a dichotomy between intellectual processes, 'held to be captive to the fixity of received meanings and categories', and affective processes, which are said 'to be autonomous from signification' (Leys 2011, 450). At stake in these attempts to respond to the climate crisis is therefore the importance of thought in politics – what kind of role our capacity to deliberate and reflect critically should play in responding to the problems of our time – and its relationship to emotions/ affect, the unconscious and our environment.

This article draws on affect theory and its critics and argues that we can retain the innovative focus on affect if we combine it with a more suitable theorization of thought. Specifically, I maintain that the reproduction of Cartesian dualism can be avoided by setting affect theory alongside sociological research into reflexivity through internal conversation surrounding the work of social theorist Margaret Archer (2003, 2007, 2012). As yet tentative and explorative, the discussion on reflexivity offers key insights into a central prism, reflexivity, through which people mediate their engagement with the world. In turning to internal conversations, I do not wish to take sides in the enduring debate about the primacy of reason or emotions and the unconscious. On the contrary, I seek to foreground and capture the diversity of thought to affirm the 'radical entanglement of affect and conceptual rationality' (Zerilli 2016, 261) and deny any desire to give normative priority to one over the other. This article highlights how Archer, firstly, articulates a broader, more nuanced, conception of intentionality and conscious thought that aims to account for the intertwined potentials of both affectivity and deliberation. Affirmation of human capacities to mediate their social context, Archer emphasizes, must not come at the cost of denying the largely subconscious nature of most social processes. The two facts are neither contradictory nor mutually exclusive. I reveal how Archer, secondly, identifies modes of reflexivity that are utilized differently according to the specific demands of each context and at the same time distributed unevenly across society. The move ties thinking back to its social and non-social origin and helps evaluate the potential of thinking to contribute to social transformation at a specific point in time. Together the two insights enable scholars of reflexivity to maintain a concern with how different people can respond to their environment through their own unique deliberations, without attributing a privileged role to human capacities for reason. At the same time, Archer's approach has been criticized for its incapacity to fully articulate the deeply relational, unconscious, and affective qualities to thinking (Brownlie 2014; Burkitt 2012). I will use the proposed revisions by commentators as a means to deepen our understanding of the connection between thinking and emotions/ affect.

In bringing the literatures on affect and reflexivity together, I do not seek to hybridize the two approaches at an ontological or theoretical level. Both have significantly different ontological commitments and perspectives and come with strengths and limitations which are unlikely to be resolved by a shot-gun wedding. Instead, I draw from the

literature a more refined understanding of the role that *affective* thinking can play in politics, which emerges by maintaining an equal focus on human affectedness, internal conversations, and their interrelation. To illustrate the relevance of the theoretical movements for politics, this article follows the recent concern with anti-capitalist and climate protests in debates on affect and on reflexivity (Carrigan 2016; Connolly 2017; Davidson and Stedman 2018; Massumi 2015). I highlight how each literature has sought to unlock a different potential to public dissent in relation to thought and affect respectively, and how their insights can be brought together to better understand and to enrich emancipatory movements. The article outlines the benefits of a focus on both human affectivity and reflexivity in connection with the leading scholar of emotions in social movements, James Jasper, and his (2018) attempt to bridge the gap between emotions and thought through the concept of feeling-thinking processes.

The article is split into four sections. First, I introduce affect theory. I do not seek to provide an all-encompassing summary of the turn to affect. Instead, the article draws out common themes before mapping out what I take to be its most distinctive contribution, made visible in relation to Massumi's interpretation of affect in terms of intensity, and its implication for conceptualizing thought. Secondly, I address the criticisms of affect theory put forward by Ruth Leys and Linda Zerilli, and their implications for politics. Thirdly, the article fills the conceptual space carved open by the critical commentary, to re-conceptualise thought in a way that maintains the focus on affect as intensity but does not displace thought. I introduce the social-theoretical debates on reflexivity through internal conversation that have not yet found resonance in affect theory and political or democratic theory. The political implications are spelled out in the fourth section. I highlight two ways in which the literature on affect and reflexivity can enrich the scholarship on the role of emotions in political protest, made visible through a critical engagement with Jasper's conception of feeling-thinking processes.

Massumi – affect as intensity

Scholars within the humanities and social sciences have sought to overcome a number of traditional dichotomies, notably between the body and the mind and between cognitive or propositional knowledge and embodied, affective knowledge (Bickford 2011; Clough 2009; Clough and Halley 2007; Forgas 2001; Krause 2008; Protevi 2009). The affective turn from the 1990s onwards also provided a critical ontological response to poststructuralist cultural studies and its focus on text analysis, deconstruction, and ideology.[1] The aim of affect theorists was to return critical theory and cultural studies to 'bodily matter, which had been treated in terms of various constructionisms' (Clough 2009, 206). They define affect at its most basic level as 'what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects' (Ahmed 2009, 29) and as the capacity of bodies 'to affect and be affected' (Clough and Halley 2007, 2).[2] Affect is attributed to visceral forces 'beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion', and the 'persistent proof of a body's never less than ongoing immersion in and among the world's obstinacies and rhythms, its refusals as much as its invitations' (Gregg and Seigworth 2009, 1). Disagreements in the literature about the exact nature of the gap between emotions and affect aside, affect theorists share a focus on the *intensity* to feelings that 'slip, evade, and overflow capture' (White

2017, 175). The aim is to understand how humans enter into situations as always-already formed by their environment, which fundamentally shapes what action is possible and considered reasonable. From this interpretation, affect theory derives the following normative aim: to identify the technologies that make it possible to target and manipulate 'the imperceptible dynamism of affect' (Clough 2009, 207). Since affect precedes decision in specific ways, in contemporary, polarized democracies 'mastery of the means of affective capture' becomes the essential tool 'for making political gain' (Thrift and Amin 2013, 158). The social sciences and humanities are tasked with challenging the ways that injustice and domination manipulate the forces beneath or other than consciousness and identifying ways to improve people's relationships with their environment.

Massumi is one of the leading interpreters of affect in terms of intensity or a 'feeling of the change in capacity' (Massumi 2015, 4). Three points are key to his understanding. Firstly, intensity is not connected to subjects but to the forces between and within bodies and between a body and the world. Affect helps Massumi account for a 'stronger sense of embeddedness in a larger field of life' (2015, 6). He draws on Baruch Spinoza to insist that affect always simultaneously entails affecting and being affected; a person can never act upon the world without being influenced and shaped by that world. Secondly, affect as intensity evades capture and can never be fully fixated or known. This ontological claim shifts the focus of theorizing away from a concern with identifying the properties of things and onto emergence and the evolving character of events. Affect provides a 'point of entry into an eventful, relational field of complexity that is already active, and still open-ended' (2015, 151). It stands for the 'margin of manoeuvrability' (2015, 3), the vagueness and uncertainty of any present situation that opens our context up for improvization and experimentation. Thirdly, Massumi commits to a gap between emotions and affect and insists that affect as intensity always precedes the impact of subjectively-held feelings. The openness of events is irreducible to emotions, since 'conscious thought' and emotions are never able to fully capture the depth to this intensity. Put together, the key cornerstones of this influential strand of affect theory are intensity, relationality, openness, a focus on emergence and experimentation, and the commitment to the primacy of affect and its separation from subjectively-held emotions.

This understanding of affect as intensity has important implications for how to conceive thought, as is visible in Massumi's concept thinking-feeling. Thinking-feeling opposes the reduction of thought to a mind and to (self-) conscious processes. Contra rationalism, Massumi highlights the embeddedness of the mind within a network, which raises doubt about our ability to attribute thinking neatly to the brain. Affect theory 'does not reduce the mind to the body in the narrow, physical sense; it asserts that bodies think as they feel, on a level with their movements. This takes thinking out of the interiority of a psychological subject and puts it directly in the world: in the co-motion of relational encounter' (Massumi 2015, 211). Thinking is no longer attributed to a specific subject or object, insofar as it 'pertains more directly to the event, what passes in-between objects *and* subjects, than to the objects or subjects per se' (Massumi 2015, 94). Massumi draws on Charles Peirce's concept of abduction and his notion of 'lived hypotheses' to clarify further what this form of thought entails. Abduction is the primary mode of thought-in-motion out of which deductive and inductive processes emerge. It rests on the fact that as an event unfolds, the parts coming together have already made themselves felt without requiring reflective mediation; the *intensity* of

the event is immediately and equally thought and felt – not through a practice of deliberation, understanding, reason, or analysis, but through a 'conceptually rigorous intuition' (Massumi 2016, 125). The expansion of thought is thus completed by anchoring thinking in intensity, which is further defined as the 'such as it is of itself' or the 'immediate presence *to each other* of every part' (2016, 124). A situation always holds together both the unity and diversity of its parts and this gives the event its unique quality or intensity, which is irreducible to other events and always capable of exceeding expectation. For instance, we have a sense of the situation unfolding, the numerous things coming together as we step into a crowd at a train station and try to get to the exit. The feeling to this situation cannot be reduced to any of its parts nor to any other, different moment at a train station (2016, 123). In other words, the intensity to thinking-feeling emerges as part of the unfolding of an event and cannot be traced back to either a subject with an autonomous, sovereign form of internal conversation or a pregiven world and structure.

In sum, a suitable approach to thinking in politics must account for the affected nature of thought as part of an event. This includes a focus on intensity, relationality, openness, emergence, and experimentation. I will elaborate the implications further in relation to political protest in the final section, after first outlining the critical responses to Massumi's position.

The limits to the Affective Turn

The following highlights two movements made by commentators that are crucial to formulating a refined approach to thinking in politics. First, I engage with Ruth Leys as an influential critic of affect theory who accentuates the intentional dimension to affect. Secondly, I turn to political theorist Linda Zerilli who supports Leys' response but also affirms the normative project of affect theory outlined above. She shows how we can focus on human affectedness to improve our understanding of beliefs, ideas, and judgement in politics.

The first movement concerns the insistence that affect is always pre-consciousness. Leys (2011, 2017) focuses on research in neuroscience in relation to the work of Antonio Damasio, Silvan Tomkins, and Paul Ekman, and cultural and political theorizing on affective politics surrounding the writings of William Connolly and Massumi.[3] She argues that the two different strands of literature key to affect theory share an anti-intentionalism (Leys 2017, 314). This anti-intentionalism emerges from a commitment to oppose cognitivism, which they interpret as an overly rationalist emphasis on the mind. Crucially, their stance involves an (implicit) acceptance of the cognitivist conception of the mind in the form of rational, detached processes operating through propositional knowledge. The consequence is that the often automatic, subliminal nature of many human activities is used as justification for a clear-cut separation between affect, in the form of intensities, and meaning/signification. Corporeal forces are given primacy in relation to the mind, and scholars draw selectively on neuroscientific experiments to claim that 'conscious thought or intention arrives too late to do anything other than supervise the results' (Leys 2017, 324).

These tendencies are visible in Massumi's central concept of 'thinking-feeling', also sometimes termed affective attunement. Thinking-feeling elucidates the complex

relationship between feeling and thinking, suggesting that affect should best be thought as '*involving feeling in thinking*, and vice versa. This requires revisiting the whole notion of rationality – and self-interest' (Massumi 2015, 91). In other words, the re-conceptualization of affect as involving a felt transition enables a departure from the 'paradigm of rationality, while preserving *thought*' (2015, 93). The problem arises when he emphasizes that in 'the heat of an encounter we are immersed in eventful working-out of affective capacities. We have no luxury of a distance from the event from which we can observe and reflect upon it' (2015, 93). Affect is pre-subjective to the extent that it is 'so integral to the event's unfolding that it can only retrospectively be "owned", or owned up to, in memory and post facto reflection' (2015, 94). In these and many other similar statements, Massumi ends up with two contradictory commitments: to a contained notion of self-conscious, cognitive thought, on the one hand, and the project of accounting for the multiple ways in which thought and awareness are constituted by affect, on the other. It is unclear why this relational, event-focused, notion of thinking must deny subjectivity its role, taking the step of conflating the fact that affect is not reducible to the cognitive with that it is always and essentially non-conscious. This unnecessarily undermines the potent point that Massumi makes, by shrouding the subjective dimension to thinking-feeling in conceptual obscurity.

Politically, the consequence of affect theory's holding on to a dichotomy between corporeal affect and 'fully conscious' processes is a relative indifference to the role of ideas and beliefs 'in favour of an "ontological" concern with different people's corporeal affective reactions' (Leys 2011, 451). Leys concludes that the price 'their views exact is to imply such a radical separation between affect and reason as to make disagreement about meaning, or ideological dispute, irrelevant to cultural analysis' (2011, 472). Affect theorists have given up too easily on the challenging project of liberating politics and political theory from intellectualist conceptions of deliberative democracy, by trying to find a solution that circumvents the problem of deliberation altogether. The implicit scepticism towards the potential of socio-political practices obscures the many different sources of change that make social transformation possible.[4]

These tendencies are a consequence of insisting on certain ways of framing the conscious-unconscious relationship. They are not essential to the normative project of affect theory as I have laid it out in the previous section and can easily be left behind without detriment to a focus on affect as intensity. In moving beyond such commitments, we should however do more than re-affirm intentionality. Leys aims to promote accounts that avoid the separation of affect and cognition or meaning; commentators in turn highlight that, in seeking to 'rescue meaning and intentionality, Leys largely subordinates affect, emotion, and feeling to appraisal, interpretation, and representation' (Cromby and Willis 2016, 483). She stands accused of endorsing 'a paradigm within which affect is always consequent to, or dependent upon, prior cognitive appraisal' (2016, 483). The challenge is therefore how to bring into the conversation a stronger focus on thinking that nonetheless remains to a significant extent open to, or even strengthens, the normative thrust of affect theory. To understand how this balancing act is possible, I turn to the second movement by commentators.

Zerilli shares Leys' concerns about affect theory but identifies in the revaluation of intentionality only a first step towards a suitable approach to affect. Zerilli argues that scholars need to take seriously affect theorists' attempt to extend a longstanding critique

of rationalist approaches to the mind, even if scholars like Massumi or Connolly ultimately fall back on the Cartesian dualism. Affect theory aims to provide a novel, progressive political response that explains 'the tenacity of oppressive social norms' and asks why some beliefs are 'resistant to social revision' (Zerilli 2016, 260). A critical stance to affect theory therefore needs to address the questions of how we can know whether our concepts are 'responsive to the heterogeneous, embodied character of human experience, truly open to the world?' and how we are able 'to discern anything new in the world at all?' (2016, 250). The questions direct attention to the need to introduce notions of 'what it means to-be-in-the-world and to-be-open-to-the-world' (2016, 250). A theorization of the 'radical entanglement of affect and conceptual rationality is needed' that keeps their mutual imbrications from falling back on 'always already affectively primed responses, on the one hand, or always already conceptually determined responses on the other hand' (2016, 261). Only then can theorists and politics start engaging with the 'unpredictability of affect' (2016, 261) as key to grasping the complexity of oppressive and unjust structures. Zerilli representatively considers the implications in relation to theorizing judgement. She highlights that affective sensibilities play a normative role in judgement, because judgements do not follow idealized conceptions of rational deliberation, i.e. the subsumption of particulars under universal principles; it is through our engagement in and 'from within the midst of this embodied affective practice' that we can make critical judgements. Human reliance on 'forms of instruction that appeal to our contingent, affective responses' seems only 'like a departure from conceptual rationality' (Zerilli 2016, 256), if we assume the existence of an abstract vantage point that renders all affective judgements inherently distorted. Interrogating the affectedness of normative judgements thus gives us one way in which we can fruitfully explore the radical entanglement of affect and reason to better capture the role of thinking in politics.

Reflexivity through internal conversation

The following extends Leys' and Zerilli's insights into the link between intentionality and intensity/ 'being-in-the-world' and 'open-to-the-world', through an engagement with debates on reflexivity through internal conversation. Sociology's focus on the social conditioning of thought and action can help inform other disciplines on how human capacities to think, emerge and remain bound to the social (and non-social) environment. This helps link any claim we make about human capacities for reason, deliberation, or critical reflection to (a) a specific context from which this potential emerges, and (b) the relational, embodied character of agency.

The idea of conceiving reflexivity in the form of an internal conversation ranges as far back as Plato's *Theaetetus* (Plato 2015, 189e). In modernity, however, the Cartesian conception of thought in terms of *introspection* undermined interest in the topic; the visual metaphor raised the seemingly irresolvable problem of how a subject can *see* itself as an object. The American Pragmatists helped re-kindle the notion of an inner dialogue through their semiotic turn. Listening and speaking rather than introspection became the suitable metaphors for reflexivity.[5] Today, the social sciences are home to three separate, and at times conflicting, approaches to reflexivity: firstly, reflexivity is used to designate a methodological approach to sociology, particularly associated with the work of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Used in this sense it is closely

connected to critical (self-) reflection. Secondly, the term became popular in connection with Anthony Giddens' and Ulrich Beck's analysis of late modernity, which is characterized as a period with increasing individualization and reflexive institutions (Beck et al. 1994). Lastly, the term has been used to recover a notion of thinking as a distinctly subjective, internal conversation (Archer 2003, 2007, 2012). Social theorist Margaret Archer has conducted empirical research into different modes of reflexivity as part of an attempt to map out the (analytically) separate contributions of structures and human agency to social transformation.[6] This article turns to Archer for her attempt to formulate a pluralist conception of thinking that seeks to incorporate practice, embodiment, relationality, affect, emotionality, self-talk, and intentionality. The brief summary cannot reproduce the rich account Archer offers of internal conversations, nor do I seek to provide a definitive reading of her work, but aims to bring out key features particularly conducive to the conversation with affect theorizing.

Archer formulates reflexivity as referring to people's capacity to 'talk to themselves within their own heads, usually silently and usually from an early age' (Archer 2007, 2), and as the '*regular exercise of the mental ability […] to consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts and vice versa*' (Archer 2007, 4). This internal conversation is language-based, but also goes beyond external discourse in its creative use of images and sensations. Reflexivity is as emotional as it is cognitive, and it is continuously shaped by our interrelationship with others and the world around us. The internal conversation builds on a, to some extent, continuous sense of self, but this seeming coherence of personhood should not obscure the fact that reflexivity does so 'certainly fallibly, certainly incompletely and necessarily under our own descriptions' (Archer 2016, 289).

Archer emphasizes the integral role that reflexivity plays for society and goes on to argue that most human activities entail some form of reflexive process (Archer 2007, 8). Contra the move towards non-cognitivism, she insists that reflexivity is intentional in that it entails some form of reasoned and purposive response to a social context. Archer accepts that many activities are habituated and/or occur at a subliminal level. People do not always, or even rarely, have a 'strong' cognitive grasp of their actions and their potential consequences. Indeed, Archer's (2000) project specifically seeks to counter a tendency in the social sciences to socialize all aspects of human existence by turning language into the key medium of human experience and behaviour. With affect theorists she shares a concern that this move too easily obscures the embodied character of human agency that we share with other animals. However, similar to critiques of affect theory, Archer argues that this emphasis should not lead to the assumption that no form of intentionality is present unless it is describable in terms of (ongoing) rational deliberation (Archer 2000; cf. Porpora 2015, 129ff.). Archer thus seems to develop her own conception of thinking-feeling. She arrives at it from a more cognitive starting point that allows her to bring into view the potential of internal conversations, without however embracing the exceptional status of human reason.

Archer's work adds to arguments for a broader conception of thought, by mapping out how humans think differently. She insists that these differences have significant causal implications at a macro-level of society and impact social mobility and social transformation. More specifically, Archer (2003, 2007, 2012) adds further purchase on ordinary ways of thinking through a series of empirical investigations into the patterned character of reflexivity. Her explorative interviews identify a number of different modes of

reflexivity – communicative, autonomous, meta- and fractured reflexivity (Archer 2003, 165). Although all humans manifest a unique combination of all the modes, each has usually one or two dominant modes that stabilize into a modus vivendi as a person reaches adulthood. Communicative reflexives draw predominantly on a 'thought-and-talk' process, which means that they rely heavily on others to conclude their internal deliberation. This dominant mode thus depends more heavily on a stable social environment. Autonomous reflexives remain independent in their thought process, forming largely instrumental relationships with others. Meta-reflexives are characterized by a critical stance towards their past inner dialogues and social context (Archer 2012, 13). They tend to work in the third sector and towards seeking new qualifications in unconnected areas. Finally, fractured reflexives hold internal conversations that do not enable them to turn social projects into action, which causes increased personal distress and disorientation.

These modes form one of the most fundamental ways in which humans orient themselves in society and provide one element to social transformation. For instance, changes in late modernity are accompanied by changes in the distribution of reflexivity: a decline in communicative reflexives in the twentieth century leads to the rise in autonomous reflexives and the potential establishment of a paradigm of meta-reflexivity in the twenty-first century (Archer 2007, 320). This has significant political consequences. Young people in Western societies are faced by demands for higher reflexivity with regards to employability, political engagement, cultural abundance, and their ethical position (Al-Amoudi 2017; Carrigan 2016). Yet these demands on the individual are not accompanied with a theoretical and public discussion of the distribution of reflexive powers in society. Political philosophy often presupposes a particular form of reflexivity congruent with a largely stable society, or, at least, that differences in reflexivity of 'normal citizens' do not matter (Al-Amoudi 2017, 81). The failure to contribute to politics, find a job, or act responsibly in the prescribed 'rational' manner is therefore attributed to a lack of information, interest, and more generally education. As a consequence, Archer (2012) documents an increase in fractured reflexivity that accompanies the reflexive imperative in the twenty-first century and is not likely to recede again. In contrast, dominant autonomous reflexives are more conducive to social mobility and to the ideals of a rational public sphere. Their focus on identifying and taking up social opportunities helps reproduce and even deepen the inequalities in society. Of course, we should be cautious about reducing the macro-social role of internal conversations too much to large-scale trends. A person's mode of thinking changes over time and remains in a complicated relationship with their socio-economic context. Any explanatory effort using reflexivity demands sensitivity to the great variation within any dominant mode of thought. Nonetheless, just as with a focus on affect as intensity, we can see how reflexivity as part of Archer's 'functional general theory of society' (Walsh 2017, 171) offers an informative lens on the persistence of social injustice and its entrenchment through structural and agential mechanisms alike.

Commentators seem to agree that Archer's conceptualization of reflexivity offers a good point of departure towards a more suitable account of inner conversations. In particular they emphasize its unique empirical focus, attempt to articulate how people actually respond to late modern transformations, and potential to bring out the concerns that need to be addressed in relation to emotions and affect, practice and relationality

(Brownlie 2014, 22; Burkitt 2016, 327). However, her account has not remained without criticism. Commentators have taken important steps forward in articulating the non-cognitive dimensions to reflexivity, at times obscured in her thought, that help capture the radical entanglement of thought and affect further.

Firstly, debate has focused on the role of emotions, including affect, for reflexivity. While Archer (2000, 213) positively highlights the centrality of emotions and feelings for reflexivity, the relationship between different modes of reflexivity and emotions ultimately remains insufficiently clear (Brownlie 2014, 28). In response, Burkitt (2012) and Holmes (2010) advance the emotionalization of theories of reflexivity, or a theory of emotional reflexivity, by challenging the acceptance of emotions as 'useful commentary' on internal deliberations that too easily denies them a central role in thought processes. Thought originates in emotions as they are integral to our engagement with the world. Furthermore, as emotions are produced within human and non-human networks, reflexivity entails a largely non-sovereign mediation process of meanings and feelings that are irreducible to the individual, and private only to a limited degree. Others take an active part in our reflexivity, as we incorporate them through our capacities for imagination and memory, e.g. what they might say about us, and their varied contributions to the inner dialogue fundamentally shape our self-feeling. Reflexivity is thus as much an interpretive practice as it entails reflection, with feelings and emotions the basis and motive for reflexive thought. Holmes (2010, 140) therefore proposes defining reflexivity as an emotional, embodied and cognitive process that goes beyond reflection to include bodies, practices and feelings of people in relation to their lives and environments. Reflexivity is not simply an 'internal dialogue', but a 'juggling of emotions within imagined and real interactions, in which interpretation can be difficult' (Holmes 2010, 145).

Secondly, Archer (2003, 25) maintains a strong emphasis on *active* agency, which ties the successful use of the internal conversation to whether a person turned their projects into appropriate practices and connects passivity and non-action with a failure of thought/ to think. In Archer's formulation the voices and 'emotional/evaluative responses of others do not get inside this inner conversation and affect us at a deep level, forging the self, its own responses, and identity' (Burkitt 2016, 325). This move entangles reflexivity in notions of self-discipline and self-control, raising difficult questions about how thought and practice are intertwined. As Julie Brownlie (2014, 24) notes, there is even a tendency in Archer's writing to separate thought from action and to view external activities as preventing thought. For instance, listening to music through headphones is assumed to adversely affect human capacities for thought (Archer 2012, 309). In response, Burkitt proposes to conceive humans as always both vulnerable and powerful, active and passive, to various degrees. Reflexivity is neither continuous nor constant and our actions and choices are formed through internal and external dialogues that are 'infused by the valences of our most important social relations, ones that are often shot through with ambivalence and contradiction'. Reflexivity is one essential capacity for interaction that is 'variable, intermittent, and limited, bounded by the network of intentional actions beyond the scope of comprehension' (Burkitt 2016, 335). Alongside the emotional origin and mode of reflexivity we might therefore do well to think of reflexive selves as fragmented and fractured; fractured reflexivity is an integral part of all internal conversations that are often home to numerous diverging voices and sensations.

Thirdly, further challenges emerge from debates about the relationship between habitus and reflexivity (Archer 2010; Sayer 2009). Burkitt aptly summarizes the dissenting position to Archer in these discussions, noting that 'non-conscious elements in our behaviour and thought can have a crucial impact on our consciousness, reflexivity, and actions without us fully realising this' (Burkitt 2016, 329). Moving beyond the conceptual imprecision that comes with such claims as 'full realisation', we might ask: what does it mean for non-conscious features of human life to play a part in reflexive deliberations – from which, Archer (2003, 25) claims, they are by definition excluded. Furthermore, what role does the 'environment – the biophysical underpinnings of social institutions' (Davidson and Stedman 2018, 89) play in inducing reflexivity in people? As previously noted, Archer is concerned with social imperialism, the tendency to view all features of human live as mediated through social discourses. In response, she fruitfully separates out different engagements with reality (Archer 2000, 161). In the natural, as opposed to the practical and social, dimension to reality, humans experience certain aspects of reality as objects to objects. This means that in some ways people are not able to intervene reflexively in the process of the environment influencing the body, e.g. when we recoil from hot surfaces, although they may still be subject to prior and posteriori critical commentary. Yet, although her account emphasizes the complex relationships between these engagements, the exclusion of the unconscious makes her articulation of internal conversations too disembodied, obscuring how thinking is part of the 'relational fabric in which bodily selves are embedded' (Burkitt 2016, 325).[7] Massumi's conceptualization of thinking-feeling, together with the critical commentary, offers a way to revise her approach and be attentive to vulnerability, non-action, the affective and unconscious, and our embeddedness as key dimensions to reflexivity.[8]

From these ongoing contemplations on reflexivity, I conclude that attending to the way thinking shapes agency and (political) action can and should indeed become a greater part of the project that affect theorists map out for the social sciences and humanities. For this purpose, reflexivity must be understood as significantly more complex than the initial definition suggested. Cartesian dualism can be avoided, when the emphasis on affect is accompanied with a focus on human capacities to cultivate a sense of self and to think about ourselves in relation to our social context that insists on the plurality to reflexivity and the need to account for the patterns to that diversity in responses to social formations. The entanglement of affect and thought is further clarified as commentators refine Archer's account by highlighting reflexivity's non sovereign, relational character, its inherent emotionality and the importance of the unconscious. This helps balance the notion of thinking-feeling which I extracted earlier from Masumi's thought, and links affect as intensity with a richer conception of thinking that includes, but also crucially goes beyond, Massumi's thinking as affective attunement.

Thinking-feeling, and political protest

In this final section I wish to bring the insights on thinking-feeling together and address their potential value in relation to political protest. For this purpose, I will map key points onto the work of one of the leading scholars on emotions and protest, James Jasper, and his recent volume that seeks to overcome the dualism of 'calculating reason' and 'disruptive emotions'. Key to his approach to emotions is an attempt to address the interlinkages

between feeling and thinking. To this end, Jasper introduces the neologism of feeling-thinking processes (Jasper 2018, xi). The book highlights that thinking and feeling both consist of 'dozens of bodily processes and mental constructs: biochemistry, memories, muscle contractions, facial expressions, sensory input, verbal labels for our emotions' (Jasper 2018, xi) that together help us feel our way through the world. Both feelings and thinking entail the processing and integration of new information into the known as a means to respond to the world according to our positionality, and both involve the processing of information at speeds beyond what is narrowly perceived as conscious awareness or cognition which nonetheless remains subject to analysis (2018, 19). Our subjective capacities as social agents are not separate from, but instead can be viewed as part of and contributing one element of, these feeling-thinking processes. 'Emotions' and 'thought' are cultural labels that correspond imperfectly to some of the feeling-thinking processes that are going on in our body and that together are said to capture specific ways of being, e.g. angry or rational (2018, 6).

Jasper furthermore seeks to disentangle the complex interplay of thinking and feeling by proposing a conceptual distinction between five types of emotion that all play a role in social movements: reflex emotions, urges, moods, affective commitments, and moral emotions. His book provides a comprehensive overview of how each plays a role in social movements, which cannot be reproduced here. Of note is that even the seemingly most 'objective' feelings, urges, are 'complex bundles of bodily processes and cognitive interpretations. All feeling-thinking signals come through our bodies, but with urges the signals are also mostly *about* the state of our bodies' (Jasper 2018, 69). Similarly, even the seemingly most abstract emotions, moral emotions, consist of feeling-thinking processes and develop out of our 'reactions to and beliefs about the social systems in which we live, especially outrage, indignation, and other feelings tied to our sense of justice.' (2018, 129).

The notion of myriad thinking-feeling processes provides a helpful mechanism to bring the two distinct literatures on affect and reflexivity further together, and enables us to see how Massumi's thinking-feeling and Archer's reflexivity through internal conversation each highlight one specific aspect to human feeling-thinking processes. The articulation of a schematic of different feeling-thinking processes additionally fills the gap between affect and reflexivity left by the two scholars Archer and Massumi. Yet, the positions laid out in the previous sections of this article also extend Jasper's account in meaningful ways, which I will now elaborate starting with affect as intensity.

Jasper provides a brief dismissal of Massumi's contribution, challenging the affect theorist on placing all feeling-thinking processes in the body (Jasper 2018, 193). In line with the critique outlined above, Jasper chides Massumi's tendency to retain a mind–body dualism and the obfuscation caused by reducing emotions to unconscious flows rather than things. In stopping at these valuable criticisms, the book however loses out on the potential in Massumi's formulation of thought in terms of intensity and abduction. The potential becomes visible when turning to the normative political project that Massumi draws from his radical repositioning of thinking-feeling. His 'performative, theatrical or aesthetic approach to politics' (Massumi 2015, 34), or a non-violent 'ethic of caring, caring for belonging' (2015, 43), recognizes that oppressive (capitalist) forms of power largely work through disciplinary techniques at the affective level to human existence. In response, the ethic embraces openness and emergence: in spite of these

invasive forms of control and domination, the world always offers 'degrees of freedom ready for amplification' (2015, 111). A political reaction to injustice and domination therefore focuses on 'germinal modes of activity' (2015, 151) that tap into the moment when events emerge and are still indeterminate in the direction that they will take. The aim is to intensify our lives, by challenging the perceived logic to capitalism and develop 'little, practical, experimental, strategic' (2015, 5f.) measures that help us expand our emotional register and limber up our thinking.[9] For example, the pursuit of an ethic of caring could entail the refusal to set a priori standards and frameworks by social movements, as witnessed in the Occupy Wall Street movement, in order to fruitfully explore the potential in the coming together of 'bodies and capacities in self-improvising collective movement for the production of surplus-value of life' (Massumi 2015, 108). For these techniques to work, given affect's fundamentally situational, relational character, the collaborative potentials must be explored *within* a given context, 'which for better or for worse is the one that feeds us' (2015, 72). The aim is to make the lives of people 'in and around the institutions in which they function at the same time more liveable and more intense' (2015, 73). The practices can then be reproduced and amplified across society to become political salient. We thus see how affect theory helps introduce a focus on intensity in terms of relationality, openness, emergence, and experimentation as one, important way feeling-thinking processes can fruitfully enrich social movements.

In contrast to his views on Massumi, Jasper (2018, 165, 210) hints at the positive contribution of Archer without delving into the internal conversation and reflexivity in his discussion of feeling-thinking. This is despite the fact that, as he himself notes, his work has always put an emphasis on the role of biographies, the 'traces of our past experiences, past interactions' that humans carry with them in the form of 'memories, understandings, dispositions, affective convictions, moral intuitions, and more.' (Jasper 2018, 162). There is an increasingly rich literature on Archer's work and protest that could prove valuable here. The scholarship is grounded in the Bourdieusian intervention of Crossley (2003) who delineated the role of an activist habitus for engagement in protest. In recent years, discussion centres on Archer's positive outlook on the potential in the changes to reflexivity in late modernity. Archer (2012; 2014) has pointed to increases in meta-reflexivity across society as a potential source for overcoming capitalist exploitation. While different modes have their role to play in both advancing and resisting transformation – not least as personhood is not reducible to one mode of reflexivity – Archer claims that dominant meta-reflexives are particularly critical of their social context and most likely to seek alternatives to the profit-focus of capitalism. This view has cautiously been supported by empirical research into responses to climate change (Davidson and Stedman 2018).

Other voices in the debate on reflexivity and late modernity have been more sceptical. They are worried by the uneven distribution of key capabilities relevant for political practices: as political action is outsourced to technocrats, basic democratic activities such as speaking at public assemblies, starting a petition, and finding political compromises are unfamiliar to many citizens (Al-Amoudi 2017, 86). An obsession with leadership additionally curbs the democratic imaginary and inhibits a focus on citizens thinking and acting politically.[10] Commentators on Archer's theory of reflexivity acknowledge that social movements such as *Extinction Rebellion* have profited from the reduced

organizational costs that come with globalization and the advancements in digital technologies (Carrigan 2016). But they also highlight that the capacity to build instantaneous mass protests is seldom supported by a long-term development of a collective reflexivity and interrelationship between its members. This makes the social media-supported protests inherently fragile: if 'the "we" is wholly or largely symbolic, resting on an image of the movement conveyed culturally', it is unlikely to endure over time as it 'lacks the converging commitments which incentivise reciprocal action after the taken-for-grantedness of what "we" are doing has collapsed' (Carrigan 2016, 208). The participation may help dispose people towards joining further movements; however, organized responses against the climate crisis are fundamentally threatened by the increase in 'distracted people', who are forced by contemporary socio-economic pressures towards an instrumental rationality that prioritizes the urgent over the important.

Given these constraints on protest in the twenty-first century, scholars on reflexivity and protest highlight the need to account for the *subjective experience* of protest, including diverging understandings of what protest entails for different people, to capture how and why people resist differently (Chalari 2013). A greater appreciation is needed of humans' capacity to clarify, mull over, practice, reach decisions, get prepared, and plan their dissidence, although they do so always in relation to other people and the objective realities they face (Brock and Carrigan 2015, 387, 388). Alongside affect theorists, these scholars of reflexivity read movements as emerging from events and as the modality leading to the grouping and re-grouping of collective agents. However, they also emphasize that movements are composed of people with their own *biographies of participation* that play a role in what kind of resistance is possible.

From this brief foray into the literature on emotions and protest, we can gain a three-pronged approach to thinking-feeling in politics: first, a focus on affect that brings out the intensity to our lives, highlighting the embeddedness, openness, relationality, and viability-for-experimentation of thought as a form of lived hypotheses. Second, a focus on myriad feeling-thinking processes, including different emotions and thought clusters which never separate out fully from either thought or affect. Third, a focus on reflexivity that brings out the subjective dimension to feeling-thinking processes, including the patterns to reflexivity.

Conclusion

This article has considered one, particularly productive, response to the climate crisis in the form of affect theory. The discussion affirmed the need to focus on creating a greater sensitivity towards non-human or non-conscious contributions to political practices. At the same time, it acknowledged that reflection, deliberation, conscious thought, and judgement remain the key battleground between 'rationalist' and 'non-cognitivist' approaches. In accommodating both, the article offers a point of departure to reconcile theorizing on affect with the normative potential of reason in politics by turning to sociological research into reflexivity through internal conversation. First, I introduced the fruitful ways in which affect theorists highlight an intensity and openness to events that cannot be reduced to rational judgement and deliberation. Massumi reveals the need to re-orient conceptions of thought towards the complex processes that occur beyond the confines of cognition. Second, the article considered key

criticisms in the work of Zerilli and Leys that bring out the entanglement of intentionality and 'being in the world' and 'open to the world', without falling for the extremes of cognitivism and non-cognivitism. Third, it turned to the emerging debates on reflexivity to remedy the limitations of affect theorists' non-cognitivism. Archer, in particular, provides empirical and theoretical work that addresses the diversity in thought and its subjective qualities. In doing so, I argued, reflexivity offers a useful conceptual tool to move beyond entrenched divides in theorizing about politics and populate the public space with human beings that subjectively and affectively navigate the world. To show what the contribution of thinking-feeling in politics might look like, the article brought together affect and reflexivity theorizing on protest with a recent attempt within social movement literature to account for emotions and reason. Extending Jasper's formulation of feeling-thinking processes, I proposed a three-pronged approach that focuses on intensities, clusters of feeling-thinking processes, and the patterned, yet diverse, subjective deliberations within and on protest. Building on the movements made in this article, future work could focus on deepening the sense of the radical entanglement between affect and thought by refining our understanding of the interplay between intensity, the myriad feeling-thinking processes that guide us, and reflexivity through internal conversation.

Notes

1. The ontological turn to affect draws primarily on the works of Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, William James, Baruch Spinoza, and Alfred North Whitehead, as well as on psychological insights by Antonio Damasio, Silvan Tomkins, and Paul Ekman.
2. Affect is further defined as the 'prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act' (Massumi 1987, xvi).
3. Tomkins and his followers maintain a basic affect theory that presupposes the existence of a number of basic, universal affects, e.g. shame, that are pre-intention. The psychological research has been popularized in the humanities and social sciences through the work of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick alongside Connolly and Massumi.
4. Livingston (2012, 288) illustrates this point in relation to the changing attitude to smoking: the visceral reaction of disgust that people feel today when confronted with cigarette smoke is the result of a longstanding debate and countless efforts to communicate the negative effects that smoking has. It is not reducible to moral deliberation on the rights and wrongs of smoking, nor the outcome of a subliminal campaign that nudged people in the preferred direction.
5. After American Pragmatism, internal conversations were once again sidelined. Norbert Wiley (2006, 2011) started current discussions on reflexivity through internal conversation by building on Colapietro's (1988) revalorization of American Pragmatist Charles S. Pierce's work. Wiley synthesized the different Pragmatist elements of reflexivity into a dialogical (I-Me-You), semiotic (sign-object-interpretant) and temporal (past-present–future) triad. The contemporary appraisal of Pierce to account for the genuinely private inner self in social theory stands in contrast with the critical evaluation of the Pragmatist's ability to account for a separate self in philosophy (cf. Colapietro 2009).
6. The third interpretation stands opposed to the first two insofar as Archer rejects the identification of a late modern individualism and sets up reflexivity as a counter-proposal to Bourdieu's conceptualization of habitus. The disagreement has led to a debate on different ways of articulating the relationship between habitus and reflexivity (Archer 2010; Caetano 2015; Sayer 2009).

7. One of the problems here seems to be Archer's tendency to construe the social engagement with reality in terms of language – ultimately retaining facets of the social imperialism she seeks to reject and undermining the valuable insight the analytical separation of different engagements with reality can offer.
8. One interesting way to move the entrenched debate on reflexivity and habitus further might here be to think about different intensities to reflexivity in, for instance, a moment of extensive socio-economic crisis.
9. Affectivity is further augmented by holding together in symbiosis and cross-fertilising alternatives and differences, in order to live out 'the intensity of their coming together in the event, their belonging-together to the event' (Massumi 2015, 68).
10. Ismael Al-Amoudi therefore calls for the establishment of institutions that engender greater meta-reflexivity across society and bring to the fore the political dimensions to reflexivity, i.e. capacities of thought that are uniquely tied to acting-in-concert – the demand here is specifically not for the cultivation of reasonable citizens however construed.

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