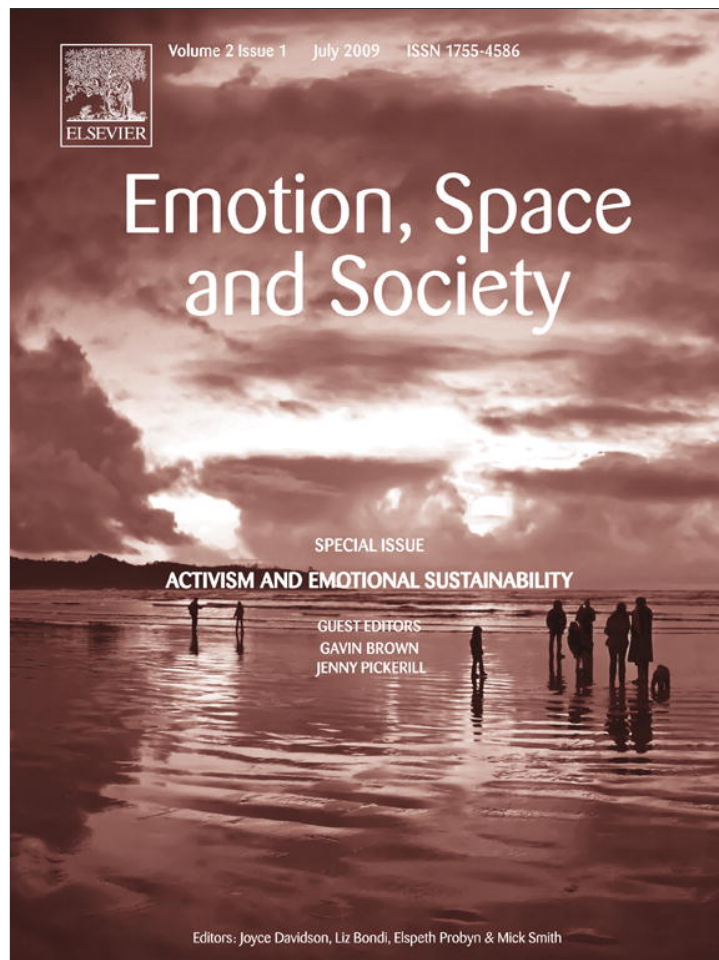


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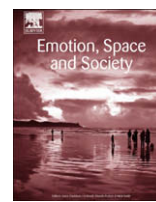
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Space for emotion in the spaces of activism

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the role of emotions in activism. Although, increasingly, researchers have examined what emotions inspire or deter different forms of political and social movement activism, this paper takes a new direction by considering what spaces, practices and emotional stances are necessary to sustain individual and collective resistance in the long-term. We argue that we need to sustain activism through emotional reflexivity, building sustaining spaces to create space for emotion in activism. Using empirical examples from different forms of autonomous (anti-capitalist) activism in Britain, the role and importance of emotions to the sustainability of activism is explored. In particular, we consider the role of different spaces in sustaining activists through the cycles of protest, what spaces of activism can be opened up by a closer attention to emotions, and how the spaces in which protest and other activist practices take place shape the emotional and affective engagements of participants. As autonomous forms of activism attempt to prefiguratively enact new post-capitalist social relations in the here and now, we suggest there is still some way to go in changing affective relationships within many of these groups.

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1. Introduction

Some of the long-term activists that I know ... have become very rigid, have become very discouraged and very despairing and very tired. Not that I don't relate to any of those things, but ... I want to be able to maintain both my own sense of hopefulness and energy and keenness, and my capacity to think freshly and act freshly and stay flexible (Marny, quoted in King, 2005: 163).

Over the last decade or so, social scientists have increasingly recognised the importance of emotions to the functioning and understanding of social movement activism. Pulido (2003: 47) refers to 'emotions, psychological development, souls and passions' as constituting the 'interior' dimensions of social movements, while for Kim (2002: 159), any account of social movement activism that overlooks its emotional dynamics "risks a fundamental misunderstanding of the dynamics of collective action". Thus in addition to physical energy, "mental and emotional energy are equally important because only healthy, happy and motivated people are able to contribute creativity and enthusiasm to a project" (Laughton, 2006: 16).

Despite these exhortations, many still consider the emotional aspects of collective action to be of peripheral importance. It is

interesting that emotions were specifically included in a book which aimed to give 'voice' to silences in the study of collective action (Aminzade and McAdam, 2001). Yet in a review of a book about *Activist Wisdom Grenfell* (2006) questioned why it was necessary to include a whole chapter on 'Hope and Despair' – why not focus on something more important he asked?

This paper moves beyond a study of the role of emotions in mobilising collective action, or the specific emotions experienced during highly charged acts of resistance, and builds upon recent work that has addressed the geographies of emotional labour in activism (Bosco, 2007). As Marny illustrates, the interior emotional life of activist movements can be fraught, demotivating and distressing, but many activists have taken positive steps to address the emotional causes and consequences of 'burn-out', and re-evaluated how they relate to other activists. In this there have been recent calls that

By acknowledging that protest encounters are emotionally laden, relational, hybrid, corporeal and contingent, possibilities open up for breaking the silences that divide us and overcoming ontological divisions such as activist and non-activist. From the conversations, questions arise such as what roles do we adopt in protest situations, what are our emotional responses, and how can we go beyond pre-determined identities and problematise our identities? (Chatterton, 2006: 260).

Between us, the authors of this paper have been involved in social movement activism of various kinds for more than 35 years. We have both been accused of capitalising on our

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previous activist involvements in order to promote our academic careers (Brown, 2007; Pickerill, 2008), and have been told by self-identified activists that we are 'not really activists anymore'. Yet we both remain committed to resisting injustice and engaging in constructive direct action, to experimenting with autonomous spaces and post-capitalist social relations. In these endeavours we draw sustenance from the embodied and affective memories of past actions and the maelstrom of emotions we have experienced during periods of intense resistance and social movement activity.

This paper offers a hopeful and reparative engagement with the role of emotions in activist spaces, with a view to elaborating how creating space for emotional reflexivity within activist spaces can contribute to making our individual and collective engagements in activism and resistance more sustainable over time. In doing so, we draw on our own experiences of these spaces, as well as those of others. This, then, is both an academic endeavour and a personal reflection upon the need for greater contemplation of the role of emotions within activism. In particular we are concerned with sustaining *long-term* activism through practices of emotional reflexivity (King, 2005) through which activists (individually and collectively) can reflect on their emotional needs and commitments, and find means of negotiating these alongside on-going resistance and involvement in social movements. Key to this process is understanding the relationship between emotional reflexivity and emotional sustainability. We argue that we need to sustain activism *through* emotional reflexivity, building sustaining spaces to create space for emotion in activism. The specifics of what these 'spaces' for emotion are, and the forms that such reflexivity might take are explored throughout the paper. However, although emotional reflexivity has long been employed by academics, both in their own practices (Fuller and Kitchen, 2004) and in exploring activism (King, 2004; Mills and Kleinman, 1988), its meanings and implications for developing more sustainable forms of activism remain underdeveloped.

Thus we conceptualise emotional reflexivity in broad terms; to include being consciously aware of emotions, of paying attention to emotions (individually and collectively, such as during meetings), and to incorporate what Barker et al. (2008: 433) call 'skillful emotional self-management'. This they conceive as including practical acts such as constructing collective rituals as well as 'mindfulness' – drawing upon the work of Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh to develop particular skills (often with the help of meditation) of being consciously self-aware of the present moment and of our feelings, and to act non-judgementally. Emotional sustainability, in this context, is the ability to understand one's emotional responses and process them in order to continue to act effectively as an activist.

The activist spaces that we consider in this analysis are primarily those that operate on the basis of a desire for autonomy through a commitment to horizontal, participatory organising, and, are primarily in Britain² (Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006). We draw empirically from several different examples of such spaces. We incorporate our life experiences with insights from a variety of research projects we have undertaken with anti-capitalist activists in recent years. This has included work with queer activists in London, activists involved with social centres, anti-war activism, and a case study of activists involved in Low Impact Developments

(LIDs) in Britain.³ LIDs, and other autonomous spaces, can (quite literally) create space for activists to reflect on their emotional needs, balancing activism with other aspects of their lives, and to enact new practices that can sustain this emotional balance to enable on-going sustainable resistance. Thus the empirical elements of this paper include personal reflections, participatory work with a number of groups and in-depth interviews, particularly with LID residents.

Despite this focus, these spaces are not discrete and the concept of who is 'activist' and thus 'non-activist' is contested and fluid.⁴ This contestation is partly what we are exploring here, specifically in relation to the emotional intensity of maintaining particular activist identities. At times, as during direct action, activists forge a collective identity inscribed through particular behaviours, language, dress, and practices (Della Porta and Diani, 1999). Such an identity serves a purpose in creating powerful bonds between participants necessary to outweigh the potential costs of taking part in collective action. However, it can also serve to separate the notion of an 'activist' from others, marginalising the many who might be politically sympathetic (Bobel, 2007). In reality activist identities are complex, multi-layered and hybrid and there will always be definitional problems in their articulation. We return to this complexity throughout.

Our core arguments in this paper are first, that we need to pay attention to the different spaces of activism in order to better understand the complexities of the relationship between emotions and activism. The spaces that we address extend beyond physical places, to a consideration of the conduct of the self and interpersonal relationships in activist encounters, and our analysis pays due attention to how these relationships change over time, and through the life course. We argue that the characterisation of these spaces better enables us to unpack the complexity of emotions in activism, and to identify those practices that might facilitate on-going commitments to activism. Our second core argument is that although within these spaces it is possible to identify much good work that already promotes emotional reflexivity for sustaining activism, there are areas which require much further attention, *and* a broader need to make explicit the link between improved emotional reflexivity and developing more sustainable forms of activism.

What follows is organised around two main sections. The first offers a short review of recent writing on the importance of emotions to research on activism, social movements organising, and acts of resistance. The second focuses on four spaces of emotions (place, temporal, the self, and interpersonal) where we identify, through our empirical work, activist approaches and practices that contribute to, but which can also undermine, (emotional) sustainability within autonomous social movements. We recognise that there are still powerful normative assumptions (often highly gendered) that persist within autonomous

² However, the authors have experience of anti-capitalist activism overseas, including Australia, and the United States (Gillan and Pickerill, 2008; Pickerill, 2007, 2008), and much of the literature used in this paper has US, Latin American, and Australian origins.

³ LID is a form of living and livelihood which seeks to minimise its environmental impact and for residents to live (using permaculture-inspired methods) from the land. They are often small scale, autonomous, and concerned with resilience to changing climate and economic systems. In addition to the physical features of being low impact (often built using recycled, local, and natural products) residents take a particularly holistic approach to personal and emotional sustainability. During a 30-month (2005–2008) empirical research project four existing LIDs (Steward Woodland Community, Hockerton Housing Project, Green Hill [a pseudonym], and Hill Holt Wood) and one proposed project (Lammas) were visited and interviews conducted with their residents.

⁴ We use the notion of activism broadly here and incorporate 'everyday acts of defiance' (Baumgardner and Richards, 2000: 283) in its definition and acknowledge the importance of individual acts in social change (Martin et al., 2007). However, our use is strongly aligned with the concepts of social movements, contentious politics, and collective action (Leitner et al., 2008).

movements, and hence we explore how activism might be sustained through paying greater attention to emotional reflexivity in activist spaces.

2. The importance of emotions in activism

We conceive emotions quite broadly, and in our discussion refer to hope, fear, humour, happiness, compassion, love, grief, anger, envy, empathy, passion, and frustration. Yet we face a challenge in defining these emotions more closely. In considering happiness, for example, it is important to draw on philosophical, psychological, and social science perspectives. The emotion is “mainly affected by our basic temperament and attitudes and by key features of our life situation – our relationships, our health, our worries about money” (Layard, 2005: 17). Emotions involve both meanings and feelings, thus straddling any clear-cut location in ‘culture’ or ‘the body’ (Jasper, 1999; Lutz and Abu-Lughod, 1990; Svasek and Skrbis, 2007). In this respect, our work draws not only on theorisations of the geographies of emotions (Davidson et al., 2005), but also on the highly contested terrain of debates surrounding affect in spatial relations (Thien, 2005). We recognise that although our naming and understanding of emotions is a social and cultural process, the feelings themselves are physical, biological impulses (Brennan, 2004). Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, we feel that it is important to remember the role of neuroendocrinology in affecting individuals’ mental health (Layard, 2005), and thus the impact it can have on activists’ emotional sustainability – in other words, their capacity for “sustaining the necessary levels of emotional energy required for long-term social change” (King, 2005: 151). For, while some of the practices we discuss in this paper are social encounters, others are consciously designed to provoke “palpable chemical and electrical exchanges” along neural pathways (Irvine, 2007: 27). Our attention to both the social and the corporeal origins of emotions and affects is consistent with the recent understandings of emotion amongst geographers and sociologists who have viewed “emotions as collectively shaped complexes and shared meanings that arise out of sets of relations among humans and non-humans in specific contexts” (Bosco, 2006: 346).

In the remainder of this section, we offer a typology of three ways in which emotions have been considered in relation to activism. We explore the role of emotions in motivating activism; in shaping the boundaries of ‘activist’ identities; and, the emotional aspects of ‘burn-out’ within activist networks. This review focuses on what this existing scholarship adds to our understandings of emotional reflexivity and emotional sustainability.

2.1. The role of emotions in mobilising activism

A decade ago Jasper (1998) noted that social movement scholars had theorised many key cultural concepts that they felt explained social movement mobilisations stressing the cognitive and rational aspects of these categories and consequently overlooking the emotional aspects of all of them. There is a long history of popular political mobilisations, as responses to expressions of rage, anger and fear at the actions of others (Goodwin and Jasper, 2006; Hercus, 1999; Holmes, 2004; Jasper and Poulson, 1995). Jasper (1998: 409) suggests that activists and social movement organisers work hard to convert ‘inchoate anxieties and fears’ into ‘moral indignation and outrage’ towards concrete objects and targets in order to recruit new converts to their cause. For Juris (2008: 65) it is important to acknowledge that emotion is not an incidental aspect of activism. Emotion is strategically deployed and fostered by organisers to engender sufficient commitment amongst activist collectives to maintain their on-going participation. This can occur through

building affective attachments (to the cause, and among activists), and to creating particular emotional moods during protests (and other activist ‘work’). He suggests this is particularly important for informal networks that rely on friendship and consensus as means of sustaining internal solidarity. He relates all of these aspects of activism to Hochschild’s (1979) concept of ‘emotional management’, acknowledging that some activists and particularly key organisers spent much of their time engaged in this work.

Nevertheless, although these emotions may serve as triggers for activism, it does not necessarily mean that the resulting mobilisations will demonstrate these same emotions. For example, Gandhi advocated controlling inner emotions of fear and doubt, to present an outer calm to the Colonial authorities rather than seeking to express rage through violent confrontations. In a more contemporary context, Juris (2008: 74) observed that, “Such non-violent performances symbolically contrasted the vulnerable, morally righteous bodies of the protestors with the menacing bodies of the police. At the same time, they created an emotional tone of serene yet determined resistance”.

Jasper (1998: 399) distinguished between those emotions that are ‘transitory responses’ to external events (anger, indignation, fear), from ‘underlying affects’ (loyalty to family, friends or nation; or fear of others) that play a role in shaping those responses; “not only are emotions part of our responses to events, but they also – in the form of deep affective attachments – shape the goals of our actions” (Jasper, 1998: 398). Jasper (1998: 420) suggests that emotions may not only inspire and sustain activism, but that they may shape individual’s preferred organisational forms and movement tactics. One of our central arguments is that without reflecting upon how their emotional responses may shape (and be shaped by) preferred social movement practices, activists frequently find it difficult to sustain their involvement in the long-term.

Juris (2008) suggests that distinct types of protest produce different emotional responses amongst activists, and that the emotions of a direct action, where one’s body is literally put on the line, are very different to those evoked by more ‘institutionalised’ rallies and set-piece marches. This might be the case, but seems to pay insufficient attention to the particular experiences of activism in the specific geographical and socio-legal contexts in which different manifestations of protest take place. As Juris (2008: 70) outlines in his study of the September 2000 protests in Prague against the IMF and World Bank direct action-oriented, activists can often be cynical about the efficacy of mass demonstrations that follow a pre-negotiated route, and the experience of that protest is highly mediated by who one is marching with – quiet, contemplative marchers, a boisterous chanting crowd, or a samba band. There are different emotions involved in being in the crush of a crowd, feeling the pressing physical co-presence of others with a (perceived) common cause, compared to being part of a tiny autonomous band, more isolated and exposed in their resistance.

Finally, sometimes the issues and causes that we contest through activism are themselves the result of emotional political configurations, in which emotional reactions can be strategically produced through discourse to shape public opinion. Thus the public is also an emotional field (Irvine, 2007: 9). Bosco (2006: 354) notes how the Madres de Plaza de Mayo used public displays of grief as a strategic expression of their activism to gain attention to their cause in the early days of their collective activism. We contend that the ability to sustain such heightened emotions in the pursuit of social movement activism is limited without creating space to reflect upon one’s emotional needs. Moreover, that much work to date overlooks the range, diversity and contested nature of specific feelings/emotions in particular contexts. In other words we need to know more about the specific kinds of feelings generated by

particular activities and spaces, and how such an awareness of these emotions can help generate more sustainable forms of activism. In summary, while the role of emotions in mobilising activism has received attention, our knowledge of the complexities of the processes, and role of particular places and contexts in those processes, remains limited.

2.2. *Emotions and collective identities*

If emotions can inspire activism, and are central to the experience of many activist practices, then, as Goodwin et al. (2001: 23) note, affective bonds frequently “define the [activist] network in the first place”. This section considers the role of emotions in the collective identities of social movement actors. It starts with a review of the potential emotional benefits of identifying with a collective movement, and moves on to a discussion of two ways in which those collective identities can have more negative consequences, through the policing of an ideal ‘perfect standard’ of what it means to be an ‘activist’, and the perpetuation of gendered performances of machismo in social movements that can disrupt the emotional sustainability of all involved. These strong identities confound long-term emotional sustainability by positioning practices of emotional reflexivity and practices of attending to one’s emotional needs as self-indulgent acts that get in the way of ‘proper’ activist priorities.

Organisational structures and processes enable activists to transform personal emotions such as anger and hopelessness into “a collectively defined sense of injustice” (Reger, 2004: 205). Similarly, activists can “build a self-contained sub-universe of meaning to manage the anxiety associated with the high-risk of participation” (Summers-Effler, 2005: 145).

It is important not to underestimate the pleasurable dimensions of collective action. If activism was all hard work and drudgery, few people would sustain their involvement in movements for very long, no matter how strongly they supported a given cause;

A collective identity is not simply the drawing of a cognitive boundary; most of all, it is an emotion, a positive affect towards other group members on the grounds of that common membership. ... Partly because of this affection, participation in social movements can be pleasurable in itself, independently of the ultimate goals and outcomes. Protest becomes a way of saying something about oneself and one’s morals, and of finding joy and pride in them (Jasper, 1998: 415).

Yet there is debate as to the necessity of the alignment of identities for movement mobilisation (Bobel, 2007). In other words, activists need not necessarily unite through a collective identity in order to act together (McDonald, 2002). This leaves open many questions as to the complexity of identity within social movements and the various emotions motivating and experienced by heterogeneous groups of people. If one can be an activist without identifying as such, then there is a need to look more closely at social movement actors’ praxis. There is a need to understand how participants emotionally experience their actions, how action is embodied, and how meaning is constructed out of those experiences and feelings. This is the challenge we set ourselves in the main empirical body of this paper.

Although collective activist identities can play an important role in cohering social movements, the usefulness of strong ‘activist’ identities has been questioned. This critique has emerged most strongly from anarchist and queer feminist movements. The anonymously published polemic *Give up activism* (1999) questioned whether the construction of an ‘activist mentality’ serves to establish a division of labour within which ‘activists’ perceive themselves (and are perceived by others) as specialists in social

change. Emotions are enrolled in this process: “Through a mixture of fear, guilt, anger, shame, or compassion, activists set themselves apart from non-activists through their commitment and self-sacrifice to lead social change” (Chatterton, 2006: 270). This separation, however, can marginalise attempts at emotional reflexivity, such that ‘for activists the usual focus is on what is ‘out there’, beyond their own personal problems’ (Barker et al., 2008: 423).

In Bobel’s (2007) study of ‘menstrual activism’ she found that many of the most prominent participants shunned labelling themselves as ‘activists’. They set out a distinction between ‘doing activism’ and ‘being activist’. In attempting to unpack this distinction, Bobel argues that the conception of ‘activist’ is anchored in values of *humility* and *rigour*. These standards place the esteemed identity of ‘activist’ out of the reach of many social movement actors who do not consider themselves worthy of that label. In other words, activists are perceived to be those individuals who embody an unyielding level of commitment and sacrifice to a cause, willing to put up with hardship and harassment in pursuing social change. It is expected that activists should put in ample time over a prolonged period and demonstrate their on-going commitment in order to truly be considered ‘activists’. They must ‘live’ and materially embody their commitment to their chosen cause. These expectations, Bobel reminds us, are unrealistic and highly romanticised. In addition, understanding the role of emotions in activism means acknowledging that some emotions are repressed, hard to acknowledge (such as jealousy) or inappropriate (such as feelings of sexism or racism). These interrupt activist practices and are a sign that there is not space in which activists can develop emotional reflexivity, or ask for help in doing so. Creating a ‘safe’ space for activists to explore these difficult emotions might be just as important for emotional sustainability as fostering the more positive emotional responses.

While this ‘perfect standard’ can lead some to distance themselves from ‘activist’ milieu, even as they are engaged in campaigning work, it can also be deployed by some self-identified ‘activists’ to police the boundaries of their social and political networks. Such identity policing also highlights the need for broader understandings of the actions that might constitute ‘activism’ (Maxey, 1999). Certainly one of us has been accused by activist acquaintances of not having sacrificed enough to claim that identity (Pickerill, 2008). Such accusations are loaded with emotion, and have an emotional impact (whether guilt, anger, despair or frustration) on those against whom they are levelled which in turn affect the individual’s capacity to sustain activism.

Bobel’s identification of the activist ‘perfect standard’ also draws attention to the gendered assumptions that underlie this boundary policing. For, she asks (Bobel, 2007: 156), “Who, exactly, *does* satisfy the criteria for activist? Who *can* afford to devote nearly every waking hour to their chosen cause? And while this mythic activist is off doing the good work, who, after all, is caring for the children, preparing meals, washing laundry, paying the bills?”

Within direct action movements, in particular, masculine gendered performances can abound, as activists compete with each other to see who can be most daring. Of course, this macho heroism is not only performed by men; and there are numerous examples of where women have queered the tendency to equate participation in embodied direct action with the markers of masculine privilege (Roseneil, 2000).

The critique of the division of labour defined through activist identities, and the limits presented by the ‘perfect standard’ of who and what an activist is, demonstrate the need for a more nuanced conceptualisation of the necessity of a collective identification to exist in order for collective action to occur. The personal, and emotional, lives of social movement actors tend to be more complicated than this suggests, thus collective identity is actually rather limiting in understanding the real identities that we each

hold while we are still 'doing activism'. In succumbing to a collective identity it is assumed in the literature that we forgo, or submit, ourselves to that identity. Social movement participants only do that partially and temporarily, and frequently end up struggling with the implications of that partial (activist) identification for all the other things we need to do in life. We remain mothers, partners, neighbours, colleagues; committed to a whole set of relationships that extend through and beyond our activist networks. The inflexibility of a collective identity (as an 'activist') to those realities is often what pushes people out of activism. So there is a schism between the 'image' and 'reality' of being an activist which prevents us from being emotionally reflexive about the multiple and conflicting demands upon our time and our emotions. For many activists, a failure to attend adequately to these conflicting emotional demands can make activism unsustainable, and they enter a state of 'burn-out'. The role of emotions in the burn-out of social movement activists is addressed in the next section of this paper.

2.3. *Emotional aspects of burn-out*

Finally, it is important to acknowledge a negative consequence of the failure to engage in emotional reflexivity – burn-out. Burn-out describes a state of mental and physical exhaustion brought on by over-work or trauma. Individual and group burn-out can also be associated with a social movement's defeat, the process of confronting the unobtainable goals of a movement (Plows, 2002), or demobilisation even when, as in the case of Adams' (2003) research in Chile, the movement was ultimately successful. It can also result from individuals being shamed or made to feel inferior within a movement (Kleres, 2005). Burn-out can stem from and be compounded by the general lack of support that social movement networks provide for long-term participants. It highlights the unsustainable nature of trying to live up to the 'perfect standard' of activist engagement. As Jasper (1998: 405) has highlighted, "in many cases, the same emotions – in different contexts, or with different objects – that lead people into social movements can lead them out again."

There are substantial emotional costs involved in the very act of taking a resistive stance on an issue, particularly when one is opposing the dominant beliefs of society. As King (2005: 152) has observed, "maintaining an oppositional stance on issues requires activists to constantly negate the hegemonic messages and norms that permeate society." It is hardly surprising that emotional dissonance, cynicism and withdrawal can result from such processes of de-integration. Constantly feeling 'different' and apart from society adds a particular emotional pressure to activism and requires a high degree of emotional reflexivity in order to overcome or cope with this dissonance. How activists deal with this is in part what we are exploring in this paper. Although confronting our "lived experiences of unhappiness" (Svasek and Skrbis, 2007: 375) can often inspire activism, we are interested in how this unhappiness is interpreted and responded to when it, in turn, serves as a brake on activism, or when the process of coping with it leads to a re-evaluation of what an individual's commitment might entail. Burn-out, therefore, can result from a failure to engage in emotional reflexivity (early enough); but the decision to acknowledge that one is burnt-out and in need of some respite from social movement involvement often follows from a crisis that provokes a period of emotional reflexivity. Furthermore, following a period of burn-out, social movement actors need to engage in reflection about their emotional needs and priorities before negotiating the terms of any potential re-engagement in activism; not least of all to minimise the reoccurrence of burn-out and to better balance activism with other demands on their time (Plows, 2002).

3. Spaces of emotions

Having summarised work on emotions and activism we now turn to a more empirical consideration of the importance of spaces to emotional reflexivity and sustainability. The role of emotions in activism are multifarious, shifting, and exist in a number of very different moments. In other words, our emotional journeys through activism incorporate different relationships, times, places, scales, memories and more. There is a parallel between our analysis and recent work (Leitner et al., 2008) that has highlighted the multiple spatialities of contentious politics – scale, place, networks, positionality, and mobility – with activist tactics and representations often drawing on several at once.

It is analytically useful to divide these into four 'spaces' of emotions in activism – by considerations of place, the temporal, the self, and the interpersonal. As soon as these are constructed it is obvious that they overlap and interact. However, part of our purpose in this paper is to make explicit the need to understand the complexity of emotions within activism and the subsequent need to pay greater attention to them, without privileging one of them over the rest. In order to do so we need to find ways to unpack their complexity, and we do this using the notion of multiple spaces. These spaces are sites of negotiation and contestation through which individuals (and groups) understand and frame their emotions. Our specific concern with emotional sustainability leads us to examine how emotions are considered in each of these spaces, activists' practices that require further attention and those which are hopeful. We are careful not to consider some emotions as bad and others as good, but rather explore practices of emotional reflexivity that facilitate activists in dealing with, and in giving meaning to, the emotions they experience.

3.1. *Place*

We start our discussion of the different spaces of emotion with place. Places can evoke certain emotions, be used as spaces in which to recall emotions past, engender familiarity and belonging, and be safe spaces in which to re-examine (or re-ignite) emotions. Space is emotionally saturated and spatial elements transmit the affects, feelings and emotions that can fuel political activism. Moreover, certain settings are more prone to produce emotions than others: as a result of particular configurations of social scripts, the performance of the actors present, and the 'staging' of that space (Irvine, 2007).

Activists employ tactics that seek to change the emotional resonance of certain places and political messages. Thus, just as 'negative' emotions such as hate and disgust can reconfigure social and bodily space, so too can the use of humour (Ahmed, 2004). Street theatre is used to transcend activist boundaries and create common ground between activists and audiences which "allows activists to release emotions such as rage and frustration, while at the same time providing positive, enjoyable experiences for audiences" (Branagan, 2007, 470). This performativity and embodiment of protest can also serve as sustaining emotional experiences for activists. Expressing opposition through performance (such as the use of puppets during protest, dancing in costume, or more simply, by acting with one's body during direct action) enables activists to intensely feel and express their protest, perhaps more powerfully than through instrumental mobilisations (such as the more formal street march with placards) (Eyerman, 2005; Wettergren, 2009). And of course, these performances are located in particular places, which themselves are often laden with meaning that activists draw upon in their acts.

These more experimental forms of mobilisation include some now familiar practices, such as the inclusion of a samba band.

Music, especially that created by activists themselves, can help transform places – from one of official parliamentary politics and organised marches (Fig. 1 outside the Houses of Parliament) to one of new rhythms, dance, joy, and alternatives.

These familiar practices form the rituals underpinning much activism that serve to emotionally sustain activists at the same time as creating new spaces of resistance. The development of ritual performance creates places as sites for remembering both the activists' cause and the significance of protest itself, but perhaps more importantly creates shared meaning (Szerszynski, 2002).

Employment of particular places as sites through which to create shared meaning and solidarity is vital for activists in creating space for activism and for emotions. For the best part of a decade from his mid-teens Gavin spent most Saturdays participating in demonstrations and other protests. The most important of these, for him, was his involvement in the Non-Stop Picket of the South African Embassy in London between 1986 and 1990. It was more than a means of demonstrating his opposition to apartheid; it was a place where he found friendship and support amongst other politically active lesbian and gay teens, and some respite from the homophobic war of attrition he associated with school. There, on a windy pavement in Trafalgar Square in the heart of London, he had licence to scream, shout, sing, laugh and get up to mischief in public. It was deeply cathartic, even as highly contested debates and differences amongst the pickets could be tense, cruel and demotivating. Having recently reconnected with various 'comrades' from this period, Gavin has been told by several that, in hindsight, they feel that the Picket saved their life.

Similarly the growth of LIDs could be interpreted as a quest to create retreat places where activists can get on with living how they wish, uninterrupted by society; "the four of us are just trying to be farmers and keeping our heads down from planners and other authorities and just getting on with it" (May, Green Hill, interview).



Fig. 1. Samba band at an anti-war demonstration, London, March 2006 (Source: Jenny Pickerill).

LIDs form part of a broader network of places where activists can seek solace and support. Within autonomous activism there is a familiarity between the activist spaces at protest camps, social centres, squats, and the homes of activists. For example, kitchens (Fig. 2) in these different locations can look and feel remarkably similar and such places serve to kindle a sense of belonging and safety within which activists can reflect.

These places, which straddle the public space of protest and the private space of activist homes, can serve as 'positive spaces' from which to construct alternative futures. Thus for Jo (Green Hill, interview) confrontational direct action is

sort of reactionary, it feels like a negative space and I have to do it from a positive space ... if I get involved in too many things like that I just feel so depressed and sad and unhappy ... if you create a good place of being for yourself and you're doing things from that good, honest, strong place, then that is the energy that then is generated here and sent out.

Such uses of place (as safe, retreat spaces; as constructive spaces within which to kindle new emerging possible worlds; and as spaces in which to plan actions) overlap and interweave (Polletta, 1999). To an extent the sense of familiarity of these spaces also travels, especially through the evocation of similar slogans (Fig. 3) and organisational structures, and as Bosco notes in Argentina, such places then become active agents in asserting certain emotions and forms of activism.

A downside to the creation of these activist spaces of familiarity, solidarity and support is that they can ultimately become cliques which enclose rather than open up the possibilities for political engagement. Not only do we become comfortable within them (and thus struggle when in the unfamiliar) but by definition they exclude others. This is something Jenny has long struggled with, especially in her choices of where to live,

This is a place [Melbourne] I feel able to be me. The place inspires me, motivates and nourishes me. I feel surrounded by people of a similar age, intelligence, philosophy, and outlook. I feel better in a place where difference isn't noticed; where however hard I try I will never be the most quirky, outspoken, or radical. I like a place where there is room to grow in myriad directions. I have resisted the notion that place can affect you because I dislike the idea of ghettos of likeminded people clustering in cities ... I had thought that living in clique communities separates 'us' from 'them' ... but now I am no longer sure if I am just making life difficult for myself by always living in 'not-very-activisty' places. Maybe I would be



Fig. 2. The communal kitchen at Steward Community Woodland, November 2006 (Source: Jenny Pickerill).



Fig. 3. 'Occupy and resist' activist centre, Barcelona, March 2008 (Source: Jenny Pickerill).

more of the activist I want to be if I lived here? (Diary entry, December 2001)

Thus this familiarity and sense of safety which is so important in emotional sustainability is all the more unsettled when confronted with unfamiliar landscapes, ideas or situations (Svasek and Skrbis, 2007: 372). Emotions are more than reactions to these unfamiliar situations, they are constitutive of how we experience movement between known and unknown spaces.

3.2. Temporal

Over time we learn to interpret and name particular bodily experiences as emotions, and the situations and places in which it is appropriate to express these and where we are expected to suppress them. Much of this is learnt in childhood but the learning processes are continuous. Thus activists will continue to develop their sense of themselves and acquire socialised means of reacting emotionally to the environments in which they find themselves. This socialisation will, of course, be heavily shaped by the habitus of activism. The learning process helps equip activists with the tools for emotional sustainability by the sharing of skills to manage emotions (Barker et al., 2008), but also, potentially, establishes a particular repertoire of emotional reactions that are deemed appropriate in activist spaces at the expense of others.

Of course, protest in itself serves as a rich source of emotions. Actions enable 'the attainment of self-validating emotional experiences and expressions through active and creative pursuits' (Yang, 2000: 596). These emotions have a key role in cohering and sustaining activists during latent periods, facilitating collective bonds (or identity) which can facilitate a temporal resilience (Bosco, 2006). But are these memories of past actions, and their associated emotions, enough to sustain activists and a movement? Juris (2008: 66) notes that "the intense feelings, egalitarian sentiments, and oppositional identities associated with mass protests provide a store of emotional resources activists can draw upon to facilitate on-going movement building. However ... peak emotional mobilisations are time-bound". Jenny has fond memories of anti-capitalist actions with her buddy on the streets of London, but quite quickly these simply become memories with little emotional resonance. For Walgrave and Verhulst (2006: 296), emotions tend to be short-lived phenomena that are easily and quickly 'numbed'.

Thus Juris is keen to make clear the need to develop new approaches in order to ensure movements are sustainable and that the emotional value of protest is continually *re-experienced*, rather than relying on memories. In other words, activism has to remain emotionally fulfilling to be sustainable. One of the ways this is ensured is through the "generation of affective solidarity" (Juris, 2008: 90) which we return to below when we discuss interpersonal space.

Emotional sustainability in activism is not simply about understanding emotional processes or re-experiencing the emotional value of protest; it is shaped by, and of course constitutes, life experience. Here we want to understand the importance of activists' generational lifestage to the sustainability of their activism. We carry particular memories and feelings with us throughout our lives and these are conditioned by where we come from, where we've been, and what we've experienced along the way (Svasek and Skrbis, 2007). This process occurs in the context of active emotional engagements with past, present and (anticipated) future experiences and environments.

Thus we can trace, in our own histories, complex emotional journeys into activism. Gavin cut his activist teeth at an early age, motivated by fear and a desire to 'do something', playing an active role in building a local Youth CND group when he was barely into secondary school. Through this anti-nuclear activism, he went on to engage in many of the major British progressive social movements of the Thatcher era – helping to organise a Miners' Support Group in his school during the 1984–1985 strike, and the aforementioned anti-apartheid campaigning. In contrast it took Jenny until her early 20s to have the confidence to shift from doing volunteer work to direct action, a 'decontamination' of GM Oil Seed Rape in Northumbria (Fig. 4).

Within these emotional journeys into activism, age can become a key determinant of inclusion. There is a particular focus on youth with activism drawing upon the freedom, risk taking and agility it provides. There is also a certain pace of change demanded by youth that can separate those of different generations. Youthful activists can have an impatience with older activists who either have to contend with myriad demands on their time, or who simply operate at a different pace.

While some activists have explicitly sought to continue movement participation as they have taken on new life commitments (such as parenthood), for others the responsibilities (and emotional commitments) we inherit with age inhibits them (as for us, our choice of academic careers structures much of our lives). Thus Will of Green Hill talks of how when they were looking for supporters "we had a chunk of the generation above us, who were 40–45 at the time, who'd go oh, yeah, we tried to do that 20 years ago and it never happened, but I'd love to see somebody else do it" (interview).

In effect there is a lack of inter-generational knowledge (Doherty et al., 2007). Instead we see the development of quite tight and long-term direct action communities with horizontal overlaps between movements (peace, environmental, anti-war, anti-capitalist), but rarely vertical interactions across generations. This has clear implications for learning from others not just of activist strategies but of emotional management strategies that could help sustain continuity. However, in recent years there have been moves to reclaim the notion of 'wisdom' and to seek to learn from elders (Maddison and Scalmer, 2006). There are emerging examples of older participants who were involved in movements in the 1970s reaching out to younger activists (in peace, LID and radical queer spaces) – to share knowledge, experiences, and journeys in a dialectic fashion across generations;

I've been looking for wisdom all my bloody life, and so I've got to the age where I should actually be employing it now, ... I'm



Fig. 4. 'Decontamination' of GM Oil Seed Rape (activists destroying crops), Northumbria, May 1998 (Source: Jenny Pickerill).

a whole generation older, [they are] the same age as my son, ... I can actually allow myself to be a different generation (Tony, Lammas, interview).

3.3. *The self*

This discussion of the personal journey of activists through their lifestages helps identify our third space of consideration – the self. Although we need to understand emotional sustainability as a collective and political issue, we cannot underestimate the importance of the personal (Cox, this issue).

If protest is embodied, then the self is an important site of meaning for activism. Moreover, activism can lead to a reconstitution of the self. In terms of sustainability the self is the space where we attempt to align our politics with our emotions, where we make sense of why we feel certain ways, and where we need to understand internalised oppression, in order to resist aligning with existing oppressive behaviours in society (King, 2005). Our bodies are important sites in protest, especially autonomous direct action which quite often literally involves putting our bodies on the line and in the way of those we oppose.

Our sense of bodily self is intricately tied to the emotions we experience in such protest. Jenny had spent years trying to divert attention from her fat bulging body, and direct action only heightened her embarrassment over its limitations. During one of her early actions she realised she was the only one too fat and unfit to adeptly jump over a wall as the trucks carrying the nuclear warheads approached. That no one laughed or seemed to mind made her feel like she finally belonged, and despite being surrounded in the main by thin fit activists, she gradually viewed her body with pride and its size as a useful weapon.

Our bodies also come into play in the love relationships that we choose. These relationships both motivate activism and detract from it. Goodwin (1997) has described the close affective ties of love, friendship and loyalty, as well as the emotions these in turn inspire, as the 'libidinal economy' of social movements, highlighting how erotic pleasure is one of the many pleasures arising out of protest and activism. Of course, this erotic dimension can impact on movement sustainability – ex-lovers experiencing jealousy or hurt may choose to separate themselves from the emotions associated with their former attachments to other activists, while romantic dyads may choose to

prioritise their domestic lives over activism (Jasper, 1998: 419). In this sense we may not be very skilled at controlling our emotions and without careful emotional reflexivity can allow these negative emotions to unduly shape our activist engagement. Our choice of life partners then of course shapes our activist involvement, and when with those who do not share our activist histories, politics or commitments we can be drawn away from activism in order to create more time to sustain and enjoy those relationships.

Within these dynamics gender plays a key role. In society there tends to be "gendered cultural expectations about emotion" (Bayard de Volo, 2006: 461), which at the extreme delineate rational men from irrational women (Hercus, 1999; Holmes, 2004), and the notion of rationality as unencumbered by emotion (Cass, this issue). But in addition there is a lingering machismo within autonomous activism which persists in ignoring how the behind the scenes 'emotional work' of activism is often left to women (or gay men, relying upon essentialised notions of gay men's 'feminine' qualities), and that it is this work which often sustains the active and visible resistance of others (Taylor et al., 2004).

Moreover, most activists have ample experience of the isolating effects of certain emotions; "I've been through quite a lot of situations where I've felt amazingly powerless" (Tony, Lammas, interview). Feelings of despair or personal fragility are common in activism. They can be the result, in part, of that dissonance between activists' life and mainstream society;

the more that we are here and value and feel comfortable with what we're doing, the more the rest of the world out there seems to be on a completely different planet ... that's one of the hardest things – to feel like you're so cut off from others and wouldn't it be wonderful to have more people that you could identify with and share ideas with, and share lots of things with (Jo, Green Hill, interview).

For some such emotions could manifest as depression – an isolating sense of unworthiness and self-doubt, from which both authors have suffered. On the flip-side of despair activists are also adept at holding onto hope (Maddison and Scalmer, 2006). As Kraftl (2008) has identified in his examination of childhood-hope, hope can be pragmatic, short-term and evident in everyday practices, not necessarily linked to a distant utopia, or as an extreme paradox of despair – one can have modest hope. Hope and despair can coexist, and the memories of emotions of past protests inspire such

cautious hope. For others they focus on their involvement in creating LIDs as being an inspiration to others; “it’s inspiration that comes to my mind. I’m hoping, just in the same way as I’ve been inspired by people who’ve done stuff like this, and consequently now I’m doing it, that hopefully I and our project will act as an inspiration to others” (Will, Green Hill, interview).

The individualising nature of some of these emotions (such as despair) could be said to be part of a broader shift in an increasingly globalised world through which new forms of individualism have emerged (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). There are two competing tensions here. On the one hand autonomous activism has explicitly moved beyond the emphasis upon collectivism, creating the freedom for individuality, which in turn creates space for emotions and emotional reflexivity;

What I think has changed in terms of the new autonomy that is growing, is the person’s previous obligation to relinquish the self. The self was dissolved in the massive collective of the traditional political parties of the left or the right. The individual ceased to exist. It seems to me that what we have going now is something akin to a recovery of the self. If the person can’t feel affect, then there is a devaluation of the person. I don’t want to call it individualism, because that can be confused with egotism, but there has to be an individual who is capable of thought, capable of feeling, capable of affect, capable of acting with consideration for others (Sergio from lavaca.org, quoted by Stirin, 2006: 233).

This individualism extends to the strong notions of self-reliance and do-it-yourself prevalent in the movement; “being brought up in the great age of Thatcherism and being taught about self-employment and self-improvement and everyone should own their own thing, and that’s quite deeply ingrained” (Matty, Green Hill, interview). At the same time activists only cautiously embrace such freedoms, concerned to ensure that an ethos of concern for others remains; “I feel very keen, and always have done, to use what we have been so fortunate to acquire – to use that with communities and be able to share with them. I would feel terrible if I didn’t. I would feel very selfish – I really want to be able to share it” (May, Green Hill, interview). Thus emotional reflexivity is not necessarily an individual process, it can be a collective act, an ability to move beyond individual reflection to understanding our interpersonal relationships.

3.4. Interpersonal

This tension between individualism and the need for collectivism often recurs in debates about autonomous activism. It is here, in the interpersonal relationships in activists’ encounters, that we explore our final space of emotions. In all that we have discussed so far it is clear that the strength of interpersonal relationships is vital for sustaining activism and energy. Indeed “the issue of human energy is complex and subtle, since it concerns both physical work and interpersonal relationships” (Laughton, 2006: 20). But the ways in which these relationships are garnered and maintained need further exploration.

One of the strengths of autonomous activism is the way it facilitates autonomy for groups in their choice of actions, strategies and direction, but it also encourages the expression of solidarity for others. Thus, many groups seek to build collective solidarity and this can take many forms. It can involve activism in one location to defend differently situated others, or it can involve a closer, and more embodied form, in the *melée* of a protest action (Passy, 2001). Juris (2008: 63) notes that the unpredictability, confrontation and imminent danger of mass direct actions produce ‘powerful affective ties’ between participants “amplifying an initiating emotion, such as anger or rage, and transferring it into a sense of collective solidarity ... ‘affective solidarity’” (Juris, 2008: 65). Emotions are the

‘glue of solidarity’ (Collins, 1990), and Juris suggests this ‘glue’ is even more important in diffuse, horizontal networks in which many participants adhere to unconventional identities and personal/political commitments.

Thus solidarity is mutually constituted; “mutual solidarity built from embodied experiences makes alliances between differently situated actors struggling against unequally geometrics of power more possible” (Sundberg, 2007: 162). Rather than solidarity requiring one group to act on behalf of another, “all act on their own behalf in the interest of creating a better world for all” (Sundberg, 2007: 148). Although acts of solidarity can have manifest effects (such as dissuading an oppressor) their particular power is in their emotional ramifications. Through interaction an individual (or autonomous self) can become permeable. In other words through activist practices (such as ritual, material vulnerability, and laughter) and experiences of solidarity, the feeling of self grows and emotional energy is shared (Summers-Effler, 2005). These effects are evident at a number of scales. Australian activists have suffered from feeling geographically marginalised from many of the counter-summit mass mobilisations, and yet organised actions in solidarity with those at the summits, drawing upon these distant actions as inspiration in the knowledge that they were not alone (Fig. 5).

On a smaller scale Paul from Lammas noted the vital importance of the support they had received; “that passionate support from a minority [of local residents] ... has been enough to inspire me to continue because they are four very active, intelligent households for whom I have a lot of respect” (interview).

Many activists have noted that they needed the collective support of others to continue, and in a broader context it is clear that “our happiness depends above all on the quality of our relationships with other people” (Layard, 2005: 8). This collective support takes a number of different forms but is based on an acknowledgement that “none of us could do this on our own” (Will, Green Hill, interview). Activists have sought support through the use of co-counselling, a non-hierarchical space in which activists were able to work through their emotions and thus sustain their activism: “Activists learned to both objectify the emotions and reflect upon them to ensure that the appropriate emotion was displayed; and to subjectively reflect through the emotions to re-create the emotional frames required to sustain their identities as activists” (King, 2005: 152). In Argentina the politics of affect underpinned much autonomous activism in the early 2000s;

It’s about being able to create a new relational mode ... we have called this ‘affective politics,’ politics of affect, politics of affections. ... When this new form of politics emerges; it establishes a new territory of spatiality... that generated a certain kind of new interpersonal relationship. It generated a way of being and



Fig. 5. Anti-WTO demonstration, Perth (Australia), November 2001 (Source: Jenny Pickerill).

a certain sense of 'we,' or oneness that is sustainable. (Martín K from Asamblea Colegiales, quoted by Stirin, 2006: 231–232).

This relationship of affection sustains those in the movement so that "sometimes we quarrel, but since we love each other, we can move forward" (Neka from MTD Solana, quoted by Stirin, 2006: 98, 99). These feelings were replicated by those involved in proposing the Lamma LID in West Wales, such as Larch, who said "it's been like coming home – I've had these ideas for so long and I've found this group of people who've got similar ideas. We've had such amazing meetings where we've just got really connected ... It is tiring and it is draining but you get a lot from it personally as well" (Larch, Lamma, interview).

These forms of support – understanding the politics of affect – are reflected in the importance of *care* expressed by activists for others; "we all just care for each other ... caring is a critical word for me" (Will, Green Hill, interview). Thus for Gavin the non-hierarchical methods of participatory organising and meetings that began by allowing space for participants to express how they were feeling on that day, took some getting used to when he first encountered them (see also the papers by Wilkinson and Woodsworth in this issue), but ultimately seemed safer and to involve an ethics of care that had mostly been lacking from the other movements he had known over the previous two decades.

This ethics of care extends to a consideration of how to work collectively in ways that create supportive spaces for emotional reflexivity;

it's really hard to describe in words the nature of our community here and the nature of what goes on at some really subtle psychological and emotional levels, but the connections we have at that level are incredibly deep and I think that they get deeper and deeper every year – they become richer every year as we learn more about each other ... we constantly ask ourselves certain questions of 'what have we learnt here, what's worked and what hasn't worked, and what are we going to do again and what should we never, ever touch again, and how can we tweak stuff or change things so that we get it right next time?' (Will, Green Hill, interview).

In particular those at Green Hill have had to expend time and energy in developing their meeting structure to create (time and physical) space for emotions; "we get together and we all hold hands in a circle and remember why we're all here, and then have a checking – in phase where we all just say how we're feeling – it's just based on feelings and what's going on for us in a feelings kind of way – and then move on to more practical stuff" (May, Green Hill, interview). For the male participants in the group, this has been a particularly hard transformation; "practically you can do anything you like as long as you apply your mind to it ... but emotional and community problems – they're the hardest, for me especially, because I was never much of a good talker about my feelings" (Matty, Green Hill, interview). There is a tension here between 'thinking' and 'doing', and perhaps a gendered division in how emotions are valued. Despite working hard on their approach both Matty and Will have an almost mechanical notion of emotions as something to be dealt with, resolved, and got out the way before the real work starts;

it's a basic balance between thinking and doing ... that can be really quite raw at times – it can be very open but we've learnt to trust it ... We've been through some incredibly emotional periods this year as that process has built, ... typically a few things will come out of that feeling session that need to be based around how we can resolve some of those feeling issues ... It's a sign that we haven't had enough meetings if there's conflicts happening outside of those meetings. (Will, Green Hill, interview).

4. Conclusions

The focus of this paper has been on a better understanding of the processes of emotional sustainability within autonomous activism. We began from the premise, as Gould (2004) asserts, that 'attention to emotions illuminates, and facilitates investigation into ... the question of movement sustainability' (173). We have argued that we need to sustain activism through emotional reflexivity, creating *sustaining* spaces to create space for emotion in activism. To do this we need to pay attention to the different spaces of activism in order to better understand the complexities of the relationship between emotions and activism. We also need to interrogate the multiple meanings and practices of emotional reflexivity, and how diverse places and contexts challenge, hinder and enable emotionally reflexive practices. Moreover, despite the many positives of practising emotional reflexivity we may not yet fully be able to answer King's (2005: 166) question: are "individuals who engage in practices of emotional reflexivity ... more likely to become and remain activists"? Of course we can quickly become engaged in a protracted debate, again, about what constitutes activism in attempting to answer this question, but we do assert that heightened emotional reflexivity is a useful approach towards sustaining activism, even if it might not work for all, or in every context. What is clear is that where activists have created sustaining spaces, such as some of the LIDs discussed here, they have done so collectively. In other words, it is at the juxtaposition of the self and interpersonal relationships where emotional reflexivity has been most developed.

Anti-capitalist identities have become bounded by a spectre of youth, lingering machismo, and particular performances of 'radicalism' that serve to exclude the complexity of many activists' emotional experiences. Thus we need to have "the ability to identify and understand the impact of particular emotions on thinking and to moderate your own approach to activism on the basis of this" (King, 2005: 160). We have to overcome the fear among some activists that to engage in emotional reflexivity is narcissistic and time-wasting, instead making explicit the link between understanding our emotions and prefiguring social transformation. In other words, how would we like to feel in a just (post-capitalist) society; and what can we do in the present to practise and model these emotionally sustainable interpersonal relationships?

Thus we have explored a variety of time-spaces: physical places, the embodied self, and interpersonal relationships in activists' encounters. We have considered how activists have worked to create sustaining spaces (such as social centres, autonomous gatherings, and LIDs) for themselves that signify their commitment to, and facilitate their on-going involvement in radical social transformation even as their life circumstances change. Within these spaces it is possible to identify much good work that already promotes emotional reflexivity for sustaining activism, but also areas which require much further attention. Practices people have employed to create space for emotions include creating time and places for support, sharing inter-generational wisdom and knowledge, attending to emotions during meetings, constructing collective rituals, and creating conditions where the emotions of protest are re-experienced rather than relying on memories of past actions. Despite these progressions there remain gendered notions of emotions and 'emotional work', and a lack of support for those who suffer from despair, or the tensions of negotiating other affective commitments alongside activism.

There is further (academic and activist) work to be done here and we should be delving into the following kinds of emotional issues. First, much of the work done thus far has been in justifying the importance of emotions to, and in, activism. But little has been achieved in understanding how we deal with emotions that people do not want to acknowledge, or seem unable (or unwilling) to manage.

Plows (2002) identified that people with mental health vulnerabilities were drawn to direct action protest camps in Britain, and then relied upon others in the community to respond to their needs. Moreover, sexism, homophobia, and racism were identified by participants in such camps as at times going unchallenged. Such emotions limit effective activism, hindering coalitions, expressions of solidarity, or relying on the few to support others. Encouraging emotional reflexivity is a voluntary process, so how do we deal with these awkward or repressed emotions? How do we create spaces for these difficult emotional responses to be expressed freely, opened up, discussed, and then processed, challenged and potentially re-formed? How do we include those who are resistance to such processes?

Second, burn-out is still understood as an individual's problem – an indication that they have over-stretched themselves and should leave activism to recover. How can we better understand why people suffer burn-out and how it can be 'treated' as a collective failure of activist situations?

Third, there is little work on what cross-generational lessons could be shared on emotional reflexivity. As Barker et al. (2008: 433) note, although 'many activists have sophisticated understandings of emotions ... these understandings are often developed through personal experience and observation and in discussions with others. However, these understandings often have to be learned anew by the next generation of activists'. Further work on theoretical and practical training in emotions developed in a way which could be shared, would ensure that 'the collective emotional wisdom of activists can be better sustained and carried forward' (ibid).

Fourth, more work is needed on the relationship between the macro-politics of society and the micro-politics of social movements. Thus, as Flam (2005: 36–37) argues, 'exploring the cementing emotions, such as loyalty, fear, shame or anger, which uphold social structures and relations of dominations, allows us to better understand which counter-emotions movements construct'. The consequences of how these emotions are constructed in different macro-political contexts are important for movement sustainability. Thus, for example, in some contexts shame or guilt are used to mobilise, in others, perhaps more repressive contexts, fear would need to be managed and hope encouraged. In others, anger towards other activists might need to be expressed in order for a group to collectively face its internal challenges and to find ways to move forward.

Finally, and perhaps counter-intuitively for this paper, is the dilemma of the extent to which we have considered and engaged with emotions 'enough' to sustain our activism. In other words, there remains a danger that the question of emotional sustainability overshadows activism. Though this seems unlikely to occur we want to end this paper by making clear that we do not wish to nullify all difficult emotions. Emotional sustainability is an on-going balancing act rather than a problem which needs 'resolving'. Many difficult emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, are powerful and useful for activism, just as (potentially) too much hope might ultimately lead to disengagement from some forms of activism. In other words, attention to emotional sustainability should not result in the creation of a new set of restrictive 'feeling rules' for social movements.

So although we have identified practices that hinder emotional sustainability, there are others, particularly collective reflexivity, that we can draw hope from, and we wish too to stress the power and strength of hope as an emotion and as a goal – that we hope we may move more assertively towards sustaining our own (emotional) needs as well as 'doing activism'.

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