

IT HAPPENS HERE: POLICE REFORM IN SMALL CITIES

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IT HAPPENS HERE: POLICE REFORM IN SMALL CITIES

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On May 25th of 2020, George Floyd was murdered by Derek Chauvin of the Minneapolis Police Department, and on June 12th Governor Cuomo of New York signed Executive Order 203 which required all police departments in the state to reimagine their policing programs. These two scenarios catalyzed protests and opened institutional avenues for police reform at the city level. This dissertation focuses on these processes of activism and police reform in three small cities in upstate New York: Ithaca, Binghamton, and Poughkeepsie. Specifically, the focus is on group formation, tactical choice, and the policy process in each city. To investigate these processes, interviews were conducted with local activists and an event catalog of notable events was created. The results show that each of these processes are rather similar across these cities, with new groups forming around collective identities, tactical choices being determined by organizations and their ties to the political elite, and Executive Order 203 structuring the policy process in a manner that resulted in similar minute reforms in each city. Overall, the results point to common processes within police reform activism in New York during this time of heightened salience around racial injustice in policing.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Starting at Lone Star Community College in 2013, Chance Smith soon moved to the University of Houston to pursue a B.S. in Sociology. After graduating in 2017, they moved to Ithaca, New York, to continue to pursue both a master's and doctorate degree at Cornell University. With a focus on the Mike Brown protests in 2014, Chance's master's paper examined the transition from non-violent to violent protest activity within one event. This topic focus led to a deeper interest in the topic of police reform and the protests surrounding the death of George Floyd. This project inevitably became the topic for their dissertation titled *It Happens Here: Police Reform in Small Cities*.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation studies the wave of social movement activity that happened in upstate New York following the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis Police Department on May 25th, 2020. Specifically, the focus here is on three cities in New York (Ithaca, Binghamton, and Poughkeepsie), which each had their own independent police reform movements, yet were all focused on the goal of reform through the newly opened avenues created at the state-level by Executive Order 203 signed on June 12th, 2020, by Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York. The main intention of this manuscript is to understand the contentious dynamics related to small town protest movements to better understand the processes of group formation, tactical choice, and policy development in these contexts.

Before I move forward with an introduction to the research project, it is important to address the socio-political context in which I am studying. As mentioned above, on May 25th, 2020, George Floyd was murdered by the Minneapolis police department. This killing was captured on video and shared on the internet, and across news media outlets. This brought the case and the broader issue of racial injustice in policing back to the forefront of people's minds. This though is not the first time in recent history that this topic has been salient, as just 6 years prior, the deaths of both Eric Garner and Mike Brown catalyzed world-wide protests and the Black Lives Matter movement (Taylor 2016). With this said, the increased salience due to the murder of George Floyd reignited widespread outrage in the streets, which in some cases, like the protests in Minneapolis, resulted in property damage like the torching of a police station

(BBC 2020). These protests, and the salience of the issue of racial injustice in policing was once again brought to the top of the political consciousness of many Americans. In an attempt to either appease the citizens who are protesting, or to correct the issues that led to the death of George Floyd, depending on your viewpoint, cities and states began to mandate police reform. One of those being New York State with their signing of EO 203. This outlined institutional avenues for police reform in the state and mandated that it occur by April 1st, 2021 (New York State 2020). This salient event of police violence, the protests that occurred following it, and the mandate for police reform all lay the groundwork for the subject matter of the remainder of the manuscript.

The purpose here is not to provide a purely historical account of the events that took place in each city, but rather to examine these three cities' processes for group formation, tactical choice, and policy development, from the perspective of the activists involved, in order to understand how these processes are similar and different depending on the context of the city itself. The focus here primarily on activist anecdotes as opposed to a content analysis of news articles in each city allows for a detailed analysis of these processes as they pertain and are important to the activists. Additionally, through the use of three different cities in upstate New York I was able to examine which aspects of the dynamics were internal to the city, imposed on by the state, or seemingly similar across contexts. While these cities do not vary drastically from one another in size, with different political parties in power and different micro-cultures of social activism, there are minor differences in the contexts and therefore the processes we can see across these towns. The remainder of this chapter focuses on the cases, methodological details of this manuscript, and a summary of the chapters.

Cities

The cities themselves were chosen due to the similarity in their size, as well as their differences in what political party is in power, their racial demographics, and the frequency of protest actions (see Table 1). Given the similarities in the policy outcomes for each of these cities, and the differences in their underlying characteristics, it would seem that a most-different systems approach was utilized (Przeworski and Teune 1970). The issue with this assertion is that the outcomes were unknown at the start of the study, therefore it would be incorrect to suggest that the basis of this study was a most-different systems approach. Therefore, the question begs, what logic was utilized for the choice of cases for this study? The logic behind this study was based on the premise that choosing cases that vary regarding demographics and political parties in power would allow for the examination of how these particular variables affect the outcomes of group formation, tactical dispositions, and policy outcomes. The expectation was that these cities would differ drastically in their outcomes, yet the findings suggested that was not the case. Therefore, while the logic of the study was set up to understand how slight differences in the variables can lead to larger outcomes on a multitude of fronts, the policy outcomes made the study appear as though it was in-line, at least partially, with a most-different systems approach. Overall, the choice in cases was based on their similarity in size and difference on multiple variables, and despite assuming this would lead to large differences in outcomes, the research suggests that this was not the case.

City	Mayor's Party	University or College	Percent African American	Percent Hispanic	Population	Frequency of Protests (May 2020-April 2021)
Ithaca, NY	Democrat	University and College	6.1%	6.9%	30,014	Frequent
Binghamton, NY	Republican	University	10.4%	6.4%	47,376	Semi-Frequent
Poughkeepsie, NY	Republican	College	31.6%	19.5%	32,736	Rare

Table 1: Comparative Cases¹

The three cities have between 30,000-47,000 residents, which makes the activist community, protest actions, and political actors easier to identify and study in comparison to the cumbersome dynamics of larger cities like Rochester and New York City. Additionally, these cities vary in regard to mayoral partisanship, which subsequently can affect the openness of opportunities for protest movements to engage

¹ Note: Population and racial category percentages are taken from Diversity and Disparities [(2021) <https://s4.ad.brown.edu/projects/diversity/DiversityPages2/Default.aspx#menu>], and are based on 2010 census data.

with policy reform. Ithaca had a Democratic mayor, while Binghamton and Poughkeepsie both had Republican mayors during this time. Which is important when trying to understand the openness of the political opportunities in each city. The assumption being that cities with Republican mayors would be less likely to provide clear avenues for community involvement in the reform process, while the opposite is assumed to be true of Democratic mayors.

Poughkeepsie has a larger proportion of African American and Latinx citizens in comparison to the national average, while Ithaca and Binghamton have smaller proportions. This is important as it allows us to understand the differing dynamics of group formation, especially given the racialized nature of protest actions, and how the identities of the activists and groups help to structure those interactions. While they have differences in racial demographics, they have a similarity in the frequency of police murder with both Binghamton and Ithaca having three instances and Poughkeepsie having four since the year 2000 (Fatal Encounters 2021). This similarity ensures that none of the cases are tied more closely to events of police brutality than another, therefore allowing for an easier examination of group formation that is not centered on a local catalyst but rather on the broad catalyst of George Floyd's murder and the opening of reform avenues in New York State. Additionally, based on previous discussions with some of the protest organizers I have found that while Ithaca had largely Black-run activist organizations involved in these reform processes, Poughkeepsie's organizations are mostly led by white activists, and Binghamton's are a mix of leadership along racial lines. These differences in racial demographics, and

organizational leadership, allow for the examination of the role racial identities play in a racialized protest movement.

The role of colleges is important in these three contexts for a multitude of reasons. First, the social movement literature has noted that college students are adults with more time on their hands than others, allowing them to take part more easily in ongoing activism (McAdam 1988). This might not be as important of a factor given that the pandemic drastically altered almost everyone's schedule and specifically it gave people more free time for many activities, one of which being activism. Additionally, due to the ongoing pandemic in 2020, the shutting down of local colleges led to a lack of tax revenue from those individuals. For cities with more college students that meant a larger financial issue. This is important as the police reform process centered some of its debate around the budget for the city and the possible defunding of the police. Therefore, it would be expected that those cities less financially affected by changes in college populations would be less likely to consider a drastic defunding of the police department, where the opposite would be true for cities looking to find more money within their budget. Therefore, these cities and their different dynamics allow us to examine the ways in which these variables affect the protest outcomes at hand.

All the cities being examined had protests in them, with Ithaca having them most frequently, and Poughkeepsie the least. Specifically, from May of 2020- April of 2021, Ithaca had a protest every Sunday, along with other protest actions throughout the week, as was noted by a Black elder activist, Peaches, in Ithaca, while according to the event catalog, Poughkeepsie had a total of 23 rallies, marches, and sit-ins combined during the same period. Despite the differences in the frequency of action, the understanding

of why this tactical avenue was chosen and the trajectory of the activism based on this is of crucial value. Overall, the cases are similar in size and differ on a range of characteristics, thus allowing them to be studied both as single cases and contrasted with the other cases for a comparative analysis.

Data and Methods

The data collected for this manuscript consists primarily of interviews with activists in each of the cities. These interviews asked about the participants' start in activism, and their entrance into the local activism scene within this wave of protest, which started with the murder of George Floyd by Derek Chauvin (May 25th, 2020), and in these cities, ended with the adoption of EO 203 by local officials (April 2021). Additionally, they asked about the history of, and their perceptions of, the processes of group and coalition formation, tactical dispositions, and the policy process in their local community. Therefore, the findings for each chapter address these dynamic processes as presented by the local activists.

In order to recruit activists for the interviews a purposive sampling technique was utilized (Lavrakas 2008). Specifically, the flier and an attached script were sent to different activist communication networks in Ithaca, Binghamton, and Poughkeepsie. In order to determine the organizations to sample, activists in Ithaca, with connections to the other cities, were consulted about the most active organizations in Poughkeepsie and Binghamton. Specifically, five activists in Ithaca with which the researcher had personal relationships, who are from or have personal connections with Binghamton and Poughkeepsie, were asked about which organizations in each of these cities were most active in the ongoing protest movement at the time. Using this information, contact

was made, and informational meetings were scheduled with the local activist organizations within each city, Progressive Leaders of Tomorrow and Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier in Binghamton and End the New Jim Crow Action Network and Poughkeepsie Community Action Collaborative in Poughkeepsie. During these discussions, the topic of which organizations were most active in the reform movement was once again discussed. These resulting insights helped to determine the organizations chosen to sample in Binghamton and Poughkeepsie. For the case of Ithaca, the organizations were chosen as they were either the most active organization in protests or were a coalition of all the organizations within the city.

To sample the activists in Ithaca, the script and flier were sent to the email list-serv or posted into the online organizing space of two activist groups: The Ithaca Panteras, and Tompkins County Coalition for Racial Justice. These groups cover a large portion of the activist community in Ithaca, thus allowing for the fliers to reach a wide audience. In Binghamton, and Poughkeepsie, the flier was sent via email to two different organizations within each of the cities, and they were asked to forward it to their mailing lists, and/or post it to their social media accounts. For Poughkeepsie, the flier and script were sent to End the New Jim Crow Action Network (ENJAN), and Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson. For Binghamton, they were sent to Progressive Leaders of Tomorrow, and Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier. After the interview recruitment slowed down from the initial fliers, the recruitment strategy was broadened to allow for snowball sampling, and for the sampling of particularly important individuals in the local activist community.

The choice of sample size in advance is a commonly discussed issue in qualitative methods (Sim, Saunders, Waterfield, and Kingstone 2018a; Sim, Saunders, Waterfield and Kingstone 2018b; Blaikie 2018; Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe, and Young 2018) and is believed by some to be a flawed concept as it is difficult to estimate at what point theoretical saturation will be reached. Yet, given the need to specify a sample size, the “Rule of Thumbs” that others have suggested were used, which range from 5 to 35 for grounded theory approaches (Sim et al. 2018a). Thus 6-15 interviews per city and 31 in total, while not ideal, fit within the recommendations of a sufficient sample size, while also being enough interviews to reach theoretical saturation. All interviews were conducted either in-person or online via zoom, depending on what the participant felt most comfortable with, yet a majority of them took place over zoom, and the three that were in person were with activists in Ithaca.

Due to the harsh realities of recruitment the initial quotas set for the sample were inevitably disregarded. The goal was to have a nearly 50-50 split in the women-men gender demographics of the sample. Additionally, around 50% of the sample from each city was to be composed of individuals who identify as racial or ethnic minorities. Despite the slight lack of adherence, the final samples were relatively close to the intended demographics. The sample overall was 51.6% women, 32% men and 16% non-binary/agender/no gender. Additionally, the sample was nearly evenly split among white and non-white/mixed-race participants with 48.3% being white. Within cities these demographics slightly change as the Ithaca sample is 46% white, 46% women, and 26% both men and non-binary/agender/no gender. The Binghamton sample was exactly 50% white, 66% women, 16% men and 16% non-binary. Finally, the

Poughkeepsie sample was 60% white, with a perfect 50-50 split between men and women with no non-binary participants. Overall, the interviews overrepresent women and non-binary individuals, yet the racial demographics are nearly perfectly split (see Appendix D for more details). All of which points to the fact that while not accounting for the split in demographics as time moved on, the sample still was evenly split across these categories.

The interviews for this study were conducted between August 2021 and May 2022. They ranged in length from 30 minutes to 3 hours with the average length being an hour and a half. As stated above, a few of the interviews were conducted in person, specifically, the interviews for Peaches, Kite Chaser, and Mom Cat in Ithaca. The remaining interviews in Ithaca, and all of the interviews in both Poughkeepsie and Binghamton were conducted virtually via Zoom. This was overall a helpful way to engage with the participants as it allowed for the interviews to be conducted at anytime and anywhere. Additionally, allowing the participants to be in their own private residences, at least from the perspective of the researcher, allowed them to feel more comfortable with opening up about their opinions. There was no compensation provided to the participants. When the interviews were transcribed, the name of the participant was changed to a pseudonym to protect their anonymity.

In regard to my positionality and the impact it had on both recruitment and interviewing, I believe that my involvement in local activism helped make other activists more comfortable with discussing these topics with a researcher, and helped with recruitment as I was already integrated into the local and state network of police reform activism. While I do not believe that my non-binary gender identity impacted

the interviews or recruitment, I do believe that my Whiteness possibly affected the comfortability of Black activists that had no personal connection to myself. Specifically, I believe that in the case of Black participants without a personal connection to the researcher, having a BIPOC researcher could have possibly increased the comfortability of the participant when discussing issues of racial identity, and its effects on the processes at hand, yet even while thinking reflexively about this, I do not believe that much if any impact on recruiting or interviewing was affected by my positionality. In fact, I believe that my connection with local activists increased the authenticity of my requests for interviews, a situation that I believe would have been more difficult if no personal connections were forged beforehand.

Outside of these interviews, a full event catalog of the protests in the three cities was developed. While a few of the questions within the interviews addressed activists' perceptions of tactics, and what actions they found to be most important, the event catalog was used to prime the participants for a focus on specific events. Specifically, during the interviews, activists were asked about some particular events within the range of protests as were logged within the event catalog. These questions were focused on notable events, and in particular those that were mentioned by multiple participants. Having a catalog to reference the specific date and aspects of the event helped the activists to recall their perceptions of said event. This is of particular importance given the analysis of protesters' perception of the causal sequence within one event and across events, something that would pose serious issues without a catalog. Given that retrospective interviews of this sort have been noted to be a strong alternative to

longitudinal studies (Hollingworth and Miller 1996), the additional value of a catalog allowed for the added ability to probe for a specific reference period.

The data for the event catalog was collected from news articles published by a single local news outlet for each city. The choice of single news sources is largely due to both Binghamton and Poughkeepsie having only one daily newspaper each, and Ithaca having only one that was accessible through online databases (All You Can Read 2021; Dutchess County Government 2021). The goal with collecting this data was to flesh out the picture of the protests, community programs, and governmental actions related to police reform in each city by creating an event catalog, in line with that of similar event catalogs produced for protest activity (McAdam, McCarthy, Olzak and Soule 2009). The news articles were sampled through reading the titles of every article published by the news organization since the death of George Floyd, and determining which of those are about police reform, and/or protests in the local community. For Ithaca, the Ithaca Journal was used, for Binghamton the Press & Sun Bulletin, and for Poughkeepsie the Poughkeepsie Journal were used. All of which provided descriptive statistics for, and information on the trajectory of, the overall activist movements.

In their review of newspaper analyses, Earl, Martin, McCarthy, and Soule (2004) note that when aspects of who, what, when and where are reported (i.e., “hard news”) they tend to be presented “reasonably accurately.” Given that this paper is focused on those elements of protest reporting, our general concern is not the accuracy of the reporting but rather the general omission of events. It is clear that many events were omitted from the news coverage, particularly in Ithaca, based on activists’ accounts of the plethora of events that were not discussed in local newspapers, but those that were

reported by the news are likely to have accurate information (Earl, Martin, McCarthy and Soule 2004). Additionally, due to the limited number of papers (one per city), a cross newspaper analysis for missing events could not be conducted, yet from the experiences of interviews, all notable events discussed by the participants were accounted for in the catalog.

On a note about the omission of data from the event catalog, there are less events in Ithaca than Binghamton or Poughkeepsie, according to news articles on the ongoing protests in each city. With this said, this is due to the omission of regular Sunday protests in Ithaca, that occurred from June 2020- December 2020, according to nearly every activist in Ithaca. This is a total of nearly 30 rallies, and marches, that were excluded from the data due to a lack of news articles on the topic. On the other hand, the activists in Binghamton, and Poughkeepsie note consistently that there were rather few protests. As Tesla, a Black Activist in Poughkeepsie notes, that they “didn't employ mostly demonstrative tactics, it was definitely more rapport based.” Additionally, the protests that were noted by the activists were nearly all accounted for within the event catalog for those two cities. This means that the utilization of the tables of tactics listed in the third chapter of this manuscript must take into account these omissions and subsequently the numerical differences between the cities. Therefore, the discussion of these tactics cannot include a direct numerical comparison between the tables, but rather they must be used to simply compare the utilization of certain tactics, and for the priming of participants.

The data for the paper is analyzed using Atlas.ti, through the use of thematic codes (Boyatzis 1998). Using an inductive approach, similar to the grounded theory

approach developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), categorical themes were developed from the interview data. These themes include the role of identity in group formation, the choice between institutional and demonstrative tactics, the role of the elites in protest, the emergence of violence, and perceptions of the policy development process, along with many others. Upon reinterpretation and repeat analysis of the interviews, these themes were solidified for discussion here. In particular, this paper used hierarchical themes with larger categories, such as institutional tactics or group formation, acting as repositories of smaller categories such as meeting interruptions or identity-based group formation, respectively. Utilizing this hierarchical format allowed for the comparison of different levels of action between cities. The following chapters utilize the themes developed, and the interviews that built those themes, to present the processes of group formation, tactical choice, and policy development. Therefore, the findings section is composed of a mix of activist insights from interviews, and event data collected from news articles, with the former being the primary focus.

With all of this said, this analysis has a few limitations that should be addressed prior to the final lines of this section. The primary limitation, that has already been touched on above, is the difference in the number of activists interviewed in each city. Despite meeting base-level suggestions for the number of participants in a grounded theory data collection process, Binghamton has nearly half as many interviews as Poughkeepsie, and nearly a third as many as Ithaca. This allowed for a better understanding of the nuances of activism in Ithaca as opposed to those other cities, despite them all reaching a level of theoretical saturation. On top of this, another limitation is a focus on cities in New York state, which limits our ability to generalize

to trends in other cities around the country. Future research should not only keep the number of activists consistent across groups, but also expand to other cities to determine how their police reform processes differed from those presented here. Additionally, the interview sampling procedure focused on sampling activists from only a few organizations within each city. This likely resulted in some activists being left out of the possible sampling pool. Future research should attempt to alleviate this issue by building a larger sampling frame and strategy that hopefully will recruit more participants who might not be included if the focus was narrower. I believe that the organizationally focused sampling technique and the lower number of participants outside of Ithaca, led to a sample that excluded tangentially related activism that possibly could have led to more insights on the dynamics at play that are not apparent to those focused on street level protesting. Despite these limitations though, this analysis highlights key aspects about the police reform processes following a requirement for reform during a time of heightened salience around police violence.

Chapter Summaries

Before I move forward with the remainder of the manuscript, it is important to first acknowledge the main purpose of each empirical chapter. Chapter 2 is focused on the group formation process within each of the cities being studied. In particular, the purpose is to understand activist perceptions on the formation of, and recruitment to, local organizations during this time of heightened salience around police brutality and other racialized injustices. I find that organizations form around identity, and in particular they form when an identity, ideological or tactical gap is seen in local organizing. Additionally, I find that coalitions of groups form around need, in particular

the need to work together to develop recommendations for police reform through EO 203, and the need for people for particular actions. Overall, the cities showed similar dynamics leading us to believe that this process of group formation might be a similar process in other small cities around the US during this same time period.

Chapter 3 is focused on the tactics used by the organizations discussed in the previous chapter. In particular, it looks to examine what tactics were used, by whom, and why. This is done through an analysis of the interviews with activists, but minor information is also provided through newspaper articles compiled into an event catalog. The findings suggest that organizations tend to pull from a similar repertoire of contention leading to similar protest strategies, additionally, that while some organizations only use demonstrative or institutional tactics, in the grand scheme of the protest movement, both were used in tandem with one another in order to achieve their goals. The main objective of Chapter 4 is to address the reform process in each city, and the activist's perceptions of the outcome. Specifically, whether they believe that the wave of activism changed the police reform proposal that was adopted, and/or the felt realities of being policed within each city. Thus, allowing for the examination of the success of the activist campaigns from those directly involved. In regard to the successes of the wave of activism, this chapter also examines the other non-policy related products of the wave of action. For example, the new political campaigns within the city, new community programs, and the opening of future opportunities for activism. Given that the policy is not a direct product of activism, but rather institutional politics, it is important to understand other successes as they illuminate other possible avenues for our understanding of the outcomes of protests.

Overall, this manuscript is an attempt to build upon previous research on political activism by highlighting the perspectives of the activists involved. Through an analysis of interviews with activists, we are able to glean new insights into the dynamic processes of activism in small towns.

CHAPTER 2

WE ALL CAME TOGETHER: IDENTITY AND GROUP FORMATION DURING THE GEORGE FLOYD UPRISINGS

After the murder of George Floyd and the opening of new institutional means for reform through EO 203, Ithaca, New York's activist community quickly mobilized! They established new organizations like the Unbroken Promise Initiative and the Ithaca Panteras, while previous organizations used this time of heightened activism to modify or amplify their efforts. Binghamton, New York utilized already established organizations like Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier (JUST), and Progressive Leaders of Tomorrow (PLOT), to facilitate their reform intentions. Poughkeepsie, New York, while primarily reliant, like Binghamton, on previously established organizations like End the New Jim Crow Action Network (ENJAN), also saw new coalitions form around police reform, like the Poughkeepsie Community Action Collaborative (PCAC).

This chapter is an attempt to understand these dynamics and to explain how organizations, during a time of heightened salience around racialized police violence, form, and how existing organizations modify their recruitment/framing for this new political environment. Particularly, this is an attempt to both address the role of individual and group identity in group and coalition formation, as well as the differences in these processes across cities with similar catalysts. The former acts as three separate case studies, and the latter as a comparative study. Through interviews with activists, this Chapter is an attempt to paint a full picture of the formation of local activist organizations, a story that is centered on issues of identity and ideology.

Literature

The major focus of this chapter is on how identity affects experiences and activism prior to the George Floyd uprisings, and the formation of groups during, therefore the modification and solidification of new personal identities afterward. A process that showcases the cyclical nature of the identities in relation to group formation, as it addresses how different identities affect activists' ability to work with others on particular projects (i.e., police abolition, tenants' rights, food security... etc.), therefore the formation of group identities, and the eventual modification of individual identity. And, how coalitions are formed based on a recognition of this identity and therefore group location within the Matrix of Domination, which allows for the acknowledgment and centering of this commonality, based on similar experiences of collective oppression, to form coalitions (Collins 2002 invoking Nira Yuval-Davis 1997).

Based on previous studies, I expected that the development of local organizations and coalitions would be based on three particular pathways: identity, ideology, and need. The first pathway, that of identity, is based on the concept that a shared identity will allow for the development of a group specifically around that identity, and the issues particular to it. When looking at the social-psychological side of collective action research, we see that it is concerned with the effect inequalities have on the development of group-level concerns (Liu and Opatow 2020). Specifically, McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1996: 5) argue that for protests to form, there must be a grievance that affects a group of people that they believe collective action will help to solve. Therefore, a common identity between people, that is affected by a common

grievance, catalyzes protests. Once protests emerge, these individual identities may be modified, group identities might form, which then can induce cross-group coalition formation.

For this project, the focus on identity primarily centers on what Klandermans, Sabucedo, Rodriguez, and Weerd (2002) call “involuntary groups” which are those of race, class, national origin, gender, and sexuality. These identities, in the context of this project, were made salient by the murder of George Floyd, due to an “awareness that grievances are shared” (Klandermans 2014: 11) and politicized as a result of the newly opened political opportunities at the state-level. These identities, as a location for collective grievances, bring with them the commonly held perceptions, and experiences, of out-groups and thus are hypothesized here to affect the dynamics of the groups internally and their interactions with others. This issue is of particular importance in the realm of police reform activism since policing as a system is historically built in a manner to target minority populations (Gonzales Van Cleve 2016; Campbell and Schoenfeld 2013). Therefore, given the racialized nature of policing, and the resulting constant state of surveillance and possible punishment that it imposes on Black communities in the United States (Bandes, Pryor, Kerrison, and Goff 2019), it would be assumed that protests focused on policing, especially those centered around a widely publicized murder, would make racial identities highly salient in the context of interactions in the protest space. With a higher likelihood of police encounters for BIPOC citizens (Epp, Maynard-Moody and Haider-Market 2014; Steinmetz, Schaefer, and Henderson 2017), it is expected that racial identity will play a direct role in leadership determination and eventual cross-organization coalition formation due to the

racialized nature of the policing system they are combatting. Therefore, it is expected that White activists will look towards BIPOC leadership for guidance given their want to help fight against police brutality but seeing themselves as lacking a solution to the problem.

Now, while there is a racialized nature to the protest movement for police reform, it is also important to acknowledge the role intersectionality plays in these spaces, as intersectionality allows for the analysis of coordination across categories (Liu and Opatow 2020). This is of particular importance in this case given the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality in relation to the employment of policing methods (Christiani 2020). For example, differences in the arrest and charging of female sexual assault survivors depending on their race (Acquaviva, Kelley, Meeker, and Fleming 2022), differences in city police force sizes depending on both the racial and class dynamics of the city (Fisher, Oddsson, and Wada 2013), and a higher likelihood of police harassment for BIPOC transgender individuals compared to their white counterparts (Stenersen, Thomas, and Mckee 2022). Therefore, it is expected that a salient murder by the police will mobilize activists and citizens with differing experiences of police harassment, and that will lead to the formation of groups via the positioning of their common experiences of police brutality. Additionally, in their work on politicized identities, Klandermans (2014: 8) suggests that “identification with the organizers and the other participants, influences people’s motivation and determination to participate in collective action.” Therefore, proposing that people will center their experiences of police harassment when formulating groups for police reform, and given the racialized nature of these experiences, they will also be centering their racial

identities. The expectation is that groups, and especially leadership within groups will be focused on prior experiences of harassment and racial identity. Making those with experiences of harassment and/or BIPOC identity central themes of formation and leadership determination.

The second pathway for organizational formation is the ideological path. This path is based on a similar concept as the identity pathway, yet this ideological identity is not imposed but chosen by the individual. Therefore, while the process follows a similar sequence as discussed above about how grievances affect an identity which catalyzes action (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996), the identity here is the chosen ideology of the individual. Specifically, the ideological pathway proposes that groups can form based on a shared socio-political belief in a particular ideology. In the particular case of this study, I am examining left-leaning political ideologies and the role that these ideologies have in the formation of new organizations. The expectation is that these groups will form around their shared ideology related to police reform (i.e., abolition), and this identity will be centered primarily as opposed to racial identity. The proposed reasoning for this is that groups that are largely unaffected by police violence (i.e., white upper-class individuals), but that have an ideological belief or identity that promotes their activism, will form groups that center this ideology as opposed to their racial identities. Additionally, the first pathway, and this one here are believed to work in conjunction with one another therefore creating groups that both racially and ideologically match the activists in the city. Overall, this is less a distinct pathway from pathway one, and instead they act as different variations on the same pathway that work in conjunction with one another.

The third pathway, that of need, is particular for the development of coalitions and their need for assistance for a particular goal. This need can be the need for more resources (i.e., people or money), and/or a need to combat/support a particular issue. In this case, the issue was EO 203 and each locale's government's recommendations. When examining previous literature on coalitions, it is clear that "social ties; organizational structures; ideology, culture, and identity; the institutional environment; and resources" are all important to the development of coalitions (Van Dyke and Amos 2017). While the aspects of social ties, organizational structures, institutional environment, and ideology, affect the ability of organizations to work together, I believe that the need for the combination of resources to be a key aspect to the formation of coalitions in the case of this current study. Given that "there are still very few studies on social movement communities and how they influence coalition form and effectiveness" (Van Dyke and Amos 2017), this work will help to build an understanding of the perceived reasoning behind the formation of coalitions from the activists involved. Youssef (2023), in their examination of coalition development in Tunisia, suggests that it was an outcome of a shared ideology and fighting toward a common cause that led to the development of unlikely coalitions. When modifying those findings to fit the current case, it would be expected that these aspects would lead to the development of cross-organizational coalitions, due to the shared fight.

Given that some organizations or groups already existed prior to the state mandate and the renewal of calls for police reform and abolition, it is also important to analyze how incumbent groups changed their focus following the possibility of reform. Additionally, how members of these incumbent groups helped to form the new

emerging organizations. This analysis of group formation, or alteration, is both a descriptive and mechanically focused task. Thus, it is both crucial to understand and describe the demographics of the city and more importantly the activist communities, as well as to understand the mechanisms that lead to the formation or transformation of these groups after the murder of George Floyd and the opening of newly available political opportunities.

An additional task of this paper is to examine how these processes were similar or different across cities in the study. Specifically, to understand whether or not the processes of group formation differ drastically between cities involved with this particular protest movement. These objectives will allow us to understand the role that identity and ideology play in group formation, as well as to understand the dynamics of both racialized organizations (Ray 2019) and race-neutral organizations, in a racialized protest movement both within and across cities.

Joining Protests

People came to the protests with drastically different levels of involvement with activism both generally and locally. For some people, joining organizations was simply a process of wanting to be involved while also being invited by someone they know. As was Ezekiel's experience of getting involved with ITU, Theresa's experience of joining the Ithaca DSA, and Tesla's experience in joining PCAC. These activists joined organizations following protests or interactions with involved individuals, or they were already involved with previous organizations due to a prior want to engage with the political system, primarily through existing organizations. This is a theme common within many interviews in this study, even across cities. These avenues for prior

involvement make logical sense given that people with connections to the community will be pulled by that same community to become involved. Additionally, those without this personal connection to activist organizations, but who want to be involved, tend to join political activism through long-standing political organizations, specifically through volunteering for a local branch of a political party. These two paths though are not unrelated to identity and ideology. As the identity of an individual can affect their connections with those involved, the community with which they reside, their experiences, and therefore their ideology, which again can lead them towards activism for racial justice. Specifically, given the racialized nature of residential segregation (Massey and Denton 1993) and of policing systems (Campbell and Schoenfeld 2013), it is assumed here that the effects of police violence would lead some who have direct personal experience with it toward ideologies that hold a disdain for the current processes of policing, and lead them to a possible want to pursue activism against it when given the opportunity.

Organizations, Coalitions, and Identities

Ithaca

Ithaca had a plethora of organizations that existed prior to the George Floyd uprising and a few new organizations and tensions that arose throughout the protest wave. To start, a few smaller organizations, that were involved but not to the same extent, should be mentioned. Starting with the Multicultural Resource Center (MRC), which was founded in the late 1980s by Marcia Fort and Eileen Brown in order to “eliminate barriers to racial justice, cultural dignity, equity and inclusion, and indigenous rights” (Multicultural Resource Center 2023). Through community

organizing and education they attempt to promote systemic change in the community (Multicultural Resource Center 2023). The activists' perception of this organization is similar to this as, Kourtney, a White activist in Ithaca who is involved with multiple organizations suggests that MRC is a somewhat long-standing organization in Ithaca, NY with "a very diverse council." Peaches, a Black elder activist who has been involved with protests in Ithaca for decades, suggests that MCR "had already been doing a lot of that [racial justice] work" prior to this movement.

Similarly, Southside Community Center, or Southside, is a longstanding organization focused on Black empowerment in the south side neighborhood of Ithaca. With an all BIPOC staff, and a diverse leadership board, Southside has attempted to promote "an appreciation for the contributions and presence of those peoples of African descent in the greater Ithaca community," since its 1934 inception (Southside Community Center 2023). The longstanding nature of this Black-led community organization was noted by a Black activist leader, Ciara, who said that Southside has been "in existence for, you know, I think, almost 100 years at this point." With Kourtney adding that the organization was also "unapologetically Black" (Kourtney).

Another tangentially related organization was No More Tears (NMT), an organization that was founded in 2009 by a Puerto Rican activist in Ithaca (No More Tears 2023). The organization's focus has been on free food distribution, youth programs, and community celebrations (No More Tears 2023). The young Black activist Deshawn similarly notes that NMT was run by one person "Like majorly herself...doing incredible things distributing Food." All these organizations, while not central to the reform actions in the city, were a part of the larger networks and history within the

community and therefore were cornerstones of tangential racial justice projects around the city. This is not to say that these organizations were completely uninvolved with ongoing activism surrounding EO 203, but that they were not the primary organizers of regular political actions such as protest rallies, coordinating the vocalizing of community complaints at common council meetings, or developing a list of community demands for police reform. Rather, their focus was on food distribution, education, and community care, as opposed to police reform specifically.

In regard to organizations that had been in existence for some time but also played a rather large role in the ongoing protests during that time, it is best to start with Standing up for Racial Justice or SURJ. SURJ in Tompkins County, is one branch of a national organization that focuses on “organizing white people for racial justice” (Tompkins County SURJ 2023). Through direct action, educational programs, and lending support for BIPOC organizations, SURJ attempts to have white people fight against white supremacy (Tompkins County SURJ 2023). The activists agree with this description of the organization, with some like Kourtney calling it a “white identified anti-racist” organization that started, as noted by the elderly White activist, Mom Cat, “before George Floyd.” Mom Cat additionally suggested that the organization itself has mostly women involved, with a range of sexual orientations, but an overall lack of working-class individuals. Additionally, due to the widespread nature of this group, some activists stated that “there's so much overlap” (Mom Cat) with SURJ and other organizations. SURJ itself is also a national organization with an ‘accountability principle’ meaning that “they don't want white people to just go off and decide what they're going to do because that often is not helpful. So, the leadership team of SURJ

met frequently with people who are in the leadership of Black Lives Matter Ithaca, Multicultural Resource Center” (Kourtney), to devise plans of action.

Another organization that existed and was doing work prior to the death of George Floyd is the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). Like SURJ, the Ithaca DSA is a chapter of a larger organization, in this case, the national DSA (Ithaca Democratic Socialists of America 2023). In Ithaca their attempt, according to their website, is to engage in a multitude of political processes including “electoral politics, labor organizing, demonstration, and education” (Ithaca Democratic Socialists of America 2023). This description provided is identical to the perception of this organization by activists in Ithaca. Ezekiel, a young Black activist in Ithaca, stated that the DSA is an organization, obviously focused on electoral politics “but it wasn't necessarily centered around advocating and, like providing equity and mutual aid to Black and brown communities” (Ezekiel). It is also a very academic-oriented chapter of DSA as Mom Cat discusses that people “will get really impatient with the jargon.” This organization though, like SURJ, attempted to “reinvigorate itself” through the use of political education programs for the population. as was noted by Theresa, a Black leader of the organization. With that said, she also suggested that the organization still had a reputation for being unwelcoming to those who were not focused on electoral politics or the academic side of political activism.

Two organizations formed immediately prior to the death of George Floyd, those being Mutual Aid Tompkins and Ithaca Tenants Union. Both of which were responses to the economic and social climate caused by the pandemic. Mutual Aid Tompkins is an organization that, according to its website, was focused on neighbors providing

community care to one another during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic (Mutual Aid Tompkins 2023). They focus on providing care to vulnerable populations and focusing in particular on sharing goods and services to help those in need within the community (Mutual Aid Tompkins 2023). In the interviews, the activists' perceptions of the organization were similar to the provided summary, stating that they attempted to coordinate community care through the use of "the blue cabinet...where people take clothing and food and, and all kinds of objects, you know, to recycle them to other families. gift cards to grocery stores" (Mom Cat). Overall, providing care to those within the community.

The Ithaca Tenants Union or ITU was also a product of the pandemic, the subsequent loss of income for a lot of local workers, and the inevitable missing rent payments. Specifically, its focus was on creating a system for assistance for renters in Ithaca to deal with the rising costs, and an inability to afford housing through the use of a helpline, proposed legislation, and a dataset on landlord reviews (Ithaca Tenants Union 2023). Now, this description provided by their website does not address some aspects that the activists focused on. Including that it was "started by Cornell students" (Theresa), but they did state that the organization was focused on "housing justice and housing rights" that were thrown into flux by the pandemic (Ezekiel).

Now, while both of these organizations have race-neutral premises, the intersectional approach that the activists took made it clear that both mutual aid and housing justice were racialized issues in society. Therefore, the transition from one fight to another was simple for both organizations. With that said, activists stated that Mutual Aid was a community-run organization that was as diverse as the area it served, while

ITU is “mostly white” (Deshawn). Additionally, as was noted by the Black leader of The Ithaca Pantheras, Rhonda, “there's also a huge trans community here and they gravitated towards being a part of the tenants’ union because it was led by trans people.” The white queer identity of the organization, and the outspoken leader of the group, were the focus on local group infighting and ruptures that I will address in the coming paragraphs, but first, I must introduce the remainder of the organizations involved.

Of the newly formed organizations during the George Floyd uprising in Ithaca, Black Hands Universal was the least involved with on-the-ground protesting, yet it was more closely involved with community care. According to their website, they were founded to fight against racial justice through “job placement and training, financial literacy, mental health resources, health and wellness, as well as cultural and educational resources for kids to adults” (Black Hands Universal 2023). Peaches suggests that the group was formed following a Women’s March that she organized, and while they formed from a protest situation, their main focus was providing assistance in the city. This included running a daily free smoothie stand that was stocked with produce provided by residents. An initiative that was focused on bringing healthy food to the inner city. This was an organization with “Black leadership” that was “Black oriented” (Kourtney) and had primarily Black participants.

The Unbroken Promise Initiative (UPI), according to local activists, was the first organization to emerge from the protests. Specifically, through the charismatic leadership of its primary organizer. As is noted on their website, the organization was founded by a protest leader during the George Floyd uprisings in an attempt to revitalize the West End, a low-income and minority neighborhood in Ithaca (Unbroken Promise

Initiative 2023). Through economic development programs, racial and economic healing, and community self-governance, UPI attempts to rebuild the West End and its residents (Unbroken Promise Initiative 2023). When looking at activist perceptions of the organization, Kourtney states that UPI is “Black identified, Black LED,” and the White transgender activist, Alphonse, notes that the organization is highly heteronormative and hyper-masculine in its approach to issues of racism and in particular its interaction with gender and sexuality. The final of these points is an aspect that affected the tensions between The Ithaca Pantheras, Unbroken Promise Initiative, and Ithaca Tenants Union, due to repeated negative interactions between multiple Black and White transgender activists and the leader of UPI, an issue that I will elaborate on more momentarily.

The attempt of the Unbroken Promise Initiative, as noted by the White and non-binary member of The Ithaca Pantheras, Lux, was to “advocate for the West Village neighborhood and how its residents had been exploited in Ithaca over the past however many years. and I think they do that more on a wide scale on a wider, more charitable focused scale.” This though created a lot of controversy from other groups. On the front of other Black-led organizations, there was skepticism of the ability of the primary organizer to “galvanize a 501 c three,” yet this was eventually shown to be a non-issue when the organization was successfully founded (Alphonse). On the front of community-run organizations like Mutual Aid Tompkins, as noted by one of their BIPOC founders, Victoria, that it was about them doing competing work, an issue that also was ignored as they eventually shared the fundraising efforts of the organization through their networks. UPI as an organization was started at the weekly protests in

Ithaca, and was previously populated by those activists that attended, a situation that drastically changed with the arrival of the Ithaca Pantheras.

The most notable of the newly emerged groups is the Ithaca Pantheras (TIP). An organization, while having an online presence, has no identifiable origin listed. Therefore, I focus here on the perceptions of its formation from activists who were involved. Lux describes TIP as a highly diverse group in regard to race, gender, and sexuality, yet Mom Cat suggests that it was primarily a group of working-class individuals. The organization was both “vocally Black feminist” and “has a queer identity” according to White female activist, Maggie. With that said, despite the fact that a majority of the leadership was Black queer women, Pi, a Black activist who was involved with multiple organizations (TIP, ITU, DSA, and the Anti-Racist Coalition) says that a vast majority of the general participants were younger white people. The organization itself focuses on both constant protests against the local police department, but also on mutual aid work, including providing Narcan training, monitoring police in the city, and creating a crisis line to divert people from police interactions that may result in arrest, according to Lux.

In Ithaca, during the beginning of the George Floyd uprising, there were regular Sunday rallies on the Ithaca Commons run by the Unbroken Promise Initiative, as noted by one of their White participants, Mum. These events shed light on issues within the community and tried to rally around the ongoing cause of racial justice, and the particular focus on the Unbroken Promise Initiative getting started. During these meetings, the community would engage in a dialogue around tactics, ideology, recent events, etc., from the perspective of the UPI leader. The issue that emerged throughout

this was the lack of intersectionality in the UPI leader's approach to activism which made the large trans community in the city feel left out, especially Black trans individuals. So, while "Unbroken Promise was really accessible and pushed people out of that place a little bit, you know, but also some of the gender stuff that I was feeling there. And some of the, this like, top-down leadership kind of thing didn't wasn't as radical as what came later with TIP" (Mum). In order to circumvent the issues of misogyny that were being highlighted, the UPI leader brought a female leader into the group, yet this demographic shift in leadership did not negate the commonality of beliefs across the two UPI leaders. A set of beliefs that were the focus on the problems in the activist community. The specific situation that caused most of the internal turmoil is described here by a White Ithaca Pantheras organizer, Kite Chaser...

“(itu leader) is a very pro-socialist left-wing activist who is phenomenal on the streets when it comes to organizing people getting shit done. She is extremely good at mobilizing people. She is a very good at provoking people and unfortunately, she has very strong ideals about how women and transgender people should be interacted with and the gray area for not meeting those ideals is nonexistent... So, because of that small slights resulted in much larger infighting and arguments. So, there was some original infighting between (upi leaders) and another member of the group who I wasn't present for, but my debriefing with (upi leaders) and others, more or less led me to believe that a Black woman disagreed with the approaches that were being used. And felt that she was being silenced because of her gender. And because of that, she was vigorously defended by (itu leader) to the detriment of the UPI leaders. Later on, other incidents occurred where for example, (upi leader)'s, brother, (Ezekiel) is pansexual and (upi leader) is what I'm going to call a traditional Black man, he's very supportive of his brother, but, but gay community values are not concurrent with some of these traditional Black community values. And so (upi leader) when interacting with his brother, certainly used language which (itu leader) considered offensive, and that resulted in her attacking how he interacted with his brother, even though they were family, they were fine with it. And what they were doing was very much normal for Black culture. And this resulted in a huge argument between (itu leader) and (female upi leader), this resulted in the falling out of (itu leader) with the group and the leadership. This was the start of Black

leaders calling (itu leader) out on introducing her own ideals. And basically, attacking members of our group who are trying to fight for Black Lives in Ithaca, attacking them because they weren't perfect in how they interacted with trans or female people. And this, over time, resulted in (upi leaders), distancing and leaving the group.”

During this ongoing weekly situation, the cracks began to show, and the Ithaca Pantheras began to form. First, according to Lux, this was through the passing of a notebook around by Rhonda to collect information about everyone and what they could contribute to a collective for the greater community. By the time the split occurred with UPI and the main protest group, a split that did not remove a vast number of the general participants in the Sunday protest according to Kite Chaser, The Ithaca Pantheras were able to create Slack and Facebook groups to organize the work that everyone said they were able to provide.

According to a member of The Ithaca Panthers, Lux, this infighting mostly resulted in UPI becoming less involved with protests, and more focused on the charitable nature of their organization, a process that slightly removed them from the action ongoing with police reform in the city. On an opposite front, as noted by their member Mum, the Ithaca Pantheras became a much larger group taking in a vast majority of the regular participants at the previous UPI run Sunday rallies, and due to their more inclusive approach, they also brought new people on board. Similarly, according to Kite Chaser, ITU became more centrally involved with the protest actions during this time. The result was two active protest organizations in ITU and TIP, one White trans-identifying and one Black queer-identifying, both with generally white bases and a radical, community-focused, approach to their tactics. As stated by Kite Chaser, this became the location for the more radical aspects of the movement, and the

group joined was a feature of the work you were interested in doing, yet the overlap was quite large at the beginning of this transition. Additionally, Ithaca has three Black ran and Black-focused community organizations in Southside Community Center, UPI, and BHU. All of which primarily recruited Black community members into their base. Finally, you had larger traditional political organizations in SURJ and DSA that were involved with everything from education to protests against particular causes in the city. They tended to be filled with people looking for a safer, less radical place to get involved.

The differences between UPI and TIP did not stop them from working together periodically, nor did it hinder the coalition formation in the city broadly. The primary coalition that formed in Ithaca during the protests was the Anti-Racist Coalition. This organization, like TIP, lacks a website and therefore an explanation of its origins. Luckily, the activists interviewed presented a full explanation of its foundation. Activists suggest the Anti-Racist Coalition “formed in Summer 2020,” somewhat due to the DSA and their leader wanting to bring together organizations following the death of George Floyd, and to create a plan for police reform to propose to the city for their new budget, according to the activist Maggie. This one coalition was simply a formal version of ongoing collaborations and group overlap within the city. The formalization of this coalition being a product of the needs within the city to develop a police reform policy proposal, as well as the collaboration around actions in the city. In fact, as noted by Deshawn, these collaborations came to a head in October when a back the blue rally occurred in the city, when the DSA, TIP, and multiple other organizations came together to counter-protest a Back the Blue rally. This rally served as a huge collaborative

accomplishment, but soon after, the groups fell back into their separate corners. Therefore, while the organizations remained relatively stable as a result of differences in ideology and involuntary identities such as race and sexual/gender identity, coalitions in the city were a process of needs given particular situations or events.

Coalitions formed with organizations outside the city were also due to needs. Particularly the need to share people, skills, and information with one another, which usually was a process of sharing people to Rochester for their ongoing actions, as noted by the young White transgender activists, Alphonse. With that said, TIP had an ongoing partnership that was mutual with the Rochester street medics that resulted in combined medic and firearm trainings between the two groups, according to Kite Chaser, who attended some of these events. A partnership that was only possible because of the needs of each organization, and the commonly held ideology of abolition across them. This proved to be useful when preparing for safety events like the back the blue rally with serious threats of violence.

Overall, the dynamics in Ithaca are complex to say the least, yet point to some clear themes. The first is the clear separation of already pre-existing organizations around racial demographics, and ideological beliefs. While this clearly did not prevent organizations from working with one another, the organizations that did already exist have found their niche within the city including the demographics of their constituents by the start of this wave of activism. Another theme of the dynamics of the city is the formation of multiple Black-led organizations, and the role of intersectionality in their dynamics. While a few different new Black-led organizations formed during the George Floyd Uprisings in Ithaca, the dynamics of these organizations were governed by their

level of intersectionality, their ideology, or their approach to activism. Mostly resulting in new organizations forming to fill the gap between the identities and ideologies of the activists and the identities and ideologies of the current groups. Finally, while these organizational dynamics were determined by identity both involuntary and ideological, the formation of coalitions of alliances was nearly always a process of needs, particularly needing more people to attend particular events or for particular services. This is somewhat similar to the concept of event coalitions in which the resources of multiple organizations are combined to create a collaborative event (Levi & Murphy 2006). In this case, the need for collaboration expands past the event if there is a larger need, which in this case is the need to create demands and combat the proposals by the city for EO 203. This pattern holds true within and across cities where the primary component to the decision to come together is the ability and need. Overall, what is seen here is the development of organizations to fill an ideological or identity gap, and coalition development for needs, all in an effort to work towards police reform through protests or the institutional avenues of EO 203.

Binghamton

The activist organizations in Binghamton were primarily started prior to the murder of George Floyd. In fact, most of the organizations involved with on-the-ground activism in the city were formed prior, yet this does not hinder the investigation of the identities of those involved with these organizations as we are able to glean insights on their demographics, as well from their collaborative work.

PLOT or Progressive Leaders of Tomorrow is a local Binghamton organization that by the time of my interviews was defunct yet was active during the uprising in the

city. According to their website, PLOT is an advocacy organization founded in 2014 and focused on uplifting marginalized communities (Binghamton PLOT 2023). In order to perform this task, they focus on public demonstrations, food drives, and political education (Binghamton PLOT 2023). This though does not tell the entire story. When examining the activists' perceptions of the organization, one of the white leaders of Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier, Anzel, stated that PLOT was an organization that was "kind of housed in citizen action. It was kind of a long story...but it really became a Black-led organization that was really focused on Black issues, in particular." As far as organizations in Binghamton are concerned, almost everyone seemed to suggest that it was younger (Kristi), more diverse (Elisa), more radical (Anna), and more secretive (Elisa), than others in the city. It was an organization that centered on identity both racially and ideologically, focusing primarily on radical protest actions.

On the other hand, Citizen Action, a "predominantly white" organization, as noted by a Black member of JUST, Elisa, was also involved in the protests within the city. As is addressed on their website, "Citizen Action of New York is a grassroots membership organization" focused on a multitude of issues including affordable housing and healthcare, public education, racial justice, and incarceration (Citizen Action of New York 2023). This organization is one branch of a state and national organization that attempts to address similar issues in other locales (Citizen Action of New York 2023). When looking at activists' perceptions of the organization, Sherri, a Black non-binary leader for Citizen Action noted its nature as an official nonprofit with a local regional and statewide board that governs its choices, which for some looks like "they have to answer to lots of lots of leadership" which affects their ability to do good

work. Additionally, she suggests that this organization wasn't "supporting their organizers on the ground, who were doing the work" (Sherri), which given that they focus on "police reform and like health care, justice, housing justice for years," as noted by the White female Truthpharm activist, Kristi, creates a problematic dynamic.

Another organization that played a large role in the protest actions on the ground was JUST or Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier. According to their website, JUST is a "community organization dedicated to dismantling mass incarceration and mass policing in the Southern Tier" (Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier 2023). They pursue this through direct protest actions, and work with incarcerated people, and other local institutions (Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier 2023). When looking towards activists' perceptions of the organization, you can see them discussing that it is "predominately white" (Elisa) and includes "people who've been formerly incarcerated and or whose family members have been incarcerated," as noted by the White female DAROC member, Tila. Their focus is on "anti-mass incarceration" (Anzel), even taking it upon themselves to conduct a multitude of protests in the area. For example, Anzel notes that by "the end of May we had already led, you know, half a dozen protests against the jail that year, related to COVID, we were actually one of the first groups in the United States to have protests and rallies. In the pandemic...So for us, in some ways, it was kind of just continuation and acceleration of the work that we're doing." Therefore, this organization has been and continued to be closely involved with the ongoing activism during the George Floyd uprisings.

Another organization that existed prior to the death of George Floyd was Truthpharm. According to their website, they are an organization that started as a "result

of tragedy caused by the opioid epidemic” (TruthPharm 2023). As an “anti-harm” organization they attempt to reduce the harm caused by opioid use, “change our justice system, address inequalities, and reduce stigma,” which they do through education and community outreach (TruthPharm 2023). When looking at their board, you can see that the organization itself is also run by only white women (TruthPharm 2023), something that is noted by the activists in interviews who state that the organization “was founded by a white woman” (Tila) and is “predominantly white” (Elisa). Speaking to the foundation of the organization, Tila states that they were founded after one of the organizers lost a family member to substance abuse, and therefore focuses on recruiting incarcerated people or people with substance abuse disorders. Sherri, the Black leader of Citizen Action, goes on to suggest that due to the racial breakdown of the leadership, Truthpharm is viewed as “not accountable to people of color.” This along with an issue with a “Black woman working... that you're not probably paying and you're not properly working with” created infighting within the organization, according to Elisa. Infighting did not stop the organization from being involved with the ongoing activism but did create a general sense of distrust within the local Black community.

Overall, all the individual organizations predated the murder of George Floyd and were already set in their demographics. Resulting in one radical and diverse organization in PLOT, one radical white anti-incarceration organization in JUST, and a few other primarily white organizations that focus on items tangential to the protests ongoing in the city. This though was not the whole story, because due to the nature of the city at the time of the uprising and EO 203, it made sense to start a new organization, a coalition among the groups, Divestment, Accountability, Reinvestment in our

Community or DAROC. Since the online presence of DAROC, specifically in relation to a description of the organization, is rather limited, the focus of the discussion of the organization will rely solely on the interviews with local activists.

According to one of its leaders, Anzel, DAROC is a coalition built from some of the previously discussed organizations. Specifically, Citizen Action, Truthpharm, JUST and PLOT. This organization was based around a collaborative event at a local park where multiple groups came together to talk with the community about issues they would like to be rectified and how they would like it done. Tila, a member of the organization, proceeds to suggest that this resulted in an ongoing series of these meetings and eventually the formation of DAROC and a list of demands for the city. A process that was not formed around the identity of the organizations but rather by the need for a collaborative response to EO203. Now, the formation of this coalition was discussed, by Elisa, as “ideology and then identity” as opposed to small groups that were viewed as forming identity first. This means that DAROC was less concerned with identity than they were with the leftist ideological concepts they were fighting for.

This idea of coalitions based on need continues with a look at their cross-city coalitions. The primary example being the coalition built in opposition to the People’s Protection Plan. The plan was an “initiative by the sheriff’s department and the New York State Sheriffs Association. And they kicked off on July 18...there was 10 initiatives” most of which went to supporting policing and cracking down on crime during a heightened wave of activism against this same topic (Anzel). Given this outrageous plan, Anzel says “we went through each of the first we had to rebrand it. So, we called it, I called it the plan for a more empowered police state...And we went

through each of the proposals and re-described them. And then kind of given our rationale about why these were bad laws and what they're and what their political function was.” They went on to build a coalition across multiple counties and created a string of protests in each county across five days. The process overall was an attempt to build a coalition for the need of opposing this plan across the state. On the other front of more simple collaborations, Anna says that activists from Binghamton also traveled to other cities to lend support when available.

Overall, this continues the trend of organizations for identity and coalitions for needs. A theme that was common across both Ithaca and Binghamton. With that said, due to the lack of newly formed organizations within the timeframe of the George Floyd uprising it is difficult to determine what the dynamics of group formation would look like in Binghamton, yet given that previous organizations fell into the same paths of self-segregation around race, class, and ideology as those in Ithaca, it would be assumed that the formation of a new organization would look similar to the dynamics of Ithaca with a more diverse and radical organization. A role that previously was filled by PLOT. Therefore, the dynamics of group and coalition formation in Binghamton, like in Ithaca, are based around the involuntary identity of race and the voluntary identity of ideology for organizations and need for coalitions.

Poughkeepsie

The city of Poughkeepsie, similar to Binghamton, has a lot of older organizations involved with the activism surrounding George Floyd. There were a few organizations tangentially related to the protest movement like the diverse Celebrating the African Spirit which according to its website, and the activist interviews focuses on “the

contributions of the enslaved Africans who were in Poughkeepsie, we often overlook enslavement in the north” (Celebrating the African Spirit 2023; Maddie). Another tangentially related organization was 854 Unity a Black-led organization which according to a Hispanic activist involved with the organization, Kylie “were doing more than just protesting they were doing, you know, food drives and clothing drives and community cleanups.” Moving to the Dutchess County Progressive Alliance, which, according to their website, is focused on educating citizens about local, state, and national political issues (Dutchess County Progressive Action Alliance 2023). When looking at activists’ perceptions of the organization, Isa, an Afro-Latina leader of Poughkeepsie Community Action Collaborative (PCAC) and End the New Jim Crow Action Network (ENJAN), notes it is “heavy on the white side and the older white side...it's not until I started coming into these social justice groups and a lot of young people of color started to kind of form in and even so it's still hard to get them involved.” Looking towards another organization, For the Many, formerly called Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson, focuses on creating a common movement across race and class lines to fight against corporate greed (For the Many 2023). This though is different from what activists note, which, as stated by the White female member of ENJAN, Greta, is that “their mission was about a lot about housing. And people during the crisis of 2008 losing their homes and their apartments and stuff. I think that's when it was formed. So, they've been around quite a while and they broaden their scope and they just growing really nicely organically.”

Other people in the community focused on art projects. For example, Maddie, a West Asian female member of ENJAN, PCAC, and multiple other organizations,

discusses how they replaced the destroyed BLM sign at Oakwood Friends School with a mural honoring those who were lost. Through the help of a group called Youth Against Racism, Maddie notes that they were able to get “47 volunteers, ages 11 to 18. From my community as well as Oakwood friend school. And they would come in for these two and a half hour sessions of painting.” This project was something that brought together the youth for the cause of racial justice.

The final tangentially related organization that existed was the Race Unity Circle, which according to their website is a Baha’is religious organization founded after the Ferguson uprisings, in an attempt to end racism as a “spiritual imperative” (The Race Unity Circle 2023). As Tesla, a Black male member of PCAC, discussed in their interview, the organization was “founded by a Black woman, but has a large white audience, like, old white audience. or older, I should say.” Isa notes that they “formulated out of I think it was seven years ago, something like that, from the shooting of Michael Brown, the killing of Michael Brown, and it was formed out of people who are of a high faith, because they believe that there is one race, which is the human race, and things like that, that was also this form that is to woman of color two Black women. And that is also older white people that also attended. I tried to bring a lot of space.”

The first major organization of interest is End the New Jim Crow Action Network or ENJAN. According to their website, ENJAN is an anti-mass incarceration organization in the Hudson Valley (End the New Jim Crow Action Network 2023). Which, according to Calvin, a White male PCAC leader, has been around for around 10 years starting as a book group for The New Jim Crow and eventually evolving into a larger organization. The organization itself is structured around “a steering committee.

So, they created a set of curators, five people that serve six-to-12-month terms and the makeup kind of rotates so that there's no dominant leader. And they kind of keep the organization running" (Kalvin). Problematically though, according to Tesla, this organization tends to be middle-class, older, and primarily white. An identity that the group clearly was molded around given the original educational focus on white people learning about incarceration. Therefore, while this group is well-intentioned, their demographics place them outside of the community that they wish to help.

Another organization that was founded a bit before the start of protests was the Procedural Justice Committee or PJC. The PJC, according to the city website, is a governmental group filled with police, community members, activists, and political elites (i.e., the mayor and common council members) (The City of Poughkeepsie 2023). In regard to EO203, Brad, a leader with the PCAC states that "the PJC was the one that city picked to officially do it." When looking at activist perspectives, Niles, an older White PCAC and ENJAN member, suggests the police's role in the process resulted in "very little of any substance in terms of ideas and proposals and resolutions, local laws came out of it. But there were people on that committee who were reform minded. So, there was a voice there. And at some point, that committee listened somewhat and made modest proposals."

One of the few coalitions that emerged during this time was the Poughkeepsie Community Action Collaborative or PCAC. According to their website, which is limited in detail, PCAC is a local organization focused on the "justice system and economic conditions" (Poughkeepsie Community Action Collaborative 2023). In regard to activists' perspectives, the coalition "was being run by a white man and young Afro

Latina woman” (Tesla). The demographics are as Tesla “would say it's pretty split down the middle in terms of [men and women].” It is an organization, according to Kalvin, that pulls heavily from the base of ENJAN, and is focused purely on the need of EO 203. As the leader of the coalition Brad suggests...

“Our initial purpose was to do what executive order 203 was asking for, to the fullest extent, as we saw what the city was going to do, again, I use the phrase cosmetic compliance, we understood that if police wanted to reform if the government wanted to reform police, they have had decades and centuries to do that. We saw that their effort. Effort is a stretch of that word, actually, but what they were doing was not in earnest. It was again, cosmetic compliance. And we wanted to make sure the public and especially the Common Council, who had to approve a plan, Got a real plan. well researched with data, we knew that the city was not going to do any research, that they were not going to pull any data. And it turned out both those things ended up being true. It wasn't, you know, great foresight. It was just pretty much a given. So yeah, the Poughkeepsie Community Action collaborative formed, we began talking about it in August, through September, I think our first meeting was early October... And yeah, it was just a lot of organizing a lot of time on the phone, a lot of emails, making sure we got the people, as many people specifically mentioned in executive order 203. So, this is African Americans, Black and African American people, particularly men. And that is a little hard to come by. But we also reached out to a number of city elders, a whole bunch of nonprofits and organizations, many of our members came from ENJAN End the New Jim Crow Action Network, we'll probably mention coming up here. And the it was just a great group of people, a number of college professors, engineers, data analysts, researchers who we were able to get together in this over, I think, two dozen nonprofits and we're and or, you know, NGOs, maybe not incorporated organizations but organizations participated. Well over 50 people, I would say closer to 100 participated. It was a lot of outreach, which we didn't see coming from this city. And so we want to make sure we did as much outreach as possible into the community. And it included um, I don't know if we'll get into more detail about this also included a community survey, policing that was done, designed in conjunction with a professor from Marist and a professor from Dutchess County Community College.”

The leaders of PCAC, like Brad, saw this as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to pursue police reform in the city. A choice that was not without its consequences as Niles notes they believe one of the activist's houses was broken into by police during the time,

in direct response to their activism. A frightening aspect of the nature of activism around police reform in the United States. Overall, this new coalition was formed from the community's needs around EO 203.

Overall, across all the cities, and particularly here in Poughkeepsie, organizations during this time in Upstate New York were formulated around identity and ideology, while the coalitions between groups were nearly always a result of needs. This makes sense given that the literature suggests that the identity, especially that of the leadership of an organization, affects who joins and therefore the demographics of the group (Klandermans 2014: 8). In regard to coalition formation, as was noted above, this formation due to need is similar to event coalition (Levi & Murphy 2006), yet, in this case, the duration of the event (i.e., EO 203) lasted for several months. For Poughkeepsie, this is clear when looking at the separation of demographics across pre-existing organizations, the formation of PCAC to create a diverse community coalition to counter this White-dominated landscape during the time of George Floyd, and the formation of coalitions around the need to provide more people and ideas to specific locations for particular periods of time. The following section will discuss what all these findings point to during this time of heightened salience around issues of race in the United States.

Comparisons

The dynamics of these three cities, according to the activist perspectives expressed in the interviews, during the George Floyd uprisings were rather similar. In fact, as was harped on multiple times above, all three cities had groups form or that existed prior, whose recruitment process while not explicitly attempting to do so,

resulted in similarities in racial demographics and ideology across its members. This points to both racial and ideological homophily within activist organizations, something that is shown again in the formation of new organizations in the wave of activism presented here. With this said, the dynamics across these cities are not completely similar, a factor that makes sense considering their different demographics, and the gaps between the activists' identities and ideologies, and those of the groups already established.

The most interesting question with these findings is why did Ithaca see a rise in new organizations while Binghamton and Poughkeepsie did not? This seems to be centered on the groups that already existed, and the perceived gap in either ideology or identity between those groups and the activists in the city. In particular, it seems as though the reason for the development of new organizations in Ithaca was due to a perceived lack of Black-led organizations, and in particular, Black-led organizations with intersectional orientations, or with a particular focus like abolition, or community care for a specific community (i.e., the West End). While in Poughkeepsie and Binghamton, from the analysis of interviews with the local activists, there was no discussion of a need to create new organizations, which given the data in Ithaca, I believe this is an outcome of the organizations meeting the ideological or identity demographics of the population. For Binghamton, at the start of this wave of activism, there were already Black-led and focused organizations with leftist ideologies, and White-led organizations with more moderate ideologies, as well as plenty of organizations that existed in between. Therefore, the space that a new organization might fill during this protest movement, BIPOC-focused and ideologically abolitionist,

was already filled by previously established organizations. In the case of Poughkeepsie, while there were less radical ideological groups, there was also no discussion about a perceived lack of groups that focused on either a particular identity or ideology. Therefore, the assumption being made is that the demographics, both racially and ideologically, were accounted for in the previously established organizations similar to Binghamton. All of this is to state that the reason Ithaca saw a rise in new organizations, while the other cities did not, was due to a gap between the identity and ideology of the activists and that of the groups, which was not present in the other cities.

With that said, the formation of coalitions was for a far different purpose. Across all of the cities, coalitions formed both within and between them. These coalitions were all an outcome of responding to the ongoing protests around the state, and specifically to coordinate a response to EO 203, or the People's Protection Plan. Unlike organizations, these coalitions were a product of need. In regard to the internal dynamics of the city, this was the need to develop policy proposals for EO 203 or to coordinate protest actions across organizations within the community. In regard to those across cities, these coalitions were mostly the product of sharing resources across the locations for particular events that were occurring. Overall, the dynamics of coalitions were a product of need as opposed to organizations which were a product of identity.

Conclusion

The previous chapter attempted to address how organizations and coalitions formed and modified during the George Floyd uprising in Ithaca, Binghamton, and Poughkeepsie. Using interviews with the activists in each location, common themes were identified in regard to group/coalition formation across these cities. The ultimate

result is that organizations formed due to identity and coalitions formed due to need. A conclusion that helps sociologists better understand the difference between these two processes in other activist spheres. This finding builds on previous work that focuses on the role of identity in the development of protest organizations (Klandermans 2014) by examining how the processes play out in the context of racialized protest movements in the United States from the perspective of those on the ground. Therefore, while these ideas around group and coalition formation are not new, the utilization of activists' perceptions of these events allowed us to confirm the occurrence of these processes at the meso-level, and the fact that these are not just theoretical processes in the mind of academics but are also bounded rational decision-making processes in the heads of activists. Additionally, this chapter went into detail about the dynamics within each city and organization in order to capture the nature of these processes on the ground. Overall, though, the findings of this chapter should be expanded in order to understand the complex dynamics that exist outside of these locales. Barring this expansion though, this work clearly highlights the themes of identity in group formation and need in coalition formation across these cities.

CHAPTER 3

WE STOOD OUR GROUND: CHOICE OF TACTICS IN POLICE ABOLITION MOVEMENTS

Following the June 12th, 2020, signing of executive order 203, which opened up political opportunities, at a point of heightened salience and ongoing political action focused on police brutality, and thus the possibility for community involvement in police reform proposals, Ithaca New York's activist community took to the streets every week for 6 months, met frequently with the mayor, and attended common council meetings in force. Binghamton, New York had a few large protests, but focused much of its attention on holding public discussions in parks around the city, attending listening sessions with the city government, and eventually bringing their recommendations for reform to the mayor. Poughkeepsie, New York took a more institutional approach with little protesting, and constant attendance at city council meetings. All of these cities had community-developed proposals that were brought to their respective Mayor and Common Council as suggestions, mostly in opposition to the state-funded research that was mandated by Executive Order 203 (EO203). Despite these cities having different tactical dispositions, ideological and racial demographics, and political parties in power, they all ended with police reform policies that were nearly identical focusing on cosmetic changes to the police force rather than some of the demands, like defunding the police department, made by activists.

This chapter focuses on the tactical aspects of this movement, comparing what choices were made, and by whom, in each city. Choices themselves that are formulated around activists' knowledge of certain tactics, previous experiences with those particular tactics, ideological dispositions for particular tactical roles, the ability to

implement specific tactics, and their views on the success of these tactics in these particular scenarios. In order to address these aspects of activism in each location, this chapter utilizes interviews with activists in Ithaca, Binghamton, and Poughkeepsie, as well as supplemental data in the form of an event catalog collected from an analysis of a local newspaper in each city. This data is used to address which tactics were chosen and for which purposes, and how this resulted in divergent interactions with police, and counter-protesters during this wave of protest.

Theory

“Activists do not simply choose from the myriad of possible tactics by making calculated tactical decisions based on efficacy or costs without concern for cultural meaning and logics” (Ring-Ramirez, Reynolds-Stenson, and Earl 2014: 416). In their study of the roles of tactics within the repertoire of contention, Ring-Ramirez, Reynolds-Stenson, and Earl (2014) suggest that activists are not simply choosing between all possible tactics, but rather choosing tactics within particular “roles” or clusters of tactics within their cultural repertoire. The current chapter builds upon this idea to examine how these tactical choices play out within the George Floyd uprisings in Ithaca, Binghamton, and Poughkeepsie, NY. Specifically, to investigate how these choices are made on the ground both across the movements and within particular actions.

Repertoires of contention, according to Tilly (1979), are sets of widely known tactics available to those within waves of contention. It is the cultural repository of tactics within a particular society. Within this repertoire, the choice of tactics by protesters is governed by their “tactical dispositions” (Junker 2014: 333), which are generally associated with particular organizations and their ideologies. The addition of

new tactics into an organization's repertoire happens through diffusion, a process by which tactics are used in a particular location, and after another organization sees this and assumes it will help in their fight as well, they adopt this tactic into their repertoire (Myers 2010; Biggs 2013). With this said, a vast majority of common tactics have previously been utilized by many organizations, across many movements, therefore, the assumption would stand that these tactics would already be adopted into the repertoire of nearly every organization, and person in these protests. These “modular actions,” (Tarrow 2011) or tactics that once diffused into a repertoire of contention are easily “mounted in a variety of sites, on behalf of a variety of goals, and against a variety of targets,” like rallies, marches, sit-ins, allow for participants to easily coordinate most tactics due to their shared perceptions of their use (Tilly 1993; Emirbayer and Desmond 2015). Therefore, the focus here is not on the adoption of tactics into a repertoire but rather on the utilization of these tools by activists. Thus, this chapter seeks to address how the police reform/abolition activists within Ithaca, Binghamton, and Poughkeepsie decided on which to utilize for this policy project, and why?

For this chapter, an analysis of tactics used by the activists in the cities showed that the tactics chosen were largely a part of one of two categories: Institutional and Demonstrative. Institutional tactics are tactics focused on the standard avenues provided by the government to pursue social/political/economic reforms. While demonstrative tactics are focused on traditional forms of collective gatherings. Therefore, institutional tactics include going to common council meetings, calling/emailing politicians, having private meetings with politicians, and even running new political candidates. Demonstrative tactics include rallies, marches, meeting disruptions, sit-ins, and even

violent events like riots. The difference primarily lies in the premise that institutional tactics are assumed to be preferred by governmental institutions that have provided the avenues for such activism, while demonstrative tactics seek to interrupt daily life in order to vocalize their demands. Simply stated, demonstrative tactics are those used for public gatherings that have a social, political, or economic focus, and are collective in nature meaning more than one person is involved. While these two tactical avenues are not exclusive, meaning that the use of one does not immediately impede the use of the other (unless the event causes a rift between the organization and the entity they are protesting against), the assumption is that organizations will tend to utilize one set of tactics over another due to their tactical disposition (Junker 2014). As was discussed briefly above, in their work, Ring-Ramirez, Reynolds-Stenson and Earl (2014) suggest that tactics tend to be clustered together into subsets of coordinated actions within the entire repertoire of contention. Specifically, in their network analysis of tactics, they found that tactics clustered into 6 blocks including Withholding (i.e., boycotts and strikes), Disruption (i.e., Civil disobedience, march), Violence (i.e., riot, attack), Contained but Unconventional means (Vigil, Picket), Conventional means (i.e., press conference, lawsuit), and Miscellaneous (i.e., motorcade, dramaturgical demonstration). Now, while they do not separate their tactics between institutional and demonstrative tactics, their findings suggest that types of tactics tend to cluster together based on their radicalness (Ring-Ramirez, Reynolds-Stenson and Earl 2014), and in this current case, I am looking at the choice between more radical on the ground protests (i.e. contained but unconventional, and disruptive tactics) or demonstrative tactics, and less radical institutional tactics, or in their case conventional claim making.

Previous scholarship suggests that this choice will be based on the activists' collective views of the legitimacy of political institutions and elites (Schneider 2014; Maguire 2021), the feasibility of employment of said tactic (Myers 2010: 292; Biggs 2013: 409), the ideological dispositions of the activists, and the history of activism within each city. The expectation is that less ideologically radical, and long-standing, organizations will take on institutional tactics primarily, while newer organizations, that are more radical, and with fewer ties to their mayor and common council will primarily utilize demonstrative tactics. Specifically, it is expected that due to the openness of the opportunities for the use of institutional tactics surrounding EO 203, that organizations with a history of using these types of tactics will continue to utilize those tactics for claim-making. While on the opposite side, more ideologically radical organizations, which might see the avenues for reform through institutional means as either closed (Goodwin 2001) or a waste of organizational resources, are expected to opt for demonstrative tactics in an attempt to pressure the mayor and common council of the city to accept their recommendations for reform. This choice subsequently will affect where activism plays out, and furthermore, the interactions that emerge within each field of activism.

In regard to demonstrative tactics specifically, the question then becomes how did the views of activists shape the choice of particular protest tactics, the interactions between protesters, police, and bystanders, and the eventual course of the action? Given the reciprocal nature of protester and police tactics (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996: 64), a purpose of this analysis is to examine how the interactions between protesters, counter-protesters, bystanders, and state actors (i.e., police and politicians) change the

trajectory of the protest and the modification of tactics on the ground. Thus, how march paths, rally locations, and safety protocols were modified during the course of the event.

State repression of protests is a common explanation for the modification of tactics during events and in particular why non-violent protesters turn violent. This is specifically true in regard to repression by the state at the peak of ongoing protest activity in a city, as noted by the study of protests to insurgency in Kashmir (Tijen Demirel-Pegg 2014). Either through the lack of avenues forward, or through the radicalization of protesters, state repression plays a key role in the escalation, and therefore the modification, of tactics (Goodwin 2001; Alimi, Bosi, Demetriou 2012). Additionally, this state repression is justified by the state by pointing at the escalatory and sometimes violent tactics utilized by activists (Nepstad 2015). Thus, riots are commonly caused by police actions (Martin, McCarthy, McPhail 2009), which are more commonly affecting poor and racial minority communities (Davenport, Soule, and Armstrong 2011; Evans and Feagin 2015). Therefore, when looking at the possibility of the escalation of protests towards violence, the choice of tactics, and the modification of tactics, we need to take into account the nature of police and state actions in retaliation.

The cities in this study did not experience much police misconduct in response to protest actions, rather most of the conflict or modification within the protests were a result of counter-protest involvement. With this said, a violation of expected behavior, similar to that of the police response, would stand as the triggering event that led to an escalation or change in tactics. Unlike the situation with the police, this is usually an outcome of yelling becoming small scuffles and ultimately fights between protesters

and counter-protesters. The reason for this is highlighted in Nassauer's (2019) work on protests in the United States and Germany from 1960-2000, where she suggests that there are 5 types of social interactions that spark violence, "spatial incursions, police mismanagement, escalation signs, property damage, and communication problems between protesters and police." For our study here in particular, all of these factors play a huge role in the sequence of events, especially in regard to the modification of demonstrative tactics on the ground.

Findings

"At the most basic level, it's just showing up on the streets, at the highest level, it's getting people into decision-making and policymaking around town and in the world."

-Pi, Ithaca.

The following section addresses the tactical decisions of the activists within Ithaca, Poughkeepsie, and Binghamton, New York. In order to do this, the findings are separated into subsections that focus on what tactics were used, including demonstrative, and institutional tactics, why these tactics were chosen, and how these tactics are modified during protests as a result of police or counter-protester involvement. Throughout these findings, I point to the idea that the choice between utilizing demonstrative versus institutional tactics was largely determined by the organization, its ideology, and subsequently the ideology of its members, and the availability of institutional tactics.

Demonstrative Protests

Demonstrative tactics were utilized in every city in this study, but to different effects and extents. Ithaca, out of all the cities, took a serious focus on demonstrative tactics, with one Black elder activist, Peaches, suggesting there were a range of tactics including “rallies, marches, demonstrations, sit-ins, lay-ins.” Additionally, a frequent occurrence that was noted by many of the activists in Ithaca was the Sunday Rallies, where the community would come together for speeches and a march each week, commonly going to the local police department to protest. This tactic of going to IPD, as was noted by the participants in Ithaca, was mostly an outcome of the Ithaca Pantheras taking over the Sunday protests from the less radical and more institutionally focused Unbroken Promise Initiative. A transition that occurred only a few months into the protest wave, and after the switch towards the more radical leadership and organization, the protests remained this way as it was commonly noted that this new organization was more inclusive of the ideologies and identities of the activists in the community (see chapter 2 for more details). When looking at the event catalog for Ithaca you can see that the most common events were rallies. Additionally, when examining the table of forms, I must make a note about those tactics seemingly not viewed as demonstrative (rallies, vandalism, or marches) or institutional (common council meetings), which here would be categorized in a few different ways. In regard to the art projects, these were community events involving the paintings of a BLM mural. As Alphonse notes they were “painting a street mural that reads Black Lives Matter...a community effort,” and due to the nature of the event being in public, blocking a street, and making a social justice claim, it should be argued that this is a demonstrative tactic.

The second of these events is the fundraiser, which was an event to raise money for racial justice initiatives, is a demonstrative event due to it being a collective gathering outside of institutional means, and for an intended social justice agenda.

Form	Freq.
Rally	13
Vandalism	3
Art Project	3
Fundraiser	1
Common Council Meeting	1
March	3
Total	24

Table 2: Ithaca- Forms

In Binghamton, I saw a different use of tactics, where the demonstrative were not the focus, yet this doesn't mean they were not utilized. Small rallies, marches, and meeting interruptions were somewhat commonplace during this time. These demonstrative tactics were not new either, as Elisa, a Black member of the group Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier, notes "JUST and PLOT have a long history of interrupting town hall meetings, whatever you want to call it, especially when it comes to policing, jail, jail stuff related issues, right. We get thrown out, we get arrested, we get all different types of things." In regard to the use of these tactics here, Kristi, a White member of the opioid crisis-focused organization TruthPharm, said that the choice of demonstrative tactics was because "it's a waste of fucking time to try to talk to our politicians because they don't give a shit." Sherri, an Afro-Latina leader of the local Citizen Action chapter, who was directly involved with the organizing of protests and specifically PLOT, said that the protests were multi-faceted. Suggesting that despite the views towards the illegitimacy of the mayor and common council, there was still an attempt at promoting ideas through the standard institutional avenues as well.

When examining the event catalog for Binghamton you again see that “rallies” were the most common form taken on by the protesters in the city. This makes sense given that demonstrative tactics were not the main source of activism for the city, and in fact, this plays into their strategy of public discussion in regard to developing their police reform suggestions. A topic that will be delved into deeper in the following section. You can also see some activities here that might not be clearly categorized as demonstrative or institutional and those are Art projects, or Virtual Events. In regard to the art project, this was an event in which “Binghamton artist Kristen Mann, 30, [who] has waited since early June for her plans to paint BLACK LIVES MATTER on Wall Street downtown to come to fruition. Saturday and Sunday, volunteers joined Mann in the effort in making her dream a reality” (Collins 2020). As is clear, similar to the event in Ithaca, that this was a demonstrative community event. In regard to the virtual event, that was a Juneteenth celebration, which due to COVID, was modified to be virtual. This only occurred for this event, from what was noted by activists, and this would have been a public demonstrative event if not for COVID-19. This was not an attempt to go through the institutional means for police reform, and therefore, like the art project, it is demonstrative in nature despite not initially seeming as such.

Form	Freq
	.
Rally	17
March	8
Silence	1
Ceremony	1
Riot	1
Arson	1
Art Project	1
Community Clean Up	2
Meetings with Political Elites	8
Mutual Aid	4

Press Conference	2
Stand Off	1
Virtual Event	1
Total	48

Table 3: Binghamton- Forms

Poughkeepsie, similarly, utilized on the ground activism a small amount. As was noted by Niles, a White member of the Poughkeepsie Community Action Collaborative (PCAC) and End the New Jim Crow Action Network (ENJAN), there were initially vigils, a march across the mid-Hudson bridge, and even rallies outside elected official’s offices. The choice in these demonstrative tactics versus institutional ones was split on generational lines, with older citizens attending common council meetings and younger citizens protesting and voting primarily. This is mostly due to the fact that common council meetings are viewed as intimidating for younger activists, and they take place at inconvenient times of day that don’t align with the schedules of younger people. Marching, on the other hand, was seen as accessible, and a community building process. Therefore, making it more frequent and more attended by young activists. As Maddie, a West Asian member of ENJAN, notes “I think the council meetings are intimidating. When I talk to people around my age, going to predominantly older spaces is intimidating and kind of annoying...then marching is for people my age. It's one of the most accessible things to do.”

Some activists, like the White Hispanic member of 854 Unity and Melanin Unchained, Kylie, also noted that this activism was ongoing during the rise of COVID, so people were looking for ways to get engaged through, “events, vigils, gatherings, public gatherings,” after months of solitude. There were events that helped celebrate African Americans in Poughkeepsie, like Black Culture Day run by Black Think Tank.

Which, as noted by the White Hispanic member of Melanin Unchained, Kylie, “brought political leaders and, and local leaders. And they had African storytelling in a poetry slam and local black vendors and giveaways. And it was a beautiful full celebration of black leaders and culture within the community.” There was a lot of focus on speaking in police forums around the reform policy, and Community events in parks. Therefore, as noted by the Black leader of PCAC, Isa, in regard to the community action collaborative, the events were “very, like community centered.”

When looking at the event catalog for Poughkeepsie, their most common forms of contention are “rallies.” This helps to support the anecdotal evidence provided by the activists who also suggested that public marches and community discussions were common tactics in Poughkeepsie. When looking at this, there are a few events that, like the events in Binghamton and Ithaca, do not fit the mold of demonstrative or institutional tactics. Specifically, Art Projects, which in this case is another community-developed art project, that due to its public nature and its social justice focus, would be a demonstrative tactic. The remaining tactics are either demonstrative or institutional, with events like listening sessions, common council, and virtual meetings, all being institutional and in particular directly focused on the avenues opened by the local government in relation to EO 203.

Form	Freq.
Rally	10
March	9
Vigil	4
Sit in	1
Ceremony	6
Parade/Motorcade	2
Vandalism	1
Stand Off	1

Listening Session	1
Food Drive	1
Common Council Meeting	1
Art Project	1
Virtual Meeting	10
Total	48

Table 4: Poughkeepsie- Forms

Across all the cities in this study, demonstrative tactics were utilized, and when examining the implementation of these tactics within each city, there are a few commonalities. First, the tactics that were used were commonly “modular tactics” (Tarrow 2011) like rallies and marches. Tactics that are applicable to and can be modified for multiple different locations. This makes sense as not only are these the archetypical mental depictions of protest activity, but they are the most easily deployable. Second, the use of these tactics was commonly associated with a view of closed-off avenues for political reform (Goodwin 2001). This can be seen in the discussion of younger activists who view institutional tactics as inaccessible, and the assumption that the mayor and common council in the city will not listen to the activists no matter what. Third, newer organizations and organizations with a history of demonstrative tactics tend to adopt or continue to use these tactics. In regard to the former, this is likely a result of new organizations filling a more radical role left empty during times of low contentious activity, therefore, the new organization takes on tactics, and recruits activists who feel left out by the more institutional approach of long-standing organizations. In regard to the latter, this is likely due to their settled tactical roles, and the ability to reapply these tactics in another wave of protest. Overall, demonstrative tactics are a key aspect of the activism ongoing in Ithaca, Binghamton, and Poughkeepsie, during this time, yet it is not the only aspect.

According to prior literature on the topic of demonstrative or violent tactics, violence or economic disruption can lead to a closing of political opportunities through increased state repression. For example, McAdam (1999) in his study of the civil rights movement, explains that the increase in urban riots led to an increase in anti-riot legislation which constrained protest activity. With this said, he additionally notes that the speed at which federal programs were created to solve issues that sparked the riots was largely due to these riots. Therefore, political violence not only increases the speed of state-based program development, but also the attempts by the state to repress, and subsequently a lessening of opportunities for political protest generally. In our particular case, this closing of political opportunities only directly affected the activists in two particular ways. First, in Ithaca, a protest at the mayor's assumed residence, resulted in the activists doxing the black Mayor, and therefore putting him at risk of White supremacist attacks. This results in a severing of the ties between ITU and TIP, and the mayor of the city, specifically related to ongoing discussions related to EO 203, which made them less likely to hold private discussions together. Second, in Binghamton, at a protest that occurred at a local jail, which started simply as a rally, about 400 people attended and the speech went on for about two hours. After the rally at the parking lot, which was connected to the community college, they began to march up towards the jail, a route lined by unarmed police, supported by a group of police in riot gear with an MRAP waiting for activists to cross the line of unarmed police. Eventually resulting in the decision to turn back in the face of such serious arrests. As Anzel notes, their "argument was, do you want to make our summer about protesting, or do you want to make our summer about defending legal cases? Those are your options, so we decided

on the former.” Both of these examples point to particular situations in which tactics either resulted in the lessening of political opportunities, or the choice was made to avoid this in order to avoid that situation. With this said, a vast majority of the demonstrative tactics utilized here from the perspective of the activists, did not have a large bearing on political opportunities. The reasoning, I believe, is due to activists not seeing tactical choice completely as a cost-benefit analysis, and that the tactics primarily used were largely not radical/violent enough to result in these negative outcomes.

Institutional Tactics

Outside of the major demonstrative tactics utilized, institutional tactics were the primary form of activism in each city. This particular aspect of activism was focused on pursuing police reforms through the government, specifically through the common council meetings that focused on EO 203.

In Ithaca, this began as an effort by the Anti-Racist Coalition prior to the announcement of EO 203. In fact, the tactic of attending common council meetings in mass was first associated with the budget in the city. Specifically, to promote a “list of demands, that was presented to Common Council” which among other things, included a component for city funding for UPI, as was noted by the mixed-race leader of Mutual Aid Tompkins, Victoria. This list of demands was built through community meetings and became the list of demands that were also utilized in Ithaca for EO 203. Similarly, prior to the introduction of EO 203, the activists in Poughkeepsie were already utilizing these institutional means for protest, specifically around the delayed vote for the PBA contract. The activist involvement in this process led the PBA to react with hateful content on the internet. Then, in retaliation, the activists ran a press conference with

BIPOC citizens where they discussed the details of the proposed contract. As Calvin notes “we carefully picked people who live in the city of Poughkeepsie, particularly, people of color, getting on video for video press conferences. And, and saying, look, here are the facts. We live in the city, care about the city, not out to get anybody.” This would not be the only time press conferences were used as they did another following their promised addendum to the activist proposed EO 203 reforms, which again resulted in a fiery response from the PBA and elected officials.

In regard to the fight for EO 203, the process was identical in every city, with the cities putting together their own suggestions and an analysis of the community’s interests, and then proposing it as a policy for reform to the citizens of the city. As Kourtney notes, in Ithaca this was done with the help of researchers at Ithaca college, “there was a key person who teaches at Ithaca College, (researcher), and she was involved in the leadership of the public safety initiatives.” Through the process citizens were allowed to give notes, a process that was organized similarly to the common council meetings in regards both to the meeting’s structure and the activist tactics to counteract it. Specifically, through the use of comment and speaking sections filled with activists looking for abolition. Overall, though, in Ithaca, and across the cities, “they shut down the demands around reform that other people had been working for” (Theresa).

In Poughkeepsie, the Procedural Justice Committee was a committee made by the mayor and populated with police, and they were chosen to run the reform process for EO 203. As Greta, a White member of ENJAN, notes, “this procedural justice committee became the executive order 203 committee in Poughkeepsie.” Therefore, a

proposed plan was formulated by the activists, yet it was not getting any response at first, so they released the more serious data around arrests, which was placed in the addendum. This was nearly entirely run by the PCAC in Poughkeepsie. All during a time when “the council and the mayor are under federal investigation for unconstitutional discrimination” (Maddie). In Binghamton, a list of demands was formulated through the use of park meetings. Specifically, the use of community gatherings in parks to discuss in small groups what reforms should be made and where the funding taken from the police department should be funneled. As Sherri, the Citizen Action Leader notes, they “split people into those groups when they got there at the park...And it was kind of like a little bit of a teach-in kind of part at the beginning. There were like, over 400 people who showed up to the park, and that’s a big deal, because it’s not a march, it’s not a protest, it’s not a rally, we’re going to sit in the park and we’re going to talk about what we want to see change.” In fact, for a lot of activists in Binghamton, their most notable event was not a large protest but rather a large community meeting in parks, where the focus was placed on the organization internally as opposed to an external target. The purpose of these events was to get the community involved with possible solutions to racial injustice in the community on a variety of levels from policing to education. A process that allowed them to survey the community members in order to have data for their proposed suggestions, as Anzel, the White leader of JUST and DAROC notes “we got a lot of data about what people wanted.” Additionally, Sherri notes that “it also showed, it proved them wrong, because they always say people don’t care about this stuff. We had 400 people in attendance for

something we threw together in less than a week...So I feel like that's the most important.”

Now, this was not the only institutional tactic used in these cities. There were also attempts in Ithaca to establish the Solidarity Slate or a slate of candidates across organizations within the city that ran for various political positions, as an attempt to have “leftist members of Common Council” as well as in other roles, as was noted by the Black Ithaca Tenants Union Leader, Ezekiel. Additionally, in all of the cities, conversations between activists and politicians were commonplace. As Theresa, a Black Leader of the local Ithaca DSA notes, “the Ithaca Tenants Union and the Panthers both worked with, with government officials at some capacity. I know some of them even worked with the police and some people worked with [Mayor] Svante [Myrick].” Allowing for either the vocalization of grievances or ensuring that certain demonstrative tactics would not be retaliated against.

Overall, in regard to institutional tactics in a broad sense, most of the activists in each town took the same approach. Utilizing the institutional avenues of the common council, and other related governmental meetings, to voice their views on the police reform plan being proposed. Additionally, due to an overall lack of trust in this system, these activists all utilized community comments to develop their own alternative plans. For this, you can see that not only are the repertoires used in these cities the same, but they were also employed in nearly identical manners as well. Additionally, the organizations that took on these institutional tactics in each city were commonly coalitions. And in the case of PCAC, DAROC, and The Anti-Racist Coalition, they were primarily formulated for this particular purpose. This makes sense as these coalitions

are formulated for the purpose of using these newly opened avenues for institutional tactics and are acting as “event coalitions” or coalitions formulated for a specific purpose, usually a single event, but in this case EO 203 (Levi & Murphy 2006). Also, these coalitions were largely run by a long-standing organization, which has utilized institutional tactics for some time, for example, ENJAN, DSA-Ithaca, and JUST. This makes sense, similar to organizations that have previously used demonstrative tactics, as they already know how to deploy these tactics effectively and therefore are able to utilize them efficiently. All in all, there is a commonality in what institutional tactics were used, pointing to a commonality in the use of these tactics during EO 203, primarily used by coalitions formed specifically to do so.

Choice of Tactics

Now that a bit of discussion of our findings on what tactics were used and by whom, it is best to address how these tactics were chosen, as not everyone always agrees on the choice of particular tactics. How were these decisions around tactics determined? The answer to that is tricky. While some people in Ithaca “hope[d] that it was done by unanimous consent,” (Victoria), this was not always the case. As Mum stated, sometimes this was done through leaders asking for suggestions, but other times due to the importance of the event or situation, tactics were sometimes imposed. With all of this said, White activists, like Kite Chaser, viewed decision-making as a process that they should not be a part of, simply because “it's not our place to decide what black leadership decides they actually want to do.” This top-down approach to tactical choice was not an exclusive sentiment to Ithaca, as when Tila in Binghamton discussed this situation it was not about the race of leadership but rather in particular the role of leader.

As she notes there was one individual, from PLOT, who tended to call the shots for the events. Tesla, in Poughkeepsie, also makes a similar claim saying that “in theory, a lot of these organizations want to be decentralized and their hierarchical structure. But in practice, it's definitely more conventional, in terms of a top-down type of situation.” Overall, while in theory, and based on ideological beliefs, these organizations attempted to take a decentralized and unanimous decision-making process, most took a top-down approach. Whether this was due to a trust in the experience of the leadership, or the demographics of the leadership in relation to the racial justice focus on the protest, in practice there was still a leadership team generally making choices for the rest of the activists involved in regard to tactics.

Modification of Tactics

Having now covered who chose what tactics, and why, in each city it is best to move towards a discussion of the modification of tactics on the ground. A common sequence for demonstrative tactics in all three of the cities was to hold a rally, then march to a particular location of importance, and then to hold a rally at this location. This was true for the weekly rallies in Ithaca, the large march in Poughkeepsie, and the first major event in Binghamton. The last of those events saw activists marching through a city that, under the direction of the mayor and common council in the city, was shut down and boarded up. They marched “from the high school along Main Street, and then turned into a sideroad and went to Recreation Park...where people gathered, and there were speeches and stuff, and then they marched back to the high school,” stated the activist, Tila. Yet, this is not the sequence of every event. For some, the dynamics of the

situation changed throughout. This is highlighted best in the interactions between protests, police, and counter protesters, and the subsequent emergence of violence.

Now, each city had a different relationship with the police and therefore police violence during protests. In Binghamton, there was no violence, but instead intimidation by the police, similar to that of Poughkeepsie where some activists like Tesla, a Black member of PCAC, said due to the ramped-up actions of the police during the largest march in the city including having “dogs, drones, and snipers” ready to go, it created a sense that violence could erupt at any moment. In Ithaca, police intimidation also included this threatened violence, where at one event “the police were like, on rooftops with rifles on all sides of Bernie Milton” stated Maggie, a White DSA member, about the situation. But threats of violence were not the endpoint in Ithaca, as Ezekiel notes people were beaten, sprayed with mace, and overall brutalized by the local police during protests in the city. In particular, on October 22, Tom Reid (Local Politician) held an event to honor the opening of new Republican headquarters, despite the plan for initially peaceful demonstrations on both sides, a tug of war between a subset of the activists, and Republican activists over an American flag. The result was a right-wing protester getting her shoulder dislocated. During this same event, a young Black man threw a water bottle at a passing car, and by the time “the young man was arrested on Elmira Road, he was being assaulted by a white man with a knife, but nothing was done about that.” After the arrest, a young trans woman activist went with a few people to the police station to get him released, where she blocked a police vehicle and got herself arrested and misgendered. Police did not let people know when they would be released, and therefore, “the group that was following [the young trans activist] got a bit rowdy,”

stated the White non-binary Ithaca Pantheras member, Lux. Eventually, the state brought in police in riot gear and tried to pull people from the crowd, and “when the group didn't break up, they pepper-sprayed everyone, dragged people, it was disturbing. They were really, really forceful,” notes the DSA leader Theresa.

Activists in Ithaca saw counter-protest violence as the main reason for tactical modification, and the primary source of violence throughout the protest wave. On the other hand, a portion of activists in both Binghamton and Poughkeepsie suggest that there was no counter-protest violence, yet this is not true for Poughkeepsie, as during the first protest as thousands of people, marched together towards the large bridge, a small amount of violence emerged. As Brad, the White leader of PCAC, notes “a white supremacist spit on a black lady, and I got involved, and he pulled the knife on me and assaulted me...And the police did not arrest this man.” Additionally, at the end of the protest there was minor property damage to businesses, and when one young man got on top of a cop car and started jumping then shoved an “empty plastic bottle or something underneath the lights that are mounted on the top” (Mattis). Overall, this was one of the events with minor violence, mostly caused by one counter-protester escalating the protest with violence, and then protesters following suit.

In Ithaca there were multiple events in which these groups and the local police abolition activists clashed. For example, The Rally Against Hate Two, had the right-wing protesters holding the pavilion, instead of the abolitionists who primarily use it for their protest actions. Ultimately, this changed the power dynamics at the event. As Kite Chaser, a White leader in TIP, notes “this was a situation where the conservative counter-protesters had the pavilion, they had power, they had amplified sound. And their

goal, their entire platform, was to spend as much time goading us as they could, and that included things like playing the audio of the George Floyd murder.” On top of this, “basically, there was no plan and there's some stupid bullshit, like beef between TIP and DSA” (Maggie). During the event, the abolitionists used a banner to demarcate the sides and create a distance between the opposing groups. Eventually, the banner held by the activists moved forward due to conflicting communications between different leaders in the protest. As the White transman TIP member, Alphonse, noted, “somewhere that banner team moved forward against Overwatch's protocol and against I think like (TIP leader).” At which point “a local neo nazi Neo fascists mother fucker was on the mic and showing videos of different activists, doxing them as well as throwing transphobic slurs at other activists,” noted the Black ITU leader, Ezekiel. An action that upset the activists in attendance and put them all at far more risk. Following this, the counter-protesters decided to burn flags, an action that finally incited chaos. “Some person from outside of our organization came and grabbed it and started pulling it away...kind of a scuffle happened there” (Pi). This resulted in one female abolitionist getting groped and put in a headlock. During which the police did nothing, and after the violence, people began to disperse. This event showcases how the sequence of events during a protest, and in particular how the violation of spatial demarcation, and the raising of emotions, can lead to violence emerging. This first of which is highlighted both in the seizure of the pavilion by right-wing protesters and the protesters encroaching on that space with their banner. Both actions, on either side, raised the intensity of the event, and along with raising the emotional stakes by doxing activists, lead to the emergence of violence.

While violence from either counter-protesters or the police was present, it was not incredibly frequent, especially not in comparison to the threatened violence that loomed over events. On private message boards, there was lots of chatter about right-wing violence being brought to protests, usually a threat of bringing weapons to events. A response to the idea that the local activists were violent, and they needed to provide the city protection. As Theresa notes, “they were talking about bringing guns and arming themselves and like, that sort of thing. Or being like their vibe, the thing that the protesters were violent, and that they need to be prepared for violence and, you know, just sort of promoting that sort of language and trying to recruit from historically violent organizations.” These online threats resulted in consistent attacks on local activists, increasing the severity of the situation at hand, and while some say that all of this did not drastically change the tactics used outside of added vigilance, others note that this is not true. In fact, these overwhelming threats resulted in the creation of a clandestine sub-organization called Overwatch, which used rapid-fire communication, and legally armed activists in hiding to help in case of emergencies (Alphonse). As Alphonse states, “on the Overwatch side of things, so on like the securities type of shit, that was always a rapid, like, a rapidly evolving situation,” and they needed to be prepared for any situation.

In fact, Safety is a crucial part of local activism in any location due to the vulnerability of the population involved. Therefore, a big portion of the focus of the activists in every city was the security of the events. In Binghamton and Ithaca, in order to ensure protection during the large march discussed before, people of color and queer folks were in the center of the march for protection. There were also marshals with

yellow duct tape on them, they had megaphones, walkie-talkies, and other ways to coordinate the crowd. And, after a speak-out at a park in a poorer side of town, where there was a police presence with riot gear and paddy wagons, organizations modified their tactics to “have people on bikes that go ahead and scout the area ahead to where we have to go, and we always have people to kind of do perimeter” to make them aware of the ongoing situation that is not within their sight, Sherri, the Citizen Action Leader in Binghamton noted.

This final section notes a few aspects about the modification of tactics and the emergence of violence. First, the modification of tactics, and in particular the emergence of violence is a result of interactions between protesters, police, and counter-protesters. This was to be expected as violence emergence is commonly the result of state-level repression (Martin, McCarthy, McPhail 2009), and “spatial incursions” and “escalatory signs” (Nassauer 2019), something that was present in all events with counter-protester violence. Second, the modification of tactics, and in particular the expectation of counter-protester and police violence, was prepared for through complex safety systems. This points to the idea that while the emergence of violence is a natural process of violations of social protest norms, attempts are made on multiple fronts to not only stop it from happening, but also to mitigate it from happening by surprise. Overall, the modification of demonstrative tactics on the ground is a process that activist leaders attempt to mitigate in order to retain peace, and hopefully continue future protests.

Discussion

Which tactics are chosen, why they are chosen, and what the outcomes of such choices are has always been a focus of research on contentious activity. This chapter

was an attempt to continue this avenue of research. Through interviews with activists in Ithaca, Binghamton, and Poughkeepsie, New York, these processes were examined in regard to their approach to the mandated local police reform brought down by EO 203, and the murder of George Floyd. As was clear from these interviews, the activists in each city used relatively similar approaches in regard to their choice of tactics, specifically they pulled from the same set of tactics in their repertoires of contention. For demonstrative tactics that meant the use of rallies and marches throughout the city for varying causes associated with racial justice. Additionally, in regard to institutional tactics, for the most part, the organizations in each city took an interest in vocalizing their beliefs in common council meetings, especially those related to EO 203, and also once realizing that this was not going to result in reform or abolition at the level the activists were proposing, they created their own set of propositions and gave them to the city.

Now with this stated, Ithaca took a stronger focus on demonstrative tactics, while Poughkeepsie and Binghamton had varying fewer protests. An outcome that likely was the reason for the increased violence in Ithaca from police. Additionally, due to Ithaca's nature as a "liberal city", they attracted numerous counter-protesters including the Proud Boys, which led to an increased level of violence. With this said, despite these minor differences, for the most part, these cities had similar tactical choices made.

This leads to a few final conclusions from this paper. The first of which is that it allowed us to understand these tactics as common due to their secure place within the repertoires of contention that span across organizations and cities. Therefore, helping to elevate the claim that tactics are nearly universal within our modern society so rather

than understanding how common tactics diffuse it might be better to examine, like here, why those were chosen. Furthermore, I add to the literature on tactical dispositions (Junker 2014) and tactical roles, by finding that newer organizations and those with a tie to more radical tactics, were more likely to utilize demonstrative tactics, while “event coalitions” (Levi & Murphy 2006), or coalitions formed for EO 203, and long-standing organizations were more likely to use institutional tactics. This helps us to build on the idea proposed by previous scholars and noted by Piven and Cloward (1977) that tactics are not just freely chosen, as I assert here that tactics are chosen by organizations due to their ideological dispositions, previous history as an organization, and to fill a vacant tactical role in the local political arena. Specifically, through the case studies above I note the commonality in the choice and use of tactics by particular types of organizations, and how new organizations form for the sake of the event, in this case, EO 203, to fill a role left unfilled. Overall, this helps to build on previous work of repertoires of contention (Tilly 1979), by suggesting that tactical repertoires are generally universal within a particular state, and expanding their findings to suggest at the meso-level of local protest activity, that the choice in tactics is dependent on aspects of each organization and locale. This expands our understanding of tactical choice by shifting our focus from repertoire expansion to how tactics from that repertoire are utilized, and by delineating that organizations involved with police reform and abolition tend to choose tactics based on their ideological perspective and the opportunities they perceive for police reform at the local level.

Additionally, I found through this examination that institutional and demonstrative tactics were used in tandem. Specifically, an assumption was made that

both were important to push their beliefs, but this became truer upon realizing that the state-run reforms were not going to take activists into account. The closing off of this avenue for reform did not only lead to more protests, but also to replicating the governmental practice to show a better and more community-focused approach to the same endeavor. Therefore, leading to a community and state-based policy for police reform in each city. All of which was common. This builds upon the work of Ring-Ramirez, Reynold-Stenson, and Earl (2014), by not only showcasing how and why tactical roles are chosen, but by adding that tactical roles are able to be combined and utilized in tandem. A finding that points to a more nuanced dynamic of tactical choice on the ground level compared to a simple determination of tactical roles by organizational leadership. Overall, this chapter allows us to see the nuanced dynamics of each city's activism as well as the very clear similarities in tactical approaches.

Conclusion

The previous chapter was an attempt to examine what tactics were chosen and for what purpose during the push for police reform during the time of EO 203 in Ithaca, Binghamton, and Poughkeepsie, New York. I found that overall tactics were similar in all cities, with minor differences in tactics leading to minor differences in the amount of violence in each city. Generally, each city used both demonstrative and institutional tactics in conjunction to promote its ideas for reform. Even going to the lengths of creating their own propositions for reform when the state would no longer listen. Showing not only the nuances of each city's approach but highlighting how the repertoires of contention in the US are rather similar across organizations and cities.

CHAPTER 4

NOTHING REALLY CHANGED: UNDERSTANDING OUTCOMES OF THE POLICE REFORM MOVEMENTS IN NEW YORK STATE

“It felt like we were just being played for a fool. Like, that nothing was really ever going to change and that, like the police were still just being given money and our communities were still just being left to rot. It's still decaying and nothing really changed. Even now people are still facing evictions. People are still being harassed and assaulted by cops. People are still being killed by the police across upstate New York, and across the entire country. Like that's the whole thing it's like, nothing's gotten any better. And no tangible solutions have been found. That's literally how it felt” (Ezekiel, Black Male Activist, Ithaca).

This is the sentiment of one of the local activists in Ithaca in regard to the outcome of Executive Order 203 (EO 203) or the statewide mandate for police reform in New York. A process that, while providing some positive outcomes, was viewed broadly as a disappointment by the activists that were interviewed. Mostly this was a result of the nearly year's worth of protests, community forums, and common council meetings, which created a sense of hope that was somewhat dashed by the minor changes that actually took place.

The following is an attempt to understand the process of reform initiated by EO 203 in each city and the activists' reactions to the final submitted document. In order to understand the process, EO 203 was examined, including the draft and final versions of each city's reforms, the structure of community input, and finally the views of the activists involved in the reform journey. A key component to this examination is

understanding how the way reform was structured, the provided suggestions from the state, and the favoring of non-activist voices in the policy development, resulted in bare minimum reforms from the perspective of the activists involved. These suggested reforms were not entirely contradictory to the wants of the activists, yet large ideological concepts such as the abolition of and defunding of the police were not quite as heavily considered.

Literature

“Policing, in its abstract conceptual sense, can be identified and understood as any empirically measurable (denotative) or symbolic and imagined (connotative) disciplinary processes that seek to maintain and, where appropriate, enforce social rules, values, and customs” (Williams and Paterson 2021). In the United States this system is tied directly to a history of racial categorization and subjugation, which resulted in a particularly harsh policing structure in the United States (Oliver 2008), that disproportionately affects minority communities (Gonzales Van Cleve 2016; Campbell and Schoenfeld 2013). Particularly with the result of high levels of police violence (Chen 2000: 99-100 citing NAPLAC Audit II). While policing, is proposed as a color-blind institution (Bonilla-Silva 1997), there are clear racialized differences in resource allotment, specifically in regard to the higher policing of (Gonzales Van Cleve 2016; Campbell and Schoenfeld 2013), and increased brutality on (Steinmetz, Schaefer and Henderson 2017), minority communities. For example, Black men are more than twice as likely to be killed by police (Edwards, Esposito, and Lee 2018). With the additional trauma experienced by those in “targeted neighborhoods” (Lally 2022), there is a

resulting loss of legitimacy for police in those communities (Tyler, Gagan, and Geller 2014).

This loss of legitimacy and ongoing brutality in policing has led to multiple social movements in the United States focused on these issues, most recently the Black Lives Matter Movement (Milkman 2017). Previous movements have attempted to reform the policing system in the United States, but they focused on the individual officer as opposed to the system of policing as a whole. This includes efforts to create new trainings, increase transparency in the use of force data, and the banning of particular tactics like chokeholds (Lum 2021). With that said, these do not address the underlying issues of policing in the United States, and instead suggest that the reduction of bad officers will reduce the overall issue at hand, or that the issues are the fault of a particular officer and not the system as a whole. This might be the result of “knee-jerk reforms” proposed as an attempt to ward off social unrest (Engel, Isaza, and McManus 2022), instead of a focus on the real needs of the local community.

A multitude of researchers have suggested ways to improve the reform processes moving forward. This includes using “evidence-based approaches in reducing officer involved shootings” (Sherman 2020), having the reform process being an ongoing process for improvement (Engel, Isaza, and McManus 2022), and a focus on the other systems that play a role in the structure of policing (i.e., training, leadership, technology, etc.) (Lum 2021). In their book, Vitale (2017) notes that policing as a social institution does not fulfill the needs of society. Therefore, “policing needs to re-configure alongside changes in social rules, values, and customs” (Williams and Paterson 2021). A process that can be seen attempted in the ongoing struggles for reform in New York State.

In a previous study of the reforms in Lexington following the murder of Breonna Taylor, researchers found that protesters fought for accountability, and defunding of the police (Lally 2022), which is nearly identical to the wants of activists in New York. This though is not a surprise as Ward, McGinty, Hudson, Stone, Barry, Webster, and Crifasi (2022) note, there is general support for mental health service co-responder models of policing diversion plans, and police accountability. Additionally, Reny and Newman (2021) find that unfavorable perception of the police increased following the protests in response to the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, which likely helped to accelerate the process of police reform during this time of heightened salience. Overall, these calls for and actions towards defunding and redistributing police funds became widespread in major cities leading to a total of \$840 million in reduced police budgets (Levin 2021). A statistic that highlights the wave of police reforms that swept across the country, and a wave that our study here only addresses a part of. The expectation is that reforms in upstate New York will pursue similar efforts to defund the police, and due to their mandated nature will attempt to address the shortfalls of previous reforms by viewing them as ongoing, data-driven, and community-focused processes.

In regard to reactions to the proposed policies in each city, it is expected that, based on previous scholarship, that activists will focus their reasoning, whether positive or negative, on their connection or lack of connection with their mayor and common council (Wouters and Walgrave 2017). Specifically, their constant communication with, or lack thereof, local political elites (i.e., the mayor and common council members). Additionally, it is expected that blame will be placed on the political ideology of the mayor and other politicians in the city. Given that the expectation is that politicians will

“show a lower willingness to adapt and to communicate when the request disagrees with the party’s position” (Öhberg and Naurin 2016) and react in accordance with their own political incentives for reelection (Downs 1957). Therefore, it is assumed that both Democratic and Republican politicians will be similarly blamed for strict partisanship by activists in regard to the policy outcomes. Overall, the expectation is that activists will externalize their reasons for the policy outcome, primarily placing the blame on local and state-level officials if the outcomes are not preferable to them.

EO 203

Before I analyze the proposed recommendations approved by each of the cities, it is best to start with an overview of Executive Order 203 (EO 203). EO 203 was an executive order by Governor Cuomo of New York, in response to the murder of George Floyd, in order to initiate a police reform process. The report itself began with actions by the State government implemented in order to help reduce racial bias in policing. Particularly, a ban on chokeholds, stopping race-oriented police calls, bail reform, and many other reforms (New York State 2020). Therefore, laying the groundwork for what is asked of local governments in the remainder of the executive order.

The purpose of EO 203 was to ask local governments to reform their policing practices. In order to help facilitate this process, the state government recommended questions, and ideas for the cities to consider. This included discussions about demilitarization, procedural justice, community policing, racial bias in policing, diversion programs, citizen review boards, transparency of data, and new trainings, among other recommendations (New York State 2020). These all were listed as possible

ways in which the communities themselves could address issues of racism and discrimination within their own police forces.

On top of recommending discussions and questions for the communities, they also proposed the order of operations for this process (New York State 2020). This process was to be done in four phases, starting with Planning, and Listening, and going to Drafting, Public Comment, and Ratification (New York State 2020). It also was spread across many months between August 2020 and March 2021 (New York State 2020). During this, they asked that you “bring your community to the table” which included an open process for reform that involved local police, community members, local DA, elected officials, and preferably residents with prior encounters with the police (New York State 2020). Additionally, they asked that the public have the ability to comment on the process in totality (New York State 2020).

All of this is mentioned as it lays the groundwork for the local proposals I am going to discuss ahead. Specifically, what is seen through an examination of the local proposals, is that despite differing activism, and community feedback in each city, the results were a similar set of recommendations focused on what was asked of them by Cuomo in EO 203 (New York State 2020).

Ithaca

The City’s Report and the Process

The process for the proposal was laid out by EO 203 but was conducted in the following manner in Ithaca. Starting with a kickoff event in August, then to an announcement of the reform initiative (City of Ithaca 2021). Following, a survey, town

halls, and focus groups were conducted (City of Ithaca 2021). Finally, a draft report was released, comments were presented by the community, and a final proposal was submitted (City of Ithaca 2021). In order to collect community input on the process, forums were run via Zoom, focus groups, and singular interviews were conducted, and surveys were administered (City of Ithaca 2021). During this time, materials from the local government and police department were published on their websites (City of Ithaca 2021). The process itself was primarily run by the common council, the mayor, and the range of working groups that were formed specifically for the purposes of EO 203. After collecting data on the community, they proposed the draft plan for the city, and following the public hearings revised and finalized the submitted report for the city.

When examining the draft proposal presented by the City of Ithaca, one is first confronted with the results of community surveys and focus groups conducted in the community. They found that people were supportive of the police (City of Ithaca 2021). Additionally, they said the idea of defunding the police was not “actively expressed by focus group participants” (City of Ithaca 2021), and that abolition seemed unobtainable (City of Ithaca 2021). The end result was a set of recommendations for the local government (i.e., the common council and mayor). These included replacing the current police department with a new city and county public safety department (City of Ithaca 2021), funding crisis intervention models for the city, developing a county-level safety review board, establishing a non-emergency call structure, evaluating their own practices, identifying new training to take part in, establish a “community healing plan,” reviewing and standardizing data, developing a plan for diverse recruitment, repurposing the swat vehicle, along with many other recommendations (City of Ithaca

2021). They suggested that in order to facilitate the implementation of these requests, they must create a “Community Justice Center to lead and complete the work associated with each recommendation” (City of Ithaca 2021). This includes the use of an online tool for community engagement with and tracking of the recommendations, with the added aspect of working groups within the community being available to those who are interested (City of Ithaca 2021). Additionally, they suggested the hiring of a data analyst to help with the data needs of the report (City of Ithaca 2021).

At the end of the process, or at the final draft of the report, the recommendations stayed largely the same. The name of the community policing structure was changed to the Department of Public Safety (City of Ithaca 2021), and the DPS would have a civilian director (City of Ithaca 2021). This would include a set of unarmed officers for non-violent calls as well (City of Ithaca 2021). The most controversial change was the following “that the Mayor and Common Council shall implement any further organizational restructuring in such a manner that the employment of each of the current police officers of the Ithaca Police Department shall continue uninterrupted by such a restructuring, retaining their positions and rank in the Ithaca Police Department, without being required to apply or reapply in order to maintain their current positions and rank, and retaining their civil service status, authority, and benefits of the title including all terms and conditions of employment and benefits as exist by law and under their applicable collective bargaining agreement, memoranda of agreement, and interest arbitration awards as applicable, and remaining subject to all duties and obligations required of them under each of the foregoing and under the rules and regulations of the Ithaca Police Department” (City of Ithaca 2021). The reason for the controversy is that

the expectation, according to a multitude of local activists across organizations, racial categories, and class categories (Ciara, Kite Chaser, Theresa, Ezekiel, Maggie), was that the new DPS would require the rehiring of new officers, yet this meant that all current officers, some with active community complaints against them, would remain employed.

All in all, the set of recommendations from the city were in line with what the city's researchers suggested they found in the community forums, and surveys. Additionally, it was directly in line with the suggested in EO 203, yet was it in line with the wants of the local population? The following section is an examination of the interviews with local activists on the reform process.

Interviews

As was previously stated, Ithaca began having common council meetings related to policing where they would discuss what the best path forward was for the city. This essentially allowed activists a direct avenue by which to become involved with the process itself, not just in the regular protests on the streets. With that said, this work is not new, as police reform in the city has been somewhat ongoing since the rise of BLM in 2014, according to the elder Black activist, Peaches. At this point in time, according to Pi, a Black male activist, Ithaca had already been actively protesting in the streets against the murder of George Floyd, and the local police department.

The common council meetings were packed with activists every time the issue of reimagining public safety was on the docket. Mostly an outcome of organizations pressuring their constituents to call in and vocalize abolitionist ideas for reform.

Specifically, groups like SURJ, The Ithaca Pantheras, DSA, ITU, and the Racial Justice Coalition (a coalition of these groups and other smaller organizations), were involved with the institutional tactics of common council meeting call-ins, stated the White female activists, Mom Cat, and Mum. Additionally, the combined efforts of these organizations, through the Racial Justice Coalition, resulted in a list of suggestions that were promoted during these meetings. These recommendations included reducing the number of officers, repurposing the SWAT vehicle into a mobile vaccine center for COVID-19, and the repurposing of police funds towards community efforts, some of which were addressed in the final proposal.

The structure of the common council meetings was simple, as they were an attempt by the local government to obtain opinions from the general populace. A process that was mandated by EO 203 (New York State 2020). Each person at the meeting was allowed to speak in 3-minute segments, a constraint that gave rise to the combined efforts of multiple organizations in order to create a cohesive statement about abolition that would not have worked in only a 3-minute block. According to Mom Cat, this included creating strong statements about “getting cops out of mental health calls.” Despite making these common claims, from the anti-racist committee’s proposed list of suggestions, they were largely ignored by the mayor and common council, as was noted by the Afro-Latina female leader of DSA, Theresa. They refused to listen to the activists of color, and instead focused on tone policing during the meeting.

Despite issues with it, the virtual common council meetings allowed for more access to the policy discussions. Activists came in support of defunding the police, while PBA members came to combat this, as the White non-binary member of The Ithaca

Pantheras, Lux notes “Police Benevolent Association speakers...were very vehemently against defunding the police, and the activists were very much for it.” The former became a more serious issue for activists as their presence and role in the reform process became more widely and clearly felt over time. In fact, some, like Mom Cat, suggest that there was a ton of police input not only in the common council meetings but the reform process broadly, “there was way too much cop input into the whole process.”

The common council meetings were not the only avenue in which suggestions for reform were sought. First, and obviously, the protests ongoing in the streets were a location where the protesters attempted to pressure the mayor and common council. This is something that is noted by multiple members of The Ithaca Pantheras, including Lux, Kite Chaser, and Deshawn. As Ezekiel, a Black Male activist notes, there were lots of actions including protests and mutual aid drives were ongoing during this time. Most of the political elite (i.e., mayor, and common council) discouraged protests, despite some attending them periodically. As Theresa notes “they more overwhelmingly discouraged the actions and have felt that it's, like ‘too disruptive or not protesting the right way or, you know, you're not getting your demands met if you don't do it through the proper channels.’ So, I would say that their relationship is counter to movement building in the city.” With this said, others like Mum, Ezekiel, and Kite Chaser suggest the mayor was generally supportive. Some even saw Mayor Svante Myrick as nice and helpful towards the protests that during the time of COVID-19 should not have been occurring, while others say that this changed over time, as Ezekiel notes.

Second, activists would seek contact with specific local elected officials, mostly a few common council members known to be close to activists, and the mayor himself.

With this said, the mayor is selective about whom he talks to and works with in the city, as Peaches notes, “I think he picks and chooses who he interacts with.” Either way, contacting local representatives and conducting conversations was an institutional tactic, given that it is being aimed at standard avenues for institutional change, used by a large portion of local activists. Lots of people had private discussions with the mayor and common council, including members of the Ithaca Pantheras and Ithaca Tenants Union, as was noted by multiple activists including Lux, Mum, Ezekiel, Deshawn, and Theresa. “The Ithaca tenants union and the Panthers both worked with government officials in some capacity. I know some of them worked with the police even and some people worked with [Mayor] Svante [Myrick]” (Theresa). This was until a protest at the mayor’s house which drove a rift between the groups and the mayor according to Mum. This protest led to a list of demands being placed on the residence of the mayor, and therefore not only publicly making demands but outing the whereabouts of a Black mayor to white supremacists who were now taking a closer focus on the reforms in Ithaca. This issue created a rift between the mayor and segments of the local activists.

The final avenue for reform was through the traditional policy development process. In Ithaca, this involved the collection of data, specifically through focus groups, by local academics. The result of which was a set of demands proposed to the city based on this research. These demands were hotly debated during the ongoing council meetings at the time as they suggested a lack of want for the abolition of the police department, something that local activists suggest they deliberately stated during focus groups. As noted by Rhonda “they specifically said that nobody said that they wanted to abolish the police. And so that was a deep, deep issue off the bat for me, because I

distinctly remember being in a focus group that every single person said, abolish the police.” Ultimately this resulted in the opinion that they were ignoring radical ideas for reform, and specifically those of BIPOC activists. During this entire process, some organizations like DSA were viewed to have worked directly on the policy, while the Panteras were viewed as not doing so, and some activists like the Black elder activist Peaches tried to work with the city government on the policy, yet stepped back, while others like UPI’s leader took an active role.

The final outcome was an attempt by the mayor to appease everyone. An attempt that ultimately failed. A perfect example of this attempted mediation was the following. “Towards the very beginning of reimagining public safety, they voted to refund a couple of the defunded cop positions” states Mom Cat, an issue that the activists fought against in the previous budget discussions but was opposed by the police force as they saw themselves as understaffed. A clear walk back towards the direction of the police’s favor.

They shut down claims for defunding, community policing, hiring local citizens, ending the current PBA contract, and reapplying for positions as was noted by multiple activists across organizations (Ciara, Kite Chaser, Theresa, Ezekiel, Maggie). A big want by the activist community was the defunding of the police and a reallocation of resources to the communities most troubled by current policing methods and community solutions to policing, as the Black activist Deshawn notes “what people really wanted was completely community-based solutions that didn't involve armed officers at all.” Instead, the mayor and common council decided to continue forward with other ideas. They proposed the start of a LEAD program. In fact, Maggie states that the leader of

GIAC helped make the LEAD program possible through his work on grants for it. They additionally recommended redirecting calls from the police to other unarmed units, specifically for mental health crises, which Ezekiel suggests “doesn't really help anything because the cops still show up anyway.” Additionally, they created a new department, or at least renamed the old department, according to Mom Cat, Ezekiel, and Alphonse. Helping “the county mental health and regional...social services [be] tied more closely together,” as the trans activist Alphonse notes. On top of this, they added a civilian member to the police board, filled by an activist leader from UPI, as Deshawn, Kite Chaser, and Alphonse note. Finally, they “repurposed the SWAT car...but it certainly doesn't look like a mobile medical center, which is what we asked for” (Mom Cat). So, overall, “now there's like, more budget for more, more police” stated Alphonse.

The big question following activism of this sort is, what were the reactions to it? Mom Cat perfectly addresses this by stating that the “funny part is the cops aren't happy either. Nobody's happy. So, who was this for?” All the organizations in town knew it wouldn't amount to anything and was a huge deviation from the defunding they asked for, and instead, the police were given more money for de-escalation retraining that in the past had not worked. Yet, despite this “Nobody was shocked,” according to Lux. Some people believed it was a step in the right direction, yet others saw it as nothing but more funding for the police and a new paint job for the SWAT car, or more apropos “lipstick on a pig” (Mom Cat).

To some, the policy looked like a checking of the box for reform by liberals uninterested in actual change. Since the original proposal, which was far more radical

in its approach to reimagining policing, was seen as mild to protesters according to the white activists, they were inevitably going to be upset by the final plan that was negotiated. As Kite Chaser states “even the most progressive policy that was initially proposed was seen as not going far enough by the majority of the protesters and things have progressively walked back from there.” Despite all of these issues though, there was a newfound sense of solidarity among the disappointed. There were more protests in front of IPD leading up to the announcement of the policy, and a few after protesting its result, a rise in new members to the community watch, and continued efforts at common council meetings to promote abolition, according to a range of activists across organizations, racial categories, and gender categories.

After the policy was signed, new work immediately began, and the results of non-policy-related actions began to make themselves clear. Some, like Mom Cat, said that after the policy, “it's getting harder and harder to be willfully ignorant. And I think the protests are part of that. and cops help by continuing to do horrible stuff to the marginalized.” “It gave time to reflect, hopefully, on their position, and privilege and what systems are at work in Ithaca, alongside the government, and how those things all operated in tandem,” Lux stated. Awareness of systemic racism, and the knowledge of the role of police in society, that of protecting property, became more widespread according to the Black Leader of Kubo, Ciara. Abolition became a more understood ideological position, a new distrust of, and higher standards from citizens for, the police emerged, and therefore, more attention was placed on the police and their behaviors. While a majority of activists did not, people who trusted elected officials worked on

implementation, as Ezekiel notes “there definitely are some people who have been helping out.”

Furthermore, the Solidarity Slate emerged, which helped activists begin to run for office. A group that was backed by a large majority of the activist organizations in town according to Theresa. Therefore, there was a larger amount of civic and political participation. Resulting in new candidates being elected to office both on the school board and the common council. A result that activists believed would hopefully lead to the foundation for larger changes in the future.

The most important part of the protests to Lux was the building of new organizations and the political ramifications of those groups having members run for and influence political offices. As they note “there was a political coalition that came out of the protests as well, the solidarity slate... where a lot of activists or former activists started running for political office for city government, and county legislature after their work in the protest movements, and they, some of them, got their seats as well. So, they could begin working in government to accomplish what they either didn't accomplish in the street or we're aiming to accomplish on the street level.” There was new awareness and involvement in Black-led organizations like Black Hands Universal and Southside Community Center, as Alphonse, and Kourtney note, and more funding became available for organizations like Mutual Aid Tompkins, and UPI. People are more interested in others' lives and well-being, a common sentiment across many activists including Pi, Ezekiel, and Deshawn. There became more local community farming projects, Book reads, and more involvement with Mutual Aid, which Mum suggests was a result of both the pandemic and the uprisings of the time. Additionally,

community watch by the Panteras gained many new members, and weekly protests continued, yet now with a discussion of the failed policy. Overall, they began working on other activist issues of racial, political, and social justice.

There were also smaller outcomes of this proposal, including allowing the mayor to increase his political status nationally. As Kite Chaser notes “we enabled [Mayor] Svante Myrick to take advantage of that situation to seriously boost his political capital.” Some, like Maggie and Pi, feel as though nothing has changed in the city, with Pi even suggesting that there are more “police cars, driving around day to day,” and they are acting even worse than they were prior. Despite all of this, there was more of a focus on community needs by the mayor and the common council.

Binghamton

The City’s Report and the Process

The city of Binghamton, for their police reform process, asked the John F. Finn Institution for public safety to conduct research on the community through surveys, “community conversations,” and local police data (City of Binghamton 2021). “The city created a stakeholder coalition — or Steering Committee — reflecting Binghamton’s racial, political, gender and neighborhood diversity to help identify ways for the police department to better serve the community” (City of Binghamton 2021). This group included the people in which EO 203 suggested should be involved, the mayor, the DA, the Chief of Police, Police Officers, Common Council Members, other local officials, residents, and religious leaders (City of Binghamton 2021). Information about the collaborative process was posted online, and the steering committee ran six

listening sessions that focused on different subpopulations from religious groups to business organizations (City of Binghamton 2021). Overall, the process for reform included the collection of data on the police and communities within Binghamton, and the development of the policy. As far as is discernible from the information provided by the city (City of Binghamton 2021) and by the interviews with activists, the Finn report, and the ongoing collection of community input on the process for reform, helped to build the finalized reform proposal. Therefore, the cycle of draft, community comments, and the revision for the final process did not occur in Binghamton, and instead the ongoing input was infused into the singular document that was proposed for reform. Essentially, opposed to creating a draft which will be commented on and modified, the city instead made one final document using the information provided by the Finn report and the community forums without allowing for additional community inputs before it was finalized.

The research institute ran models to determine the effect race of the citizen had on certain aspects of policing (Worden, Cochran, McLean, and Worden 2021). They found that while race affects who is pulled over, it does not affect the likelihood of searches, arrests, or tickets after a stop (Worden, Cochran, McLean, and Worden 2021). They also found that white and black citizens both makeup about 50% of the population of police uses of force, and that for some aspects of use of force, like Tasers, black citizens have force used upon them at a higher rate (Worden, Cochran, McLean, and Worden 2021).

The city during the months of January and February of 2021 ran Zoom focus groups, and a community survey (Worden, Cochran, McLean, and Worden 2021).

“Meetings lasted 35 minutes to an hour, and the number of participants and attendees ranged from 52 to 105” (Worden, Cochran, McLean, and Worden 2021). A big focus of community complaints was around “transparency and accountability” with suggestions like making the complaint data public, and the use of a civilian review board to review these complaints, being suggested as solutions (Worden, Cochran, McLean, and Worden 2021). In addition to this, and with the repeal of 50-a, the citizens wanted officer disciplinary records to be posted publicly (Worden, Cochran, McLean, and Worden 2021). Some participants wanted more engagement with the police and the public, and others, both survey and focus group respondents, wanted more anti-racism training for officers (Worden, Cochran, McLean, and Worden 2021). Some citizens wanted more diversity in hiring, and reallocation of police funds, among many other requests, but a very common request was for changes to non-violent police calls (Worden, Cochran, McLean, and Worden 2021). “Among the strongest concerns was for the department to offload the responsibility of responding to mental health, substance abuse, and other nonviolent calls to external agencies. In decoupling these responsibilities from police purview, the public offered, there could be reductions in the potential for escalation, reduced contact with the police that these populations experience, and elevated diversion to social services” (Worden, Cochran, McLean, and Worden 2021).

Overall, the study recommended many things. This included more contact and discussions with residents, community policing tactics (and therefore more hired police), clearer and more transparent use of force and complaint data, more trainings, a form of citizen oversight, diversion plans that include local services, use of social media

for updates by the police, more community surveys, and more diverse hires (Worden, Cochran, McLean, and Worden 2021).

The city took these recommendations in and then built a finalized report, in this report seven goals were suggested, and these outlined their steps forward for reform (City of Binghamton 2021). In fact, the short length of the suggested reforms was a clear issue that will show up in the following section of interviews with activists. Their first goal was to “improve Transparency & Accountability,” a process that included publishing annual reports, force policies, and conducting an audit of arrests, stops, and use of force data (City of Binghamton 2021). Additionally, they suggest they will publish police training materials, improve the complaint process, and use social media to engage better with the public (City of Binghamton 2021). Their second goal was to diversify the police force, a process that is to be done through focusing on residents for hire, hiring a recruitment officer, and expanding their online hiring process (City of Binghamton 2021). Goal three was to expand their association with MHAST, create a group for new programs for mental health services, and explore new transportation possibilities for people in crises, all to aid with their response to mental health crises (City of Binghamton 2021). Their fourth goal, to employ better training for officers, is to be achieved through more training on LGBTQIA+ and immigrant communities, and more use of force training (City of Binghamton 2021). Goal five focused on community policing strategies (City of Binghamton 2021). Through the use of meetings to ensure the implementation of the reforms, an increase in officers on foot and bike, the use of community surveys, and the use of community partnerships, they expect to increase the connections between the community and police (City of Binghamton 2021). Goal six

was to increase their relationships with the local youth populations through the creation of a youth center, SROS, and other forms of outreach (City of Binghamton 2021). The final goal was to increase citizen engagement to “help advise and shape the priorities addressed in this plan” (City of Binghamton 2021).

With all of this said, the policy did not provide direct responses to all of the community’s problems, nor did it look like it did enough. The following section on interviews will examine the activists’ perceptions of these reform efforts, and what occurred after they were submitted.

Interviews

The policy process in Binghamton was complicated but not unexpected. The people chosen to be involved with the policy discussions were done so deliberately, specifically those who supported the mayor and the police force, including officers themselves, as multiple activists, and a common council member note. Anna, a common council member states in particular “the mayor handpicked the members of the collaborative.” No activists were chosen, just faith leaders like the chair of the NAACP, who had previous shady connections with the mayor around youth funding, according to Tila. Additionally, while there was a Democrat on the committee, the two most outspoken council members were not invited, Anna, a common council member, notes.

On top of these meetings to develop the policy, there was an ongoing survey to collect opinions on police reform from the citizens. At one point, screenshots of the poorly worded community survey were posted online, in an attempt to get people to input incorrect demographics to mess with the data, “what this person basically did is

that they screenshotted the questions and highlighted the ones that were problematic or worded in such a way that if you weren't thinking about it, you would pick the wrong answer. And then they basically said they were encouraging all their followers to, you know, to like to fuck with the questionnaire, like, you know, when you answer the demographics, at the end, don't give your true demographics... when they ask you about your age, say that you're older, when they ask you about the color of your skin, your race, say something else, or when they ask you about if you've ever had police interactions? Say yes, just lie, you know” (Tila). Eventually, the mayor and common council caught on and made a public statement to avoid such choices. The survey got only 300 participants, as Kristi acknowledged. Tila notes that the “Roy consultancy group analyzed all the submissions,” and they suggested that the use of Tasers was the only location where racial bias was present.

This report and the recommendations proposed were also countered by an ongoing community forum organized by city racial justice organizations. Through these widely attended meetings, the activists developed a proposal for police reform, and specifically the allocation of resources to other services. Now, while most of the political elites (i.e., the mayor and common council) saw activists as a threat, and attempted to paint them as crazy, two common council members were supportive of the activists’ demands for reform, and would check and talk with the activists regularly, noted Tila. Some council members welcomed the protests, like Anna, yet others saw the protests as morally correct but not following the desired tactics of the representative, or as dangerous. The latter group even went as far as trying to stop public comment.

The activists in Binghamton wanted a reduction of SROs, a defunding, and reallocation of police resources for community-oriented projects related to housing, education, and racial justice, yet ended up with a reform policy that was less than promising to them. The end result of the EO 203 process was a mixed bag, with some like Tina suggesting that “there's been no movement at all in terms of the politics,” specifically in regard to the felt realities of living in the city of Binghamton. With that said, there were some proposed changes. First, they made policies more accessible online, had more police officers on bikes, and hired more diverse officers. There were “a lot of the proposals surrounding taking money away from the police department and putting it more towards services that would purport to prevent crime, rather than react to it,” Anna stated in her interview, yet none made the final policy. The activists tried to get rid of three officers to save 1.2 million, a proposal that they even made a video about to show how the funding could be used to build a new school, or house families for a year, and instead, the mayor and common council offered to put more SROs in schools, and defunding the police did not happen. Overall, the policy was used to “justify more police officers,” as Kristi notes.

The reaction to the policy and the process to create it was mixed. Some, like Sherri, suggest “it was exactly what we expected,” which makes sense given the people involved with the committee. Therefore, the activists, while not surprised, were disappointed and angry at the result. The proposal was useless, more money was given to the police, and there was no need to refute a process they found to be pointless, especially considering this was right after they tried to remove bail reforms. Some, like Sherri, the Afro-Latina leader of Citizen Action, view it as a success for the way in

which it brought people and groups together for this cause, and gave people hope. Despite what was viewed as a failure, it also was reassuring to know that it was not an outcome of the activism but rather the mayor, common council, and the policy process, as the common council member, Anna, notes. Simply reinforcing the idea that political elites will not change the status quo. Also, despite losses on the political level with the policy, some activists, like Elisa, viewed the whole experience as positive as there were more coalitions, donations, book drives, etc. within the community.

After the policy was signed, the work did not stop. There were protests immediately after the announcement of the policy, mostly, as Sherri notes, “because we were putting pressure on them.” In fact, Black August, a large multi-city event, was developed to combat the policy and educate more people. There was also more organizing around the jail and the ongoing operation there. On top of this, more people are invested in civic and political change. Three activists ran, and one won school board races. Additionally, the Community Foundation of South-Central NY helped establish funds for racial and housing justice, and a few activists and local black religious leaders created the Change Coalition, which worked with the city to build a new youth center, Anzel notes. There was ongoing work with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to help with COVID recovery, a process that became of interest to the activists. Eventually, after public outcry, \$6 million was given to local affordable housing. On top of this a few racial equity grants were started, and more mutual aid networks were created.

Despite this, some people, like Tila, perceive nothing as having changed on the political front. In fact, the White DAROC member suggests that the only outcome really was the connections built between organizations. After the policy was announced and it

was viewed as pointless to continue pressuring politicians about it, it became clear that the best strategy was to continue “base building and capacity building,” Anzel states. Some organizations were hurt during this time, whether that was due to the blow of the failed policy or because of COVID, it felt as though there was a “decrease in kind of general political activity overall,” Anzel acknowledges. Organizations like DAROC started to organize around different social justice issues. All pointing toward what Kristi means when she says she doesn’t “think the policy is going to change. But I think the scope of local actions is going to change.”

Poughkeepsie

The City’s Report and the Process

In Poughkeepsie, the reform process was run by the Procedural Justice Committee, composed of police officers, city residents, and stakeholders, which helped to develop recommendations through the use of a couple of community forums (City of Poughkeepsie Procedural Justice Committee 2021). They proposed in the end, the creation of a civilian review board or another form of oversight to review complaints (City of Poughkeepsie Procedural Justice Committee 2021). They also recommended the expansion of mental health partnerships, an improvement of the complaint forms, a focus on hiring diverse officers, a focus on community policing, keep employing SROs, continued body cam use, and yearly use of force training (City of Poughkeepsie Procedural Justice Committee 2021). All of which were outlined as possible reforms in EO 203 (New York State 2020).

The reform suggestions were then taken in and written into a draft plan for the city by the PJC (City of Poughkeepsie 2021a). They also had an online tool for public feedback during this process (City of Poughkeepsie 2021a). In their report, they showed how the department was already using procedural justice and implicit bias training and showed their updated policy manual from 2019 (City of Poughkeepsie 2021a). They included their policies on topics of discrimination, use of force, and others (City of Poughkeepsie 2021a). They stated that their policies are already publicly available, and that they will continue their established Crisis Intervention Team program (City of Poughkeepsie 2021a). They also acknowledged that they already have signed the “Right to Know Act” into law (City of Poughkeepsie 2021a). The draft plan also included an acknowledgment of the need for, and a plan of action to develop, a civilian review board. They suggested that they will continue to hire diverse officers, yet they continued to state that the officers will be allowed to live up to 20 miles outside of the city (City of Poughkeepsie 2021a). They noted they would continue to have an SRO and continue with other forms of community outreach including expanding their connection with local mental health services and child protection services and having community policing (City of Poughkeepsie 2021a). Most of which was already being done by the city (City of Poughkeepsie 2021a).

After community input and the finalization of the proposal by the PJC, it is clear that the differences between the draft and finalized plan were minor, with notes added about the continued involvement of the PJC in the reform process, a want to seek accreditation, the creation of a working group to create a civilian review board, and a continued engagement with the citizens of the city on the reform process (City of

Poughkeepsie 2021b). Overall, the Finn Institute, which analyzed the final policy, suggested that “the City of Poughkeepsie's reform and reinvention efforts predate Executive Order 203. The report of the Collaborative highlights several reforms adopted by CPPD ahead of the Executive Order and charts several paths of further reform that are compatible with extant research findings” (Worden and McLean 2021). They suggested that they should continue community surveys, have more community policing, and keep racial justice at the forefront of their mind in the ongoing process (Worden and McLean 2021). While the Finn Institute found the reforms to be promising, the city residents had differing opinions. The following section will discuss the findings from the interviews with local residents on this process.

Interviews

In Poughkeepsie, the development of a policy following EO 203 was done through the local procedural justice committee. Greta notes the process by stating that, “you form this committee, and you don't even invite anybody who's, or you invite one person who has some activist background, but you know, is not presently in the most active group in the city.” The focus for the mayor and common council was the PJC, which was an attempt to signal cooperation with the community more broadly. Therefore, “the police department tried to portray the report as coming from the procedural justice committee. Because they wanted to make it look like the public created this. Or at least representatives of the public created this. When that is not what happened. What happened was the procedural justice committee submitted, I think, seven recommendations. But the report itself is written by the police,” the White activist

Kalvin notes. Therefore, it seemed as though the police played a larger role in the reform than any other group.

In addition, none of the political leaders wanted to see change, and nothing changed unless groups like PCAC made an uproar about it. None of the council members were directly antagonistic towards the activists, when individually lobbied some were receptive, while others were uninterested. With that said, the police attempted to intimidate the local activists, leaving some “fearing that there would be some type of retaliation,” as the Black activist Tesla notes. Which lends a perspective to the knowledge that “our common counsel is being federally investigated for unconstitutional discrimination when it comes to the police attacking people of color” (Maddie).

Despite the want by the mayor and common council to keep this process away from the activists in Poughkeepsie, they did have to engage with them, which gave activists an avenue to promote their claims. This was outside of already occurring protests, and community events in Poughkeepsie. Brad, a White activist leader, was largely responsible for the data collection and analysis that aided in the activist proposal according to Niles. Using FBI, and state criminal justice data, they were able to poke holes in the reports provided by the police department during the policy development process. The city also used a digital meeting platform, “it wasn't Zoom, they used Global GoToMeeting or whatever it is, which is a harder thing to get onto,” as Isa notes. An issue that made it harder for everyday people to participate. Despite this, “the virtual commenting [was] definitely helpful” (Mattis), and ENJAN and PCAC got people to email and attend council meetings. Some people came to council meetings with

prepared remarks, and others without, “I just feel like by actually having both kinds of comments that kind of like gave you a whole like congealed the whole community together and you were you understood the larger picture because it was told through so many stories, so to speak” notes Mattis.

During this entire time, protests in the city were ongoing. “If it wasn't for the protests, we would never have seen EO 203, if it wasn't for the protests...this is a rare historic opportunity” Kylie states. Despite this, the mayor and common council did not react to the ongoing protests and activism in the city according to Niles. Additionally, there was a concerted effort to contact and have conversations with these political elites. The mayor and common council were engaged in a number of ways including being invited “to some ENJAN meetings, we certainly wrote and called them and showed up at Common Council meetings” to vocalize issues, states Brad. Despite the mayor and common council being kind to the activists for the most part, they knew it was never going to amount to actual policy change.

In the end, Poughkeepsie was given a mixed bag of recommendations. Some say it as nothing, in particular, that nothing changed in regard to police reform or jail reform. It was simply “Cosmetic compliance.” (Brad). With this said, things were brought to the forefront. The civilian review board came up for a vote. They were able to lobby to increase the city’s youth budget for the 2022 year according to Mattis. The city said they would try to split up mental health calls and have family services intervene as Kylie notes. They decided to drop the need for a certain amount of college credits to become a police officer, which allowed lower-income and minority individuals to more easily get into those positions when obtaining college credits would be difficult. The right-to-

know act was introduced. More data transparency, specifically the publication of a quarterly report, yet at the time of the interview this was not yet done despite being two quarters after the initiation of this policy. Either way, activists like Calvin believe that without the protests and activism, this would not have even been proposed.

To some, like Tesla, EO 203 looked like progress as it helped initiate an attempt to diversify the police force. No police feathers were ruffled, but despite this, small steps were made in the right direction. Some, like Maddie, viewed it as “not enough, it's not enough,” despite procedural changes around chokeholds, and use of force, because it still allowed police to investigate themselves in regard to a proposed special investigation. Overall, though, it was a learning process for everyone, where they were better able to gauge their expectations for future activism, and to understand the tactics that worked and didn't work for them. It empowered citizens to put in more work for the betterment of their community.

The reactions to the policy were mixed. Some were disappointed, angered, and shocked. Some people saw it as positive but not enough, while others questioned what the point of this process was if they were not going to acknowledge BIPOC voices. Despite their efforts not amounting to the expected outcome, the protests brought new leadership to the forefront. More people became involved with PCAC, ENJAN, and local political discourse generally. New people ran for city council, specifically people of color. Additionally, there was more awareness towards the work that needs to be done, and more political awareness for young activists due to self-education. There was more community, and coalition building, and on top of this, a “large number of police officers retir[ed]”, which Brad assumed was caused by increased public pressure.

With that said, protesting did not continue as usual, nor as regularly, after the police reform policy was signed. “I certainly don't recall hearing about anything in reaction to this,” Tesla notes. There were simply no public demonstrations in response. People took a break, as burnout was high among activists. The protests did not last long, according to some, like Brad, mostly due to the idea that White allyship “ebbs and flows” with the salience of racial injustice. And therefore, so do the memberships of these groups, the salience of the issues, and the avenues for reform. In the end, some activism did continue as the city kept postponing items of the report for implementation. As Isa notes, they kept asking “where are the recommendations? You know what I mean? Like, where are they, we're not seeing them,” which has led them once again toward “heavy emailing and phone calling” of the mayor and common council for the purpose of the implementation of the reforms.

Discussion

When looking at the cases presented above, you can clearly see the role that EO 203 played in the structuring of the reform process, but also in the reforms themselves. The first glaring similarity is in the process. As was set up by EO 203, each city conducted surveys and focus groups to address the needs of these communities. The results suggested that most people were in favor of police reform through transparency, and new training, along with the development of some form of community oversight. With that said, the activists all countered these reports with their own work including developing their own suggestions on how a defunded police budget could help to address a number of ongoing crises in the cities. These were then utilized in the public commenting portion of the reform process in each city, conducted primarily through

online meetings. The end result of the proposals in each city looked as though they took insights from the research that was conducted along with input from community members. This though is contrary to the activists' perceptions that their requests, including those for abolition and defunding, were largely ignored. These similarities in processes seem largely dictated by EO 203, the political interests of the mayor and common council in each city, and their findings from the community surveys. Therefore, the end result of the process looked as though the city addressed community needs and the requirements laid out by the state government.

While all the cities' processes were largely determined by EO 203 and the suggested policy recommendations make it seem as though it also dictated what reforms were sought after, this is not the entire story. Each of these cities has its own local political context, and people in power with their own interests, so it would be a flaw to suggest that EO 203 completely dictated the results. The more nuanced reasoning for these policy results is that the people (i.e., mayor, common council, PJC...etc.) involved in the policy process in each city favored other voices and the results of other processes (i.e., the community focus groups) over the vocal statements of the activists. This does not mean activists were completely ignored, as can be seen in early drafts of the reforms, yet in the end, their opinions were likely not the most favored. In fact, it seems that the city's decision-makers mostly favored the research conducted by their respective research organizations. Despite being noted by some activists as being inaccurate, these were representative studies of the local community, and therefore political elites favoring these over the loud minority of activists makes logical sense. Specifically given that local political elites (mayor and common council) in each city are either striving for

reelection, higher position, or just attempting to retain a good public reputation both within and outside of their political party, it makes sense that they would focus on the results of the academically researched focus groups to make their decisions as opposed to favoring the much more controversial activists. Additionally, when you look at the local context of each city you can somewhat see the countering claims from other important players in the policy realm. For example, the police in Ithaca argued that they are understaffed and the reduction of more police officers through defunding of the department would leave more people in the community at risk. On top of this, when looking at who was involved in the policy processes' decisions, one can see that in Poughkeepsie and Binghamton the choices were made by local community leaders with differing interests, some of which opposed the changes pushed for by activists. Overall, while the process and the basic recommendations were suggested by EO 203, the decision on the final policy was made by the political elite in each city and the task force focused on this process, and given these previously stated issues, the result makes logical sense.

With this said, the activist community felt ignored throughout the entire process. This though was not the end for that community, as protests continued in the streets, activists were elected to political positions, and most importantly the activist community had built strong connections with one another and sometimes even new organizations. Therefore, despite the activists not receiving huge wins from their perspective, in the policy realm, the outcomes of this wave of protest were somewhat positive. Add this to the many other cases around the US in which similar reforms around transparency, new training, and the banning of particular police tactics were adopted, and you can see that

all of these small wins built up to a larger reform process nationwide. For example, in Houston during this same time period, Mayor Sylvester Turner signed Executive Order 1-67 and started a police reform task force which resulted in new civilian oversight, a ban on particular police tactics, and a transparency in police data, among other things (City of Houston 2020), similar to what is occurring in upstate New York, and possibly around the country.

Given the similarity in the outcomes across cities, the question must be asked, does activism matter? The short answer is yes. Protests across the world were the basis for EO 203 and played some role in the local efforts discussed here. In particular, protests helped to collect community needs through public forums, rally against hateful rhetoric and groups, and push for the reforms that the groups wanted. So, if protests are still useful, then why are the end policy results so similar? A portion of this comes from the fact that activists are only a small portion of the community within these cities, and likely have more radical opinions than the broad population, therefore, while the activist's requests were not always met, this is possibly an outcome of their opinions not being in line with the broader community's opinions. Additionally, politicians rarely seek extreme reforms, and therefore they were likely able to heavily favor the findings from their studies to pursue the mildest form of reform, that would cause the least uproar from the city's diverse stakeholders in order to ensure that their place in power is not heavily threatened by this policy process. Overall, the lack of activist success in policy terms does not mean that the ongoing activism was useless. With new organizations, new activists, and new common council members, along with ongoing reform processes, the effect activists have had on police reform is subtle but continuous. In the

future, as is clear from the past, these police reforms and the movement that achieved them will lay the groundwork for further reforms, hopefully getting activists toward their goal of police abolition and defunding.

Conclusion

The previous chapter focused on the police reform processes in New York State during 2020-2021. Through the use of interviews with local activists, and an analysis of the proposed police reform policies, I found that all three cities had similar policy outcomes. These included new transparency of policing data, the requirement of body cameras, bans on chokeholds, and citizen involvement with the system of policing for constant vigilance. With this said, these were far from the abolition and defunding ideals that were pushed forward by the activists, leading to some disappointment with the final results. Despite this, activists have continued to gain political power through elections, and built new organizations and connections for future work. Not only strengthening the activist community in each city but along with the ongoing nature of these reforms, a political base that can be utilized for future political actions for police abolition.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The story laid out in this manuscript is one of newly sparked activism that is bound by the features of their local environments and the state mandates outlining what reforms are to be sought by the cities. It is a story of new Black-led organizations emerging from the ashes of a tragic and salient event of police brutality. It is a story that expresses why particular tactics are chosen, not from the perspective of an onlooker, but instead from those who were actively making the decisions. It is a story about how ambitious wants from activists, and status quo preservation by political elites (i.e., the mayor and common council) lead to disappointing outcomes for the activists involved. Yet, this is also a story about how small advancements are made from waves of activism that set the groundwork for future activism to push the needle forward once again. While it would be simple to retell the stories that were told in each chapter, the attempt here is to point toward the overarching story of this activism, a story that points towards it as a microcosm of activism that is perpetually ongoing in regard to police reform and racial justice.

It is important to briefly discuss the historical context of these protest activities being discussed. On May 25th of 2020, George Floyd was murdered by the police in Minneapolis. The video of this interaction was shared widely on the internet, and this disgusting example of an unjustified murder by a state official sparked widespread outrage and protests across the country. These protests led some states, like New York, to require cities to reform their police forces, in particular in relation to issues of racial justice. The killing of George Floyd, and Executive Order 203 both laid the groundwork

for the activism I discuss here that occurred from May 2020 - April 2021. With this said, the purpose of this manuscript is not to provide a historical account of the events in totality, but to understand three particular aspects of the movement from the perspective of those involved. These three topics, group formation, tactical choice, and policy development are the focus of the majority of this manuscript and of each chapter respectively. The following chapter acts as a summary of the previous chapters and as the glue that brings all of these topics together.

What I Found

Chapter 2 looked at the groups that were involved with the activism in each of these cities. In particular, it was an examination of the processes of group and coalition formation within and across cities. Through interviews with activists, I am able to understand group, and coalition, formation as a result of identity and need. As was highlighted across all three cities, groups formed around identity, whether voluntary or involuntary, but that was only true in the sense that a gap existed between the identity of the activists and the active social movement organizations. This meant that for cities, like Poughkeepsie and Binghamton, new group formation was not common during this time as there was a plethora of groups that corresponded to the identities and ideologies of the activists in the cities. With that said, in Ithaca, there were a few new organizations that emerged, primarily centered around radical ideological beliefs and BIPOC racial identity. This was due to the fact that previously established organizations either lacked Black leadership or were more centrist in their ideology, at least as far as the general population of activists was concerned. This gap allowed for new organizations to form that fit those needs, that once established, met the needs of that population of activists.

Due to the racialized nature of the protest wave, racial identities were primarily centered in conversations around identity, which ultimately led these newly formed organizations to have Black leadership as White activists took an approach that can best be described as active allyship. Where they were actively involved with protest activities, following the leadership of a Black activist, and were sometimes brought into the organizing core to assist in particular actions or for particular tasks. Additionally, due to these protests being centered around a highly publicized case of police brutality, there was a centering of police abolitionist ideology. While this ideology is not new, the widespread acceptance of this ideology among activists was new for Ithaca, therefore leading to a lack of previously established groups with this ideology, and subsequently, the need to form one. Now, the constant focus on the formation of new groups does not mean that older organizations, like those active in Poughkeepsie and Binghamton, did not show the signs of the processes occurring in their past. When looking at the identity and ideology of the groups that were already in existence, you see a racial and ideological homogeneity among their members. This finding is not new, as Klandermans (2014) notes that identification with groups' members and leadership leads to an individual joining a particular organization. The interesting finding here is that this process of group formation around identity and ideology seems only to occur if there is a perceived gap between what is present in the population of activists and the current groups. While more research is needed to say how this process occurs across different locales, this finding can point us to the reasoning behind why some cities see new organizations form, why others do not, and how those organizations will form, which will be centered on the identity and ideology of the contemporary protest wave.

Now, this only highlights the formation of groups and not the formation of coalitions either across groups or cities. As opposed to groups forming to fill a particular ideological or identity gap in the organizational space, coalitions are created to fill a need. Similar to the idea of event coalitions (Levi & Murphy 2006), where groups will come together for the sake of a particular event, the coalitions that formed in all of these cities were either for a singular event or a long-term event. In regard to the singular event, this process was primarily focused on the need for more people at an event, or the need for a particular organization to provide safety for another. In regard to the long-term event, these were coalitions formed around the need to develop police reform recommendations for EO 203. These event coalitions, especially the short-term, disband after the event. The same is expected of the event coalitions for long-term events, yet this would need to be studied further to fully understand their trajectory.

The findings for Chapter 2 are interesting and can help us elaborate on previous understandings of group formation by adding an understanding of the process from the perspective of those involved. Additionally, it notes that group formation is a process based on identity, and the absence of groups that fit that, and that groups form will fill this gap. The added assumption here being that while the groups here were formed around BIPOC racial identities, and the ideology of police abolition, this is due to the focus of this wave of protests, and if the context were to change then so would the identity and ideology of focus. Future research on this topic will hopefully be able to locate whether this process is applicable to other situations.

Chapter 3 of this manuscript focuses on the tactical choices made by the organizations discussed in the previous chapter. Here the focus is on the distinction

between demonstrative and institutional tactics, which were chosen, why, and by whom. I find through an examination of activist perceptions on this topic that there is a commonality in the tactics within the repertoires of contention across these organizations. This builds on previous research on repertoires of contention (Tilly 1979), and specifically their focus on the modification of this repertoire, to note that these sets of tactics are stable across cities. This helps future research by shifting the focus from how new tactics are adopted to a focus on which of the tactics are chosen and why. Our findings suggest that this is an outcome of two different processes. First, the choice of particular tactics is associated with the ideology of the organization. Specifically, newer organizations with fewer ties to the political process and political elites (i.e., the mayor and common council), will take more demonstrative tactics to make their point, while longer-standing organizations will focus primarily on institutional tactics. This is due to the previous connections that organizations have with the mayor and common council, and the perception that these institutional avenues for reform are open. This perception of openness, similar to the idea presented by Goodwin (2001), suggests that when the institutional avenues for reform are perceived as closed, activists will gravitate toward demonstrative tactics to promote police reform.

Now, with this said, future research will need to elaborate on this decision-making process to note whether this is a particular feature of the Upstate New York cities studied, the political environment in which they occurred, or a more generalized process applicable to other cities. Our findings here point to the process of tactical choice being one dictated primarily by the perception of the target, as opposed to knowledge of how to implement tactics, a focus of the tactical diffusion literature

(Myers 2010; Biggs 2013). Overall, the findings of this chapter point to the idea that the development of the organization, its leadership, and its history, all aspects discussed in the first chapter, will lead to differences in the tactical choices being made as their identity and ideology will lead them to view certain tactics as more effective than others.

The final chapter, Chapter 4, builds upon the previous two chapters in order to analyze how these organizations, and their tactical choices, lead to differences at the policy level. In particular, how the structure of the political process itself limited the ability for the reform suggestions made by the activists to be adopted into policy. When looking at the perceptions of the policy process from the side of the activists you can see that the mayor and common council in the city largely ignored the recommendations given by the activists, which resulted in a disappointing outcome for the activists. Now, if activists were not the set of actors playing the largest role in policy development, then who was? This answer can simply be answered with the political elite (i.e., the mayor and common council). Through dictating what public meetings will occur, when they will occur, and what platform they will occur on, the mayor and common council in the city dictated the policy process entirely. This structuring though was given to them by the state government through EO 203, which outlined not just the way in which the process should occur, but also what in particular they would like to see as an outcome of the process. This handing down of the process and recommendations bound the policy process greatly, and while changes were made to policing in each city, these were largely only done to bring the police forces in line with the recommendations from the state, as opposed to accepting the proposals from the activists.

All of this is not to say that activism played no role in the process, as through the use of coalition building, detailing police reform recommendations, and constant common council meeting attendance, the activists made their points loud and clear to the mayor and common council in their respective cities. While they did not get everything that they wanted, the activists in large part said that if they did not do this work then the final policy would have included less changes. Therefore, the use of activism was not useless to the activists at all but rather not as effective as they would have hoped. Adding to this, the policy itself, and EO 203 would also not have happened without these protests. Following the murder of George Floyd, activists took to the street across the nation. This resulted in many locations mandating reforms of their police similar to EO 203, pointing to the idea that while maybe they did not achieve all their goals, the use of protests made the policy process itself possible. Additionally, the police reform policy is not the only place where outcomes of the activism in the city can be seen. When looking at the non-policy successes of the activism you can see a higher connection between the activists in each city, the formation of groups that can continue the work following the policy adoption, and the introduction to new mutual aid and education programs to help out the citizenry of the city. All of which the activists saw as a direct result of their protest activity.

This manuscript holds within it three connected studies of different aspects of social movements all within the protest movements in Upstate New York following the murder of George Floyd and the signing of Executive Order 203. This movement is not one exclusive to New York, but rather to the United States as a whole. While this data is not generalizable to populations and situations outside of these cases, it is important

to address that these processes outlined here might also be at play in other cities across the country. If this is the case, the resulting findings from this study suggest that small advancements have been made in bringing about a more racially just police force across the nation. A set of advancements, like those in previous historical movements, that will be built upon in future waves of activism on the topic. Additionally, the successes of this wave of protest, specifically the development of new organizations, increased interconnectedness in the activist community, and the development of new mutual aid networks, lay the foundation for future work, and highlight that just because we do not see an institutional change in policing, that we might still see successes that reside outside of these institutions. The hope is that future research on this topic will determine which of these aspects are generalizable to the broader society in which we live during this time of political upheaval, and if these processes hold true in different contexts and time periods. Additionally, the hope is that this project motivates other social movement scholars to look at these processes from the perceptions of those involved as opposed to simply an examination of events or the policies themselves. By taking this depthful approach, we may be better able to understand the internal dynamics of these movements left out by larger and more quantitatively focused research. Finally, and most importantly, I hope this manuscript highlights exactly why such police reform activity is not only important for study but important for the fight for racial justice within our society. We are not simply discussing a sociological concept but the lives of those involved with these social movements, and the people who are affected by police brutality and racial injustice in our society. Keeping this in mind through our research,

noting the humanity of those involved, is crucial for understanding these complex social processes, and the effect our work can have on the world around all of us.

APPENDIX A: COMPARATIVE CASES

City	Mayor's Party	University or College	Percent African American	Percent Hispanic	Population	Frequency of Protests
Ithaca, NY	Democrat	University and College	6.1%	6.9%	30,014	Frequent
Binghamton, NY	Republican	University	10.4%	6.4%	47,376	Semi-Frequent
Poughkeepsie, NY	Republican	College	31.6%	19.5%	32,736	Rare

Note: Population and racial category percentages are taken from Diversity and Disparities [(2021)

<https://s4.ad.brown.edu/projects/diversity/DiversityPages2/Default.aspx#menu>], and

are based on 2010 census data.

APPENDIX B: SCRIPTS

ITHACA

I am seeking participants for the interview portion of a study on local activism in Ithaca. If you have been involved with any of the protests, organizations, or other activism in Ithaca since the murder of George Floyd, your insights can be incredibly useful to this project. I am attempting to examine your views on the protest activity in the city, and the dynamics that emerged throughout. Please contact me at cas563@cornell.edu if you are interested in being involved.

BINGHAMTON

I am seeking participants for the interview portion of a study on local activism in Binghamton. If you have been involved with any of the protests, organizations, or other activism in Binghamton since the murder of George Floyd, your insights can be incredibly useful to this project. I am attempting to examine your views on the protest activity in the city, and the dynamics that emerged throughout. Please contact me at cas563@cornell.edu if you are interested in being involved.

POUGHKEEPSIE

I am seeking participants for the interview portion of a study on local activism in Poughkeepsie. If you have been involved with any of the protests, organizations, or other activism in Poughkeepsie since the murder of George Floyd, your insights can be incredibly useful to this project. I am attempting to examine your views on the protest activity in the city, and the dynamics that emerged throughout. Please contact me at cas563@cornell.edu if you are interested in being involved.

LOCAL ACTIVISTS NEEDED FOR AN INTERVIEW STUDY!



HAVE YOU BEEN PARTICIPATING
IN THE PROTESTS IN
POUGHKEEPSIE SINCE THE
MURDER OF GEORGE FLOYD? IF
SO, YOUR EXPERIENCES COULD
HELP US BETTER UNDERSTAND
THE ROLE OF IDENTITY IN
PROTESTS.

TO JOIN THE STUDY PLEASE CONTACT
C.A. SMITH (CAS563@CORNELL.EDU)



LOCAL ACTIVISTS NEEDED FOR AN INTERVIEW STUDY!



HAVE YOU BEEN PARTICIPATING
IN THE PROTESTS IN
BINGHAMTON SINCE THE
MURDER OF GEORGE FLOYD? IF
SO, YOUR EXPERIENCES COULD
HELP US BETTER UNDERSTAND
THE ROLE OF IDENTITY IN
PROTESTS.

TO JOIN THE STUDY PLEASE CONTACT
C.A. SMITH (CAS563@CORNELL.EDU)



LOCAL ACTIVISTS NEEDED FOR AN INTERVIEW STUDY!



HAVE YOU BEEN PARTICIPATING
IN THE PROTESTS IN **ITHACA**
SINCE THE MURDER OF GEORGE
FLOYD? IF SO, YOUR
EXPERIENCES COULD HELP US
BETTER UNDERSTAND THE ROLE
OF IDENTITY IN PROTESTS.

TO JOIN THE STUDY PLEASE CONTACT
C.A. SMITH (CAS563@CORNELL.EDU)



APPENDIX D: SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

NAME	City	Race	Gender	Organization(s)	Leader or Member
Victoria	Ithaca	Black, Filipino, Hawaiian and White	No expressed gender identity	Mutual Aid Tompkins County	Leader
Theresa	Ithaca	Black and Latina	Woman	Democratic Socialists of America – Ithaca (DSA)	Leader
Rhonda	Ithaca	Black and Native American	Agender	The Ithaca Pantheras (TIP)	Leader (founder)
Pi	Ithaca	African American	Man	TIP, DSA, ITU, Anti-Racist Coalition, and the Solidarity Slate	Member
Mum	Ithaca	White	Woman	UPI, and TIP	Member
Maggie	Ithaca	White	Cis-Woman	Democratic Socialists of America - Ithaca	Member
Ciara	Ithaca	African American	Woman	Kubo	Leader

Alphonse	Ithaca	White	Trans Non-Binary	TIP and UPI	Member
Kourtney	Ithaca	White	Woman	Dryden Groton Plus Human Dignity Coalition, TIP, UPI, and Multicultural Resource Center.	Member
Ezekiel	Ithaca	African American	Cis-Man	The Ithaca Tenants Union (ITU)	Leader
Deshawn	Ithaca	Black and White	Man	TIP, and ITU	Member
Kite Chaser	Ithaca	White	Man	The Ithaca Pantheras	Leader
Lux	Ithaca	White	Non-Binary	The Ithaca Pantheras	Member
Peaches	Ithaca	African American	Woman	Alliance of Families for Justice, and a community elder involved with multiple	Leader

				organizations in small but influential ways.	
Mom Cat	Ithaca	White	Woman	Anti-Racist Coalition, Immigrants' Rights Coalition, and TIP	Member
Tesla	Poughkeepsie	African American	Cis-Man	PCAC, and ENJAN	Member
Shannon	Poughkeepsie	White	Woman	Co-Op Art Gallery, ENJAN	Leader (Co-Op), Member (ENJAN)
Niles	Poughkeepsie	White	Man	PCAC, ENJAN	Member
Mattis	Poughkeepsie	White	Cis-Man	Democratic Socialists of America – Mid Hudson	Member
Maddie	Poughkeepsie	West Asian	Woman	ENJAN, PCAC, Celebrating the African Spirit, and Community Matters	Member

Kylie	Poughkeepsie	White and Hispanic	Woman	854 Unity, and Melanin Unchained	Member
Kalvin	Poughkeepsie	White	Man	PCAC and ENJAN	Leader
Isa	Poughkeepsie	Afro-Latina	Cis-Woman	PCAC, and ENJAN	Leader
Greta	Poughkeepsie	White	Woman	ENJAN	Member
Brad	Poughkeepsie	White	Man	PCAC, and ENJAN	Leader
Tila	Binghamton	White	Woman	DAROC	Member
Sherri	Binghamton	Afro-Latina	Non-Binary	Citizen Action	Leader
Kristi	Binghamton	White	Woman	TruthPharm	Member
Elisa	Binghamton	African American	Woman	JUST	Member
Anzel	Binghamton	White	Man	JUST, DAROC, and Riot Act Books	Leader
Anna	Binghamton	White and Middle Eastern	Woman	Common Council	Leader

APPENDIX E: LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS- ITHACA

Organization	City	Founded (Before or After the Death of George Floyd)	Demographics	General Goals	Goals (Police Reform)
Ithaca Pantheras	Ithaca	After	Black Led. Large white base. Working class.	Abolition of the Ithaca Police Department and the development of a new community care system in its place.	Abolition of the Ithaca Police Department and the development of a new community care system in its place.
Democratic Socialists of America – Ithaca	Ithaca	Before	Mostly White. Middle Class. Academically Focused	To promote democratic socialism in Ithaca, NY, through political campaigns, educational events, and protests.	Defunding the Ithaca Police Department and the redistribution of those funds to community needs (i.e., food, education, healthcare).
Unbroken Promise Initiative	Ithaca	After	Black Led. Black activist base. Working Class.	To help with the economic development of the West Hill area of Ithaca.	To get more BIPOC community members into positions of power and decrease the level of incarceration in the city.
Tompkins County Coalition for Racial Justice	Ithaca	After	Diverse mix of all the activists in the city	To bring together local organizations to develop a community plan for the defunding of the Ithaca Police Department	Defunding the Ithaca Police Department and the redistribution of those funds to community needs (i.e., food, education, healthcare).
Multicultural Resource Center	Ithaca	Before	Latina Ran. Diverse.	To promote cross cultural conversations on	Defunding the Ithaca Police Department and

				racial justice through education and political campaigns	the redistribution of those funds to community needs (i.e., food, education, healthcare).
Southside Community Center	Ithaca	Before	Black Ran. Black Activist/community base.	To create an educational/community space for BIPOC children in the Southside community of Ithaca.	To get more BIPOC community members into positions of power and decrease the level of incarceration in the city.
No More Tears	Ithaca	Before	Unknown	To share free food with the local Ithaca community in need.	Defunding of the local police department and the redistribution of funds for free food distribution and education.
Showing Up for Racial Justice	Ithaca	Before	White Ran. White Base. Middle Class.	To allow white activists the ability to work with BIPOC organizations in the fight for racial justice	To help promote the demands of BIPOC community members.
Mutual Aid Tompkins	Ithaca	Before	Diverse Mix of Activists	To create a network of mutual aid in Ithaca to allow for people in need to get food, and clothes for free.	To get more BIPOC community members into positions of power, and to promote the demands of BIPOC organizations.
Ithaca Tenants Union	Ithaca	Before	White Trans base and leadership	To create a network of local tenants to help combat ongoing housing issues with local	Abolition of the Ithaca Police Department and the development of a new community care

				landlords in Ithaca.	system in its place.
Black Hands Universal	Ithaca	After	Black base and leadership.	To uplift BIPOC voices in Ithaca	To get more BIPOC community members into positions of power and decrease the level of incarceration in the city.

APPENDIX F: LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS- POUGHKEEPSIE

Organization	City	Founded (Before or After the Death of George Floyd)	Demographics	General Goals	Goals (Police Reform)
End the New Jim Crow Action Network	Poughkeepsie	Before	White, middle class, older.	To educate people on the effects of mass incarceration in order to combat it within Poughkeepsie.	To end mass incarceration locally.
Poughkeepsie Community Action Collaborative	Poughkeepsie	After	Diverse Mix of Activists	To create a local coalition of organizations to promote economic and racial justice.	To analyze and dispute the local EO 203 reports, as well as to promote the redistribution of police department funds to support local housing, healthcare, and post-incarceration services.
Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson	Poughkeepsie	Before	Latinx ran and focused.	To build a community to fight against local greed.	To support the redistribution of funds towards local free/reduced rent housing issues.
Celebrating the African Spirit	Poughkeepsie	Before	Racially diverse	To celebrate the contribution of enslaved Africans in Poughkeepsie	To support education around local BIPOC history
854 Unity	Poughkeepsie	Before	Black Led	To support local community care through education, protests, and food/clothing drives	unknown
Dutchess County Progressive Alliance	Poughkeepsie	Before	Older white activists	To educate citizens on local and national political issues.	To promote the defunding of the local police department.
Race Unity Circle	Poughkeepsie	Before	Black led. White base.	To promote racial unity around the idea that the only race is the human race.	To promote better relations between white power structures (i.e., police) and BIPOC citizens.
Procedural Justice Committee	Poughkeepsie	After	Police and politician ran organization	To analyze the ongoing procedural justice initiative in the city.	To develop a plan for police reform for the local community.

APPENDIX G: LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS- BINGHAMTON

Organization	City	Founded (Before or After the Death of George Floyd)	Demographics	General Goals	Goals (Police Reform)
Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier	Binghamton	Before	Primarily white.	To end mass policing and incarceration locally.	To end mass incarceration and the expansion of new jails and prisons locally.
Progressive Leaders of Tomorrow	Binghamton	Before	Black based and Black led.	To uplift marginal voices in the community through protests, educational events, and food drives.	The abolition of the Binghamton Police Department.
Citizen Action	Binghamton	Before	Primarily white.	To help with issues of housing, education and racial justice.	To support the demands of local organizations that are fighting for racial justice.
Divestment, Accountability , Reinvestment in our Community	Binghamton	After	Diverse Mix of Activists	To build a coalition of local organizations to create demands related to EO 203	Defunding or abolition of the local police, and jails/prisons, and the redistribution of funds towards education, healthcare, housing and post-incarceration services for community members.
Truthpharm	Binghamton	Before	Primarily White	To help end the opioid epidemic locally.	To stop incarceration for drug related offenses.

APPENDIX H: STATISTICAL TABLES

Number of events

City	# of Events
Ithaca	47
Binghamton	72
Poughkeepsie	74
Total	193

Number of violent events

City	# of Violent Events
Ithaca	6
Binghamton	7
Poughkeepsie	2
Total	15

Tactics and Forms

Ithaca – Forms

Form	Freq.
Rally	13
Press Conference	12
Virtual Event	1
New Law	4
Vandalism	3
Art Project	3
Fundraiser	1
Common Council Meeting	1
Election Results	2
EO 203 Related Event	3
March	3
Ceremony	1
Total	47

Ithaca – Primary Tactic

Tactic	Freq
Bannerling	1

Dramaturgical Demonstration	1
March	3
Speech Making	5
Displaying Goods/Symbolic Displays	3
Press Conference	1
Distributing Goods	1
Blockade	1
Damaging Property	5
Other	16
Debate	1
Discussion	4
Missing Activity	5
Total	47

Ithaca – Secondary Tactic

Tactic	Freq.
Petitioning	1
March	1
Speech Making	4
Sloganeering	2
Press Conference	1
Blockade	3
Other	5
Discussion	1
Missing Activity	29
Total	47

Ithaca – Tertiary Tactic

Tactic	Freq.
Civil Disobedience	1
Flag Waving	1
Physical Attack	1
Blockade	1
Other	2
Missing Activity	41
Total	47

Binghamton - Form

Form	Freq.
Rally	19
March	8
Silence	1
Ceremony	1

Riot	1
Arson	1
Art Project	1
Community Clean Up	2
Debate	1
Election Results	2
EO 203 Related Event	2
Meeting	8
Mutual Aid	4
New Law	4
Press Conference	11
Stand Off	1
Virtual Event	5
Total	72

Binghamton – Primary Tactic

Tactic	Freq.
Candle Lighting	1
Debate	11
Discussion	2
Holding Signs	2
Marching	7
Reading Names	1
Silence	1
Speech Making	13
Sloganeering	4
Press Conference	1
Musical	5
Performances	
Distributing	4
Goods	
Damaging	3
Property	
Other	14
Missing Activity	3
Total	72

Binghamton – Secondary Tactics

Tactic	Freq.
Bannering	1
Discussion	10
Petitioning	1
Holding Signs	5
March	2
Silence	3

Speech Making	5
Sloganeering	1
Vigil	1
Press Conference	2
Ceremonial Activity	1
Musical Performance	2
Flag Waving	1
Blockade	1
Looting	1
Other Activity	4
Missing Activity	31
Total	72

Binghamton – Tertiary Tactics

Tactic	Freq.
Reading Names	2
Silence	2
Speech Making	2
Sloganeering	6
Singing Collectively	1
Physical Attack	1
Damaging Property	1
Other	4
Missing Activity	53
Total	72

Poughkeepsie – Form

Form	Freq.
Rally	11
March	9
Vigil	5
Sit in	1
Ceremony	6
Parade/Motorcade	2
Attack	1
Vandalism	1
Stand Off	1
Press Conference	10
New Law	5
Listening Session	1
Food Drive	1
EO 203 Related Event	4
Election Results	4
Common Council	1
Meeting	1

Art Project	10
Virtual Meeting	
Total	74

Poughkeepsie – Primary Tactic

Tactic	Freq.
Candle Lighting	2
Debate	14
Discussion	1
Parading	1
Praying	1
Marching	10
Silence	1
Speech Making	9
Sloganeering	3
Vigil	1
Wreathing	1
Ceremonial Activity	1
Civil Disobedience	1
Distributing Goods	2
Physical Attack	1
Damaging Property	1
Other	19
Missing Activity	5
Total	74

Poughkeepsie – Secondary Tactic

Tactic	Freq
Candle Lighting	3
Canvassing	1
Discussion	14
Holding Signs	2
Silence	1
Speech Making	1
Sloganeering	4
Vigil	2
Displaying Goods/Symbolic Goods	1
Musical Performance	1
Flag Waving	2

Distributing Goods	1
Yelling	1
Other	1
Missing Activity	39
Total	74

Poughkeepsie – Tertiary Tactic

Tactic	Freq.
Dancing	1
Discussion	1
Holding Signs	2
Praying	1
Silence	1
Sloganeering	1
Musical Performance	2
Other	2
Missing Activity	63
Total	74

APPENDIX I: REFORMS AND ACTIVISTS' WANTS

	NAMES (cities/activist communities)					
Reforms	City of Ithaca	City of Binghamton	City of Poughkeepsie	Activists - Ithaca	Activists - Binghamton	Activists - Poughkeepsie
Replacing the current police department with the Department of Public Safety	✓			✓		
Crisis intervention models for policing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Police review board	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Unarmed, Non-emergency, or mental health call system	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Evaluation of policing practices	✓	✓	✓			✓
New Trainings	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Data transparency	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Diverse recruitment	✓	✓	✓			✓
Repurposing the SWAT vehicle	✓			✓		
Firing and rehiring a new police force				✓		
Abolition of the local police department				✓		
Defunding and reallocating police department funds				✓	✓	✓
Community Policing		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hiring Local				✓		

Citizens						
Ending the PBA contract				✓		
Youth Outreach (SROs)		✓	✓			
Lower education standards for police officers			✓			✓
Reduction of SROs					✓	
Jail/Incarceration Reform						✓

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