The Unbroken Chain

by
Tristen Spencer Tomlin

Submitted to the Department of Political Science
School of Natural and Social Sciences
in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Bachelor of Art

Purchase College
State University of New York

May 9, 2023

Sponsor:	Samuel R, Galloway, PhD
	Chair, Political Science
Second Reader:	Mariel Rodney, PhD
	Professor, Literature

Table of Contents:

Table of Figures:

I. Introduction

Having self-determination over what's taught in the academy has been long fought for by Black students. Black students know this well as their community has had to create academic institutions for knowledge production, and once those institutions integrated, they fought to be seen within them. It was Black student activism through the 1960s and 1970s, specifically the late 60s and early 70s, that pushed for that greater visibility within academic intuitions founded under capitalist white supremacist patriarchy. In the past, Black students and their allies had to build power by through protest, occupations of spaces, creation of demands, pushing for cultural academic programs, and working with Black faculty. They did this in hopes of fulfilling the promises of the Black Civil Rights movement of the 1960s.

These activities were at their height after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., coinciding with the rise of Black student activist like Huey Newton and Booby Seale of the Black Panther Party, and the Kwame Ture of SNCC (the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee). This Black Power Era of the movement called for a radical shift in tactics that black students on their campuses had taken up. Students were confrontational and ready to be seen because they understood that their experiences mattered. Although state repression throughout the 1970s would kill some of these actions on campuses. The 1980s saw a decline in student movement activity to scale it was in the previous era not only due to state repression of national actors but a shift in cultural landscape where there was not a large societal political movement.

It should be noted that the AIDS epidemic occasioned a large societal political movement in the 1980s, but not one that generated the same on-campus fervor as the Black Civil rights Movement. Similarly in the next era of the 2000s there was an anti-war movement against the Afghanistan Invasion and later Iraq War, but it also did not create the same societal eruption as the

recent COVID-19 and George Floyd Uprising of the 2020s, which spilled over onto campuses. Students on campuses like SUNY Purchase College felt enough was enough and rebelled against the conditions they faced as it pertained to racism and cultural erasure. Rebellion on those issues spilled into conversations and rallies about sexual assault, class, environmental racism, disability issues and access to resources like mental health care.

Purchase College students were the new link in a chain of Black student movement activity. Inspired by how the protests of 2020 sought to transform the nation, students brought that energy back to their campus in Fall of 2021. This Senior Project looks to engage these student activists as rationale actors making strategic moves to gain support of members of their community while tactically outmaneuvering their opponents, acting deliberately rather than blindly guided by emotional reaction. To do so, I track how Purchase College students used a philosophy of care and unapologetic blackness to innovate tactics and sustain their efforts. I will also track how both the community's and Purchase College's Administrative officials responded by looking at the ways in which the Administration engaged in neutralization of new tactics innovated by students. Thus, by analyzing the protest events as a chess-like relationship of innovation versus neutralization, I demonstrate how the tactical interaction between Administration officials and students allows a better understanding of the role played by tactical innovated during this link in the chain of student activism and how it can result in sustaining a movement.

II. Literature Review

Current literature demonstrates an understanding of movements on the theoretical and historical levels. Martha Biondi's *The Black Revolution on Campus* looks at Black student activism on campuses in the 1960s through the 1970s as students use tactics like protest, occupation of administration buildings, creation of a list of demands, pushing for establishing a Black Studies departments or program, and the hiring of more Black faculty. Biondi's text is grounded in the larger political moment of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, both of which had nationally recognized political actors who started as young activist on college campus, with SNCC and the Black Panthers as examples of this.

Biondi frames her actor's actions in this historical lense, "Black Power advocates saw themselves as unmasking U.S. intuitions---including liberal ones like universities--- and exposing the whiteness disguised as universalism. They were seeking to change the terms of desegregation: it must not be colorblind but pluralist. Their call for self-determination was not antithetical to the quest for full inclusion and equal rights, but a strategy for achieving it in a nation deeply shaped by a history of white supremacy. Crucially, Black power encouraged African American to see themselves as African descendants, as part of a global majority... This international consciousness intensified in the 1970s giving rise to new Pan-African and third world identities initiatives and solidarities" (Biondi, 2012, p. 4). Here, education is a battle ground for change using actions that lead to higher visibility and awareness of issues relating to lack of equity for black youth.

This historical lens gives context to events like the massive New York City School Boycott of 1964. Melinda Anderson's brief analysis of this protest moment demonstrates that parents of

Black grade school students cared about the quality of their child's education and would take action to improve it. Anderson cites that grass roots community organization made it possible for parents to let black churches watch and educate some of their kids as other parents marched with their own. As organizers put it, "A full-scale boycott will show, as will nothing else, how much Negro parents are willing to sacrifice for their children. The moral impact will be such that no person in authority will ever again fail to consider the determination behind our fight for equality of educational opportunities" (Anderson, 2022).

Unlike the sustained yearlong protest of the Montgomery bus boycott, this day did not change the fact that de facto segregation still exists in New York School which are some of the most segregated in the country. However, this massive protest did help end de jure segregation in the country since the 1964 Civil Rights Act was passed that year. It demonstrates that people, Black Parents, will act out of love for their children to ensure they receive quality education. People have the power to enact change but that it takes mass mobilization which will push societal values and structures.

While I draw heavily from Doug McAdam conceptually to theorize tactics in subsequent sections, I do not do so without modification. Jack Weinberg offers a critique of McAdam's recontextualization of the Civil Rights Movement as not solely the product of Martin Luther King and SCLC but also a product of student activism like SNCC and norther leftist radical students. Weinberg's review of McAdams Freedom Summer gives an alternative perspective of White norther student participation within the Civil Rights Movement. Weinberg's view is that the movement didn't gain or radicalize White students but tapped into northern White student's leftist circles that existed prior to this explosive momentum.

Weinberg makes two salient contributions, first,

> Parting the Waters provides ample evidence that black students were always the driving force in the southern civil rights movement and that their organization, SNCC, was consistently the most militant of the civil rights groups and the one that constantly drove events forward", and second, "The first large northern student protest that could be considered distinctively "radical" or "New Left" happened in May 1960. Students from Berkeley and other San Francisco area campuses protested hearings held by the McCarthyite House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) at San Francisco City Hall. Thousands participated in a direct confrontation with the police and with federal authorities. It sent a signal that was picked up across the country and helped make Berkeley a magnet attracting students with radical leanings... A handful of northern students with ties to the Socialist party had an organizational connection to the southern civil rights movement through the black pacifist socialist, Bayard Rustin (Weinberg, 1999, p. 218-219).

Here, Weinberg demonstrates that solidarity between Black and White student activist are the product of leftist ideological ideals they live up to. White students were showing up to support the movement for Black civil rights. These students were in contact with activists like Bayard Rustin. Leftist ideologies were already being diffused up north and the Civil Rights Movement gave a format in which other movements like the Gay Rights, Women's Liberation, and Anti-War movements could channel this energy there. What shouldn't be lost is that students in SNCC were the militant element that pushed tactics and movement activity even as White elites in presidential administrations at the time discouraged them and ultimately conceded. Weinberg correctly, makes it known that it was SNNC student militant tactics that pushed the movement forward as they

would not sit patiently and wait for the federal government to act but force them to. What this does is give ownership of moments like this to students in academic institutions who are the catalyst for bringing new life and tactics into a lineage of activism. This links the historical to the theoretical by showing that students are part of the long civil rights movement that makes great strides and accomplishments by the 60s.

We can further extend a critique of McAdam to his many writings on mobilization, which looks at the concept of cognitive liberation and posits that participation in movement activity is based whether something that is unjust can be changed. With this concept McAdams asks whether people have the power to change something and can exercise that power, that it is 'both unjust and subject to change' (McAdam, 1999, p. 34). Yet, some scholars have critiqued this model.

Deborah Gould looks at how emotions, such as despair, can fuel a political movement because it is a means of survival rather than efficacy. Gould uses the idea of political despair in response to McAdam's cognitive liberation model to explain that even if people see their actions as futile, they will still engage in activist activity to exercise control of their lives. Gould says the following about despair's use for Aids Activist of the 1980s Act Up:

> "Activists altered the affective experience of despair by coding it to mean 'having nothing left to lose', and rather than paralyzing, despair became freeing. Activists collectivized and politicized despair, conjoined it with anger, and channeled those feelings into militant street-based AIDS activism. Counterintuitively, then, the despair of this period helped to launch a movement" (Gould, 2012, 108).

In this account, emotions like despair mobilize people toward action. Here expressions of anger are validated because militant tactics forcing transformative change make people feel effective. It allows people to witness that their work matters and they do too.

Of note, Deva Woodly responds and uses Gould as a basis for theorizing the necessity of social movements. Woodly explains that even through our despair we make change, if not of policy, which never happens immediately, then of people's ideas, minds, and actions. She writes, through Gould, "For citizens, a politics of despair is characterized by a lack of institutional investment and public trust, suspicion of the social practices and habits of others in the polity, cultural meanings that are illegible across difference, and deep cynicism about the possibility of political efficacy. For governors, a politics of despair is characterized by a Weberian retreat to bureaucratized oligarchy particularly marked by either indifference or inability to respond to the concerns of constituents" (Woodly, 2022, p. 7). Woodly furthers her point, positing that movements are powerful because they have real power to make change and empower people to be that change. In Reckoning, Woodly argues it is through a movement that participants explore how other avenues, such as radical Black Feminist Pragmatism, can serve as the ethical and ideological framework of the Movement for Black Lives while also transforming the broader discourse on issues of racial justice. Thus, *Reckoning* builds out from Woodly's earlier research in *The Politics of Common Sense*, where she explains that public opinion on discourse can change based on political action like protest and other tactics.

However, none of these authors track the interplay between emotion and tactical innovation as a means of sustaining activism. The historical literature looks at historical moments as one piece in a larger unbroken chain. Here activity starts and stops, it may build on what happened before but is not an ongoing action. The theoretical authors are engaged in the claims and structures of

movements which help us understand the ideological frameworks used to create their spaces. What my research expects to do is demonstrate the importance of students' tactics to help us understand how social movement theory becomes praxis. What I hope to demonstrate is the interplay between affect (despair) and rational strategic calculating when thinking about political questions to show how one initial protest ignited a movement.

III. Methods

My account relies heavily on student voices; I have used my experience as a participant in the events to inform my engagement with writing and relaying them. With Institutional Review Board approval from Purchase College, I have conducted interviews with participants in the 2021 – 2022 student protest at Purchase College. These students were known to me, and their activism was not limited to protest but also other campus initiatives and community building. Other participants who were interviewed were faculty and staff members who participated based on the desires of students for support and guidance.

Each individual consented to their responses being used in this project. They were interviewed in a variety of contexts, over zoom, in-person, private and local settings, for at least 30 minutes. A series of eight open ended questions were asked to everyone with follow up questions asked for more detail. Responses were mainly documented using handwritten notes and supplemented with transcribed audio recordings. There is no intention to misrepresent the individuals or their answers. Additionally, participants' identities were anonymized for their privacy as some questions tackled personal reasons for protesting. Everyone was given a pseudonym and no identifying information was included.

I was primarily interested in the tactics that protestors used, the emotional effects of engaging with the student protest, and what brought them to do the work. To get a sense of these topics of interest, the following eight open ended questions were asked of the interviewed individuals:

1) Have you participated in a protest before?
2) How did your identity factor into whether you engaged in protest and how you engaged in protest, was it a factor?
3) What was the issue or subject that prompted you to engage in protest/what sparked the protest?
4) Why did you believe protesting was the best action for you to take/why was protesting important to you?
5) What was the effect of your protesting (was it effective -- how do you measure efficacy?)
6) How did you feel when engaging with the protest?
7) How would you want to see what you accomplished continue, sustained?
8) What other methods did you use to engage the community outside of protest?

With these questions I could ask follow-ups for more information, which allowed me to better understand what students were thinking. Understanding "why did they take those actions?" and "how did it affect them personally?" were always my primary interest.

The primary reason for this is understanding what happened not as a product of irrational acts but as the work of rational actors making strategic moves. I put social movement literature from political scientists, sociologists, and those who theorize on emotions in contentious situations in conversation with responses from students. What I came to understand was that the *students' best weapon was their variation of tactics. They innovated new ways to gain support and to*

outmaneuver administrative entities, ultimately winning them over. This meant finding ways to make sure the campus community supported their actions.

Part of this work is also translating the on-the-ground rhetoric into language for multiple audiences. An impassioned and emotional statement is articulating a grievance, identifying an issue, or explaining a motive. It is about demonstrating how one's identity intersects and impacts how they care for others; what motivates them; what their responses are to trauma/harm or institutions of power and what they understand as efficacious.

It is important that this research includes the voices of those who were there. It allows them to give firsthand accounts to what they were feeling and why they took those actions. People should have the chance to speak for themselves as rational actors and give context to their actions. Without including them it would be a disservice to this project and their movement. Finally, while they are a few representatives of the Purchase College community, they demonstrate that this community is just as worthy of research and analysis as any other.

IV. What Happened

What preceded the violence was care. Before the events of 2021 or the Pandemic of 2020, the Black community and queer Black community had a vibrant campus culture. Clubs like QPOC (Queer People of Color) hosted Balls, large gatherings within the queer community that allowed for expression and supportive competition through fashion and dance. Black students on Purchase College's campus had a long history of using cultural club spaces to create community, solidarity and action. It was these foundations that helped support student activists.

Even during the pandemic one participant described a zoom space where people could be in community, “it was actually really important to me because it makes you feel less alone so actually activates you in a way […] like oh shit this […] is happening to more you know people you know what I mean than just me like it's not it's not an isolated thing”. There was care before moving back to campus, the foundation this student movement was founded on. When people experienced racialized or gendered violence on zoom students and faculty created a space of safety. Sharing these experiences allowed people to recognize the larger structures at play and that they were not alone.

Theorist Fred Moten accounts for the extra emotional labor that especially Black faculty are expected to attend to:

> Often this critique shows up in a range of unpaid, imposed pedagogical duties carried out at various faculty meetings and conferences; in all its justifiable, fetishized performativity, it is often manifest as a sublation of anger mistaken for uncut ire or the absence of ire. Black students have to think about the give and take of such surplus being stripped from the thickness of their skin, then decide that it is best understood, best distilled, as the mood for love (Moten 2008, 1743-1744).

Black faulty are the knowledge keepers and the glue that have seen everything and know the institution, they know of the efforts that have started and been stopped. This relates to the work of Black faculty at Purchase who have done this work with students to get it done, such as culturally responsive teaching and creating spaces for students to feel comfortable learning at Purchase since the institution's founding. This kind of work is hard because there is no separation of the self from it, and it asks so much of the person with no other compensation than the production of knowledge for the community and students.

In Fall of 2021, at the beginning of the semester, Naheim Paris was walking a friend home. As they walked by UPD headquarters Naheim's friend pulled out a taser to show and give to Naheim to hold. She explained to him that she did not feel safe walking alone at night. When handing off the teaser it went off. Immediately UPD responded to the sound. The officer quickly confiscated the teaser and charged Nahiem with possession of a deadly weapon. Later Paris received a message from the college that his charge would result in suspension for a semester and this in turn would also affect his scholarship status as well.

Naheim was thrown into a situation analyzed by Saidiya Hartman in *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* when she examines Esther Brown, who rebels against the systemic oppression she faces out of survival for herself, and women like her. Hartman explains in the following excerpt from the chapter, "The Anarchy of Colored Girls Assembled in a Riotous Manner":

> The afterlife of slavery unfolded in a tenement hallway and held Esther Brown in its grasp. She and her friends did not forget for a moment that the law was designed to keep them in place, but they refused to live in its clauses and parentheses. The problem of crime was the black presence in the northern city, the problem of crime was the wild experiment in black freedom, and the efforts to manage and regulate this crisis provided a means of reproducing the white-over-black order that defined urban space and everyday life. With incredible ferocity, state surveillance and police power shape and regulate intimate life. State violence, involuntary servitude, poverty and confinement defined the world that Esther Brown wanted to destroy (Hartman 2019, 256).

Here Hartman is talking about a young woman in the early 20th Century fed up with society and the system policed heavily around her. The way the state treats Brown is not unlike how it treated Naheim over a century later treated on Purchase's campus, or the queer black femme students who assembled in a riotous manner on his behalf—and theirs.

When word got out about the incident students quickly mobilized. Black Students felt Nahiem was targeted by the Conduct office and UPD and the punishment outweighed the continuous injustices that students of colored suffered compared to their white counterparts. One individual I interviewed said the following: "But Nahiem and his friends not only backed him up by saying it [the taser] was not his but he was just holding it, and the girl came forward and said, yeah that was my taser, he shouldn't be held criminally liable at all. And not only that but the school has a fucking history of sexual assault on campus which is why people on this campus feel inclined to carry some sort of protection. So, I felt a lot about that situation."

Simultaneously, during that semester, student researcher Qunicy Campbell uncovered further evidence that enslaved people labored on the Thomas plantation, the land Purchase College is built on. This was substantiated by a 2020 history page on the Purchase website that was taken down by Fall of 2021. Campbell had spoken about this to student leaders in the newly formed Political Science Club, such as myself and Kaelin Martin, and other faculty, such as Professor of Sociology, Toivo Asheeke.

Mobilization on campus was inspired by the events of 2020, and seemed to come more easily. In reality, this was the convergence of many factors, such as the 2021 academic year being the first time many students were back since the COVID 19 pandemic hit and in the aftermath of the 2020 George Floyd protest. Both events had a great impact on Black communities since COVID was a health threat and the protests were a reminder that policing has long been a threat

to physical safety. Ergo, Students were emboldened by a politically activated society to go out and protest, to resist the everyday conditions they faced.

Thus, these two movements synthesized into one. The continued mistreatment of black students, and by extension faculty, was tied to the historical legacy of enslavement in the Northern part of the United States. These student leaders worked together to bring the issue to the forefront of the campus community's consciousness. As one participant explained it,

> For a lot of people it was […] learning the history [and] seeing the perpetuation of the violence in real time [...] I remember someone handing me a flyer and was like 'this is what's going on please read this we'd love some love and support.' So I think that it was […] the historic example and the present example. And for me it was also understanding the theory that links them. That definitely helped me in a similar manner to my own experience, contextualizing what was going on as not an isolated incident as part of a broader system, a broader cycle of violence.

Once word got out about Naheim's suspension, the first student occupation of the Student Services Building took place, where administrative staff like the President have offices, located next to the Conduct Office. During this contentious standoff between faculty members and students against the administration officials, the University Police Department (UPD) was called to make students and faculty exit. Instead of doing so, students were emboldened to engage in peaceful occupation and ask to be heard. The students were there to defend their friend, be in solidarity with him as a community. The administration cared only about their territory. They wanted to reclaim power over their space and would use UPD to arrest anyone who did not comply. It was a show of power from both sides; Students demonstrated they could organize and mobilize

themselves to call out injustices done to them, but the administration would not be moved simply because of push back. In the end neither heard the other (because they did not want to).

Deva Woodly examines the use of care politics as a framework in which activist practice showing up for one another to show they matter to each other. Woodly explains,

> In this way, the politics of care begins with the conviction that it matters when whole populations are hurting from harms inflicted by the ways we have structured society, whereby some people are systemically advantaged, and others systematically disadvantaged. It matters that we have designed politics so that some voices are much more likely to be heard and have influence than others, though all may bare an equal claim to citizenship... A politics of care begins with the notion that it matters if we're hurting --- that we must attend to that in the conception and carrying out of our activities toward governance (Woodly 2022, 92).

Politics of care pushes back on this status quo by affirming that all black lives matter and should be cared for within society. This means that community support for individuals and among each other in the community is a big component of care. Woodly explains that with these politics of care blackness should be unapologetic not respectable because black people are not a monolith, and we should respect the differences and identities of each of us. What student activists engage in is the act of demonstrating that their voices matter. They are fulling the basic premise of the politics of care by showing the college administration that their claims will not go unheard and they will get them heard by disrupting the work of the college.

The student leaders who lead these actions were queer black femme individuals who used social media to distribute their demands and communicate to other student activist and leaders.

This allowed them to get a lot of people out to come and fill up the plaza as they made noise around the administration building. They hurled accusations of racism on the individual and structural scale and made sure to repeat their demands so the crowd could hear. The goal was to get the student community's support by galvanizing them which helped build solidarity. These protest rallies helped to show students were serious about putting the administration on notice and not stand ideally by. They did this on at least three occasions during that Fall 2021 semester and once was at the president's inauguration. UPD was always on standby but during that inauguration they acted as a barrier between the students and guests leaving. It was about noise and disturbing the peace because while the SUNY system celebrated their first president of color, students say that she was complicit with the injustices of the past and present.

Recall in Hartman's text above, "the problem the problem of crime was the black presence in the northern city... the wild experiment in black freedom." But the problem with the institution was the Black bodies making claims that disrupted everyday work. How dare these black queer femme students accuse the administration and by extension the conduct office of racism on the grounds of erasing enslaved people buried here and the targeted use of the code of conduct on black students through UPD and the Resident Assistance and Coordinators. This reminder that the neoliberal academic intuition is complicit in the societal racism that happen to black people. For these student activist acts of defiance through protest performs their freedom as unapologetically black. They defy policies that police their expression.

The student leaders in the Political Science Club would show up to these protests and promote the petition to change the name of Big Haus and honor those who were enslaved on the campus that was the Thomas plantation. They saw what they were doing as the work of repatriations and repair of the past and for the present and future. They promoted the petition online

and in person and to the administration and PSGA. This was for the campus community to have the full history. By doing this with the student protesters they demonstrated that black students mattered because this was their history. They also showed that everyone needed to take ownership of this history because of the way white supremacy and capitalism affect us all.

At the end of the semester, there was a meeting with Black faculty. It would become a way for students and faculty to organize together under the banner of the Slavery and Freedom Project during the next semester. Moten explains the importance of Black Studies as such, "Black studies' concern with what it is to own one's dispossession, to mine what is held in having been possessed, makes it more possible to embrace the underprivilege of being sentenced to the gift of constant escape" (Moten 2008, 1745). Moten speaks about the value of Black Studies to academia and what it is. It is valuable because it provides an outlet for faculty and students to think about their identity within the larger context of the world. Black studies provide a space in academia to ponder questions of the relation of blackness and the black body to the world and the critique and rejection of the western world as is. Importantly initiatives within the Global Black Studies minor like the Slavery and Freedom project have provided much needed space to challenge the College administration to do the educational repair work when it comes to acknowledging enslavement as part of the plantation history.

Thus, students' biggest support was invested faculty and staff, so this meeting brought them together to enact change. With this coalition they could act by having more students sign up for the Global Black Studies minor so it could become a major and use classes in that minor for projects that students could make to contribute to the online page. This all helped to bring more students into this work.

All of Spring 2022 was about organizing and acting. The protest students created a meeting space that was the Black Student Union and through that space created community with their different events. Students in the Political Science Club continued to further their efforts with the petition to change Big Haus and acknowledge enslavement on the campus by having forums and voting suggesting new names. Their efforts lead to the PSGA passing a resolution which was brought before the College's board. The name would be changed on the building and website at the very start of the Fall 2022 semester.

Student lead action pushed for change and got it done. At the end of that Spring 2022 semester students brought the administration to the table to hash out how their grievances could be delt with and if they could work together to reach their demands. During this "Ceremony for our Future", students celebrated their successes but came with demands moving forward like making Purchase the foremost college to study and create art from the legacy of enslavement and embrace the freedom that came out of it. They also wanted more opportunities for the administration to ask for student perspectives. Administration officials, including Purchase's President, listened but faculty and students made sure what was heard was that students would continue to protest and call out the college as systemic problems persisted.

What should not be lost is that the Black Queer Femme Students are the ones who sparked and lead these actions throughout. As one the student leaders said it best, which was that black queer and trans people (black people part of the LGBTQIA+ community period) are the most unprotected, experience the most violence, and are the most erased. This community within a community is the most marginalized because of the intersecting oppression they face due to race, gender and sexuality. This is why the queer black student leaders fought so hard during this academic year, they needed to show they cared for one another against the systemic oppression

they faced by their institution. They demonstrated their lives and experiences mattered through their protest and through building solidarity within their community.

The student activists practiced care by showing up for one another. They showed that they would be a community around one individual who was targeted. They then continued to do this by calling out the systemic injustices they faced in their experiences at the college. This was all done to center the most marginalized within the activist work, black and brown bodies some of whom were queer as well as faculty who were of those identities. The activist publicly politicized the histories, experiences, and identities of those individuals by showing they mattered and should be protected.

V. Tactical Innovation in the Protest Chess Match

In this section I break down the tactics used by students in their efforts as praxis informed by a guiding philosophy of care. Before moving into the case study of the tactical interaction between student innovations and the neutralization by Administration officials, I break down the guiding philosophy of care, before homing in on tactics executed by students, and tracking the interaction with emotion. Students employed tactics like a leaderful organizational structure, using a radical flank, and articulating their emotions into persuasive rhetoric. This is done to better understand what Doug McAdam's dubs the "chess like fashion" of tactical interaction (McAdam 1983, 752) and what I analyze as the chess game students and Administration play when making their moves.

Care

The students' most valuable tactic was care. Care allowed them to do something that other actions and emotions did not: build friendships. Woodly expands on care by thinking about organizing. On the subject Woodly makes clear, "Organizers' chief functions is to prepare: to prepare people to relate, and especially to relate across difference; to prepare people to develop and trust in their own power analysis; to prepare people to imagine, plan and execute collective actions that will have political impact" (Woodly 2022, 141). Here Woodly explains that the spaces student leaders create with their actions create community. The friendships within this community create relations along political lines. This becomes tactical since people can rely on one another to show up and provide care. As one participant put it, "protest is a form of care: you're coming out, you're displaying [...]with physical bodies [...] that you're caring for someone [...] and you care about [...] what's going on and I think that one of the main points of the protest was to get visibility."

Woodly is articulating that organizing is about building relations with people which builds community so people can create action. This is a process. It takes people willing to start this education about the issue(s) and what power people have when enacting change. In addition to a politics of care, Woodly writes about self-care. Woodly discusses tactics of storytelling to get people to relate to one another and using care to midgait harm by the group and among each other. Let's unpack Woodly's quotation by looking at students' actions.

To prepare people to relate... across difference. Student leaders always brought people in from different backgrounds. They understood this was everyone's issue and that everyone should care. Their actions built solidarity by identifying intersecting oppressions and acting to liberate. While Naheim's case was what brought all these students together, his incident opened dialogue between communities of Black students about the harassment they received from UPD or the microaggressions from non-Black peers, faculty, and staff. In these space, women and femme students felt empowered to express their fear of walking alone at night and while being at parties. Queer students also had a space to air their emotions on the policing eye of homophobia and transphobia. As one participant put it, "like there's an electricity to […] seeing […] someone really seeing you."

To prepare people to develop and trust in their own power analysis. Although student leaders understood who their allies and opponents were. It was clear that the college's administration cared about two things, its financial standing and its white population. This was demonstrated to students of color through how they are treated at a protest. As one student protester at the time put it:

> Especially when I was at purchase and we protested there, the idea of the cops bum rushing all of us terrified me. Like I was shitting my pants. Like I was so scared of

> that happening. And I knew it wasn't going to, also, because we outnumbered them within any given moment, but it's kind of horrifying to think about with how the protest in the 70s at Purchase, I won't say parallel, but how they seem more, I don't [know] it was more white if anything. And now [are] more Black and when Black people protest, we don't really get the chance to do sit-ins, like they did [in the 1970s].

This student is pointing out that historically Black protest and protesters have been seen as a larger racial threat than their white counter parts and get treated as such because their political power is a threat to the status quo (Updegrove, 2020, p. 87). They are also speaking emotionally to how harrowing the threat of police violence and bodily harm are for a young person to have to contend with just to be heard, especially those who occupy queer femme Black bodies that disproportionally face violence (state and interpersonal).

Additionally, student activists created avenues for other students to see that administrative structures are not built to listen to their grievances and change for them but rather protect their own interest. This is demonstrated when administrative officials were hesitant and unwilling to acknowledge information about enslaved individuals on the campus and the conclusion that the land was previously a plantation. Student activists pushed the campus population to analyze this as an effort to have a debate or dialogue about naming or the language of the plantation but rather to protect the legal interest of the College. Here black students saw that white supremacy and capitalism obstructed calls for reparative work.

To prepare people to imagine. Student activists worked with faculty to reimagine the academy as one with black bodies in mind. This coalition sparked the Slavery and Freedom Project which came from the vision of Purchase being the for most intuition to research the effects of

enslavement, have students create art and research projects around topics of enslavement, activism and liberation and called for purchase to institutionalize this knowledge and create spaces to produce it. This was ambitious. Although student activists were trying to transform what the institution stood for. Thus, opening the gateway to other possibilities like the de-arming and defunding of UPD and increased funding for academic and counseling programs. Even the pushing more funding toward infrastructure for the students like their dorms and apartments not for the wealthy that lived around Harrison. Students did imagine their needs getting met and the liberating practices of expressing their freedom.

Leaderful

It is important to keep in mind that like student movements before it, Purchase's recent movement was leaderful. Students across different clubs and organizations, of different identities and backgrounds contributed to the success of what students were doing. Leaderful movements allowed the work to be spread across people and allowed for rest for different leaders so others could take the reins. By not having one person take charge it allowed for less burnout and more strategies to be employed. According to one participant, the organizing principle of leaderfulness "was also just feeling like we are all bodies in the same space and that was kind of like an electricity that people were really missing, with those connections." It was this catalyst to bring people in and do the work. As was said eloquently by an interviewed student, activists using a network of communication, such as a Black Student Union, allows for "roundtables where you're like […] why didn't we talk about this sooner?"

A key part of what made this tactic work was that each person was made to feel like an important part of the whole. There was not one individual who could claim to be the leader of the

entire movement, instead individuals and groups worked together to make the changes they wished to see:

> On the ground honestly, I was scared. There were moments I was scared for my friends, I was scared for myself, there were some really intense moments but at the same time, and I don't want to romanticize it, […] but, umm, I did feel like I was a part of something like I felt like I was a piece of a larger up rising. It was exhausting, it was frightening, but it felt really important and meaningful to be there with people that I care about and to see people showing up and to see people showing up for each other and with each other. Yeah, there were moments where you felt this very intense like I don't know I felt this very intense feeling of connection with people I was with. And it also when we were like talking about things and like planning strategy and thinking through these issues it was exciting to imagine other futures.

This participant describes the culmination of their emotions as an "intense feeling of connection" that allowed them to "imagine other futures". Like the other student, they do not negate the feeling of terror knowing they or their peers could be targets of state violence, but their continued engagement was based on the community being built, the idea of showing up for one another. Excitement replaces fear as one embraces being on the forefront of great reckoning and possibility.

Radical Flank

One of the strategies that gained the most use out of this movement was the radical flank opening the door for more moderate claims. Coined by Herbert Haines, he explains,

> Activists and scholars alike have suggested that the activities of radicals in a social movement can undermine the position of moderates by discrediting movement activities and goal threatening the ability of moderates to take advantage of the resources available from third parties. I refer to this general backlash as the negative radical flank affect... Conversely, a positive radical flank effect can occur when the bargaining position of moderates is strengthened by the presence of more radical groups (Haines 1984, 32).

Haines article seeks to demonstrate how the radical flank effect helped more moderate black civil rights groups in the 60s secure funding and "bargaining" power when it came to elites. Haines also demonstrates how youth led movements by SNCC and the Black Panthers helped to increase radical energy throughout the country and allowed more moderate groups like NAACP and NUL (National Urban League) obtain funding and leverage bargaining power.

In 2021, this dynamic is remodeled with the Black Student Union and Political Science Club. The radical flank at Purchase consisted of the Black Student Union (BSU), the queer black femme student leaders, who the administration saw as radical; those in the Political Science Club (Poli Sci Club) were seen more as moderate for pursuing a more institution-building tactic with the administration. The Poli Sci Club was recognized as an entity under the student government, Purchase Student Government Association (PSGA), while the BSU acted outside that space of the institution. Yet, the collaboration between the BSU and Poli Sci Club allowed for awareness and visibility to be pushed on a radical level and for institutional change to take place.

Lending support for the role of tactics in sustaining a movement, Brent Simpson describes one of the positive effects of the radical flank:

> We consistently found that tactics mattered for the emergence of flank effects, but agendas did not... We suspect that, particularly for members of the general public (as opposed to committed activists within a given movement), actions speak louder than words. Tactics may be seen as more reliable information since they are tangible actions that have actually happened, while agendas are often more carefully crafted for self-presentation purposes (Simpson 2022).

Simpson's study looks at how radical flanks in the animal rights movement and climate change movement influence public perception. Specifically, it looks at how moderate support increases when radical tactics are used. Support is based on the tactics that are employed. This relates to the Ellefsen text where a cooperative radical flank affect lead to more moderate support. More radical tactics like dousing the street with animal entrails lead to more moderate support of awareness of animal suffering just like how in Ellefsen radical groups who destroyed private property allowed for moderate groups to further push for companies to stop animal testing.

Although students were trying to build a base and bring people in, they were not going to sacrifice their message, thus they delivered it in ways to garner the most attention. As one student put it:

> I also think that if people were to go to the administration, they wouldn't do anything. This was this was part of the outrage like you know they are the ones who are perpetrating this issue so to try and just talk to them seems like a waste of energy and they pretty much have made it pretty clear that they're not on the side of the community and they really never have. You know the way all of these violences are dealt with by the administration it just continues violence so […] it like wasn't even a consideration to try and talk to them. Then there ended up being a meeting

> with the chancellor in which not only nothing got done but […] the meeting was like a sham as a distraction from people organizing a protest, protesting […] the president's inauguration but as a distraction [it] was unsuccessful. [A] pretty like intense and […] large […] protest that resulted and […] the people who were in the meeting just kind of didn't skip a beat and just [went] over but yeah no when the administration has constantly shown that that their sole prerogative is not to care for the students not care for the faculty or anyone in the community you don't fuck with them like they just they just don't.

This participant acknowledged that when activists were not heard through more intuitional venues, they decided to support a more radical tactic because it was about being heard, not placated. These student leaders and protesters knew they antagonized the President and other administrative officials. Their goal here was to make people ask questions and converse about the issues, not be praised for protesting the right way. These radical tactics helped to get institutional claims heard. But, as both groups worked toward the same goal of a more equitable campus that stood for racial justice, often on the same events, these two protest flanks were not adversarial, but cooperative.

The Administrative response to all of this was to pursue the more institutional, because in their eyes more moderate, claim of changing the name of Big Haus. Even then while pursuing this, during the process and after, they would obfuscate ownership of the history of enslavement on the institution by rooting it in a larger narrative that blurs the lines of the institution's hand in erasure. It demonstrates that the student's radical reimagining of the intuition is subject to being warped by it. The only thing that counters this warping is the radical flank.

What is most important to recognize is that student activist opened the space for these issues to be talked about. Impressively, that this small group moved the larger community because

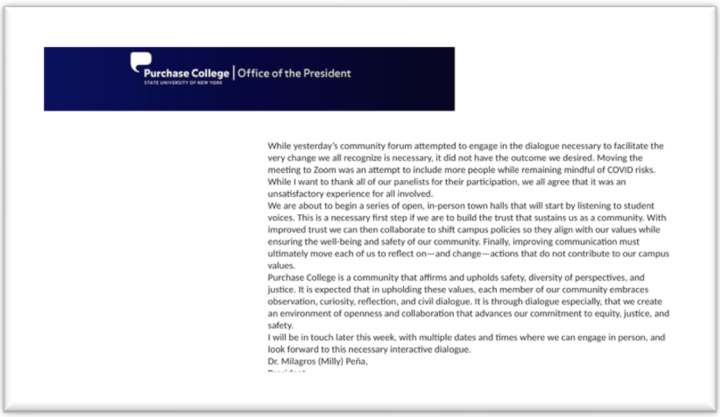
their claims were powerful, poignant, and true. It was actions deemed too radical like the occupations of the president's office and the protest at her inauguration that made the larger campus community become aware of the issues students spoke about. It was a small group of students who employed using the more radical and institutional tactics to get their claims heard. They worked together to mobilize other students. They called things as they saw it, if they felt something was racist, like a policy, person, or entity, they said it was or they interrogated why certain things went unsaid or unanswered. It was about pushing the issue.

Emotions

Perhaps counter-intuitively, one of the President's most useful actions was the policing of anger that students felt. In an email from President Pena addressing the limitations of the Zoom webinar town hall and the move to in-person meeting, she pushed respectability: "Finally, improving communication, must ultimately move each of us to reflect on—and change—actions that do not contribute to our campus values." She is saying that students needed to conduct themselves in a manner that gave respect to receive it. Yet, this was based on a politics of respectability, that policed the emotions of black student activist especially those who were queer and femme. The president sought to not engage rather than understand that emotion has its place in the political space as catalysis for action and articulation of the harm being felt. Anger is normal and justified when encountering institutions that show they do not care about the people.

Audre Lorde, in her essay, "On the Uses of Anger," speaks on the usefulness of emotions such as anger as a political tool to identify systemic oppression. First, Lorde comments, "But anger expressed and translated into action in the service of our vision and our future is a liberating and strengthening *act of clarification*, for it is in the painful process of this translation that we identify

who are our allies with whom we have grave differences, and who are our genuine enemies" (Lorde 1981, 127 – emphasis mine). Lorde's basic idea is that anger is a normal reaction to racism.


Purchase College | Office of the President

While yesterday's community forum attempted to engage in the dialogue necessary to facilitate the very change we all recognize is necessary, it did not have the outcome we desired. Moving the meeting to Zoom was an attempt to include more people while remaining mindful of COVID risks. While I want to thank all of our panelists for their participation, we all agree that it was an unsatisfactory experience for all involved.

We are about to begin a series of open, in-person town halls that will start by listening to student voices. This is a necessary first step if we are to build the trust that sustains us as a community. With improved trust we can then collaborate to shift campus policies so they align with our values while ensuring the well-being and safety of our community. Finally, improving communication must ultimately move each of us to reflect on—and change—actions that do not contribute to our campus values.

Purchase College is a community that affirms and upholds safety, diversity of perspectives, and justice. It is expected that in upholding these values, each member of our community embraces observation, curiosity, reflection, and civil dialogue. It is through dialogue especially, that we create an environment of openness and collaboration that advances our commitment to equity, justice, and safety.

I will be in touch later this week, with multiple dates and times where we can engage in person, and look forward to this necessary interactive dialogue.

Dr. Milagros (Milly) Peña,

Figure 1 Respectability Politics

In this piece Lorde is speaking to white women at a women's studies convention where there they have continuously commented on her anger rather than evaluate how they are complicit within white supremacy and patriarchy. Anger can be a liberating force that brings people together and transforms how people perceive the world, if they are open to receiving it, and begin recreating it. Lorde is talking about the division between women specifically Black and white women but also among women of color. She is demonstrating that white women primarily, but not limited to them, can miss the intersections of identity that structure and restrict everyone under white supremacist capitalist patriarchy.

Later, Lorde orchestrates the rage women of color feel being systemically oppressed by institutions:

> Women of Color in america have grown up within a symphony of anger, at being silenced, at being unchosen, at knowing that when we survive, it is in spite of a world that takes for granted our lack of humanness, and which hates our very

> existence outside of its service. And I say symphony rather than cacophony because we have had to learn to orchestrate those furies so that they do not tear us apart... Anger is an appropriate reaction to racist attitudes, as is fury when the actions arising from those attitudes do not change (Lorde 1981, 129).

This is linked to one participant's own experience:

> Protesting is important to me because I believe protesting is advocating people [from] unable to use their voices […] I learned that the importance of the education I was able to get was to be able to speak my mind about shit that I cared about. I still would have protested if I didn't finish high school but I wouldn't have realized my potential and caring about myself and caring about those little things like going to school and the third.

What Lorde and this queer femme interviewee articulate is how there is power in vocalizing your experience. Whether someone understands or not, people must contend with someone trying to vent their frustration with being silenced. This student expresses themselves to give voice to those who cannot, those who have been silenced or not survived. Here identity is important because it allows someone as a woman or queer black femme to say this is the "shit I cared about" or it is important my voice be part of the conversation and heard because people like me due to interlocking oppression become the most marginalized and invisible.

Lorde comments on solidarity between women of color speaks to the frustration students felt when engaging with administration officials like the President, the Director of Community Standards or the Chief Diversity Officer. Students' anger came from the lack of "learning", that Lorde talks about, on behalf of these officials because inside and outside the classroom students

educate each other about issues and privileges sparking from their identity but because of the position of power Adminstrators are shielded from those same interactions of “learning” and instead hurt students with their apathy towards them.

This is why students met that apathy with anger. They did this to spark a reaction from the entire campus community, not only the administration. The administration used respectability politics to shut down and take control of conversation. But student protestors and activists had already gained engaged students and some faculty. Those engaged students understood that the student activists’ anger in response to the institution's racism was a valid because it was rooted in a longer intuitional history of students of color’s struggles linked to the broader history of the campus having been a plantation, itself indicative of the white supremacy of the larger world. The use of anger helped to not erase the identities of these student activists as queer black femmes. For them, to survive is to be in revolt.

Finally, Students did despair of their endeavors, which only made it clearer that they felt it was for them to do this work or it would not be done. To despair in politics is to acknowledge that that one must do for oneself and not expect others to it for you. Student activists did this work without any hope that the College President, Vice President or Board would do anything, but that it mattered that the students did something regardless. As one student put it, even when inflected with feeling a lack of efficacy, what fuels their engagement was community care:

> [I] will say like it felt like a failure at the end of it like to me like I felt like we failed which I have a lot of not empathy, apathy, about that and kind of pessimism. It was like very disheartening that it didn't feel like we made the change that we did and in the spaces that we did […] but I think that in a big way whenever people come together it's a powerful thing you know whether it's in protest […] whether it's

> protesting by like talking with your friends and discussing interesting ideas or like making art or dancing or whatever method it is whenever people come together it's powerful thing […], like there's despair there's heart break and it holds all these different things yeah but that's how I felt. But yeah, there were moments where I was like genuinely afraid when were in the protest. But there were also moments where I felt really excited like at the time I had lots of like meals and flex and it was nice to, like people would trade out bringing water and those moments it felt like really nice to be able to go and run and do something as simple as grab water and for people to do that for me you know it was care."

Tactical Interaction: Moves in the Chess Match

Tactical innovation was crucial so activists could employ diverse strategies. The tactical evolution that takes place by activists is a response to being neutralized by the administration. Once innovation stops the process and cycle ends. Doug McAdams explains the practice as such, "Lacking institutional power, challengers must devise protest techniques that offset their powerlessness. This has been referred to as a process of tactical innovation... In chess like fashion, movement opponents can be expected, through effective tactical adaptation, to neutralize the new tactic, thereby reinstituting the original power disparity between themselves and the challenger" (McAdam 1983, 752). Here McAdam outlines the tactics black insurgents of the 1960s used to build power.

In his article, "Tactical Innovation and the Pace of Insurgency" he outlines five tactics of rioting, community campaigns, freedom rides, bus boycotts, and sit-ins as ways insurgents build what they lacked: power to disrupt. This process of innovation of tactics was met with adaptation by the government to neutralize the tactic. Each time this happens both sides learn from each other

as a form of tactical interaction. When tactics are exhausted and have adapted, then the insurgents have reached the end of this cycle of contention.

During the Purchase student movement of 2021, tactics like the protest, occupation, petition, meetings, and social events were employed and adapted to by the administration, either by waiting out the students or by half-heartly delivering. Tactical innovation by activists was done through a network of communication. An example of this was having the BSU protest at the President's inauguration poised while more institutionally-minded student leaders talked to the SUNY Chancellor and Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees. As sketched in the previous section, the tactics that students employed were always met with a way to be neutralized. In what follows, I will demonstrate the moves in this chess game.

Move One: Student's First Tactic; Occupation of the Administration Building

The student's first tactic was the occupation of the administration building. According to student newspaper reporters at the Purchase Phonix, "Protests began outside Campus Center North, next to the "Coffee with a Cop" event, where supporters handed out flyers, chanted supportive messages and shared stories in which they experienced racism on campus. "When there's more of us, we're marching up there," said Paris. The protest progressed into the president's office, where students stayed for several hours. The protesters spoke with the Chief of University Police, Chief Dayton Tucker, college president Milagros Peña, Vice President for Student Affairs Dennis Craig and Chief Diversity and Affirmative Action Officer, Jerima DeWese" (Mead, 2021).

Students were organized from the start and did their actions intentionally. It should be noted that students got in the room where they were heard, which resulted in the "abeyance" of Nahiem's

charges and a review of the student Code of Conduct. This mobilization was done quickly over the course of a few days and yielded a win and results for students. The Administration did make their own moves simultaneously as this took place, such as threatening to use UPD to arrest occupying students, isolating Naheim (to speak with him separately), and taking back some control through a campus wide email funneling the issue into a about a webinar. Students decided to hold rallies each week on Fridays until they saw action. This created a space of care for students who did not get heard or treated just but who the community showed up for.

The rallies were used as a weekly occurrence in October of 2021 to disrupt those working in the Student Services administrative offices. They were a space for students to feel heard and in community and know that they weren't alone. One of the students I interviewed said, "It was a way for me to speak my mind about the shit that was happening to me on a grand scale because I knew I wasn't alone." What this student is saying is that they felt comfortable enough in that space to feel like they mattered, and their experiences did too. They weren't looking for empty promises.

Figure 2 Black Student Matter Caucus Presents: Rally at the Clock

Move Two: Zoom Webinar

The Zoom webinar was a town hall on safety created by administrative officials in response to the protest for Nahiem. Their goal was to review the code of conduct and hear any questions had about it. Although, students did not feel heard because unlike zoom meetings, students could only use chat and Q&A features to communicate via text. It did not help that a hacker acted as Nahiem to spew racist comments which caused discomfort and rage among students. This frustration with the administration because of the harm they allowed to happen and continued to perpetuate became action.

Move Three: Second Occupation

Students responded to the Zoom webinar town hall with another occupation of the administration building. When interviewed this student describes the experience as such:

> We walked into that building with a bunch of people. Nahiem came. It was a bunch of chaos, but it was beautiful chaos. They knew about it too, the Administration, because there were already cops there... We started talking. People come up one by one... I have to say that that was unplanned. It was in the heat of the moment and have to say we were fucking pissed.

What this student was describing was that they wanted to be heard not listened to or silenced. Their rhetoric was emotional, but their actions were structured. Students cared about what happened to each other. They would not let violence just be done to them; they would speak out and retaliate.

Move Four: Second Administration Response: Email

In the aftermath of this situation the administrative response was an email about the situation (as seen above). The administrative email acknowledges that zoom was not a conducive space to hold a town hall and would therefore have them in person. This was another win for students as they were able to bring these officials out of their offices. The email itself is innocuous but the following line at the end of paragraph two reads, “Finally, improving communication, must ultimately move each of us to reflect on--and change—actions that do not contribute to our campus values.” This statement asks for decorum during protest and ultimately asks protesters to show up in a respectable manner. It ignores that there is no correct way to protest and as Audre Lorde would say that anger is a valid response to racism.

Move Five: Tactical Innovation - Rename Big Haus

Simultaneously, during that semester, when student researcher Qunicy Campbell uncovered further evidence that enslaved people labored on the Thomas Plantation, the land Purchase College is built on, the tactical innovation of students was to work collaboratively to rename the dormitory Big Haus. The Big House on a plantation was the enslaver’s residence. Students maintained that keeping that name normalizes slavery and erases those enslaved individuals. The efforts of students pushing this petition garnered over 300 signatures. Further efforts by students to work with the Purchase Student Government Association and decided by the college council changed the name to Central. In his research statement Qunicy wrote, "It is not one authoritative narrative, but a collection of fading data that we ourselves turn into stories... I hope that it can someday be used to challenge prevailing narratives." His statement demonstrates the need to give voice to those individuals by telling their history. Histories that don’t serve white supremist statecraft of capitalist economics.

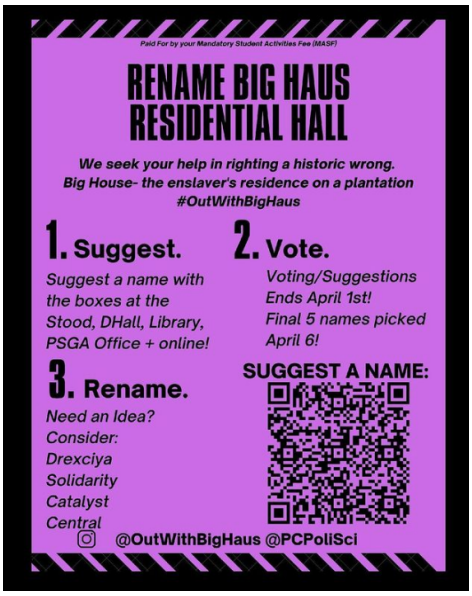


Figure 3 Rename Big Haus Campaign Poster

Students and faculty held town halls that demonstrated the debate of naming. What was shown was the importance of naming and the responsibility of not commemorating subjugation and captivity. The petition to change and the process to rename Big Haus were done to create an inclusive community and for all members of the campus community to gravel with the history of the land and take ownership of it. Even with efforts by the Admin to obfuscate the truth by using language that favored them it still created space for conversation about the disputed memory of how students remember the institution and how it remembers itself. All of this to say that students invited staff and faculty to help them with this effort to get it done.

Ultimately, by students challenging the administration they were able to be effective. This student concluded, “I would say it was pretty effective. It was a successful outcome for the students, for people in marginalized communities. We showed that people would show up for one another and make more of an effort for that to be known/present. We made people visible.” Students acted with intention. They acted strategically to ensure care for their friends and community so it could become better.

VI. The Unbroken Chain

What came of this movement was more solidarity between students no matter their position, race or class. Students practiced this solidarity by being open to educating themselves about each other and the issues in their campus community, they showed up for one another at protest by making those spaces to practice care emotionally by physically being there or physically with food, and by advocating for their peers as well. Students Leaders created organizations like the Black Caucus to do some of the things listed previously. Students across the campus had more activist spirit when it came to issues on campus and that impacted communities on this campus. This solidarity helped students understand the different connections and intersections they had to one another.

What came out of the protest was a more radical energy, especially from students. This was best shown by the students who represented everyone the PSGA. In the subsequent semesters since the presidents of the PSGA have demanded more of the college Administration by taking up student demands. First this was the taking up of the resolution to rename Big Haus, then it was the resolution to support the campaign against the Berms, after the willingness to empower student leaders from the Students Against Sexual Assault to become a Service and finally their willingness to support and be a part of protest. This radicalization was due to the crossroads the Student Association was put in: act as bureaucrat for an intuition that cared little for all students even them or join the fight with the students they represented and faced the same issues as. The PSGA chose to use the student power that was built to force the Admiration's hand and fight with students.

Students also became more outspoken about issues that intersected with many students' identities. When a freshman student was assaulted by a senior and then was made to feel powerless by the institutional mechanisms that were in pace to help them, Title IX; Overnight, with the help

of student leaders, they put together a protest that got media attention and called out the college, the Title IX system and a predatory society. In many ways, the students were fighting a losing battle against a societal issue of rape and sexual assault culture with systems set up not to protect the vulnerable but to wait, maybe punish, and even protect the aggressor. What students did find was that they were not alone on this journey to call out to those in power. They found each other, a community of survivors, who knew that pain and wanted to care for and protect one another. It was about knowing who you can go to lean on and feel safe with rather than relying on structures working as intended to fix themselves.

The changing of Big Haus to Central was significant in the shift to acknowledging the legacy of the campus being built on the former Thomas Plantation. It allowed for the conversation to be opened about the memory of the institution, the racism behind erasing that history, while also showing students had effective power to change the conditions they sought to. On a more radical level it demonstrates that the college would not normalize that legacy of enslavement with a name that harkened back to the Big House, the enslaver's residence. It was students that institutionalized this kind of repair work through educational repatriations of teaching the debate of plantation versus farm and using the Slavery and Freedom Project initiative within the Global Black Studies minor to call for radical leftist teaching of history and blackness place within the academy. The small effect of changing the name of this dorm had a large impact on the campus community.

Turning again to Moten, he put it as such:

> It is obvious (particularly after the recent lessons of Lindon Barrett, Herman Bennett, Daphne Brooks, Nahum Chandler, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Brent Edwards, Saidiya Hartman, Sharon Holland, and Achilles Mbembe, among others) that blackness has always emerged as nothing other than the richest possible

> combination of dispersion and permeability in and as the mass improvisation and protection of the very idea of the human. (Moten 2008, 1746).

Black Studies, Moten explains, is the study of what it means to be black and a true understanding of the human experience. To be human is to know suffering, to seek escape from subjugation. One could read this as seeing blackness as tied to negative aspects of human experience, but it can also be read as blackness tied to an ongoing struggle for freedom. Black Studies provides a space in academia to ponder questions of the relation of blackness and the black body to the world and the critique and rejection of the western world as is.

Students were also able to now occupy more administrative positions after the initial protest. One of the biggest was the Conduct office allowing students to serve as board members for appeals and hearing rather than just having staff and faculty. To have students in the room where these decisions happen allows for transparency, knowledge, and give their perspective on student's actions and a record of student perspectives. That student perspective allows for greater fairness and understanding and if not change an outcome it can point out the flaws within the system. This was a welcome outcome for the institution and students.

The Administration also became open to listening. During the Berms campaign the Administration was very quick to change their stance to match students. The outcome of the visibility of the research on enslavement meant a slow but nonetheless a push for an acknowledgement of enslavement through restoring the website and placement of a plaque. Individuals in administrative positions like Tile IX, The COD, Student Affairs, Associate Director of Student Engagement and Involvement and Advisor to the PSGA, and even the provost and Chief of university police have made themselves available to hearing student concerns and creating

rapport with them. Because of student agitation and the power built there, the threat of continued agitation means administrative officials will try to placate students.

The Unbroken Chain was always the linage of black student social movements of the past to this present moment. It was a symbolic demonstration that the Fall 2021 Purchase College student protest, and others, thereafter, were another link in the chain for a long struggle to show black bodies mattered in all spaces of life especially academic institutions. It should be noted like the past that Purchase's student movement did not exist in a vacuum; Students were protesting on Rutgers, HBCUS and in other college communities' nationwide against their conditions. Before the Black Civil Rights/Black Power movements sparked the on-campus protest by black students in the 1960s and 1970s and today the resurgence in student activism was the direct result of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the George Floyd Protest Uprising. This new link was the result of student actions that was all done by students, young people, who saw that their mistreatment in society seeped into their college experience and decided not to stand for it.

Student Protesters were protesting on going racism on their campus through policing of black students as related to the erasure of the history of enslavement. They linked the historical injustices on the land to the ongoing injustices students faced at the institution. Through an organizing philosophy of care and innovative tactics they were able to gain the campus community's support and make the Administration concede to some of their demands. They practiced care by using the leaderful movement to show up for those who became burnt out and taking over. They were innovative by finding solutions to neutralized tactics: holding protest rallies outside of the administration building when threatened with arrest by protesting inside. The effectiveness of organizing that semester and through that year inspired other students to advocate for issues they wanted to see change and push for it.

Sustainability is based on the idea that something can continue. Purchase College Students have sustained their movement by relying on community care to fuel their desire for action. Engaged community members have all experienced burnout so they have brought people in, asked for help, or stepped back rested and recuperated so they can come back. Many movements end because of server state repression which disorganizes and demobilizes participants. In the case of Purchase College, arrest was always a fear but never the main concern; Instead, what disorganizes and demobilizes participants was the slow, waiting out, of students. Administration officials would make promises, start committees, and push initiatives that would take semesters and therefore years to make any results. This was the point. As students graduate and others feel the slow pace of "change" it demotivates and calls into question what student power can do if it cannot transform a static structure.

Political despair can mean the rejection of hope but that does not mean action cannot be taken. The Black Queer Femme students were angry, and they expressed that through an open rejection of the status quo and called for transformation. They did not think their actions would be efficacious. Although they were wrong, time and time again. Students taught themselves what movement/protest actors learn outside the academic institution all the time; It is not solely about the goal or transformation but rather it is about the people you find, the relations you sustain and the actions you continue to do. Sometimes the most important thing is to do something.

Bibliography:

Alexander H. Updegrove, Maisha N. Cooper, Erin A. Orrick & Alex R. Piquero. 2020. "Red States and Black Lives: Applying the Racial Threat Hypothesis to the Black Lives Matter Movement," Justice Quarterly, 37: no. 1 , 85-108

Anderson, Melinda D. (2022). "Feb. 3, 1964: New York City School Children Boycott School." Zinn Education Project, https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/nyc-school-children-boycott-school/.

Biondi, Martha. 2012. The Black Revolution on Campus. University of California Press.

Gould. Deborah. (2012). Political despair. In Politics and the Emotions, The affective turn in contemporary political studies, ed, Paul Hoggett and Simon Thompson. Continuum International Publishing Group,

Hartman, Saidiya. 2019. Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals. W. W. Norton & Company.

Haines, Herbert. 1984. Black Radicalization and the Funding of Civil Rights: 1957-1970. Social Problems, Vol. 32, No. 1, Thematic Issue on Minorities and Social Movements. (October). 31-43

Lorde, Audre. (1984). The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism. Sister Outsider. Crossing Press, 124-133.

McAdams, Doug. 1983. Tactical Innovation and the Pace of Insurgency. American Sociological Review. Vol. 48, No. 6, 735-754

Mead, Kevin et al. 2021. The Purchase Phoenix writers. (2021, Oct 20). “Protests for Nahiem Paris' Suspension Appear Successful.” The Purchase Phoenix. October 20. https://www.purchasenews.org/post/protests-for-nahiem-paris-suspension-appear-sucessful

Moten, Fred. 2008. Black Op. Modern Language Association. Vol. 123, No. 5, Special Topic: Comparative Racialization. 1743 – 1747.

Simpson, Brent et al. 2022. Radical flanks of social movements can increase support for moderate factions, PNAS Nexus, Volume 1, Issue 3, July 2022.

Weinberg, Jack. 1990. Reviewed Works: Freedom Summer by Doug McAdam; We Are Not Afraid: The Story of Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney and the Civil Rights Campaign for Mississippi by Seth Cagin, Philip Dray; Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement by Mary King; Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63 by Taylor Branch. History of Education Quarterly, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Summer, 1990), pp. 212-224.

Woodly, Deva R. 2021. Reckoning: Black Lives Matter and the Democratic Necessity of Social Movements (TRANSGRESSING BOUNDARIES). Oxford University Press.