Identity-rhetoric, unity & the Warren County protests of 1982

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[1] B. Palmer, "The History of Environmental Justice in Five Minutes," *NRDC*, last modified May 18, 2016, https://www.nrdc.org/stories/history-environmental-justice-five-minutes.

Abstract

In the autumn of 1982, a relatively small and rural county in North Carolina called Warren County started the environmental justice movement. The allocation of a hazardous landfill to the county sparked this start. Residents argued that the landfill was only allocated to Warren County because the county was predominantly African American and poor. Protesters said that the authorities did not expect African American and poor people to have the political clout to significantly rebel against the construction of the landfill. Yet both African American and white residents strikingly did rise up together in a direct-action protest of roughly four weeks. Only a few years prior, both of those races had still lived segregated in North Carolina with their separate environmental struggles. Now, they were protesting together for an environmental concern. How did this unity come about? This study aims to provide a part of an answer to that question by focusing on how identity-rhetoric generated unity among African American and white people in Warren County. It concludes that two core narratives of race and class as well as the identity issues religion, public health, and the relation between governing authorities and citizens generated a sense of unity that incorporated all people of Warren County and even beyond.

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Introduction

In the Northeastern corner of North Carolina lies a relatively small and rural county called Warren County. In the beginning of the 1980s, outsiders often described it as "a rural wasteland" with "little to brag about."[2] The population was predominantly African American, the third poorest in North Carolina, with little industry to offer them alternative employment to farming.[3] In 1982, it was strikingly this county - that appeared to be on no one's radar - that gave birth to (what has been coined) the environmental justice movement. It did this by igniting a sizable direct-action protest against the allocation of a hazardous waste landfill to the area.[4] As one of the primary scholars on the Warren County protests, McGurty, states: "Warren County, North Carolina, is heralded as a watershed event of contemporary environmentalism, as the birthplace of the environmental justice movement."[5] Environmental justice can best be defined as the "fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, culture, national origin, income, and educational levels with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of protective environmental laws, regulations, and polices."[6] Prior to the direct action protests in Warren County, environmentalism primarily revolved around conservationism or wildlife preservation. However, after the Warren County opposition, a substantial justice and Civil Rights Movement was incorporated into environmentalism.[7] Environmentalism was forever changed.

But what exactly happened at this turning point in environmentalism? In 1982 authorities started the construction of a polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) landfill in Warren

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[2] M. Jordan, *The Carolina Times* (Durham, NC), Sep. 18, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn83045120/1982-09-18/ed-1/seq-7.pdf.; D. Alderman, "Fight Goes on Against Landfill," *Winston-Salem Chronicle* (Winston-Salem, NC), Sep. 23, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn85042324/1982-09-23/ed-1/seq-1.pdf.

[3] D. Alderman, "Fight Goes on Against Landfill."; "Chemical Conflict," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 21, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-21/ed-1/seq-6.pdf.

[4] R.D. Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality* (Clark Atlanta University, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000).; R.D. Bullard, "Communities of Color Still on Frontline of Toxic Assaults," *Dissident Voice*, last modified May 29, 2007, https://dissidentvoice.org/2007/05/25th-anniversary-of-the-warren-county-pcb-landfill-protests/. A. Wegner, "PCB Protests," *NCPedia*, last modified 2012, https://www.ncpedia.org/pcb-protests. E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice" (UMI Number: 9624433, University of Illinois, Ann Arbor, MI, 1995), P.iii, 373; D. Alderman, "Fight Goes on Against Landfill."; .J. Scanlan, "The Theoretical Roots and Sociology of Environmental Justice in Appalachia." In *Mountains of Injustice: Social and Environmental Justice in Appalachia*, ed. M. Morron & G.L Buckley, (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011), http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1j7x69w.6.

[5] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.373.

[6] J.N. Gracia & H.K. Koh, "Promoting Environmental Justice." *American Journal of Public Health* 101, no. S1 (2011): S14-6.

[7] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.9.; Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio, *Meet Deborah and Ken Ferruccio*, WUNC91.5, Oct. 24, 2011, http://wunc.org/post/meet-deborah-and-ken-ferruccio#stream/0.

County.[8] PCB is a toxic chemical known to cause, among other things, birth defects and cancer.[9] Four years before, in 1978, PCB had been illegally dumped on the shoulders of roughly 210 miles of North Carolinian highway.[10] In order to contain this toxic danger, authorities decided that the soil should be stored in a landfill in Afton, Warren County.[11] Inhabitants of Warren County were highly displeased with this prospect. While shouting such phrases as "We Won't Take It No More" and marching the streets, they rose up in non-violent protests to halt the construction of the landfill.[12] The protesters primarily argued that the landfill was located in Warren County because it was poor and predominantly African American. As a result of those demographic facts, the government did not expect them to be politically capable enough to halt the landfill's construction.[13] As a local newspaper put it: "Some protestors contend the state chose the county because of its high concentration of blacks, poor economic status and political weakness."[14] In the end, the direct-action protests lasted roughly four weeks from the 12th of September to the 15th of October 1982.[15] People from all races and ages joined.[16]

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[8] R.D. Bullard, "Communities of Color Still on Frontline of Toxic Assaults."; A. Wegner, "PCB Protests."; E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," P.iii, 373; D. Alderman, "Fight Goes on Against Landfill."

[9] "Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)," *EPA*, https://www.epa.gov/pcbs/learn-about-polychlorinated-biphenyls-pcbs#main-content.; C. Wilson, "2 UNC Students Among 130 Arrested at PCB Site," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 21, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-21/ed-1/seq-1/ocr/.; C. Wilson, "PCB Protest Nears End," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 17, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-10-05/ed-1/seq-2/ocr/.; "Afton," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Aug. 23, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-08-23/ed-1/seq-2.pdf.; "Briefly-Raleigh," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), April 28, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-15/ed-1/seq-2.pdf.

[10] D.E. Taylor, "Warren County, North Carolina," *Pollution Issues*, http://www.pollutionissues.com/Ve-Z/Warren-County-North-Carolina.html.; C. Anderson, "At Campus Panel Forum Warren Co. Dump Site Discussed," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Oct. 15, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-10-15/ed-1/seq-2/ocr/.; C. Wilson, "PCB Protesters Plan Action Today," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 20, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-20/ed-1/seq-1/ocr/.; The Associated Press, "Briefly, Afton," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Oct. 05, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-10-05/ed-1/seq-2/ocr/.; C. Wilson, "PCB Protest Nears End," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 17, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-10-05/ed-1/seq-2/ocr/.

[11] D. Alderman, "Fight Goes on Against Landfill."

[12] A. Wegner, "PCB Protests," *NC Office of Archives and History*, 2012, https://www.ncpedia.org/pcb-protests.; C. Wilson, "2 UNC Students," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 21, 1982.

[13] "North Carolina Newspapers, 1982," North Carolina Newspaper Archive, http://www.digitalnc.org/collections/newspapers/.

[14] C. Anderson, "At campus panel," *The Daily Tar Heel*, Oct. 15, 1982.

[15] "North Carolina Newspapers, 1982," North Carolina Newspaper Archive, http://www.digitalnc.org/collections/newspapers/.

[16] D. Burwell & L.W. Cole, "Environmental Justice Comes Full Circle: Warren County before and After," *Golden Gate Univ. Environmental Law* Journal 1 (2007), p.9-40.; E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p. 1-220.

Those four weeks were the first time that predominantly poor African Americans and Whites truly united for an environmental justice cause. That unity was remarkable for three reasons. Firstly, because both races came together. Secondly, because they came together for an environmental cause. And thirdly, because both races in general were in this case mostly poor.

Considering North Carolina's history of racism, it was striking that African American and White residents united at all. A few years earlier, racism had dominated everyday life. In the 1960s, for example, African American students were still initiating sit-ins to get served at certain stores and restaurants.[17] A White alliance with African Americans was at that time unlikely and even often unimaginable. Yet, in 1982, both races were protesting together. The protesters themselves also noticed the remarkable nature of this bond.[18] A farmer stated, "If anybody had ever told me whites and Blacks would get together in this county like this for anything, I wouldn't have believed it."[19] Rather extraordinarily, different colors thus united during the PCB protests.

The unity among races was moreover striking because it was the first time that African Americans and Whites united for an environmental cause on such scale. Both races had occupied themselves with environmental concerns, but never to such an extent together. Whites dominated more mainstream environmentalism with organizations like the Sierra Club. [20] Such clubs primarily concerned themselves with instances like the formation of Redwoods National Park and the Clean Air Act.[21] Around the same time, African Americans were more concerned with, for instance, equal opportunities than the national parks. They deemed mainstream environmentalism elitist. This is evident in a question of Tom Bradley, member of the City Council of Los Angeles and future mayor of that city. In 1972, he asked the Sierra Club why "to many of our nation's 20 million blacks, the conservation movement

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[17] P. Davies & I.W. Morgan. *From Sit-Ins to SNCC : The Student Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s*. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida), p.1.; *Legacy of the Greensboro four*, Television, CNN, 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Rmjt0kJF0A.; "Sit-in," *Britannica Academic*, accessed November 10, 2017, http://academic.eb.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/levels/collegiate/article/sit-in/68011.; A. Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1987), p.59.

[18] M. Jordan, *The Carolina Times*, Sep. 18, 1982.

[19] D. Burwell & L.W. Cole, "Environmental Justice Comes Full Circle," p.16.

[20] E. McGurty, "From NIMBY to Civil Rights," in *Environmental History and the American South: A Reader*, ed. P. Sutter & C.J. Manganiello (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), p.372-377.; E. McGurty, *Transforming Environmentalism: Warren County, PCBs, and the Origins of Environmental Justice* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009). The Sierra Club is an environmental organization that aims to protect the wilderness and push for environmental legislation. "About Us," *Sierra Club*, https://www.sierraclub.org/about.

[21] "About Us," *Sierra Club*.; The Clean Air Act is "the comprehensive federal law that regulates air emissions from stationary and mobile sources." "Summary of the Clean Air Act," EPA, 1970, https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-clean-air-act.

has as much appeal as a segregated bus."[22] They did not respond. Mainstream environmentalist organizations like the Sierra Club wanted to remain concerned with environmental issues that touched all lives, not just those of minorities.[23]

Therefore, African Americans had separate environmental struggles prior to Warren County. They primarily concerned themselves with environmental issues within the African American community.[24] In 1968, Martin Luther King, for instance, linked waste management to minority rights during the Memphis sanitation strike. In Memphis, the primarily African American garbage pick-up service faced dangerous working conditions for little pay and went on strike.[25] While both races thus mostly had their own environmental struggles prior to 1982, it was not until Warren County that African Americans fully united for the same environmental cause.[26]

The unity of protesters was lastly remarkable because poor people were not expected to have the means and time to unite in a protest. Scholars have included this in the term "path of least resistance." This term is further explained in the literature review section of this introduction.[27] Thus, for three reasons, the coming together of people in Warren County was rather unique. Different colors and poor people united during the PCB protests to halt the construction of a toxin dump.

This begs the question, how did this unity of races in general and for an environmental concern in particular, come about in Warren County? More specifically this thesis aims to answer the question: to what extent did the protesters' identity-rhetoric with its amplifying elements generate unity among African American and white people during the Warren County direct-action protests between September 12 and October 15, 1982? Key aspects of the research question are the concepts identity and rhetoric.

Identity-rhetoric played a fundamental role during that birth. As illustrated earlier, the identity issues of race and class were at the forefront of the Warren County protest. Scholars

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[22] E. McGurty, "From NIMBY to Civil Rights," p.372-377.
[23] E. McGurty, *Transforming Environmentalism*, p.12-14.
[24] Ibid., p.10-11.
[25] H.L. Wang, "NAACP Honors Memphis Sanitation Workers Who Went On Strike In 1968," *NPR*, Jan. 15, 2018, https://www.npr.org/2018/01/15/578176756/honoring-memphis-sanitation-workers-who-went-on-strike-in-1968.; S. Estes, ""I am a Man!": Race, Masculinity, and the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Strike," *Labor History* 41, 2 (2010), p.153.
[26] E. McGurty, *Transforming Environmentalism,* p.10-11.
[27] J.T. Hamilton "Testing for Environmental Racism: Prejudice, Profits, Political Power?" *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management,* 14, no. 1 (1995): 107-132.; .M. Konisky & C. Reenock, "Compliance Bias and Environmental (In)Justice," *Journal of Politics* 75, no.2 (2013): p.506–519.; H. Sigman, "The Pace of Progress at Superfund Sites: Policy Goals and Interest Group Influence," *Journal of Law & Economics* 44 (2001): p.315–344.

tend to define such identity in a "personal" and a "social" way. Personal identity refers to the idea of who you are as an individual. Put differently, "Personal identity involves a person's individual sense of him or herself as a discrete and separate entity."[28] Social identity, "involves an individual identification as part of a collective or group, such as belonging to a nation, class, ethnicity, religion, or other subgroup."[29] These different facets of a person identity can overlap.

The protesters at Warren County primarily referred to the racial and class components of their identity. However, public health, religion and the relation between subject and authority also played a role. People feared for "the tragedy of birth defects miscarriages and cancer in the future."[30] Moreover, the protesters gathered in churches and the protests were led by African American reverends.[31] Dissatisfaction with the existing relation between subject and authority is captured in one of the most prominent slogans of the protests, "Dump Hunt in the Dump." Hunt was the state's governor.[32] The relationship between citizens and authorities is thereby part of Warren County's identity-rhetoric as well.

However, what exactly is rhetoric? The definition of rhetoric ranges from narrow to broad. In its most narrow sense, rhetoric refers to the words people express or write. People's hidden message or the way in which they communicate is then not included. Questions like, what is the influence of the person's back ground on the message? and what is he or she saying between the lines? are not addressed. In contrast, in its broader definition, rhetoric refers to what people say both explicitly and implicitly. It, for instance, touches upon the manner in which a person speaks, who the person speaking is and in what context he or she is speaking. Especially the fact that this latter definition incorporates the history and image of the person who is speaking is of value for the Warren County case. As the historiography section explains further, the unity among people very much revolved around the presence of civil rights leaders. The broader interpretation thereby allows for a more precise picture of the unifying ability of identity-rhetoric in the PCB protests.

The unifying ability of the Warren County protests' identity-rhetoric is worth focusing on for two combined reasons. Firstly, the rhetoric forms the basis of later environmental justice studies. By adding a civil rights component to environmentalism, the PCB protests

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[28] B. Cossman, "identity." *The New Oxford Companion to Law*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199290543.001.0001/acref-9780199290543-e-1082.
[29] Ibid.
[30] "Hunt policy to blame for PCB fight," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 28, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-28/ed-1/seq-6.pdf.
[31] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.125-127.
[32] "North Carolina Newspapers, 1982."

added a new set of core terms to environmental studies. Scholars started to focus on the relation between race, class and environmental disadvantages, just like the Warren County protesters had. Secondly, while it plays such a key role in the environmental justice debate, the rhetoric in general and it unifying abilities have not been thoroughly analyzed yet. The academic debates on environmental justice illuminate how the rhetoric used at Warren County functioned as a starting point for environmental justice scholars. A historiography on the Warren County protests illustrates that the rhetoric of those protests and the manner in which it brings about unity has not been studied in-depth.

The identity-rhetoric of Warren County forms the basis of environmental justice studies. This is particularly evident in two environmental justice debates. Firstly, the "does it exist?" debate. Secondly, the "how it came about" discussion. The "does it exist?" debate proves whether or not environmental injustice exists. [33] The studies in that debate use racial and class issues as a starting point. The majority of studies conclude that environmental injustice exists. [34] Abel and White, for instance, studied the relation between industrial pollution, minorities, and poverty levels in Seattle, Washington. [35] They conclude that, "Minority and working class residents were more concentrated in the same neighborhoods near Seattle's worst industrial pollution risks."[36] However, others refute the existence of environmental injustice. Anderton et al., for instance, look at the location of treatment, storage and disposal facilities for hazardous waste (TSDFs) and find that they are not disproportionately located in predominantly African American communities. In their words: "we find no nationally consistent and statistically significant differences between the racial or ethnic composition of tracts which contain commercial TSDFs, and those which do not."[37] Despite disagreeing on whether or not environmental injustices occur, it is evident that race and class issues form the basis of the majority of studies in the "does it exist" debate. Studies

[33] S. Arora & T. Cason. "Do Community Characteristics Influence Environmental Outcomes? Evidence from the Toxics Release Inventory." *Southern Economic Journal* 65, no. 4 (1999): p.691–716.; M. Pastor Jr., J. Sadd, & J. Hipp, "Which Came First? Toxic Facilities, Minority Move-In, and Environmental Justice," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 23, no.1 (2001): 1–21.; P. Mohai & B. Bryant, "Environmental Racism: Reviewing the Evidence." In *Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards*, ed. B. Bryant & P. Mohai, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992):163–176; M. Ash & T. R. Fetter, "Who Lives on the Wrong Side of the Environmental Tracks? Evidence from the EPA's Risk Screening Environmental Indicators Model." *Social Science Quarterly* 85, no.2 (2004): p.441–462.; B. Goldman & L. Fitton, *Toxic Waste, and Race Revisited*, (Washington, DC: Center for Policy Alternatives, 1994).
[34] Ibid.
[35] T.D. Abel & J. White, "Skewed Riskscapes and Gentrified In- equities: Environmental Exposure Disparities in Seattle, Washington," *American Journal of Public Health 101*, No.12 (2011), p.2211-2216.
[36] Ibid., p.246.
[37] D.L. Anderton, A.B. Anderson, J.M. Oakes & M.R. Fraser, "Environmental Equity: The Demographics of Dumping," *Demography* 31, no.2 (1994), p.229.

on, for instance, the relation between environmental justice and gender have only recently been done.[38] The rhetoric of race and class used during the PCB protests of 1982 thus forms the basis of the "does it exist?" debate.

The identity-rhetoric of Warren County also resonates in the "how it came about" debate. That debate further analyzes whether authorities choose certain areas for, for instance, landfills because they do not expect the population to be able to stop them. In the academic debate this is known as the "path of least resistance" argument.[39] The scholars Hird and Reese, for instance, find that communities who mobilize themselves politically experience lower pollution levels.[40] Similarly, Hamilton finds hazardous waste facilities are less likely to expand in more politically mobilized communities.[41] The 1982 PCB protesters point out that Warren County was chosen for a "path of least resistance" argument. Even a state employee contended the area was chosen because the residents, "[are] mostly Blacks (…) there aren't many of them, they're poor, and they don't have any political clout.""[42] Some of the same identity related rhetoric that was used during the Warren County protests thus resonates in the "how it came about" debate.

Strikingly, studies on identity-rhetoric lack in the historiography on the PCB protests. More specifically, studies on how identity-rhetoric generated a sense of unity among the African American and white protesters lack. Instead, the historiography of the PCB protests exists out of chronologies of the events.[43] This is evident in, for example, the study of Burwell and Cole as well as McGurty's research. The study of Burwell and Cole is primarily a chronology. They describe the start, actual protests, and the protests' legacy in their article. While they do not focus on rhetoric they do offer some implicit clues as to how unity came about. For example, they say that citizens rose up because they "feared for their property values and also for their health"[44] Moreover, they argue that the protests grew because

[38] S. Buckingham & R. Kulcur, "Gendered Geographies of Environmetal Injustice," *Antipode* 41, no. 4, .659-683, http://dspace.brunel.ac.uk/bitstream/2438/8822/1/Fulltext.pdf.
[39] D.M. Konisky & C. Reenock, "Compliance Bias and Environmental (In)Justice," p.506–519.; H. Sigman, "The Pace of Progress at Superfund Sites," p.315–344; J.A. Hird, A. John & M. Reese, "The Distribution of Environmental Quality: An Empirical Analysis." *Social Science Quarterly* 79, no.4 (1998): 693–716.
[40] J.A. Hird, A. John & M. Reese, "The Distribution of Environmental Quality," p.693–716.
[41] J.T. Hamilton "Testing for Environmental Racism," p.107-132.
[42] "Warren County PCB Issue," *The Carolina Times* (Durham, NC), Oct. 30, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn83045120/1982-10-30/ed-1/seq-15/ocr/.
[43] D. Burwell & L.W. Cole, "Environmental Justice Comes Full Circle," p.1-40; E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice"; V. Eady, "Warren County and the Birth of a Movement: The Troubled Marriage between Environmentalism and Civil Rights," *Golden Gate Univ. Environmental Law Journal* 1 (2007): p.41-52.
[44] D. Burwell & L.W. Cole, "Environmental Justice Comes Full Circle," p.13;

African American civil rights activists used the opportunity to combat discrimination.[45] However, they neither offer any more in-depth conclusions on how Whites and African American united nor do they incorporate the role of rhetoric in the process. Nevertheless, Burwell and Cole's valuable chronology could form the basis for such an analysis.

The most prominent scholar on the Warren County protest, McGurty, provides a little more in-depth explanation of how both races united but refrains from focusing on the protesters rhetoric as well. She answers the question of why environmental justice was born at Warren County. Numerous interviews and national newspapers form the basis of her study and provide valuable primary source insights into the occurrences of 1982. She provides a thorough overview of the events to answer her research question.[46] People rose up because they were worried about the idea of a hazardous landfill in their backyards. Moreover, she not only says that the protests grew because civil rights leaders joined, she also concludes that their joining strengthened the unity between African Americans and Whites. However, in contrast to Burwell and Cole, who state that joining was the leaders' own idea, she states that the civil rights leaders were initially invited by White residents because the latter did not know how to organize direct-action protests.[47] Civil rights leaders thus seem to play a unifying role in the Warren County situation. The historiography of Warren County thus provides evidence of why people rose up and, to some extent, why they came together. None of the scholars focus explicitly on how a particular use of identity-rhetoric brought about unity. As previously outlined, this is striking as that rhetoric forms the basis for many studies in the environmental justice debate.

How the protesters' use of identity-rhetoric forms a sense of unity can best be studied with sources that directly quote the protesters words. In this way, it is certain that no scholar has re-interpreted the words spoken. For this reason, three local newspapers from the North Carolina library newspaper archive are analyzed. The archive holds an extensive online collection of local newspapers. This study uses the Winston-Salem Chronicle, the North Carolina Times, and the Daily Tar Heel in the year 1982 between the 15th of September and the 12th of October. The Winston-Salem Chronicle is "oldest and most respected community newspaper."[48] They cover the area of Winston-Salem as well as surrounding regions such as

[45] Ibid., p.15
[46] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p. 1-220.
[47] Ibid., p. iii.
[48] "Welcome to the Chronicle," *Winston-Salem Chronicle* (Winston-Salem, NC), Oct. 8, 2017, http://www.wschronicle.com.

the events in Warren County.[49] Warren County itself did not have such a regional newspaper of its own but was covered by this paper. The Carolina Times, is a state-based newspaper that no longer exists. It was primarily used to fight racial inequality in North Carolina.[50] The Daily Tar heel is a student newspaper of the University of North Carolina.[51] Together the three newspapers provide three different voices; one regional, one state, and one student. In this manner, a relatively thorough analysis of the rhetoric used is provided. A newspaper analysis has as a disadvantage that reporters can filter the information they provide. Reporters might, for instance, have taken several quotes of protesters out of context. In this manner, they provide a skewed version of history. Secondary sources, including a radio interview with the Ferruccio's, are used to counter these misrepresentations at least to an extent.

In order to understand the rhetoric used, an overview of the events is firstly provided. Numerous factors, individuals, and occurrences were at play during the PCB protests. After an overview of that interplay of factors, one is no longer occupied with a search of who did what, but is able to focus on the analysis of rhetoric used and the unity that rhetoric brought about. Secondly, the core identity-rhetoric arguments and their amplifying and unity generating elements are expounded. These core arguments revolve around race and class as it is (as illustrated above) those demographics that play the leading role in the PCB protests. How this core unity was strengthened and even expanded to include people from outside Warren County by more subtle identity-rhetoric and their amplifying elements is analyzed in the final chapter. In this way, a thorough answer is formed to the question: to what extent did identity-rhetoric generate unity among African American and white people during the PCB direct-action protests between protest between September 12 and October 15, 1982?

[49] Ibid.
[50] "The Carolina Times," *DigitalNC*, Oct. 8, 2017, https://www.digitalnc.org/newspapers/carolina-times-durham-nc/.
[51] "About," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Oct. 8, 2017, http://www.dailytarheel.com/page/about.

Chapter 1: historical context: when unity came about

The Warren County PCB protests find their origin in 1978. In the summer of that year, Robert Ward of Ward Transformer Company hired Robert Burns (who owned a waste disposal company) to illegally dump 31,000 gallons of chemicals containing PCB's. Burns and his sons accepted the offer and spread the toxins along roughly 210 miles of North Carolinian highway.[52] The government's solution to the contaminated soil was a landfill in Warren County.[53] African American and white citizens came together in that county in the autumn of 1982 for a roughly four week long direct-action protest against the landfill.[54] Before delving into how identity-rhetoric fostered a sense of unity among the protesters, it is essential to first study when this unity came about and which actors played a role. It is that historical context that partly drove the PCB protesters to use unifying identity-rhetoric. A particular time period, the personal history of the protests' white leaders, unfavorable court cases, and the arrival of civil rights leaders form the historical context.

The PCB protesters' response grew out of a growing concern about hazardous waste control in the 1970s. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimated that the U.S.' toxic waste production had increased with an annual ten percent since the end of the World Wars. In an attempt to control this production, the government enacted the Toxic Substance Control Act in 1976. As part of that act, the EPA received more control over PCB disposal.[55] This heightened the costs of processing PCB for many companies like Ward Transformer. Ward likely decided to contract the Burns to evade those heightened costs.[56]

However, the public was becoming very aware of the dangers of chemical waste. The citizens of Warren County understood the severity of the situation because of that awareness. This awareness was partly triggered by the Love Canal incident of 1978.[57] Love Canal was a working-class residential area built on the remains of a former canal. During the industrial boom of the Second World War, authorities had dumped around 80 different types of toxins in the canal. In 1978, these toxins started to affect the population that was living on top of

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[52] E. McGurty, "Warren County, NC, and the Emergence of the Environmental Justice Movement: Unlikely Coalitions and Shared Meanings in Local Collective Action," *Society & Natural Resources* 13, 4 (2000), p.375.
[53] R.D. Bullard, "Communities of Color Still on Frontline of Toxic Assaults," *Dissident Voice*, May 29, 2007, https://dissidentvoice.org/2007/05/25th-anniversary-of-the-warren-county-pcb-landfill-protests/.
[54] "North Carolina Newspapers, 1982."
[55] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.30-38.; L. Schierow, "The Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA): Implementation and New Challenges," *Congressional Research Service* (2009), p.16.
[56] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.30-38.
[57] Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio.

them.[58] The residents of Warren County watched the evacuation of the people in Love Canal. Around the same time, they heard about the illegal PCB dump in their own area. As one of the Warren County protest initiators said while she was reflecting on the events years later, "Coincidently that same week that the PCBs were being dumped (…) Love Canal residents were being evacuated from their home so the public was very aware of the dangers of chemicals."[59] As a result of the 1970s-growing national concern with hazardous waste disposal and the Love Canal incident, some residents were able to grasp the severity of this dump and grew concerned. They especially became concerned after state authorities announced in the local newspaper on the 20th of December 1978 that they would put the PCB soil in a landfill in Afton, Warren County.[60]

At the start, the opposition was primarily white.[61] Two white residents formed the initial opposition to the landfill's allocation. Their names are Kenneth (Ken) and Deborah Ferrruccio. "[T]he local opposition formed immediately."[62] These two educators, who had only recently moved to the area, became the protests primary leaders. As McGurty states, "everyone involved in the case (…) could agree to one point, Ken and Deborah Ferruccio were the key to the local opposition."[63] As soon as he heard about the PCB landfill, Ken wrote letters to the state and the EPA as a first sign of protest. He felt that the government was taking control over his land, and demanded a say in the matter. Deborah called their protest a kind of religious calling, "we have to protect god's creation and people's public health because it is what god wants us to do."[64] They felt it was their religious duty, especially as teachers, to protect their community by educating them on the situation. They tried to educate and motivate people from all races to take action.

> "We literally ripped up the phonebook and said you take this page you take this page. And there was never a question from the beginning that your black and I am white (…) because when you got the gun to your head you don't say I don't really want you to help me. You take whom ever."[65]

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[58] E.C. Beck, "The Love Canal Tragedy," *EPA Web Archive*, 1979, https://archive.epa.gov/epa/aboutepa/love-canal-tragedy.html.; L.M. Gibbs, *Love Canal and the Birth of the Environmental Health Movement*, (Washington: Island Press, 2010).; "Love Canal," *Britannica Online Academic Edition*, 2017.
[59] Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio.
[60] Ibid.
[61] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p. iii, 95, 173.
[62] Ibid., p.48
[63] Ibid., p.59
[64] Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio.
[65] Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio.

As a result, the Ferruccio's were able to form a local action group consisting of roughly 400 people that were called the Warren County Citizens Concerned About PCBs (Concerned Citizens).[66] Initially, most members of the group appear to have been white.[67]

However, African Americans soon joined the protest. In early 1979, reverend (rev.) Luther Brown of the local African American Church (Coley Springs Church) knocked on the Ferruccio's door and declared his support. Afterwards, Concerned Citizens held meetings in the Coley Springs Church. People from outside the group started joining too.

The Ferruccio's were able to get a diverse set of around 600 to 1,000 people out of the 15,000 people in the county to attend an EPA meeting on January 4, 1979. [68] There, the EPA presented its plans for the landfill. This plan included waivers for three of the landfill permit requirements. Normally, the landfill would have to be 50 feet between the landfill and the ground water level, at Warren County it was merely 10 on an average day. For this, they received their first waiver. The second and third waiver were for a so called "underliner leachate collection; and the artificial layer," technical parts of the construction. Citizens were moreover concerned about whether the overall quality of the ground sufficed. Generally speaking, a landfill was located in impermeable clay soil. However, the soil in Warren County was relatively permeable and held little clay.[69] The meeting was, however, not a place where citizens could voice such concerns. They were merely presented with the plan that would be executed "regardless of public sentiment."[70] As McGurty puts it, this angered the attendees and alienated the government officials from the local population.[71]

Following the EPA meeting, two court cases were held. One was of a local farmer who sewed the state for poisoning his land.[72] Another one was called by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). This signals the early involvement of African Americans in the PCB struggle. They argued that the landfill was being sited in Warren County partly because of the predominantly black population. The soil itself was not of any superior quality and hence they felt that the large presence of minority citizens must have played a role in the allocation process. However, the judge did not agree

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[66] Ibid.; E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.59.
[67] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.95, 173; "North Carolina Newspapers, 1982."
[68] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.48-49.
[69] C. Hampson, "Warren County and Environmental Justice: A Community Fighting Back," (2788, University of North Carolina Asheville, NC, 2010), p.9, http://toto.lib.unca.edu/sr_papers/history_sr/srhistory_2010/hampson_chris.pdf.; "Carolinians angry over PCB landfill," *The New York Times*, Aug. 11, 1982, http://www.nytimes.com/1982/08/11/us/carolinians-angry-over-pcb-landfill.html.
[70] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.82.
[71] Ibid., 76-95.
[72] D.E. Taylor, "Warren County, North Carolina."

and concluded that "There is not one shred of evidence that race has at any time been a motivating factor for any decision taken by any official –state, federal or local—in this long saga."[73] The involvement of the NAACP as an organization ended with the court case.

The Ferruccio's then set out to organize a direct-action protest against the landfill. From that moment on, African Americans got more involved in the PCB opposition. Rev. Brown invited African American activist Rev. White of the United Church of Christ (UCC)'s Commission for Racial Justice to assist. Prior to that the Ferruccio's lacked the organizational skills to maintain a large crowd of people mobilized for the entire duration of the protests.[74] The protests would last roughly four weeks, from Wednesday the 15th of September until Tuesday the 12th of October 1982.[75] Rev. White arrived in the beginning of the direct-action protests. He invited other African American civil rights activists to join. [76] Soon, a significant number of such activists had joined the PCB protests. and the landfill was turned into a civil rights issue as well.[77] While the Ferruccio's thus invited African Americans to join the protests from the start, it was not until the civil rights leaders came in that a significant number of African Americans united with the white PCB protesters.

Their unity is widely visible throughout the protests and could not be broken by government officials. The white and African American opposition held marches and protest rallies together on all the days that soil was delivered to the landfill.[78] Governor Hunt tried to break this unity. He verbally opposed the protests, insisted that the landfill was only sited in Warren County because it was the most suitable location, and had numerous people from both races arrested.[79] Despite his efforts to break the protesters apart, the people of Warren County remained united. Moreover, most charges were dropped. A sense of unity thus existed throughout the protests that authorities were unable to stop.

The protests thus grew out of a growing concern for hazardous waste and a dissatisfying result in court. The protests were initially predominantly white and led by the Ferruccio's. The Ferruccio's tried to incorporate African American residents from the start. Despite their efforts, it was not until African American civil rights activists arrived in Warren

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[73] . McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.91.
[74] Ibid., 109-110.
[75] "North Carolina Newspapers, 1982."
[76] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.109-110.
[77] Ibid., p.iii.
[78] "North Carolina Newspapers, 1982."
[79] The Associated Press, "Security Required at Controversial Dump Site for PCB-laced Soil," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Aug. 26, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-08-26/ed-1/seq-2.pdf.; J. Slagle, "Protest Against Dumping of PCB Ends in Arrests in Warren County," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 16, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-16/ed-1/seq-1/.

County that African Americans became fully incorporated in the direct-action protests. Authorities were unable to break the bond between the protesters during the four-weeks of protest. This signals the unity's strength. While *when* African American and white people got together in Warren County is now evident, it is still relatively unclear how this unlikely alliance came about. The ensuing analysis forms part of an answer to that question.

Chapter 2: Narratives of Race and Class

In the autumn of 1982, both African American and White protesters were primarily using two narratives to explain why Warren County had been chosen for the siting of a toxic waste landfill.[80] One of the narratives revolved around race and the other one around class. Respectively, the essence of the rationales was that the government had picked the county for a toxic waste site because its citizens were African American and/or poor. In the words of a leading protester, "the state has singled out Warren County because it is a poor and predominantly black region."[81] Officials simply did not expect those two groups of citizens to rise up. They did not feel that African Americans and poor people had the resources and political clout for it.[82] As outlined in the introduction, in environmental justice studies this is known as the: "path of least resistance" argument.[83] Yet the citizens of Warren County came together and rose up despite these expectations. The narratives of race and class were at the center of that unexpected, united protest. What role did these two core narratives and the factors that enhanced the message of those narratives play in the unifying process? Put differently, to what extent did the narratives of race and class with their amplifying elements unite people? Each narrative is addressed consecutively.

Narrative of race

Initially, it was primarily a group of white residents, under leadership of the Ferruccio's, who participated in the protest's preparations. However, soon African American citizens joined them. The narrative of race (partly) brought this unification about. This is elaborated upon in the ensuing paragraphs. The narrative of race had one core argument. The essence of that core argument has been explained in the previous paragraph. The persuasiveness and unifying power of that central argument was amplified as the protest progressed as a result of three factors. Firstly, prominent figures of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s joined the protests. Secondly, the narrative was used in ways reminiscent of the Civil Rights Movement of the two prior decades. Thirdly, the media reported on the race narrative's core

[80] "North Carolina Newspapers, 1982."
[81] C. Wilson, "Landfills may violate rights," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Aug. 26, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-08-26/ed-1/seq-8.pdf.
[82] "Warren County PCB Issue," *The Carolina Times*, Oct. 30, 1982.
[83] D.M. Konisky & C. Reenock, "Compliance Bias and Environmental (In)Justice," p.506–519.; H. Sigman, "The Pace of Progress at Superfund Sites," p.315–344; J.A. Hird, A. John & M. Reese, "The Distribution of Environmental Quality," p.693–716.

argument and the first and second amplifying factor. Before delving into these amplifications, the fact that the narrative of race's core argument was fundamental to the protests is further substantiated by addressing the arguments salience.

That core argument of the race narrative resonated throughout the entire protest and generated support from both African American and white citizens. Already a month before the direct-action protests, African American farmer and lifelong resident of Warren County Edward Summerville was arguing that the residents were concluding that the issue was race, "There is absolutely no other conclusion you can draw (…) when you look at the evidence."[84] Ken Ferruccio echoed a similar sentiment as Summerville, "I think the decision to dump PCBI (…) in Warren County was motivated, at least in part, by racial considerations." He said those words in the second and one of the most turbulent weeks of protest with daily mass demonstrations and over two hundred arrests. The narrative of race also continued to resonate after the last truck with contaminated soil had rolled in. After that moment, a county resident reflected back on the direct-action protests. He said that the Warren County population had been chosen as hosts of the hazardous waste because they were, "mostly Blacks (…) and they don't have any political clout."[85] These quotes all address and illuminate the core argument of the "race narrative." The narrative's continuous appeal is illustrated by the fact that the words were spoken slightly before, during and after the direct-action protests occurred. Moreover, the fact that Ferruccio is white and Summerville is African American, illustrates that the narrative was, at least to an extent, convincing for both races.

However, these quotes illustrate neither the progression of the narrative of race's appeal nor how it generated a sense of unity among the protesters in Warren County. Those factors have to be found elsewhere. For instance, in the core narratives' first amplifying element: African American civil rights leaders who joined the protest. The civil rights leaders' reputation and usage of the narrative of race emphasized and legitimized the link between African Americans, civil rights, and hazardous waste management in particular and the PCB struggle in general. In this manner, they evoked a sense of unity among all African American resident and made the PCB struggle a valid cause to rebel against. This, in combination with the organizational skills of the African American leaders, seems to have further enticed African Americans to join white citizens like the Ferruccio's in an environmental protest.

[84] M. Jordan, "Blacks in Warren County Fighting Dumping PCB," *The Carolina Times* (Durham, NC), Aug. 14, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn83045120/1982-08-14/ed-1/seq-1/ocr/.
[85] "Warren County PCB Issue," *The Carolina Times*, Oct. 30, 1982.

This unifying effect of the civil rights leaders is illuminated by an analysis of the reputation and skills of the civil rights leaders that joined. Two of the first civil rights activists that joined the PCB cause and united people in protest were rev. White and Chavis. They arrived on the first day (the 15th of September) of direct-action protests. Both rev. White and rev. Chavis' reputation amplified and validated the narrative of race's core argument. In this manner, they further united the African Americans with the PCB cause. Their reputation derived from three aspects; their association with the United Church of Christ (UCC), their positions as reverends, and their personal civil rights history.

Rev. White and Chavis represented the UCC, a network of churches with a long history of civil rights activism in North Carolina in general and Warren County in particular. As representatives of that history, the two reverends further manifested the link between civil rights and hazardous waste management that was being made in Warren County. In the UCC's history, its Commission for Racial Justice had, for instance, been at the forefront of the voter registration efforts in the 1960s in the county. The coordinating office for those efforts were even in Warren County during that time.[86] From that office, the UCC tried to actively convince African American citizens to register to vote and vote. In this manner, African American political influence (even if there remained little African Americans in power) grew. The UCC's website propagates its history of civil rights activism as well. As they state, the UCC was at the "forefront of (…) the Civil Rights Movement."[87] Rev. White and Chavis were representatives of this church that had a reputation of being occupied with civil rights. The reputation of the UCC is expected to have resonated in their presence. Therefore, the reverends participation in the protests further emphasized the link that was being made between civil rights and the PCB landfill to an extent.

The reverends unifying capacity was further enhanced by the fact that they represented a church. Religion played a major role in the lives of the citizens of Warren County.[88] As a result, religious figures like rev. White and Chavis are expected to have had the ability to influence people's actions as translators of God's words. The pious nature of the community is evident in the extensive use of prayer in the protests. McGurty, for example, reports "the incorporation of prayer into all the protests."[89] Local newspapers also confirm this praying. On the 21st of September (the beginning of the second week of direct-action protest),

[86] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.109.
[87] "About Us," *United Church of Christ*, 2017, http://www.ucc.org/about.
[88] *Warren County Documentary*, YouTube Video, last accessed Jan. 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YJJ2OQ3zSs.
[89] E E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.126.

newspapers report that roughly ninety people engaged in, “”The Lord’s Prayer” while kneeling at the entrance to the dump site.”[90] Religion was thus a fundamental part of Warren County life and its protests. People who adhered to that religion were more likely to follow its leaders, like rev. White and Chavis, into a PCB protest.

Religious authorities were especially able to unite people with the Warren County cause because people were truly convinced that the PCB struggle was a spiritual, religious mission. As Deborah Ferruccio explains, people came every day to protest for over a month partly, “Because people had faith that this was an issue that had a higher calling and we were often speaking in the context of a church we made people feel comfortable and they realized that what they were doing was something spiritual.”[91] The church was, moreover, used as the protests’ organizational center. At the church, protests were planned and information was shared.[92] The involvement of religious leaders like rev. White and Chavis confirmed or enhanced the idea that the PCB protests were “an issue that had a higher calling.”[93] In this manner, rev. White and Chavis got people to unite in protest. How religion and church brought about unity is more elaborately addressed in the next chapter.

The two reverends personal reputation and skills also equipped rev. White and Chavis with a certain mobilizing power. rev. White had, for instance, developed a useful set of organizational skills during his history of civil rights activism. In fact, rev. Brown of the Warren County Coley Springs Church had invited rev. White to join, primarily, for those organization skills. Prior to his arrival, the (then still) predominantly white opposition lacked the necessary skills to ignite a substantial direct-action protest.[94] Rev. White was one of the people to provide these skills. He had gained these skills primarily during his involvement with the UCC’s direct-protests of the 1960s and 1970s. As McGurty puts it, “The Commission and White had been involved in disruptive action in the county and throughout the state since the 1960s and were not going to be left out of this one.”[95] With the gained skills, rev. White soon manifested himself as an organizational leader in Warren County. People followed him in numerous protest rallies and came to hear his speeches at the Coley Springs Church.[96] In this manner, he was able to mobilize both African American and White

[90] C. Wilson, “2 UNC Students,” *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 21, 1982.
[91] Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio.
[92] E. McGurty, “The Construction of Environmental Justice,” p.126.
[93] Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio.
[94] McGurty, “The Construction of Environmental Justice,” p.109-110.
[95] Ibid., p.111.
[96] Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio.

citizens during the PCB protests with his skills, the various facets of his reputation and his UCC membership.

Rev. Chavis united African Americans with the PCB struggle primarily through his well-known reputation as a civil rights activist. In order to grasp the essence of that reputation, one needs to delve into rev. Chavis' history as a civil rights activist. Rev. Chavis started his civil rights career at the age of thirteen when he became the first African American to ever obtain a library card at the central library in Oxford, North Carolina. As an adult, he was invited by rev. White to join the UCC Commission for Racial Justice's attempt to desegregate schools in North Carolina. In 1972, rev. Chavis got arrested as one of the "Wilmington 10", which provided him with instant fame. [97] The Wilmington 10 were ten students of the University of North Carolina. They boycotted the school after it had forbidden them to honor Martin Luther King's birthday. Many people in the area were angry that the boys engaged in such a protest. As a form of revenge, the citizens falsely blamed the Wilmington 10 for burning down a grocery store. The ten members received sentences that ranged from 29 to 34 years. Chavis was, however, released after four years as a result of a successful appeal.[98] His captivity attracted international media attention and provided him with the necessary authority to lead the people of Warren County in protest. As McGurty describes,

> "he had become a hero for blacks. Nowhere was this truer than in the northeastern section of North Carolina where Chavis had helped organize blacks for civil rights actions. As a member of the UCC church located in Warren County, he was a part of the local community. Through contact with White and the Commission, he became an important symbolic leader for the local backs in the protests."[99]

Rev. Chavis only joined a few days of the protest in the initial phase and got arrested on the third day. Rev. Chavis thereby emphasized the link between civil rights and the PCB landfill that was being made. Even a famous civil rights leader like rev. Chavis was willing to get arrested for the cause. He had only just gotten out of jail.[100] Despite his short participation, as McGurty writes, rev. Chavis was able to lead many African Americans during the protest because of his reputation.

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[97] http://www.blackpast.org/aah/muhammad-reverend-benjamin-chavis-1948
[98]"Muhammad, Benjamin Chavis (1948-)," *Blackpast*, accessed December 02, 2017, http://www.blackpast.org/aah/muhammad-reverend-benjamin-chavis-1948.
[99] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.112.
[100] Ibid., p.113.

Rev. Chavis and White enhanced the legitimacy of the narrative of race's core argument further by actually using the narrative. Both Reverends used the narrative of race, for instance, during the second week of protests. They said that they "felt that the landfill had been placed in Warren County because of the high percentage of blacks living there."[101] They thus linked the treatment of African Americans and toxic waste control with the use of the narrative of race. Hence, they enhanced the sense of unity between African Americans and the landfill protest that was being created.

In a similar manner, the reputation of other civil rights activists seems to have validated the link between African American civil rights and toxic waste that was being made. For instance, Golden Frink's involvement with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), his reputation, skills, and loud voice, further united African Americans with the PCB struggle. Frinks arrived during the first days of the direct-action protests. He was reported in the local news a while later as an arrested member of the SCLC,

> "The first truck nearing the marchers stopped at Golden Frinks, a representative of the Southern Christina Leadership Conference, stepped into its path, causing the driver to halt. The crowd was rabid, cheering Frinks on with chants of "Fed Up, Fired Up" Frinks was arrested."[102]

The fact that his participation in SCLC, the organization of Martin Luther King Jr., was explicitly mentioned hinted towards a link between African American identity and the Warren County struggle. The SCLC was one of the most famous civil rights organizations in the United States. It had played a fundamental role in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 70s.[103] The SCLC's appraised legacy is, for instance, evident in the work of the renowned scholar of the SCLC and Martin Luther King Jr, Adam Fairclough,

> "Movement, organization, or church, SCLC was *effective*. Its accounts may have been slipshod and its internal structure chaotic, but SCLC excelled in the area that mattered most in the early 1960s: the theory and practice on nonviolent direct action."[104]

Moreover, as civil rights activist Bayan Rustin explained, SCLC became the 'sustaining mechanism' and "dynamic center" of the Civil Rights Movement.[105] The presence of

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[101] "Chemical Conflict," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 21, 1982.; K. Marshall, "White Discusses Society's Problems; Believes 'color line' is Major Obstacle," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Nov. 08, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-11-08/ed-1/seq-5.pdf.
[102] D. Foust, "Warren County-Residents Protesting to Protect their Neighborhoods, their Homes," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 28, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-28/ed-1/seq-6.pdf.
[103] A. Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1987).
[104] Ibid., p. 2.
[105] Ibid.

representatives like Frinks of that "center" of the Civil Rights Movement drew more attention to the connection between African American civil rights and the PCB landfill that was being made.

However, Frisks' did not solely strengthen the link between African Americans, their civil rights and the PCB cause through his involvement with SCLC. He also brought people together in the Warren County protests with his civil rights history, skillset and voice. Frinks had participated in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the 1950s and the sit-ins of the 1960s. Moreover, Golden Frinks had organized and led many Civil Rights actions in North Carolina. He, for instance, participated in the segregation efforts in Edenton, North Carolina and was appointed by Mr. King Jr. as field secretary of the SCLC in North Carolina between 1963 and 1977. His continuous and remarkable style of Civil Rights activism had earned him the nickname "the Great Agitator," and he had been jailed eighty-seven times for his activities throughout the Southeast.[106] Frink's reputation as a civil rights activist was well-known to many. As McGurty writes, "He was well known in North Carolina as a skilled civil rights organizer."[107] This reputation and the skills he developed throughout his history of civil rights activism made it possible for Frinks to unite the people of Warren County in protest. As McGurty shows, this is, for instance, evident in the role he took on. During the PCB protests, Frinks developed himself as an organizational leader. He actively shaped the day-to-day development of the protests.[108] Also, his voice contributed to his effectiveness as a protest leader. As McGurty points out, his voice alone already carried a great sense of authority.[109] Frinks civil rights reputation as well as his organizational skills, thorough involvement, and voice thus brought people from different races together for the PCB cause.

Golden Frinks invited the SCLC president of the time, Joseph Lowery to join the protests. The presence of the leader of one of the most renowned and successful civil rights organizations further legitimized and enhanced the unity between African Americans' identity and the PCB struggle. Lowery arrived with his wife Evelyn and his colleague Fred Taylor on the 20th of September, the beginning of the second week of direct-action protests, in Warren County. In Deborah Ferruccio's words: "Little by little as we proved it the first and second week in came doctor Lawyer."[110] Lowery had founded the SCLC with Martin Luther King Jr.

[106] "Golden A. Frinks," *NcPedia*, https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/frinks-golden.
[107] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.117.
[108] Ibid., p.118.
[109] Ibid., p.119.
[110] Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio.

and several others. As part of the SCLC he had joined the landmark marches from Selma to Montgomery. Following Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in 1968, it was Lowery who took over the SCLC's leadership. In Warren County, he got arrested in the beginning of the second week of protest. Roughly 375 people marched from Coley Springs Church that day to the landfill's location, over 130 people, including Lowery, got arrested. [111] The fact that the leader of one of the most renowned civil rights organizations in U.S. history joined the PCB struggle and was even arrested further illustrated and legitimized the link between African American civil rights and the Warren County landfill that was being made. He was able to unite both black and white citizens in the PCB protests. As McGurty concludes, "he commanded great respect because of his reputation and because of the rapport he built with many local white activists. As a gifted speaker, he gave many motivational talks to the group and led them in prayer."[112] Lowery his reputation and skills thus united people in protest.

Lowery further united the African Americans' civil rights with the PCB issue through an explicit usage of the narrative of race. As a local newspaper reports, "Joseph Lowery, the president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, also felt the location of the dump was racially motivated."[113] As an authoritative and respected individual like Lowery used the narrative of race, the plausibility of that narrative was enhanced. After all, it is commonly accepted that people trust and follow authorities that they respect more easily.[114]

Lowery's colleague, Fred Taylor got arrested on the third day of the direct-action protests. As an SCLC member, Taylor's participation and arrest drew attention to the role of civil rights and race in the protests. Taylor had been involved with the civil rights struggle in the decades before Warren County. He had, for instance, handed out leaflets during the Montgomery Bus Boycott. He became an active member of SCLC, heading the SCLC's department of Chapters and Affiliates after holding the position of Office Manager and Assistant Director of Affiliates.[115] The fact participation of someone with Taylor's history and SCLC position in the PCB protests emphasized the narrative of race's core argument. This is illustrated by a local news report on his arrest. His SCLC membership is explicitly mentioned, "The 30 arrested Friday were charged with impeding traffic. They included (…) Fred Taylor

[111] "Chemical Conflict," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 21, 1982.
[112] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.120.
[113] "Chemical Conflict," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 21, 1982.
[114] A. Braet, *Retorische Kritiek: Hoe beoordeel je overtuigingskracht?* (Amsterdam, NL: Boom Uitgevers), p.46-27.
[115] "Reverend Fred. D. Taylor," *Emory University*, https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/woodruff/fyi/reverend-fred-d-taylor-and-the-southern-christian-leadership-conference.

of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Atlanta."[116] By explicitly mentioning his ties to SCLC, attention is drawn to the fact that a prominent civil rights organization supports the protest. If the rights of African Americans were not being violated, then why would that organization join? In this manner, Taylor further ties the PCB cause to African American lives.

The first amplifying element of the narrative of race and that narrative's unifying capacity was thus the presence of civil rights leaders. Their participation alone highlighted the link between African American identity and the PCB issue that was being made. Moreover, the civil rights activists brought in leadership skills that united both African American and White people in protest.

Another link to the Civil Rights Movement also amplified the connection between African American lives and the PCB struggle. This second amplification of the narrative of race is the continuous usage of direct and indirect references to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The Civil Rights Movement (in short) tried to stop white oppression and create equal opportunities and treatment for African Americans. By referring to this movement, the racial undertones of the PCB landfill's allocation process were amplified. The references to the Civil Rights Movement can be divided into five (overlapping) categories; nonviolent protest in general, sit-ins, arrests, songs, and marches. McGurty notes something similar in her study on the Warren County protests as she states, "Meetings at the local black Baptist church, the high visibility of well-known African American activists, the incorporation of prayer into all the protests, and the long distance march – from Warrenton to Raleigh, all were part of an established repertoire of civil rights activism familiar to county residents as well as activists from other places who joined the locals."[117] Still, McGurty refrains from an in-depth analysis of the unifying power of rhetoric that reminded people of the Civil Rights Movement.

The protests firstly remind of the Civil Rights Movement because of their overall nonviolent nature. This link between the nonviolence of the Civil Rights Movement and of the nonviolence of the PCB protests developed as the protests progressed. From the beginning organizers like the Ferruccio's and rev. White decided that the protests were to be of a nonviolent nature. As Deborah Ferruccio explains in an interview, at the start of the protests, "We knew as we went down there (…) it was going to be nonviolent. No one was going to

[116] "30 More PCB Protesters Arrested in Carolina," *The New York Times*, Sep. 18, 1982, http://www.nytimes.com/1982/09/18/us/30-more-pcb-protesters-arrested-in-carolina.html?mcubz=1.
[117] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.126.

throw any rocks we were not being accused of being crazy cause we were not crazy."[118] "There" in this quote refers to the landfill site. Partly as a result of this tactic, all of the direct and indirect references to the Civil Rights Movement made during the PCB protests were nonviolent on purpose. However, the Ferruccio's did not use nonviolence at the start of the protests as a tactic because it reminded them the Civil Rights Movement. They used it, as Deborah Ferruccio her quote illustrates, to take the moral high ground.

Still, during the 1960s and 70s nonviolence had, for instance, been a character trade of Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights struggles. For many African Americans, the link between the nonviolence of his movement and the nonviolence of the Warren County struggle was therefore hard to miss. The power and prominence of nonviolence in Martin Luther King Jr.'s struggle is evident in this quote of him,

> "Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon. It is a weapon unique in history, that cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals. Both a practical and a moral answer to the Negro's cry for justice, nonviolent direct action proved that it could win victories without losing wars, and so became the triumphant tactic of the Negro Revolution of 1963."[119]

Participants in the protests link this nonviolence of the Civil Rights Movement with that of the PCB issue. They, for instance, speak of "non-violent reactions to arrests" that remind them of the civil rights struggle of the 1960s and 1970s.[120] The nonviolent nature of the protests returns in the ensuing paragraphs. The link between the nonviolence of the Civil Rights Movement and that of the PCB protests thus progressed as other links with the Civil Rights Movement developed. The Ferruccio's did not observe this link from the start.

A second factor that reminded people of the Civil Rights Movement during the PCB protests was the use of nonviolent sit-ins. As one newspaper put it: "Their appeal is reminiscent of the civil rights struggle of the 1960s- with sit-downs in the middle of the highway and non-violent reactions to arrests"[121] By copying a tactic of the Civil Rights Movement, the struggles of that movement were remembered. Just like in decades before, people had to sit-in to fight for their rights. In this manner, African Americans were further tied to the PCB struggle. To understand the significance of sit-ins, one needs to understand

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[118] Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio.
[119] "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speaking at The New School
February 6, 1964, Re-broadcast on WAMF on December 8, 1964," *Amherst College*, https://www.amherst.edu/library/archives/holdings/mlk/transcript.
[120] "PCB Protest Continues," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep.24, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-24/ed-1/seq-10.pdf.
[121] Ibid.

their origin and role in the Civil Rights Movement. Sit-ins were a widely used nonviolent protest tactic that came about in the beginning of the 1960s in North Carolina. There, four black students sat at a lunch counter for whites in Greensboro. After the waitress refused to serve them, they stayed all day. Over the next few days they kept returning to the counter with more and more students.[122] The event soon led to similar sit-ins in surrounding places and then crossed state lines, "Time called it "a non-violent protest the likes of which the U.S. had never seen.""[123] Arguably similar to the Civil Rights Movement's sit-ins, the people of Warren County laid down their bodies on the road to the landfill. By laying down their bodies, they tried to stop the tanker trucks from reaching the dumping ground. By using sit-ins, memories of the Civil Rights Movement were evoked. In the minds of many, the narrative of race was brought more to the foreground. The PCB struggle was not just an environmental issue, it was a civil right one as well.

This sit-in type of action, occurred on a variety of days throughout the protest and brought both African American and white protesters together. Near the end of the second week of protest the local newspaper reported that "More than 100 protesters have been arrested for forming a human barricade between trucks carrying PCB-laden soil and a landfill predominantly black Warren County."[124] These people were both White and African American. In the end, people who laid down on the road were reported explicitly on the 15th, 16th, 20th, 21st, 23rd, and 27th of September.[125] However, people were arrested for impeding traffic nearly every day. In total around 384 people were charged throughout the weeks of protest for impeding traffic. The fact that the sit-ins kept reoccurring and a vast number of people from both races participated in them, illustrates the unifying power of this link with the Civil Rights Movement.

The opposition had understood the mobilizing power that sit-ins would have even before the sit-ins occurred. On the sit-in days, lying down on the road was not necessarily a

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[122] P. Davies & I.W. Morgan. *From Sit-Ins to SNCC,* p.1.; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Rmjt0kJF0A.; "Sit-in," *Britannica Academic*, accessed November 10, 2017, http://academic.eb.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/levels/collegiate/article/sit-in/68011.

[123] A. Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America*, p.59

[124] N. Egemonye, E.G. Pitt, A. Johnson, R. Eller & E.L. Pitt, "Love Canal Chapter Two," *Winston-Salem Chronicle* (Winston-Salem, NC), Sep. 23, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn85042324/1982-09-23/ed-1/seq-4/.

[125] E. Steele, "Photos," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 21, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-21/ed-1/seq-1/ocr/.; N. Egemonye et al., "Love Canal Chapter Two," *Winston-Salem Chronicle*, Sep. 23, 1982; I. Hillard, "More Arrests Made in PCB Ordeal," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 17, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-17/ed-1/seq-2.pdf.; "Afton," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 21, 1982.; "Briefly-Afton," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Oct. 5, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-10-05/ed-1/seq-2/ocr/.

spontaneous action. The day before the first truck reached the landfill, a local newspaper illustrates this, "When the dump trucks carrying PCB-laden soil rumble into Warren County on Wednesday, area residents will be ready to greet them-by lying down in the road."[126] However, whether the sit-ins were coordinated or occurred spontaneously on the days that followed is unclear. Moreover, whether they used sit-ins deliberately because they reminded people of the Civil Rights Movement is unclear. Either way, the sit-ins further unified African Americans and whites during the PCB struggle.

The numerous non-violent reactions to arrests of both African American and whites that occurred at the sit-ins, fourthly, remind of the Civil Rights Movement. By reminding people of the Civil Rights Movement, the arrests further enhanced the connection between African American civil rights and the PCB struggle. As quoted previously, a protester described the protests on September 21, by saying that it reminded him "of the civil rights struggle of the 1960s- with (…) non-violent reactions to arrests."[127] Another report reinforces the occurrence of such non-violent responses to arrests on the 21st of September, "None of the protesters offered any resistance to the officers, who picked them up one by one and placed them on barred buses."[128] During the Civil Rights Movement, non-violent reactions to arrest had played a major role. It was, for instance, a major part of the sit-in movement. People would sit at lunch counters and the like, and be taken away by policemen without resistance.[129] At Warren County, people behaved the same and hence linked African American civil rights issues to the PCB struggle.

Responding to arrests in a nonviolent manner was a deliberate tactic. However, whether the organizers used nonviolent responses to arrests because they knew it would remind people of the Civil Rights Movement is unclear. People were instructed to hold their bodies still by protest organizers. As one local newspaper reports, "The protesters had been instructed by the leaders to lay limp when officials put them under arrest, forcing two, three, and sometimes even more patrol men to carry them to waiting buses."[130] The opposition managed to continue to non-violently react to arrests throughout all the weeks of protest. In this manner, the PCB struggle was further linked (either intentionally or unintentionally) to the civil rights of African Americans in Warren County.

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[126] "Dumping Grounds," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 14, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-14/ed-1/seq-6.pdf.
[127] "PCB Protest Continues," *The Daily Tar Heel*, Sep.24, 1982.
[128] C. Wilson, "2 UNC Students," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 21, 1982.
[129] S. Zunes & J. Laird, "The US Civil Rights Movement (1942-1068)," *International Center for Nonviolent Conflict*, https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/the-us-civil-rights-movement-1942-1968/.
[130] D. Foust, "Warren County- Residents Protesting," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 28, 1982.

The idea that the PCB struggle was a civil rights issue was also emphasized by a fifth, reference to the Civil Rights Movement: the continuous usage of the songs "We Shall Not Be Moved" and "We Shall Overcome." The song united people and referred to a sense of unity among the PCB protests. The songs were already used when the first truck rolled towards the landfill on the 15th of September.[131] Protesters continued to use it during their daily marches and protest rallies until the last truck had dumped its contaminated soil in the landfill. Local newspapers continuously report on the use of the songs: "the protesters picked up the rhythmic chant of "We Shall Overcome"."[132] As well as "A black woman chimed in whit the words of that old gospel favorite, "like a tree planted by the water, WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED!!"[133] And the singing of "the 1960s-protest anthem, "We Shall Overcome," during the two-hour demonstration. " [134] "We Shall Overcome" thus united people in song. Moreover, the song hinted towards a sense of unity among the protesters. It was "we" who would overcome, not "I."

With the "We Shall Overcome" and "We Shall Not be Moved" songs, the style of the protests was reminiscent at least to an extent of the Civil Rights Movement. In this manner, the discriminatory nature of the landfill's allocation was again re-emphasized. As McGurty notes, reporters and protesters recognized that "The whole thing was a revival of the hole civil rights stuff- the tone, the look, the chants"[135] While the origin of the songs is unclear, it is known that they both played a prominent role in the Civil Rights Movement. As the scholar Spener, who extensively studied the history of the "We Shall Not Be Moved" song, explains:

> "The song "We Shall Not Be Moved" occupied a prominent place in the canon of "freedom songs" that were employed repeatedly in the Civil Rights Movement's on-the-ground battles to end racial segregation in the U.S. South. "We Shall Not Be Moved" shared certain characteristics with other "freedom songs" that had already made some of them—such as "We Shall Overcome"—part of the canon of union songs in the United States."[136]

In the 1960s and 1970s these songs were thus tied to the Civil Rights Movement. They expressed the ideas and struggles of the people of that time. By using these songs during the

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[131] "Briefly-Raleigh," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 24, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-24/ed-1/seq-2.pdf.
[132] D. Alderman, "Fight Goes on Against Landfill."
[133] C. Graves, "PCB Landfill: A Human Rights Issue," *Winston-Salem Chronicle* (Winston-Salem, NC), Sep. 30, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn85042324/1982-09-30/ed-1/seq-4/#.
[134] "Briefly-Raleigh," *The Daily Tar Heel*, Sep. 24, 1982.
[135] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.125
[136] D. Spener, *We Shall Not Be Moved* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2016), p,66-67.

PCB protests, the protesters, whether intentionally or not, revived the feelings and memories of the Civil Rights Movement.

Songs like these, apart from evoking the feelings and beliefs of the Civil Rights Movement, also functioned as a form of social definition. Singing a Civil Rights Movement reminiscent song at the PCB protest confirmed that the people who sang the songs were people who shared similar civil rights and believed the PCB landfill was violating those rights. As one scholar put it, singing together at protests: "often represents those shared beliefs that allow 'disparate strangers' to feel they are indeed a band of brothers and sisters and reinforces those beliefs when much of the world is working to break them down."[137] The songs thus brought about a sense of unity. Moreover, it turned the environmental struggle into more of a Civil Rights Movement because it evoked the feelings and ideas of the Civil Rights Movement and its associated ideas of discrimination and taking back control.

In addition to, or better yet as a result of, the non-violence in general, the sit-ins, non-violent arrests and songs, fifthly, also the marches of the PCB protest were in a way references to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 70s. In this manner, they too tied the African Americans further to the PCB struggle. As one protester put it: "To me it felt like the old civil rights days all over again. The marching. Speaking out against some great injustice."[138] As soon as the trucks started rolling, people started marching to the dump-site and protesting there, they did so every day until the landfill was completed. As Deborah Ferruccio illustrates, "They thought we would do this maybe two or three days a week at the most but we had to pull this off for six weeks." Local newspapers reported on the marches of the PCB protest on the 23rd, "White said the rally was a prelude to another protest Monday at the dump site."[139] About the march on the 20th the papers said, "An estimated 375 people marched two miles from Coley Springs Baptist Church to the landfill Monday."[140] Moreover, after the protesters had arrived in Raleigh in the second week of October after a multi-day march from Warren County to the state capital, the papers reported, "They arrived outside Raleigh Monday night after marching from Warren County to protest the land fill."[141] Various Civil Rights reminiscent marches were thus held during the PCB protests. Some scholars say that the one between Warren County and Raleigh, a sixty-mile-long route that took the

[137] R. Rosenthal & R. Flacks, *Playing for Change: Music and Musicians in the Service of Social Movements* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), p.124.
[138] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.125
[139] "Briefly-Raleigh," *The Daily Tar Heel*, Sep. 24, 1982.
[140] C. Wilson, "2 UNC Students," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 21, 1982.
[141] "PCB Cleanup Complete," *The Carolina Times* (Durham, NC), Oct. 15, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-10-15/ed-1/seq-8/ocr/.

protesters several days to finish, reminded them of the big, famous marches of the Civil Rights Movement. McGurty has, for instance, argued that this march was reminiscent of the Selma to Montgomery march in the 1960s.[142] Whether one agrees or not, truth remains that the marches in general, as the quote in the beginning of this paragraph illustrates, reminded people of the Civil Rights struggles of the decades before in which African Americans too, rose up to fight injustices. The narrative of race and the link between African Americans, civil rights, and the hazardous landfill protest were amplified as a result.

As illustrated already a little bit in the paragraphs above, local media extensively covered all the amplifications of the narrative of race. It covered the participation of civil rights leaders as well as the non-violent nature of the protests, the sit-ins, arrests, songs, and marches. People were through the media once more reminded of the link between civil rights and the PCB struggle. In this manner, the media strengthened the narrative of race and its unifying power. To illustrate the media's coverage of the narrative of race and its amplifying elements, a protester said: "Because of the personalities involved it got bigger coverage (…)."[143] By reporting on the protests in this manner, the media helped to spread the narrative of race. The Carolina Times, for instance, reported "The protesters argue that Afton, a rural township in Warren County, was selected for the location of the dumping because nearly 75 percent of its residents and 60 percent of the county's residents are black."[144] Moreover, the media made the argument that Warren County was chosen for the allocation of the PCB because of racial reasons more valid by incorporating the views of prominent experts or authorities on the protests like Lowery. The Daily Tar Heel, for example, stated: "The Rev. Leon White and the Rev. Ben Chavis, both of the United Church of Christ Commission on Racial Justice, said they felt that the landfill had been placed in Warren County because of the high percentage of blacks living there. Joseph Lowery, the president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, also felt the location of the dump was racially motivated."[145] By repeatedly addressing the link that was being strengthened between African American civil rights and the PCB protests, the media reinforced that link.

This amplification was primarily done by the Daily Tar Heel, the student newspaper of the University of North Carolina. They, overall, wrote the most articles on the Warren County protests in general, and in particular on the narratives used. However, it should be noted that

[142] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.125.
[143] Ibid. p.128.
[144] C. Graves, "PCB Landfill: A Human Rights Issue," *Winston-Salem Chronicle*, Sep. 30, 1982.
[145] "Chemical Conflict," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 21, 1982.

the North Carolina Times wrote less articles, yet put most stories on the narrative of race on the front page. The Winston-Salem Chronicle, covered the Warren County protests the least. However, they generally did mention the narrative of race in their coverage.[146] While the level of amplification of each newspaper is thus debatable, it is apparent that the narrative of race was present in all newspapers. Hence the unity between African Americans and the landfill protests was emphasized at least to an extent by all.

However, it should be noted that the rhetoric of race, apart from unifying people, also divided the protesters in a certain way. As a result of all the factors that amplified the narrative of race, the PCB struggle became primarily a civil rights concern, and less of an environmental or a class issue. Some people deemed the racial overtones undesirable. They argued that the extensive use of race-based rhetoric hampered the protest' cause. Some people in Warren County spoke bitterly about those "who simply want to make it a battle between whites and blacks"[147] They argued that it was becoming a black versus white struggle instead of a fight for a common cause: protecting the community. A local resident, Mrs. Ward, for instance, stated in the second week of protest "her concern about continued support from both races if the emphasis of the protest shifted from an environmental to a racial issue."[148] In that same week, an editorial in the Daily Tar Heel outlines how rev. White's comments "have served only to reinforce the notion that Warren County citizens have turned the landfill controversy into a struggle between black and white instead of a controversy over the environment."[149] In response to that editorial rev. White himself answered: "the president of the University must have called them (DTH editors) up and told them what to write," and that the editorial "was a disgrace to the University""[150] Race-related rhetoric thus, apart from unifying people, also divided certain groups.

It should, however, be observed that after the second week of protest, local newspapers no longer focus on this fear for a black versus white struggle. The fact that they no longer valued it newsworthy, indicates that the fear for a black versus white issue was no longer so big that it could not be ignored. However, it is not possible to fully conclude whether people stopped fearing for such a struggle. It remains evident that, the narrative of

[146] "North Carolina Newspapers, 1982."
[147] "Chemical Conflict," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 21, 1982.
[148] K. Lovell, L. Curry. & C. Evasely, "The Continuing Battle Against PCB," *Winston-Salem Chronicle* (Winston-Salem, NC), Sep. 23, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn85042324/1982-09-23/ed-1/seq-5/.
[149] "PCB Protest Continues," *The Daily Tar Heel*, Sep.24, 1982.
[150] K. Simmons, "White addresses rally in the Pit," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 22, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-22/ed-1/seq-1.pdf.

race's core argument and amplifying elements generated at least a certain division among the people of Warren County. They did not solely unite them.

Narrative of class

Apart from a narrative of race, also a narrative of class was used by people to explain why a PCB landfill was being located in Warren County. The narrative of class, just like the narrative of race, had one core argument and several amplifying factors. As mentioned in the introduction, the narrative of class' core argument was that the landfill was allocated to Warren County because the county was predominantly poor. Authorities did not expect such a poor group of people to rebel against the landfill for "path of least resistance" reasons. Ken Ferruccio illustrates this core argument. Before the protests started he explained, "It's a situation of the state putting an undesirable landfill in its poorest county, in per capita income."[151] Through the class narrative's amplifying factors both poor African American and poor white residents were tied to the PCB struggle. In this manner, the narrative of class generated a sense of unity among the African American and white citizens of Warren County. Those effects were amplified by three factors; the use of anecdotes, a "dim economic future" picture of the area, and the fact that the narrative was used by trustworthy individuals from within the county.

The ensuing section delves into the core narrative's amplifying and unity generating factors. This section is much shorter than the section on the narrative of race. The narrative of class did, in contrast to the narrative of race, not generate as much coverage on its own. It was addressed throughout the protest, but often in combination with the narrative of race. This is also why less material is available on the narrative and its development.

The material that is available illustrates that protesters amplified the narrative of class and its unifying abilities, firstly, with the use of empathetic stories. People described the dire economic circumstances that individuals in Warren County were in and would be in if the landfill was completed by telling anecdotes of their own lives. In this manner, they illustrated and hence emphasized the link between poverty and the PCB struggle that was being made. The majority of the anecdotes revolved around a loss of land value. People, for instance, told the press that they were positive that the value of their property would decrease instantly if the landfill was constructed. There were stories of farmers like Pernell who said in the third week

[151] C. Wilson, "Landfills may violate rights," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Aug. 26, 1982.

of protest that, "he expected the value of his 300 acres of tobacco and soybeans to plunge dramatically- and the property tax on the same land to remain the same."[152] There was also Mrs. Ward, who feared for her and her husband's economic future when the first trucks rolled in, "My husband and I are going to retire in about 15 or 20 years and nobody is going to want to buy our farm because of the PCB contamination."[153] Edward Summerville, who had lived his entire life in the county, explained roughly a month before the actual physical protests took off why he was joining the protests, "They are going to cost be about $30,000." Edward and his wife Mrs. Florence Summerville "say the PCB landfill will probably cut their property value in half."[154] The people of Warren County thus emphasized a link between the PCB landfill and the poverty of people from all races in Warren County by tying their own economic situation to the PCB issue as an example.

People, secondly, also tied a fear of future poverty for all citizens, no matter their race, to the PCB struggle by painting a "dim economic future" picture for the entire county. This picture primarily revolved around the fear that this PCB landfill would be the first of many. Put differently, that it would attract more and more companies who wanted to dump their hazardous waste in a relatively remote and poor area. As one protester put it in the first week of protest: "If the toxics start rolling into the county, who will decide whether or not other wastes should be stored in the area."[155] Ken Ferruccio asserted the same before the physical protests took off, "the Warren County landfill may be the first of many others."[156] By using the narrative of class to link a type of dystopian future with the PCB struggle, protesters united the poverty of all races in Warren County and the PCB landfill

Thirdly, the fact that "common men," who lived in the region, used the narrative of class emphasized that narrative and the link between the general poverty of the county and the PCB struggle that was being made. It is commonly accepted by scholars that people are more likely to accept and actively support the arguments made by people they relate to, like someone who is from the same region and in the same situation. Ken and Deborah Ferruccio were such trusted community members. They were well integrated in the community. As Deborah puts it, "we knew the people from all walks of society I guess it's because we are teachers." They knew "all these local farmers."[157] Moreover, they played a critical role in the

[152] D. Foust, "Warren County- Residents Protesting," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 28, 1982.
[153] J. Slagle, "Protest Against Dumping of PCB," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 16, 1982.
[154] M. Jordan, "Blacks in Warren County Fighting Dumping of PCB," *The Carolina Times*, Aug. 14, 1982.
[155] Fleming, J.T. & L. Dorm, "PCB dump may still leak." *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 15, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-15/ed-1/seq-6.pdf.
[156] C. Wilson, "Landfills may violate rights," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Aug. 26, 1982.
[157] Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio.

PCB protests, as illustrated in the first chapter. As also illustrated in the introduction of this section, Ken Ferrruccio actively used the narrative of class. Though often in combination with the narrative of race. In one of the last weeks of protest he also said that "the site was chosen because the county is not a rich and politically powerful area."[158] Trusted individuals from within the community thus used the narrative of class and thereby further emphasized the link between both African American and white poor people and the PCB landfill.

The narrative of class was used by many people, both African American and white. This illustrates that poor people from both races were tied to the PCB cause through the narrative of class. In one of the last weeks of protest a paper reported that "Some protestors contend the state chose the county because of its high concentration of blacks, poor economic status and political weakness."[159] Around that same time, another local newspaper reports, "The citizens of Warren County say the dump site is there because their county is poor and predominantly black."[160] After the protests had ended, a citizens wrote the North Carolina to express its gratitude for them covering the protests, he asserts that the landfill was located in Warren County because the people in that county "They're mostly Blacks (…) they're poor, and they don't have any political clout."[161] The use of the terms "the citizens" and "they're" illustrate that the people of Warren County were united behind the narrative of class argument. People often knew each other and were well aware of the fact that they were almost all poor. During the PCB struggle they were therefore united, in a sense, around the issue of class.

The fact that these quotes were uttered before, during and after the protests illustrates the continuous appeal of the narrative of class. However, the quotes also illustrate that the narrative of class was generally combined with the narrative of race. This is for instance, evident in the last quote, in which "they're mostly Blacks" and "they're poor" are combined. [162] While present, the narrative thus did not generate as much solo coverage as the narrative of race. It was even often overshadowed by the narrative of race and left out of the local newspaper reports.

However, not all people chose to unite with the protesters even though they might have sympathized with the protesters narrative of class. Most likely because there was some

[158] C. Anderson, "At campus panel," *The Daily Tar Heel*, Oct. 15, 1982.
[159] C. Anderson, "At campus panel," *The Daily Tar Heel*, Oct. 15, 1982.
[160] "A strategy for Warren County," *The Carolina Times* (Durham, NC), Oct. 02, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn83045120/1982-10-02/ed-1/seq-10/ocr/.
[161] "Warren County PCB Issue," *The Carolina Times*, Oct. 30, 1982.
[162] "Warren County PCB Issue," *The Carolina Times*, Oct. 30, 1982.

truth to the "path of least resistance" argument. The most illustrative example is one of the men, Wilson Fogg, who drove the trucks with contaminated soil to the dumping site. When asked "where do you think you're going with that stuff?" he responded, "I can't feed three children if I don't drive this truck." [163] This example illustrates that even though a lot of people showed up to protest, the authorities were actually right to an extent, people were really too poor to protest. An art teacher at the same high school where Ken Ferruccio taught English named Vicoria Lehman illuminates this too. She said that the turnout was smaller on the Wednesday of the second week of protest than the days before because the manager threatened to fire those workers that missed work for the march, "It's a poor county. Everyone needs fifty dollars. It all counts."[164] These examples illustrate the high poverty level in the county as well as the prominent role of the issue of class in the PCB protests. While the narrative of class and its amplifying factors thus connected people with a lower-income to the PCB issue, for some the narrative was simply to real to join the protests.

Two narratives were thus used during the PCB protests, one of race and one of class. Each of these narratives had one core argument and several amplifying and unity generating factors. The narrative of race linked African American identity to the PCB struggle. This was done, firstly, by prominent civil rights activists who emphasized the African American civil rights component of the PCB issue. As soon as the activists arrived, the opposition was no longer primarily white. The organizational skills of the civil rights leaders were, moreover, able to unite both African Americans and white people during the protests. Secondly, (in)direct references to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s emphasized the link between African American civil rights and the PCB issue. The protesters used, for instance, similar songs. Lastly, media reports on the narrative of race and its unity generating factors reinforced that narrative and those factors.

The narrative of class was often overshadowed by- or combined with- the narrative of race. Yet it remained a core component of the PCB struggle. The narrative tied African American and white poor people together and to the PCB struggle. Leaders of the protests used the narrative and hence reinforced its legitimacy. Moreover, citizens emphasized the idea that they were all facing a similar economically unfortunate period if the landfill was completed. The landfill affected the economic situation of all poor people negatively.

[163] D. Foust, "Warren County- Residents Protesting," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 28, 1982.
[164] J. Slagle, "Protest Against Dumping of PCB," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 16, 1982.

Both core narratives form he center of the Warren County protests, but not everyone supported them. Some citizens felt the racial tones of the protests overshadowed the environmental aspects of the PCB issue. Others did not have the money to take a day off work and join the direct-action protests against the landfill. However, they may have sympathized with the protesters nonetheless. Apart from two identity-related core narratives, the PCB protest also had some less prominent, but still unity emphasizing, identity-rhetoric.

Chapter 3: Religion, Public Health & a Common Enemy

The narrative of race primarily united the African American population with the PCB struggle and the narrative of class primarily the lower-income residents of Warren County with that same struggle. The two narratives were at the core of the process that united the people of Warren County in 1982. However, there were other, less fundamental, identity-rhetoric facets that emphasized a sense of unity as well. They too, contributed to the unity represented in news reports like, "The fever of hope was visible to everyone there. "Stop the dumping" was echoed by all. The feeling of unity was shared by young and old, white and black."[165] These other forms of identity-rhetoric have to be analyzed if one wishes to understand the full extent to which identity-rhetoric unified African American and white protesters at Warren County. Three other forms of identity-rhetoric played a significant role; religion, public health, and the desired relation between the government and its subjects. This leads to the question, to what extent did the identity-rhetoric related to health, religion, and the relation between subjects and governing authorities bring about a sense of unity during the Warren County protests? All three forms of identity-rhetoric are analyzed in the ensuing paragraphs. It becomes evident that a combination of these additional types of identity-rhetoric and the two core narratives even amplified a sense of unity that transcended county boundaries.

Religion

Apart from being united as a result of the two core narratives, religion also united the opposition. Religion generated unity in Warren County in roughly four ways; it was, a motivational factor, part of the general day-to-day protest language, a guiding factor, and the church formed the organizational center of the protests in general.

To further elaborate, people said they joined the opposition out of a sense of religious servitude. The PCB struggle was an infringement on their health, their environment and general well-being and they ought to stand up to protect what God had given them. Deborah Ferruccio, for instance, says that she and her husband initiated the protests, partly, also because they believed that "we have to protect god's creation and people's public health because it is what god wants us to do." They thus acted out of a sense of religious servitude and they tried to convey this idea that the PCB protest was a spiritual quest. Ken Ferruccio,

[165] K. Lovell, L. Curry. & C. Evasely, "The Continuing Battle Against PCB," *Winston-Salem Chronicle*, Sep. 23, 1982.

for instance, explains halfway through the second week of protest, "When people realize this was a moral and spiritual issue, they really began getting involved." Ferruccio, moreover said around the same time, "This movement reflects the real religious views of the people of this county.""[166] Deborah second that thought, "Because people had faith that this was an issue that had a higher calling and we were often speaking in the context of a church we made people feel comfortable and they realized that what they were doing was something spiritual and when they marched down that landfill knowing we were not stopping the trucks but that we were taking a stand it was a spiritual issue."[167] According to the primary organizers, people were thus driven to the protests, partly, for spiritual reasons. Put differently, religion motived people from all colors and walks of life to stand up against the PCB landfill.

In addition to being motivated to join by religion, religious ideas, psalms and songs were also incorporated in the day-to-day language of the protesters. They all united to sing spiritual songs and pray. In the second week a local newspaper, for instance, reported that, "About 200 demonstrators sang, prayed and marched around the state Capitol Thursday to protest the continuing burial o PCB-tainted soil at a landfill in Warren County."[168] Around that same time, "North Carolina Highway Patrol officers also arrested Southern Christian Leadership Conference President Joseph Lowery as he led about 90 others in "The Lord's Prayer" while kneeling at the entrance to the dump site."[169] People from different colors thus united to sing religious prayers as part of the Warren County protests.

Religion also served to guide the different types of protesters in the same direction. Religious ideas stirred the protests' tactics and development in particular directions. Rev. White, for instance, establishes a causal relation between the non-violent nature of the protests and Christianity. As he says on the day that the first truck started rolling: "It's our intention to stop them (…) We'll hold the line in a nonviolent Christian manner."[170] It seems as if, to a certain extent at least, religion guided them to protest in a non-violent way. Moreover, religion was also put forward as an explanation for why the marches would go a certain way and not another. As one protester stated during a march in the third week of protest: ""I wanna do what the Spirit says to…" The march continued another half mile down the hill with all of the volunteer truck-blockers eventually arrested and carted to the county

[166] C. Wilson, "2 UNC Students," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 21, 1982.
[167] Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio.
[168] "Briefly-Raleigh," *The Daily Tar Heel*, Sep. 24, 1982.
[169] C. Wilson, "2 UNC Students," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 21, 1982.
[170] "Briefly-Raleigh," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), April 28, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-15/ed-1/seq-2.pdf.

jail. The crowd was still a mile from the dump when word came through that the procession was turning around. Word was passed along, and the about-face began in front of the 80 State Patrolmen monitoring part of the road. Asked why the march was turned back, White said, "The Spirit told us to go back to the church.""[171] This "guidance by religion" happened on other protest days as well. When the protesters were halted as they tried to approach the site at one instance in the beginning of the first week of protest, White "said that the group would wait for the "spirit" to tell them what to do."[172] The protesters thereby united behind the guidance of God. Put differently, religious thoughts stirred numerous individuals together in the same direction during the Warren County protests.

In addition to Christianity in general, also the religion's place of worship, the church played a fundamental role during the PCB protests. Churches served as a platform for discussion, decision and motivational speeches. People were brought together in a physical place for a common cause to stress the values and ideas that they all shared about the PCB issue. Put differently, the gatherings in church were a symbolization of the people's unity. As a local news reporter observed: "the protesters, some 60 strong, had gathered at the church, the center for the protests."[173] The church in question is the Coley Springs Church. The fact that this was an African American church, illuminates the existence of unity among African Americans and white people during the PCB protests. It was at that church that the opposition gathered mostly. They gathered before and after the protests on most days in order to revive the protesting sprit and the will to get up and protest again the next day, the day after, and the day after that. As Deborah Ferruccio explains, "We would meet every day before the marches and every night afterwards at Coley Springs Church and we would revive in the people that energy that it takes to get up and do that again."[174] It was remarkable that both African American and white citizens were gathering together in an African American church. A few years earlier, white people would never have gathered in that church. This only serves to further illustrate the sense of unity that existed among the PCB protesters.

In addition, to the Coley Springs Church, people also seem to have gathered in other churches. As Ferruccio described, after they had formed the Citizens Concerned About PCBs, they "began to meet in the churches and when we met at the churches, and even in the courthouse, we always all meetings began with prayer so we did what civil rights people had

[171] D. Foust, "Warren County- Residents Protesting," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 28, 1982.
[172] J. Slagle, "Protest Against Dumping of PCB," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 16, 1982.
[173] D. Foust, "Warren County- Residents Protesting," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 28, 1982.
[174] Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio.

always done which was speak about politics in the church."[175] However, to which churches Ferruccio refers has been lost in the source material. However, what is evident is that church, especially the Coley Springs Church, formed a type of spiritual center for the PCB protests. It was there that people united in prayer and motivated each other to continue to strive for their common cause of halting the PCB landfill.

Health

Unity derived, in addition to from religion, also from a shared concern for public health. People were significantly worried about the negative health effects of a malfunctioning landfill. They feared for diseases, their drinking water, and their groundwater. On the issue of health, a local protester, for instance said a roughly two weeks after the last truck rolled in that, "Landfills are "cheap" to build and fill, but no one can pay the cost of cleaning up ground water with poisons in it. The human cost is too clear to anyone who has ever worked with retarded or handicapped children."[176] In this manner, this protester (rather indirectly) indicates a fear for an increase in handicaps if the landfill is constructed. Related to the concern about drinking- and ground water a local newspaper stated: "From the start, the main issue was concern for the environment and fear that the poisonous chemical would leak into the soil and the local water supply."[177] A protester shares this concern, "PCBs, will run from the pond and seep into the ground water, and then into their drinking water."[178] Protesters thus feared for their general health and polluted water. This concern brought people together from all walks of life in Warren County. A local newspaper reported on this unifying power of such health concerns, "Residents- and a number of supporters from throughout the state and the country- are rightfully concerned that the hazardous waste may jeopardize the health of their community and even have clasped hands black and white, to fight the move."[179] Black and white thus stood united against a future filled with illnesses.

They especially stood united against an ill future for their kids. One of the protesters stated, for instance, "as a nursing student, I would rather deal with this issue on a political level now, that to deal with the tragedy of birth defects miscarriages and cancer in the

[175] Ibid.
[176] "Warren County PCB Issue," *The Carolina Times*, Oct. 30, 1982.
[177] "Chemical Conflict," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 21, 1982.
[178] I. Singletary, "Charges Dropped Against Times Reporter," *The Carolina Times* (Durham, NC), Nov. 13, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn83045120/1982-11-13/ed-1/seq-1.pdf.
[179] N. Egemonye et al., "Love Canal Chapter Two," *Winston-Salem Chronicle*, Sep. 23, 1982.

future."[180] And another argued that "The PCB landfill in Warren County is a time bomb that threatens to shower us and future generations with cancer and birth defects."[181] "We are fighting for our grandchildren, one woman has said."[182] A young protester also expressed a concern for her future herself, "we are marching because we do not want this to affect our future." She and others thereby spoke for both their own health as well as the future health of others when they said no to PCB in Warren County.

Scientific date made this unity generating concern for public health credible. The opposition gathered its own scientific data on the landfill to illustrate the landfill's danger. This illuminates a serious lack of trust in the information provided by governing authorities. The Ferruccio's and the Citizens Concerned group hired a soil expert, shortly before the direct-action protest started, to test the ground of the site's location. In an interview, they reveal that the scientist concluded that, "The state's argument that the engineering principles of landfill technology could turn an unsafe site (…) into a safe site and our scientist [said] that basically no that can't be done in Warren County North Carolina, we don't have the clay we are about 5-7 feet away from groundwater."[183] The site was thus deemed unsafe by the soil expert, the groundwater, for instance, had to be at least 50 feet away from the groundwater according to official regulations, but here it was only 5 to 7 feet. Deborah went as far as to say that officials, "could not have picked a worse site." It is generally accepted by academia that data of a trustworthy official, such as a scientist is rather easily accepted by the general public as legitimate. In this manner, the scientific data strengthened the public health concerns that many shared. A sense of unity was emphasized, the PCB landfill affected everyone's health.

Local newspapers echoed the scientific findings of the opposition. In this manner, the unity the findings generated was amplified. Before the trucks started rolling in and the actual physical protests started, the Carolina Times already reported that, "Ferruccio said a study by a soil science expert brought in by his group shows the landfill site does not meet Environmental Protection Agency standards. But he said pressure placed upon Washington by state officials allowed the project to go forward."[184] Around that same time, one of the Carolina Times' reporters also investigated the situation and found that

[180] "Hunt policy to blame for PCB fight," *The Daily Tar Heel*, Sep. 28, 1982.
[181] K. Lovell, L. Curry. & C. Evasely, "The Continuing Battle Against PCB," *Winston-Salem Chronicle*, Sep. 23, 1982.
[182] I. Singletary, "Reporter Goes to Jail, Gets' Inside Story," *The Carolina Times* (Durham, NC), Oct. 02, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn83045120/1982-10-02/ed-1/seq-1.pdf.
[183] Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio.
[184] C. Wilson, "Landfills may violate rights," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Aug. 26, 1982.

> "state officials conceded that the site does not qualify on this point. "The proposed disposal site does not meet the separation requirements of 50 feet between the site and the groundwater table" wrote state officials in a 1978 proposal. But they went on to say: "The State of North Carolina has requested in the EPA (…) permit application a waiver of this requirement." But that's not all. The Warren County site also doesn't have the quality of soil called for by EPA guidelines for this type of toxic landfill. But that has not phased the state. They just asked for another waiver and promised to build a mound over the toxic soil, covered with a plastic liner that, according to state officials "will effectively prevent any rainwater infiltration into the landfill.""[185]

During the protest, scientific information was thus echoed by local newspapers. This further emphasized the argument that this was a flawed landfill that posited a serious danger to the citizens of Warren County.

It is hard to determine the extent to which the Ferruccio's scientific findings convinced people of the dangers of the landfill. However, it is evident that people shared an understanding of the PCB landfill's dangers. As one protester, for instance, stated on one of the first days of protest, "Suggesting that the state "guarantee that the area's water able will be checked for quality on a frequent basis," (…) is typical of the logic the state leaders have repeated to Warren County citizens concerned about the PCBs. The trouble is that EPA approved landfills leak!"[186] Moreover, the citizens of Warren County did not even seem to need the scientific data that the Ferruccio's provided. They very well understood the danger of a PCB landfill, just because they used common sense. As Deborah Ferruccio puts it, "You had well diggers and farmers said you have got to be kidding me you cannot dig a hole, put a piece of plastic in it and keep this out."[187] People thus shared the sentiment that the PCB dump would prove a danger to their community.

Government officials set out to counter the scientific data of the opposition with their own set of data and claims. In this manner, officials tried to break the sense of unity that, partly, health concerns had created. During a panel discussion in the last week of physical protest, secretary of the N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety Heman Clark, for instance, argued that Warren County was not chosen as the landfill's site because of the county's demographics, but because of scientific reasons. As a local paper reports, "he said,

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[185] M. Jordan, "Blacks in Warren County Fighting Dumping of PCB," *The Carolina Times*, Aug. 14, 1982.
[186] J.T. Fleming & L. Dorm, "PCB dump may still leak," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 15, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-15/ed-1/seq-6.pdf.
[187] Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio.

geographical location, characteristics of the soil and economic feasibility were reasons Warren County was selected over 90 other sites." Clark then continued to describe how the landfill would be made safe.

> "The bottom of the- dome-shaped landfill is seven feet above the water tables, a waiver of the original requirement by the Environmental Protection Agency that the ground level be 50 feet above the water tables, Clark said. At the very bottom of the hole is a monitoring device to detect any problems that may occur, which is topped by a thick plastic lining. A thick clay substance is placed over the plastic and a layer of soil is added. A second detector follows along with fiber, the contaminated soil, an additional two feet of clay, a plastic liner and a buffer soil. "More than 99 ... percent of the substance is dirt," not PCBs, Clark said. "If it does leak, the system is there to detect it." [188]

In addition to Clark, also other state officials argued that Warren County had not been chosen for racial or class reasons. One week before the protests started, Governor Hunt, for instance, argued that, "This is a state-of-the-art landfill, he said. "We're doing all we can to ensure that it doesn't endanger anyone and we're confident it won't."[189] On one of the first days of protest the Daily Tar Heel reports, "State representatives have said that the location of the dump was based on a number of factors; soil quality, water table level, county population density, the availability of land and because Warren County is near the counties where the PCBs were originally dumped."[190] A few days later that same newspaper reports that "Gov. Jim Hunt has claimed throughout the controversy that removing the illegally dumped PCBs from the NC58 roadside was "the finest manner possible" to protect the health of North Carolinians. Warren County was chosen as the dumpsite, he said, because it "emerged in every analysis as the best overall choice.""[191] Government officials thus tried to break the protesters apart. However, the fact that the protests did not stop until the last truck of soil reached the site illustrates that their attempts were futile.

A Common Enemy

[188] C. Anderson, "At campus panel," *The Daily Tar Heel*, Oct. 15, 1982.
[189] The Associated Press, "Security Required," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Aug. 26, 1982.
[190] "Dumping Grounds," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 14, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-14/ed-1/seq-6.pdf.
[191] J. Slagle, "Protest Against Dumping of PCB Ends in Arrests in Warren County," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 16, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-16/ed-1/seq-1/.

In addition to talks of health concerns and religion, also people's shared dissatisfaction with the way the government was treating them generated a sense of unity among African American and white protesters. More particularly, also references to a common enemy hinted towards a sense of unity among the protesters. This situation was amplified by four factors: the government's "whether they like it or not" attitude, the continuous use of an "us" versus "them" kind of rhetoric, governor Hunt as the embodiment of the of the state's decisions, and the continuous arrest of protesters. In this sense, "us" refers, roughly put, to the poor and African American who were forced by the "them," the government officials and polluting industries, to host a hazardous waste landfill in their community whether they liked it or not.

This "whether they liked it or not" attitude of the government angered the people who later formed the opposition. It ultimately led to a distrust in authority that motivated people to united against officials' decision to construct a PCB landfill. The Ferruccio's, for instance, sprung to action as soon as they heard that Warren County was getting a landfill whether citizens liked it or not. Frustrated by this lack of control over their own community, Ken took up his pen to write numerous letters to the associated press and government officials. As Ken put it: "my involvement begins with that statement that public sentiment didn't matter."[192] This lack of control over their own land thus illegitimated the acting authorities at least to a certain extent. The authorities thereby became a kind of "enemy" of the Warren County residents against which the residents united.

This unity was reinforced by the continuous use of a type of "us" versus "them" rhetoric. The speaker for a student organization called the chapter of the Federation for Progress of the University of North Carolina, Johnson, for instance, spoke of a struggle between residents and the state in the second week of protest while opening a rally of around 200 students, "the residents have joined together and have declared a nonviolent war against the state, (…) Johnson said."[193] Ken Ferruccio used similar "war" like rhetoric already in the first days of protest, ""We're at war with the state." Those were the early morning words of Ken Ferruccio."[194] Traditionally, wars are fought between two disparate parties over a patch of land.[195] In this case that patch of land was the PCB landfill's location, or more broadly the

[192] Kenneth & Deborah Ferruccio, interviewed by A. Granados & F. Stasio.
[193] The chapter of the Federation for Progress of the University of North Carolina was a student organization that concerned itself with issues of societal progress; K. Simmons, "White addresses rally in the Pit," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 22, 1982.
[194] J. Slagle, "Protest Against Dumping of PCB," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 16, 1982.
[195] "Conventional-Warfare," *YourDictionary*, last accessed December, 2017, http://www.yourdictionary.com/conventional-warfare.

general control over Warren County. There was thus a type of generalization and unification of protesters versus the state.

Governor Hunt himself became the embodiment of the "rich state officials" in this "state" versus the "poor, predominantly black citizens of Warren County" struggle. As one local newspaper describes it, "The mixture of young and old, black and white protesters attacked Gov. Jim Hunt for directing the disposal of the toxic wastes at the burial site."[196] The fact that Hunt became the posterchild for the state's actions is most clearly evident in the slogans used during the protests. Protesters carried signs such as "Dump Hunt in the Dump." [197] Moreover, the protesters continuously sang, "We don't want no PCB. Give it to Hunt don't give it to me."[198] And protesters also uttered such ideas as "Jim Hunt is a racist, a wolf in sheep's clothing," White said.[199] Hunt thus became a kind of embodiment of all evil that had led to the construction of the PCB landfill in Warren County. As another local newspaper sums it up, "To the Warren County residents, Hunt represents all that is evil. "Repeating such slogans as "Dump Hunt in the Dup" and "We Won't Take It No More," some protesters have blamed the governor for the landfill and threatened political retaliation if the tainted dirt continues to be dumped."[200] Hunt was thus no longer considered a trustworthy politician, but a kind of enemy "other" that had targeted the local population because they were poorer and often had a different skin color than he did. This brought about a sense of unity among the protesters.

This idea of Hunt as the enemy, is reinforced by the occasional mentioning of the fact that Hunt did not want to meet with the protesters before the landfill was completed. This, arguably, portrayed him as a kind of person who was oblivious to the concerns of the people he governed. However, it should be noted that local newspapers only addressed this issue in the end of the second week of protest. One local newspaper reports that "Brent Hackney, a spokesman for Hunt, said the governor has agreed to meet with protesters, but only after the dumping is completed."[201] Another said that Hunt, "said he was sticking by plans not to meet with opponents of the burial until after the operation was complete."[202] By refusing to meet with the protesters, Hunt, arguably, alienated himself from the protesters. The Ferruccio's

[196] "Briefly-Raleigh," *The Daily Tar Heel*, Sep. 24, 1982.
[197] C. Wilson, "2 UNC Students," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 21, 1982.
[198] "Briefly-Raleigh," *The Daily Tar Heel*, Sep. 24, 1982.
[199] K. Simmons, "White addresses rally in the Pit," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 22, 1982.
[200] C. Wilson, "2 UNC Students," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 21, 1982.
[201] "Afton," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 22, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-22/ed-1/seq-2.pdf.
[202] "Briefly-Raleigh," *The Daily Tar Heel*, Sep. 24, 1982.

were, for instance, disappointment that Hunt did not meet with them. In this manner, the idea that Hunt was a kind of "common enemy" of the local population was further amplified.

The "us" versus "them" sentiment was, lastly, further emphasized by the arrests of hundreds of protesters. The authorities were the people who were "right" and the protesters the people who were "committing a crime." One of the protesters describes the policemen they faced during the protests, "We were met by approximately 50 highway patrols in full riot gear. They wore helmets, face shields, batons in hands."[203] On almost all protest days, people got arrested. The number of people varied daily though. On the first day it was, for instance fifty-five.[204] However, on the second day it was only seven.[205] Yet, on the 23rd of September it was a hundred people and on the 27th as much as one-hundred fourteen.[206] In total over three hundred people got arrested. They were all released free of charge or with a minor fee to pay.[207] The arrests created an even bigger division between protesters and authorities. The authorities claimed the right to arrest those who resisted their rulings.

The "us" was arguably strengthened and the PCB protest further legitimized because prominent officials also got themselves arrested. Civil Rights activists like rev. Lowery, for instance, as already mentioned, got arrested. Moreover, the arrest of the congressional delegate of the District of Columbia, Walter Fauntroy attracted national media attention on the 27th of September. A local newspaper reported on the incident,

> "The controversy over the dumping of toxic PCBs in Warren County received further national exposure with the arrest of Congressional Delegate Walter Fauntroy, D-District of Columbia. He joined more than 100 other protestors who were arrested Monday for attempting to block dump trucks from entering and leaving the landfill site. Fauntroy, a non-voting member of Congress has vowed to launch a full congressional inquiry into why the state chose to locate the 25-acre site in Warren County, which has a high black population and the state's lowest per-capita income level."[208]

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[203] *Warren County Documentary*, YouTube Video.
[204] J. Slagle, "Protest Against Dumping of PCB," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 16, 1982.
[205] I. Hillard, "More Arrests Made in PCB Ordeal," *The Daily Tar Heel*, Sep. 17, 1982.
[206] N. Egemonye et al., "Love Canal Chapter Two," *Winston-Salem Chronicle*, Sep. 23, 1982; "Briefly-Afton," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Sep. 28, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-09-28/ed-1/seq-2.pdf.
[207] D. Russakoff, "As in the '60s, Protesters Rally," *The Washington Post*, Oct. 11, 1982, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1982/10/11/as-in-the-60s-protesters-rally/47e2d0e3-8556-4d9f-8a77-8a78ab51ca61/?utm_term=.ad38d8a231c0.
[208] "Congressman Arrested In Afton," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), Oct. 1, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-10-01/ed-1/seq-8.pdf.

As prominent officials got arrested, the division between state authorities and protesting citizens was further emphasized.

A "whether you like it or not" attitude, religion, a shared concern for public health, and a common enemy thus all four amplified a sense of unity among the protesters. During these amplifications the protesters race was of little concern. The "whether you like it or not" attitude of the government created an "us" versus "them" situation. Government officials were seen as "against" the citizens of Warren County. The continuous arrest of protesters only further emphasized the "us" versus "them" sentiment. Governor Hunt became the embodiment for all the undesired decision that were made regarding the landfill. Religion brought people together in prayer and in churches during the protests. Lastly, people, not matter their race, shared a concern for public health. This concern was elevated by the use of scientific data. By sharing, among other things, a concern for public health, a sense of unity was generated. The government tried to break the protesters' unity with its own scientific evidence. However, the continuation and popularity of the protests illustrates that they were generally unsuccessful. The protests even drew people from outside the county.

An even broader unity

A combination of identity-rhetoric related to race, class, public health, religion and the relationship between authority and citizens did not just emphasize a sense of unity within Warren County. It also drew citizens from the entire North Carolina, as well as other states to the PCB struggle. People, for instance, argued that the government could also decide to dump chemicals in the rest of the state. As Ken Ferruccio argues, "These people are not protesting the landfill just out of concern for themselves," Ferruccio said. "They know allowing this one would affect life throughout the rest of our beautiful state. [209] Lowery expressed similar sentiments when he said, "Rev. Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, called the Warren County Protest "the beginning of liberation of all people in North Carolina.""[210] This rhetoric illustrates a perceived sense of unity among all citizens of the state of North Carolina.

There even existed a sense of unity with citizens from other states. This is most clearly illustrated by the fact that Lois Gibbs, the protest leader of the Love Canal incident, came to

[209] C. Wilson, "Landfills may violate rights," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Aug. 26, 1982..
[210] C. Wilson, "PCB Protesters Plan Action Today," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 20, 1982.

Warren County to speak on the 19th of September in Coley Springs church.[211] She used the narrative of class in her speech. As a local paper reports, "Gibbs spoke to approximately 700 people gathered at Coley Springs Baptist Church in Afton, about three miles from the dump site. "What you are doing is not much different from what we did at Love Canal except you have the ability to stop this," Gibbs said, referring to the toxic waste landfill."[212] Another paper reported, "Mrs. Gibbs told the crowd: "You're getting a landfill because you live in a rural community and you don't make 100,000 a year""[213] Gibbs' presence broadened the PCB struggle in Warren County with the use of a narrative of class. It was not just an issue in Warren County, but it was a poor people struggle in other regions of the U.S. as well.

However, not everyone agreed that a sense of unity existed between Warren County and Love Canal. One subscriber of the Daily Tar Heel who opposed the PCB protests in general, did not think that Love Canal and Warren County could be compared. They were simply two different. The Love Canal incident had occurred in a more densely populated area, and Warren County's landfill was, according to him or her, in accordance with state regulations. As he or she writes in response to a previously published article,

> "The article quotes Lois Gibbs of Love Canal as she tries to make a comparison between Love Canal and Warren County. There is no comparison. Love Canal was the result of illegal dumping of a variety of toxic chemicals dumped over a number of years. The chemicals were directly dumped in a pure farm. The Warren County PCB dumping is very different. The site is not near any heavily populated areas. It is a planned dump which has met and surpassed both state and federal government standards for toxic dumps the PCB had been exposed since 1978 with no recorded health problems. There is only one chemical being dumped. There is a guaranteed limit on the amount to be dumped. These are facts that are matters of public record. The protesters have presented no facts, only speculation."[214]

While resentment of a comparison between Love Canal and Warren County thus exists, it should be remembered that only one record of such a resentment could be found. Overall, Gibbs' speech illustrates that a sense of unity existed between the people in places like Love Canal and Warren County when it came to the issue of hazardous waste management.

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[211] *The Carolina Times* (Durham, NC), Oct. 09, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn83045120/1982-10-09/ed-1/seq-3.pdf.
[212] C. Wilson, "PCB Protesters Plan Action Today," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 20, 1982.
[213] *The Carolina Times* (Durham, NC), Oct. 09, 1982.
[214] J.E. Harper, "Love Canal and Warren County," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-10-05/ed-1/seq-8.pdf.

This sense of unity was not just perceived, it was in fact real. This is illustrated by the fact that people from other counties became involved in the PCB struggle in Warren County. As a local newspaper reports already before the actual direct-action protests started,

> "Groups in other communities apparently are getting the message. In July, an organization called North Carolina Citizen's Action on Toxic and Chemical Hazards (CATCH) was formed in Greensboro. Their basic argument: Leave toxic chemicals alone until you can find an alternative to dumping them in one particular community. N.C. CATCH includes citizens groups from Chatham, Lee, Mecklenberg and Guilford counties, where private firms have proposed other hazardous waste landfills."[215]

Another message writes in the second week of protest, "They come not only from Afton, but from Shocca, Warrenton, Areola and Soul City all townships in Warren County. They are united and committed in their battle against the transfer of PCB-laced soil (…) in Warren County."[216] People came from as far as New Jersey, "Teen-agers, housewives and middle age men from Warren and surrounding counties have taken part in the marches and demonstrations. Monday's march included a minister form New Jersey who learned of the protest form a wire-service story."[217] Monday's march refers to the march of roughly 375 people on the 21st of September that went from Coley Springs church to the landfill's location. Lastly, many of the renowned Civil Rights activists, like Lowery, Taylor and Chavis were from a different county. Their presence as well as the presence of many others from other regions illustrates that large groups of American citizens united against PCB. The PCB struggle thus brought together people form many places, not just Warren County.

Noteworthy is that no large environmental organization felt connected to the Warren County protests. None of them joined the PCB protest scene actively. The Sierra Club department in North Carolina merely advised the state on how best to construct the landfill and suggested to the state that it might be smart to involve the general public more in the decision-making process (a suggestion the state chose to ignore).[218] The club took off as soon as the direct-action protests started.[219] In turn, the opposition did not approach the Sierra Club for help. The sense of unity that existed in Warren County thus did not reach the large, predominantly white, environmental organizations of the U.S.

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[215] C. Wilson, "Landfills may violate rights," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Aug. 26, 1982.
[216] D. Foust, "Warren County- Residents Protesting," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 28, 1982.
[217] C. Wilson, "2 UNC Students," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 21, 1982.
[218] E. McGurty, "The Construction of Environmental Justice," p.140.
[219] Ibid., p.139.

Moreover, it should be noted that some citizens of Warren County were not happy with the presence of outside agitators. Those citizens argued that it merely drew attention to the wrong aspects of the struggle. As an article says, "A recent Associated Press news analysis attempted to paint the protests as having overblown the racial issue because of leadership by outside agitators."[220] Such "outside agitators" were, for instance, Chavis and White. As the Daily Tar Heel writes, "A recent Associated Press news analysis attempted to pain the protests as having overblown the racial issue because of leadership by outside agitators. The stories, however, rarely mention, that White has been pastor of the nearby Oak Level United Church of Christ for 21 years. (…) the Rev. Ben Chavis, one of the Wilmington 10, is a member of White's congregation."[221] Reports, though rare, thus exists of people who did not feel that a sense of unity should exist between the people in Warren County and outsiders because it put the focus on the issue of race and race alone. Nevertheless, the feelings and expressions of unity are far more present in the local newspapers than resentments of such feelings and expressions. It thus seems fair to say, that an even broader sense of unity existed than the unity among people in Warren County alone.

[220] J.E. Harper, "Slanted Journalism," *The Daily Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill, NC), http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92073228/1982-10-12/ed-1/seq-6.pdf
[221] D. Foust, "Warren County- Residents Protesting," *The Daily Tar Heel,* Sep. 28, 1982.

Conclusion

An analysis of (primarily) three local newspapers has revealed that two core narratives and three sub-identity-rhetoric factors determine the extent to which protesters' identity-rhetoric and that rhetoric's amplifying factors generated unity among African American and white people during the Warren County protests of 1982. The two core narratives were the narratives of race and class. The three identity-rhetoric factors were religion, public health, and the desired relation between the government and its subjects. All of these different forms of identity-rhetoric combined, linked African Americans, both African American and white poor people, and hazardous waste management together in Warren County and even beyond.

The core narrative of race linked African American civil rights to the PCB issue. This changed the color of the opposition. The initial protest preparations had primarily been done by white residents. However, African Americans started to join as soon as the narrative of race took off. That narratives' central argument was that Warren County was getting a landfill because its population existed primarily of African Americans with little political power. This is part of what scholars call the "path of least resistance" method. Government officials executed a plan in an area where they did not expect those plans to be met with opposition. The narrative, thereby, linked African American identity and the PCB issue together. Three amplifying factors enhanced this link.

Firstly, African Americans started to join the, initially primarily white, protest as soon as prominent civil rights leaders arrived. Most of them already arrived during the first week and second week of protest. The reputation of these civil rights activists further emphasized the link between African American and the PCB issue. The presence of the president of one of the most renowned civil rights organizations, the SCLC, for instance, emphasized that the landfill was not just an environmental concern, but an African American one as well. The civil rights leaders, moreover, used their organizational skills to mobilize both African American and white people for a common cause. In this manner, they generated unity.

Secondly, the protests' style of songs, marches, and nonviolent responses to arrests reminded people of the Civil Rights Movement. In this manner, the link between African American civil rights and the PCB issue was further enhanced. In addition, it functioned as a kind of social definition. By using, for instance, songs that were reminiscent of the Civil Rights Movement people reminded each other that they were a group that shared a set of values and ideals. Both African American and white people used the songs, marches and

nonviolent reactions to arrests that reminded people of the Civil Rights Movement. This illustrates the ability to generate unity of all of those identity-factors.

Thirdly, the media reported on the entire narrative and the first two amplifying factors. In this manner, it too reinforced the link between African American identity and the landfill conflict that was being made. The narrative of race thus primarily incorporated African Americans into the, initially mostly white, opposition to the PCB landfill in Warren County.

The narrative of class touched upon a sense of unity among African American and white poor people when used in the context of the PCB issue. Its core argument was that the government allocated the landfill to Warren County because its population was primarily poor. As a result of this low income, officials expected the people of Warren County to lack the time and resources to stop the government's plans. This is also part of what scholars call "path of least resistance" thinking. The narrative's core argument and unifying abilities were amplified by three factors.

Firstly, people told anecdotes of the landfill's negative effects on their own personal economic situation. The value of land would, for instance, drop. Secondly, people generated a "dim economic future" picture for the entire county. In these manners, protesters reinforced the link between poverty and the PCB issue that was being made. Thirdly, the fact that "common men," who people trusted, used the narrative of class further legitimized and enhanced that narrative's link between the poverty of both African American and white people and the landfill.

The narrative of class was used by both races during the protests but often overshadowed by the narrative of race. This dissatisfied some of the county residents who felt the PCB protest was now solely a racial issue. Moreover, some protesters might have sympathized with the narrative of class, but they chose not to support it. They could not miss the money they would earn if they did not rise up in protest. The "path of least resistance" thinking upholds here.

In addition to the core narratives, the identity-rhetoric on religion, public health, and the desired relation between the government and its subjects also generated unity among the African American and white residents of Warren County and even beyond.

Religion, firstly, motivated people to unite in protest. People saw the protests as a kind of "religious calling." Secondly, reverends stirred the protesters in similar directions, claiming it was God's will that they would, for instance, march to the landfill and then halt. Thirdly, people evoked a sense of unity by praying together and singing religious songs. Lastly, the

church formed the organizational center of the protests. Especially at the Coley Springs church both African American and white people came together to discuss and plan the PCB situation. The fact that the Coley Springs Church was an African American church, yet white people joined the meetings, illustrates a sense of unity among both races.

A shared concern for public health also hinted towards a sense of unity. They all feared for their own health, the health of their children, and the health of their land. Protesters gather scientific data to legitimize these unifying public health concerns. However, government officials offered alternative scientific evidence in an attempt to break the unity of the protesters. They argued that the landfill did not pose a threat to the Warren County population. The fact that the protests continued despite these governmental attempts, illustrates the strength of the protesters' unity.

Lastly, people's shared dissatisfaction with the existing relation between the government and its subjects generated a sense of unity among African American and white protesters. This shared dissatisfaction was amplified by four factors. Firstly, the government had a "whether they like it or not" attitude that angered many. Government officials had decided that the landfill would be located in Warren County whether that county's residents liked it or not. This loss of control over their land motivated people to rise up together against the authorities. Secondly, the continuous use of an "us" versus "them" type of rhetoric reinforced the idea the opposition (the "us") was united against the state (the "them"). People even spoke of a "war" against the state. Thirdly, the fact that the government started arresting protesters further emphasized this "us" versus "them." The residents were allegedly committing a crime by protesting against the landfill that the government had placed there without their agreement. Lastly, governor Hunt became the embodiment of the "them" that people united against. In these manners, the dissatisfaction of both African American and white people with the existing relation between the state officials and the people of Warren County generated a sense of unity them.

A combination of religion, public health concerns, and dissatisfaction with the existing relation between authority and citizens, as well as the two core narratives brought about a sense of unity that transcended the county's borders. People from other counties and even other states were drawn to the site. Most of the civil rights leaders were, for instance, from other counties. The PCB issue thus touched not only African Americans and whites from Warren County, but also from other places.

In these manners, identity rhetoric with its amplifying factors generated a striking sense of unity among African American and white residents in Warren County between

September 12 and October 15, 1982. Unexpectedly, African Americans and whites came together in a state and county with a history of discrimination. They came together even though they were poor and predominantly African American and thus not expected to have the political clout to rise up against authority's decisions. In this way, the unity at Warren County defied odds and a "a rural wasteland" with "little to brag about" was able to change environmentalism and the direction of its associated studies forever. [222]

A study of local newspapers on the use of identity-rhetoric at Warren County complements those studies but also offers options for future research. As explained in the introduction, scholars on Warren County have generally used national newspapers and/or interviews to provide a thorough chronology of the Warren County protests. Studies on the unifying abilities of identity-rhetoric are absent in the historiography. This is striking because this rhetoric led environmental justice scholars to initially study environmental justice cases in which race and/ or class played a role as well. In order to generalize this studies' findings, the unifying abilities of the identity-rhetoric of protesters at those chosen cases can be analyzed too. Perhaps the unifying power of identity-rhetoric upholds in a similar manner in other historical cases. An analytical framework could be formed with which to analyze the unifying abilities of identity-rhetoric during environmental justice protests throughout a larger period of history.

[222] M. Jordan, *The Carolina Times* (Durham, NC), Sep. 18, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn83045120/1982-09-18/ed-1/seq-7.pdf.; D. Alderman, "Fight Goes on Against Landfill," *Winston-Salem Chronicle* (Winston-Salem, NC), Sep. 23, 1982, http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn85042324/1982-09-23/ed-1/seq-1.pdf.

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