The Contentious Politics of the Concerned Citizens Forum (CCF)

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The Durban based Concerned Citizens Forum (CCF) is popularly considered part of what is called a 'Social Movement and the New Left' (Pokwana 2001).[1] That is a group of post-apartheid, largely, community based organisations (CBOs) including, but not confined to, the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), the Landless Peoples Movement (LPM) and the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (WCAEC). All of which are independent and critical of, to varying degrees, the policies and practices of the African National Congress (ANC) government and the ANC led Tri-partite Alliance.[2]

Launched in July 2001, comparatively little is known about the CCF. The only published account is *We are the Poors: Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2002) by Ashwin Desai. This book is something of an 'insider' account of how the CCF evolved, by a high profile activist-intellectual who works closely with it. Practically, it is largely orientated around the working class urban areas that make up the eThekweni Metropolitan municipality, with a particular focus on two poor areas, Bayview and Westcliff, in the 'Indian' township of Chatsworth. Mostly, it shows how people in these communities have been forced to defend them against the impact of government neo-liberal polices (contained in the macroeconomic framework Growth Employment and Redistribution - GEAR), and how poverty and struggle is woven into the social fabric of their daily existence.[3]

As a result, the roots of the CCF lay in the experiences of tens of thousands of working class people and their exposure to the concrete manifestations and impacts of the government's GEAR policy, and not in any pre-theorised ideological critique or commitment.[4] As such, initial actions were largely reactive and sought to ameliorate the worst and immediate excesses of government policy, such as evictions and disconnection from water and electricity, at the local level.

In the process the CCF has enabled people to swap experiences and skills such as training 'struggle plumbers and electricians' to illegally reconnect those disconnected and held video

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[1] A classic definition of a social movement is provided by Diani: 'A social movement is a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and / or organisations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity' (1992: 13).

[2] The CCF, APF and WCAEC, along with other community based organisations, including some Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), are affiliated to the Social Movements Indaba (SMI). For more on the SMI see www.apf.org.za.

[3] Considered by some as the first book on social movements in the post-apartheid era (see various reviews at www.ukzn.ac.za/ccs), it is an important starting point for those unfamiliar with the CCF in particular and the initial development of the social movements generally since 1994.

4 Prior to participating with the CCF, people did not live in a social vacuum and so came with ideological baggage - a variety of political, social and 'common-sense' beliefs, however partial or sometimes contradictory they may be. Common sense is taken to mean 'the largely unconscious way in which a person perceives the world' (Gramsci cited in Simon 1982).

screenings and other social events. Nationally, the CCF was central to organising the Durban Social Forum (DSF) to protest against the ANC government at the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in August 2001 (Desai 2002). This forum was in many ways a precursor to the SMI, and the CCF was a founding affiliate and has organised solidarity marches, rallies and memorandums with and in support of groups elsewhere in the country, such as the LPM and APF. The CCF also participated in the 'counter events' outside the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in September 2002, including the 'Social Movements United' march of up to 30,000 people.

What this research reveals is a loose association of individuals and organisations, that brings together disparate and autonomous CBOs initially drawn together by the commonality of, what Meszaros (1971: 33) has called, the 'elementary imperatives of survival'. Yet they are further united by what they bring to the CCF: a broad array of shared living experiences, identities, loyalties, symbols and resources that they draw on (and continually create and exchange) as a source of mobilisation and campaigning.

Whilst the term 'the poors' (Desai 2002) sought to capture this messy amalgam of people, it underplays an organisation differentiated by uneven experience, age, gender, 'culture' and 'real politick'. This heady cocktail of people, ideas, and experiences does not lend itself easily to simple classifications. Participants of the CCF cannot be straightforwardly categorised as having a single, coherent political consciousness or identity in opposition to 'neo-liberalism', and 'globalisation', neither do they have or represent a 'blueprint' - a 'how to' guide to campaigning in the 'new' South Africa.[5]

As we shall see, some participants believe that the loose and *ad hoc* form the CCF has so far taken has contributed to the lull in organised public activities of the group since December 2002. Others see the loose form as a virtue, as the organisation can be quickly mobilised if and when need be, with the component groups then returning to the 'hum-drum' of 'ordinary' life. For some the CCF is moribund and for others it no longer exists.[6]

Objectively, this lull is also due, in part, to a change in tactics by local government who in response to the CCF have retreated, perhaps temporarily, from direct confrontation and mass generalised evictions and disconnections in areas where the CCF emerged and the bulk of their participants live. Whilst this has not precluded sporadic activity by independent participating groups, such as the Tenants Association of Sydenham Heights (TASH), a partial fragmentation of constituent groups and some leading participants has taken place, as internal differences over the organisational, strategic and tactical future of the CCF tests people's resolve to maintain unity.[7]

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[5] The CCF is not a membership based organisation and so those involved and associated with it will be referred to as 'participants'.

[6] The name certainly lives on. At public meetings called by the council in Sydenham Heights in late 2003, the eThekwini Municipality invited 'the CCF' and put the name down on the agenda. However, except for several individuals in Bayview and WestCliff, who are popularly rooted and can mobilise meetings of several hundred at short notice, practically all those interviewed and observed during this research process no longer meet, campaign or mobilise as the CCF.

[7] As with all forms of collective action, some participants have become 'burnt-out' and found it difficult to sustain high levels of activity over more than 2 years. Others have been overwhelmed by the energy it takes to

The research agenda
This research attempts to bring the story of the CCF up to date and to critically build upon existing work by entering into a dialogue with key participants (and other layers of participants and supporters) that constitute the CCF. Mainly, through in depth interviews, participant observation and participants self-reflection, it endeavours to develop the contours of the CCF mapped by Desai (2002).[8]

In terms of the questions posed by the overall research agenda of the Centre for Civil Society Social Movements Research Project (see Ballard et al 2003), this report seeks to identify: who are and what is the CCF, where is it located, why and how did it develop and how does it operate and mobilise? Broadly, what are the organisation's forms of resource mobilisation and framing strategies and repertoires of contention?[9]

What transpires is that the very mechanisms of the political opportunity, framing and resource mobilisation processes that were once harnessed and facilitated the emergence of the CCF, have transformed into challenges that threaten its survival. These can be conceptualised as issues of identity (what type of organisation is the CCF, what image does it want to project and how?), of organisational form (does the CCF need a permanent structure?) and finally political agenda (what does it stand for?).

These challenges are not unique to the CCF or South Africa, for, as Harman notes, they are a generative feature of collective protest:

> **Every successful protest goes through two phases. The first is when it bursts upon the world, taking its opponents by surprise and bringing joy to those who agree with its aims. . . it seems that the sheer momentum of the movement is bound to carry it forward from strength to strength. This draws its adherents together, and leads them to play down old differences of opinion and old arguments on tactics. But those against whom the protests are directed do not simply give up. . . At this point, arguments over tactics necessarily arise within the movement, even among people who have sworn to forget old disputes in the interests of consensus** (2000: 49).

Just as the history of the liberation struggle in South Africa is littered with debates and dissent, competing political traditions, improvised alliances and unpredicted outcomes (see Fine and Davis 1991; Anthony Marx 1992), so is the CCF. However, interviews reveal that a small core group of people with a strong sense of allegiance to the CCF keep it 'ticking over',

'simply' survive in a period characterised by high unemployment and worsening poverty that exacerbates inequality.
[8] In an attempt to be transparent and accountable, especially given the tensions and controversy that exists between some participants of SMI affiliates and researchers, a detailed account of my research methodology is in appendix I.
[9] Focusing on the CCF as an organisation does not constitute counter-posing or collapsing the individual in to the group. As will become clear this research conceptualises the importance of collective action as constituted by a dynamic relationship between the two forms of agency.

and in the process are trying to grapple with the very serious problems and challenges that have developed since the initial, explosive, stage of the organisation's evolution.

Theorising action

In discussing the rise of popular movements in the twentieth century, Barker (1995) notes that what is common is the organic development of a series of fundamental questions. Broadly, are our demands fitting, or should we change them? What form of organisation is needed? Can we trust those that claim to represent us? How shall we handle division in our ranks? What do we want to say, what is to be hoped and what feared, what is to be thought, what is to be done?

These types of questions are similar to the theoretical issues that have concerned social movement scholars for over 30 years (see Della Porta and Diani 2003; Maheu, 1995). As social movement theory evolved (see McAdam et al, 1999) theorists of the political opportunities and political process school of research (see McAdam 1982; Tilly, 1978) became more interested in understanding how social movements came into being and how they operated. They focused on collective activities, their organisational structures, leadership, social bases and culture, and framing strategies or consensus building.[10]

Other classic studies of social movements claim that attention should be paid to the ways in which people 'construct' (and change) the social world, and so analysis should centre on the individual actor - agency.[11] In the *Making of the English Working Class* (1986), E.P. Thompson argues that we orientate our analysis towards actors and what is most subjective in their behaviours, towards experiences. Taking into account individual, as well as collective subjectivity, the 'social processes' whereby actors arise, express themselves, and change – how people challenge constructed patterns of behaviour, social (structural) relationships.

Nonetheless, the more recent turn to the study of 'subjectivity' in development and social theories (see for example Long and van Der Ploeg 1994) tends to detach agency from the complexities of the dynamics of the social relationships – social conditions - in which it is exercised, and so loses meaning and analytical precision. The result is a tendency, perhaps unwitting, towards an uncritical celebration of 'popular culture', 'the community' and the invocation of a quasi-mythical belief in all forms of discourse and action 'from below', and so reproducing much of the voluntarism and idealism that characterises much of this work (see Brass 1995; Eagleton 2003).[12] One consequence, accidental or otherwise, is to eschew openly ideological debate, politics and political organisation, thus disarming people from

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[10] Much less research has focused on what participants involved in social movements think, how that might change or be affected by active involvement and the role of group membership in relation to the individual. Therefore, something of a 'black box' in social movement theory research exists on this subject. For a detailed discussion of how, through 'everyday' processes of social interaction, Treatment Action Campaign participant engagement contributes to a sense of personal transformation and learning, see Endresen (2004), and for participants in the CCF, see Dwyer (2005 forthcoming).

[11] An attribute of actors defined as 'a locus of decision and action where the action is in some sense a consequence of the actor's decisions' (Hindness 1986: 115).

[12] Desai (2002) and Desai and Pithouse (2003) have a tendency to replicate elements of this. For an excellent discussion of community, community development work and community politics see Robson (2000).

making normative statements that may enable them to begin to answer some of the questions posed by Barker and grappled with by social movement theorists more generally.[13]

Consequently, the ideas and 'politics' related to the ways in which agency responds – acts - must be of significant importance in understanding agency. Not least, because different outcomes develop from different political responses linked to particular ideological concepts. That is, social relations and social action is subjectively interpreted in historically specific, i.e. political, ways and reflect the coming together of a multiplicity of living realities, of people's experiences, that have grown out of definite social conditions and reacting on them.[14] However, social conditions do not instigate organisations, people do. Neither can they explain specific choices and developments in which people draw on their own concrete understandings, networks, and ideas.

Clearly, a problem in social (movement) theory is that the social relations (structure) in which people mobilise (agency) are often set apart as 'binary opposites' (see Sibeon 1999) with the individual or social group often counter posed to structural analysis. Yet, this dichotomy between structure and agency, is challenged by Giddens (1984 1993), who argues that structures (variously referred to as social context or 'systems') influence people's agency but that they only continue to exist insofar as they are sustained by people's repeated actions. In conceptual terms, what we are, in part, concerned with is trying to understand how institutions condition events, how actors are responsible for particular outcomes and circumstances and the interaction between the two – that is, the macro and micro level consequences of social action and change.

This is no simple task. Indeed, is it possible to do this without reducing agency to structure, so denying agents the capability of initiating action, effectively denying agency? Conceivably, a useful starting point is not to preference agency over structure or vice versa, but to appreciate the intricacies of their intimate relationship. 'Intricacies' that in part reveal how organisations and people develop. Consequently, social change is not a 'thing' that just happens or 'history without a subject' (Althusser 1972), it is a process, expressed and worked through by individual agency more often in collective organisation in specific historical and changing ways and conditions that are subjectively interpreted. Focusing on either relationship is to miss 'the real relationship of structure and action, the structural conditioning of action and the effects of action on structure' (Abrams 1982: 7).

What emerges, when conceiving of the CCF and its participants in this way, is a group of people enmeshed in a constant process of political and social constitution within definite social relations ('the transition'). Accordingly, the CCF can be understood as open-ended activity in which participants reflect (both as individuals, leadership and as a group), develop and review their activity in the immediacy in which they operate. While the focus and the emphasis is on understanding the emergence and operation of the CCF, this would be

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[13] The roots of the hostility to 'Politics' and political parties in South Africa are not without good reason given the genuine sense of 'betrayal' that some participants feel towards sections of the pre-1994 liberation movement. It is clear that several former anti-apartheid activists involved with the CCF have felt this acutely.
[14] Interestingly, Desai (2003) has suggested we consider social movements as not part of (formal) 'politics', but as operating in the 'political'. See 'Witnessing the Transition' located at www.ukzn.ac.za/ccs.

incomplete if analysed in 'isolated contemplation' and necessitates an 'insistence on context' (Ginzburg 1993).

This requires that the organisation is positioned in a historical and contemporary context for the lives and actions of CCF participants are 'embedded' in social, economic and political relationships, whose dynamics affect them (constraining and offering opportunities), but are also changed by their actions. Therefore, having briefly reviewed the main theoretical concerns highlighted in social and social movement theory, I will now situate the nature of the South African transition to democracy since 1994 in a global context, commonly referred to as a period of 'globalisation'.[15]

The emergence of the CCF is understood as a 'local' response to the very real effects of 'globalisation' as manifested in the historical specificity of post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, it is unintelligible except against the background of the relatively slow economic growth of the last 20 years (globally and nationally-what Brenner (1988) has called an 'economic crisis'), and the frustrated aspirations of those people who have to live with the contradictory outcomes of ANC government policies that are framed by a form of home grown neo-liberalism. This research is therefore about the lives of real people and about the impact of people's participation, their political engagement, in civil society in a global(ised) period of rapid social, political, and economic change – 'the transition'. It is to the global element of the transition I shall now turn.

Globalising the local: The global context
Uneven development 'lies at the heart of the world system', a world 'of extremities in both the level of economic development and in the state of the human condition' (Panayitopoulos and Capps 2001: 213). This process of uneven development is exacerbated by the tendency to economic crisis inherent in capitalist mode of production. Businesses attempt, both individually and at a social level, to offset crisis - by shifting investment to financial assets and speculation (one trend in the past 20 years) and through austerity measures - cutting wages, mass sackings and reducing the social wage, etc.[16]

Kiley (2002) notes how one consequence of 'globalisation from above' is that it has not been accepted passively, and in trying to understand the impact of this process Burawoy et al (2000) suggest we 'ground globalisation' by mapping its distinctive and emergent political terrain. That is the subtle ways in which the policy outcomes that are responses to

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[15] Understood as a historically specific political and socio-economic phenomenon expressed, largely, through the implementation of neo-liberal policies that decision-makers worldwide accept as a means of solving global (and national) 'economic crisis'. These are fiscal discipline, public expenditure priorities, tax reform, financial liberalisation, competitive exchange rates, trade liberalisation, foreign direct investment, privatisation, deregulation and property rights (see Callinicos 2003).

[16] This also puts pressures on a government to cut back on social expenditure, i.e. basic services, to create more favourable conditions for businesses to boost or restore profits, and often aggravates the uneven development process. The importance of this process is, as Habermas (1976) argues, that economic crisis is shifted into the political system through the 'reactive-avoidance' activity of government as mediators of economic and social development. It is within the framework of this historical and on-going process that popular protests are generated.

globalisation are continually interwoven in the fabric of participants' lives and how they reproduce, experience and respond to this at a local level.

Walton and Seddon link the impact of such processes to an earlier wave of 'successful collective action' across the world. They argue that 'it is the crisis and the process of reconstruction of global capitalism that began in the late 1960s and early 1970s that has generated the economic policies of liberalization and austerity that have themselves given rise to the upsurge of popular protest across the developing world. . . ' (Walton and Seddon 1994: 22). They show how, in virtually all cases, these movements produced a reversal of cuts in the social wage that in the process led to a greater awareness of the limits to economic liberalisation, and in a few cases transformed into wider political challenges to incumbent governments.

Noting the continuing instability and crisis prone nature of global capitalism, Dwyer and Seddon (2002) argue that the popular protest of the kind that Walton and Seddon discuss, and was characteristic of the period from the mid 1970s to the late 1980s, has not been extinguished. Indeed, it has continued throughout the 1990s and into the new millennium, and can be understood as 'a new wave' of popular protest.

It was these 'changing structural economic conditions' (Anthony Marx 1992: 27) and an '. . . international system, reflecting the political norms, values and principles of the major powers. . .' (Habib, Pillay and Desai 1998: 99) that conditioned the behaviour and policy choices of the ANC leadership as it was set to govern in the early 1990s. We can therefore establish that the broad terrain upon which this resistance takes place is one in which national-states are embedded in both a domestic and an international political set of relationships. Importantly, as McAdam argues, 'In short, movement scholars have, to date, grossly undervalued the impact of global political and economic processes in structuring the domestic possibilities for successful collective action' (1999: 34). Having outlined the global processes that give rise to 'domestic possibilities', I will now outline those political and economic processes particular to South Africa that conditioned the transition from the early 1990s.

Localising the global: the national context
The geo-political changes induced by the dissolution of state-bureaucratic socialism from 1989 onwards, changing investment criteria, and domestic 'economic crisis' (see Gelb 1991) reinforced the notion that post-apartheid domestic economic growth would be tied to the international economy. The continuing problem of global economic growth was mirrored nationally with annual growth in Gross Domestic Product averaging 1.5 per cent between 1980-1990 (World Bank 1997: 123). Since 1994, the ANC government has set itself the task of entrenching liberal democracy, whilst seeking favourable terms for South Africa's economic reintegration through winning a stake in international markets.[17]
To garner political and economic support (particularly much needed international investment) required the ANC to make the country 'attractive' (i.e. politically and economically stable) for investors. Herein lay the political and economic dilemma for a 'liberated' South Africa,

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[17] Therefore ruling out any redistribution of existing wealth from rich to poor in the world's most unequal country.

and this dovetailed with the ideological fall-out from post 1989 changes. Crucial to political stability and mass popular demands for the attainment of social and economic equality, would be sustainable and stable economic growth.

How best to achieve this was no academic debate: with a euphoric and militant liberation movement, in which organised labour was central, the options of 'growth through redistribution' and 'distribution through growth' were not purely 'technical realities', but constituted an element of the on-going class struggle in ideological terms.[18] As Habib, Pillay and Desai (1998), Marais (1999), Bond (2000) and others help explain, although global and domestic constraints conditioned the choices taken by the ANC in the 1990-1994 period, this did not mean the absence of choice or that they were uncontested inside the liberation movement.

On the contrary, it was in this period that the ANC leadership imposed limits on its strategy and tactics. They were, to change the status quo yet seeking to preserve it, ensuring that, given the circumstances, they effectively limited the options they were prepared to consider using to move towards a post-apartheid South Africa. This helps explain why elite negotiations – the option chosen - was preferred to consistent mass protests: they were viewed by the ANC leadership as being the best way to achieve their nationalist aims of governing South Africa as a liberal democracy.

Since 1994 the ANC government, together with a host of state and non-state organisations and agencies, have began to institutionalise democracy and asserting the rule of law - the 'normalisation' of liberal democracy. Democracy has been redefined in institutional terms and limited to the political sphere, emphasising formal processes and procedures for selecting parties and leaders.[19] This has taken place under conditions of neo-liberalism aided by corporatist institutions, the broad restructuring of state and societal relations (including capital and labour), in an attempt to make South African capitalism more competitive (see Bond 2000; Marais 1999).

The process of combined and uneven development in South Africa has been intensified by the ways in which the government has sought to offset the socio-economic crisis and legacy of apartheid through the austerity measures contained and produced by GEAR. That is, the process of globalisation and the development of neo-liberal policies on a global scale discussed earlier express themselves in South Africa primarily in the form of GEAR. But, as is now well documented, the ANC's shift to GEAR has not resolved this dilemma, but has accentuated structural unemployment and inequality.

Consequently, any sense of a shared 'development' agenda was undermined by the closure of the RDP office and the introduction of GEAR in 1996, and represented a major shift towards

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[18]Bond (2000) and Marais (1999) document how the notion of 'redistribution through growth' (i.e. trickle-down theory) began to appear with increasing frequency in discussions of development policy. Whilst this was a complex and contradictory process, trends towards favouring economic liberalisation can be discerned from ANC proclamations and decisions in the period 1990-1994.

[19] See Robinson (1998) for a discussion of how the once popular meaning of what constitutes democracy has been narrowed and limited to institutional arrangements.

economic orthodoxy.[20] Thus, the evolving relationship between the government and civil society is one in which it appears that the outcomes are continually subject to revision and question. It is in this specific social matrix, 'a full socio economic crisis in the making' (Kotze 2003: 2-3), that pre-1994 forms of collective organisation, loyalty and identity are very slowly starting to change and new forms are emerging. The process of change formally initiated by liberal democratic elections in April 1994 is still unfolding before our very eyes. However, looking back to 1994, social and economic change has been slow and fragmented. Despite all the progress made with the Constitution and other formal rights, many problems and tensions remain.

Whilst the first election did not, and could not, solve the economic crisis, it would be simplistic to understand the re-election of the ANC in June 1999 and April 2004 as a complete vindication of their work since 1994.[21] This was partly reflected in the public sector strike 6 weeks after the June 1999 election and the anti-privatisation strikes involving millions of workers in 2002. In addition to which, the independently organised protests of up to 20,000 people outside the WCAR in August 2001 and the 'Social Movements United' march in September 2002 outside the WSSD began, however unevenly, to blame the ANC government directly for continuing socio-economic problems and perceived lack of delivery of basic services. Ultimately, the major cause of tension between the government, labour, and people in organisations like the CCF, is linked to GEAR and the consequences of GEAR policies on the lives of CCF participants.

In sum, the unfolding of liberal democracy since 1994 has taken place in a period in which neo-liberal economic policies have been accepted by the ANC leadership as the best way to solve the socio-economic legacy of apartheid, and has provided a new structure of opportunity for collective mobilisation in South Africa. That is, the way in which the transition has unfolded has generated expectations and rights-based claims that have placed demands on a broader array of actors and institutions. It is within this framework, the interdependent relationships between the global, national and local nexus, together with the expectations generated during the liberation struggle and the ANC promises of 'a better life for all', that we must situate the development of the CCF.

Anatomy of an organisation: How the CCF developed
The immediate story of the CCF begins with the formation of the CCG in Durban in 1999. The CCG was a 'loose alliance' that included the prominent sociologist (and biographer of Nelson Mandela) Professor Fatima Meer and other well-known members of the Durban Indian community. Prompted by the ANC, they started a campaign to encourage Indian people not to vote for the historically 'white' parties (the New National Party and Democratic Party) in the second general election in June 1999 (Desai 2002).

During this campaign the CCG encountered a reluctance to vote for the ANC, and a survey of 504 families in Westcliff and Bayview areas of Chatsworth revealed that 75 per cent lived below the poverty line, 58 per cent were unemployed and 42 per cent dependent on welfare

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[20] For example the internationally renowned pro-business magazine, *The Economist* (12 October 1996), praised the ANC government for introducing a 'conservative macro-economic policy'.
[21] For a discussion about the drop in the number of people registering to vote and voting see McKinley (2004).

grants.[22] Consequently, the CCG evolved into a de-facto human rights group whose focus shifted to campaigning against housing evictions, water cut-offs and demands for rent by the local municipality. This transformation helped revive 'flatdwellers' associations' in parts of Chatsworth (Desai 2002). In September 1999, this resulted in the CCG taking up the case of 10 families in the Bayview and Westcliff areas who were about to be evicted by the council for rent arrears.

In early 2000, several people (all with previous activist experiences-see below) had been conducting research about water and electricity provision in Kwamashu, Umlazi, Hammarsdale, Wentworth and Chatsworth for the Canadian-based Municipal Research Project. This work 'exposed them, first hand, to the extent of the problems people were facing'. Noticing a spate of evictions and the resistance this generated across Durban, they agreed, with other city based activists, 'that the haphazard nature of the struggles could end up being hijacked or contaminated, whether it's racial politics or cooption, by various ANC structures. . . ' (Interview, anonymous, 26.07.03).

These people were keen to ensure that such community protests had 'an autonomous and independent identity outside of the Alliance' (Interview, anonymous, 15.07.03). They also believed that the CCG was 'too content' to remain in Indian areas, and so began looking outwards to make connections between the people in the different areas that were protesting against evictions and disconnections.

At first, they focused on Chatsworth and began holding meetings of 10 or so people who, as one describes, had 'a lot of tentativeness' about organising. Having convinced them that combining and using legal and direct action they could prevent evictions, they soon found that as they won legal battles this attracted more applicants. This generated its own publicity, seemingly spread on the 'community grapevine' by friends, family, neighbours and work colleagues, and meetings got bigger, so enabling them to mount more substantial challenges to the municipality based on the size and scope of their meetings.

Interviews with some of those involved reveal that parallel to the unfolding of this process in Chatsworth, emerging, 40 kilometres away, in the Mpumalanga township of Hammarsdale, the Concerned Citizens Group (who had already made the news for protesting against the installation of water meters) made tentative contact with those activists working around Chatsworth and the CCG.[23] One of those conducting the research tells how, 'we read in the press of eruptions happening elsewhere' (Interview, anonymous, 26.07.03), and so the fledging group, based around two units in Chatsworth, began actively to seek out those in other townships and soon found that 'representatives' from other communities were contacting them for discussions about working together.[24]

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[22] Fatima Meer, quoted in *Natal Mercury* February 17 1999.

[23] Initially associated with the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), this group was pressured by the IFP leadership to 'toe the party line' but decided to seek alliances with the CCF. By late 2003 the group seemed back under the influence of the local IFP leadership (personal communication with several Hammarsdale participants December 2003).

[24] As the research progressed, some, but not all, participants expressed reservations about just how representative some 'community leaders' were.

More widely, participants from Chatsworth soon found out, through connections with other activists and news reports of protests elsewhere, that people in other areas such as Wentworth and Umlazi were facing similar problems over electricity, water and evictions. For example, as the protest actions and meetings continued, one community representative found that he would be telephoned by people in Pheonix or Umkomass saying, 'can you come to our community and speak to people, we are facing the same problems and would like to start something' (Interview, anonymous, 18.06.03).

During the course of 2000-2001 different community groups across Durban began to strike up relations based around a perceived common set of problems that hinged around the provision of and inability to pay for basic services. One participant from Chatsworth describes how, having been taken to meetings with other community based representatives in places such as Hammarsdale and Wentworth, they '. . . realised that it was not just us, but there was every other community across Durban and KwaZulu Natal that was facing that problem' [of 'social injustice'] (Interview, anonymous, 18.06.03). For another involved in setting up and participating in joint community meetings and helping to meet with new contact groups 'What was really evident was there was a tremendous potential, desperate people, they do want to do something, that is what we learnt there' (Interview, anonymous, 26.07.03a).

However, in the process of forming a loose organisation, initially on the back of judicial and extra-judicial defensive actions, what emerged from a series of meetings amongst community representatives was a need for pro-active campaigns. Whilst it is always difficult to pinpoint seminal moments or the start of a process that begins to create and cement an organisational identity, several participants highlighted the usefulness and excitement of the regular Saturday meetings, at Natal Technikon and the University of Natal (UND), during 2001.

This was when participants from a range of community groups came together with students, academics and other staff, mainly from the University of Durban Westville (UDW) to make banners, discuss actions and show (political) videos. It would seem that it was through such events that people began to bond, as they sat and painted banners, laughing and joking, working together, swapping anecdotes and stories, and so developing a CCF camaraderie. One major result of this was the evolution of the 'Ten Rand Campaign'.[25] One participant recalls how he started to feel like he was part of something bigger, 'Yeah, you see, by meeting those people what came to my mind is that I am not alone in this thing' (Interview, anonymous, 10.08.03a). Captured in a different way, another participant simply said, 'It was fun'.

Here we can begin to see how those in the CCF, through collective action and explicitly arranged and planned meetings and workshops, began to identify with the CCF as their organisation. An organisation that does not have one interest as such, but one that acts as a

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[25] The original campaign emerged amongst people in Hammarsdale before they linked up with the CCF. Then, despite high profile activists in the CCF arguing for a 'no charge' campaign they accepted the R10 'flat rate' because people demanded to make a monthly contribution towards their debts with the municipality. The campaign culminated in 5000 people, some waving fake R10 notes, converging on eThekwini municipal offices in May 2002 offering to pay off some of their debts.

co-ordinating body organising and supporting protests, rallies and solidarity, so linking those groups across Durban who share common experiences, such as fighting evictions, or common grievances, such as not being able to afford to pay for municipal services such as electricity. That is, it began to evolve as an organisational territory filled by the interaction between different groups and individuals consisting of distinct identifiable groups that march separately but strike together.[26]

The composition of the CCF
As we have noted, the CCF is not a membership-based organisation and the shorthand terms most commonly used to characterise the CCF by participants in interviews and at meetings were a 'loose coalition', 'a network' and 'a network of organisations'. People were never referred to as 'members'.

Whilst it is possible to identify those organisations affiliated to the CCF, this 'looseness' makes a quantification of CCF participants very difficult.[27] Firstly, as it is not a membership-based organisation there are no membership lists, and no 'official' records of the numbers of people attending various mobilisations and meetings have been kept. Secondly, as there are no membership-type or political conditions on participation (at meetings, marches, workshops, etc), numbers ebbed and flowed depending on the particular issue, event and resources available.

Nevertheless, what can be identified is that initially (and still to a small extent today) a core of city based activists, who had access to resources (computers, telephone, fax, e-mail, recourse to finance, etc) consistently acted as central organisers, initiators and transmitters of information between groups and individuals.[28] Several identified themselves as 'petty-bourgeois', as did one or two other participants, but others referred them as 'city based comrades'.

This small group act like a co-ordinating network and draw around them peripheries, contacts and connections, affiliates and sympathises through mobilising, providing and pooling resources ('infrastructure'). This enables them to facilitate and synchronise meetings (book halls), arrange transport (negotiate deals and discounts), pass on information (where and when to meet), thereby connecting different groups for whatever purpose. This could be a march, rally, a meeting in another community or an event elsewhere in the country, such as a SMI meeting in Johannesburg.[29]

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[26] A list of the organisations that make up (or were once associated with) the CCF is detailed in appendix II.
[27] All participants interviewed and others asked this question were hesitant to put a figure on the size of the CCF. Mobilisations have ranged from several hundred in Chatsworth, 5 000 drawn from several townships and at best 20 000 outside the WCAR.
[28] Several participants note how this core group is not politically homogeneous and comes from and is influenced by ANC, socialist, Marxist, black consciousness, anarchist and autonomist ideas.
[29] Clearly, lack of resources limited activism at times, but an 'activist entrepreneurialism' permeated the CCF and some became adept at 'hustling' for resources. Examples of this, for reasons of confidentiality, cannot be disclosed. But it ranges from 'bending the rules', to 'being economical with the truth' and lying (often to authority) to gain access to resources. Unwitting reliance on the personal financial resources of some city based participants may have contributed to the failure to sustain the CCF.

Nonetheless, CCF events predominantly attract what can be conceptualised as working class people (largely unemployed, but not all).[30] As such, in interviews, meetings, rallies and informal discussions, participants commonly referred to themselves and others like them in Durban and across the country as 'the oppressed, 'the deserving', 'the poor' and 'the poorest of the poor'. Whilst the CCF has a very small number of lower middle class adherents (academics, students and other professionals), it is underpinned by working class people and it is inconceivable to imagine the bulk of those present at CCF marches, meetings and rallies are anything but working class people.

Historically, this composition is common to similar organisations and movements, from the British Chartists of the nineteenth century to the United Democratic Front in the 1980s. If most participants in the CCF are unemployed, again this mirrors experiences from other poor countries in which people have historically been at the forefront of popular protests and 'food riots'. For example, research on Tunisia and Morocco (Burke 1989; Seddon 1988 cited in Walton and Seddon 1994) has demonstrated how a mixture of urbanisation, neo-liberal austerity policies and a history of forms of prior collective organisation (community, labour, religious, etc) makes for an 'explosive cocktail'.[31] Consequently, it is unsurprising that such people make up the social base of the CCF.

Families, women and the CCF
We have noted how the CCF began to draw together a wide range of people. This includes existing CBOs, small clusters of academics, including some from the Combined Staff Association (COMSA) and the Socialist Student Movement, and other non-party-aligned academics at UDW and to a lesser degree the UND, contacts through the Workers' College and politically independent activists. However, watching, listening and interacting with such people, it is apparent that more than an organisational network is involved in mobilising, campaigning and reliving events, etc.

This involves contacts between neighbours, friends, family, school friends and workmates who learn about issues and impending protests, and talk, debate, gossip and argue about this, and encourage each other to participate or not. For example, one participant tells how through a Youth for Work comrade he was introduced to Ashwin Desai and other city based comrades, and he then invited his former school friends to attend CCF meetings.[32] Another

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[30]Understood here as those people who, because they have no meaningful access to the means of production, have to sell their labour to those that do (see Miliband 1979). Whether people are unemployed or not, in either the formal or informal, sector does not detract from them being part of this social group. This way class is understood as a social relationship and part of a broader attempt to understand the processes through which people transform the societies in which they live.

[31] The ensuing (class) conflict 'includes all manifestations of social life, and is an economic, cultural/ideological, social and political phenomenon' (Miliband 1979: 29). Whilst Walton and Seddon (1994) and Miliband (1979) recognise such protests as a manifestation of the underlying struggle between classes, De Ste Croix (1981) notes that it does not mean that apparent social classes or individuals will understand the essential conflict in class terms - as class struggle. Neither may individuals who comprise a specific class feel antagonism towards members of other classes. People may or may not be partly or wholly aware of their own struggle and not how they are linked locally, nationally, or internationally to those of others (see the section on internationalism below).

[32] Youth for Work is an autonomous and politically independent national youth organisation initially set up by the Cape Town based radical NGO, AIDC.

accidentally met with city based participants whilst on a demonstration at UDW, one was introduced to the CCF by her brother and another by a shop steward he met at the Workers' College.

Desai (2002) notes how the family unit (and extended family) became central to the CCF. One participant says that what excited him about the CCF was seeing 'families in struggle, families in motion' and how even the most 'fractured families' could take part in direct actions (Interview, anonymous, 15.07.03). In some ways, this replicates experiences of other activists who were drawn into political activism by their family during apartheid and the role of the family unit in street committees and civics. Likewise, the role of the family in mass movements has been noted in earlier social movements. For example, one historian writing on the Chartists movement in nineteenth century UK, notes how the Chartist movement '. . . was a family and community organisation in which "everybody" participated' (Charlton 1997: 68).

Consequently, women have long been involved in political campaigns in South Africa. From organising demonstrations against residence permits in the Orange Free State in 1913 to being at the forefront of the general political struggle of the 1950s and 1960s, from community organisations to trade unions and women's groups, women have played a crucial role.

In some ways, it is unsurprising that CCF protests and meetings in townships are dominated by older women, given that women have long been the main care-givers and providers in households with responsibility for providing food and dealing with bills. Indeed, the household economy has long been a crucial backbone of the political economy across Africa. It was not coincidental that several of the CCF candidates in local elections were women and indeed if the CCF do contest elections again, this is likely to be repeated.

Whilst women are not the majority in the city based core, in other organisations women such as Mrs Gumede, Zelda, Orlean, Pearl and Cindy have played a prominent role. Yet, these are not simply 'protest fodder'. In several areas across Durban, these women are the backbone and public face of tenants and residents associations, youth and environmental organisations. A cursory glance at newspaper photographs and videos taken from marches and violent confrontations with the police shows how women were prepared to physically confront and ridicule authorities if need be.[33]

Speaking with other participants and observations at a range of community meetings, it is clear that these women are considered organisers and leaders who are well respected and rooted in their local area. In Chatsworth, women led the struggles and men played a supporting role. Masculinity was the subject of ridicule at several public meetings. Drunkards were not tolerated at meetings, particularly men who tried to speak out of turn or were deemed to be 'talking nonsense'. Sometimes these people are heckled and dealt with firmly and mockingly by women (and other men). On several occasions I witnessed drunken men being ejected from meetings.

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[33] See for example the video 'The Battle of Bayview'.

One participant talks of how he was fascinated to see '. . . beetle nut chewing Indian Aunties staring down the barrel of a gun' (Interview, anonymous, 15.07.03). Several youth from Hammarsdale talk of how it was a revelation to them to see women playing such a prominent role in sections of the CCF. One of the major things one 21-year-old youth learned was 'how women are strong, for example in Wentworth most of the comrades are women and they are strong'. Although he also noted how '. . . where I am living, women, they don't have chance to do things. . .' (Interview, anonymous, 10.08.03b), alerting us to the unevenness of women's participation across different groups and townships.[34]

Identity, ideology and mobilisation
Debates around equality and injustice are taking on an increasing significance in sociology and political science. This is fuelled by the perceived widening gap between rich and poor both globally and nationally, and is the fundamental driving point of both the new 'anti-capitalist movement' (see Olin Wright and Brighouse 2002) and the social movements in South Africa. This is not to say that CCF participants understand their issues and actions in this way - although it is clear they have an intuitive grasp that 'something is up'.

This is similar to the processes that Thompson (1986) reveals in his studies of eighteenth century England, in which he identifies a set of processes and relationships that he terms, 'class struggle without class'. That is, Thompson identified, within the collective and customary practices of the poor, forms of resistance to their rulers and exploiters which rested on the antagonisms inherent in developing capitalism in that period, but which the poor had not yet learned to conceptualise in 'class' terms.

What Desai (2002) shows, is that what is more pressing is the daily struggle to survive, feeding families, getting a job or some income, somehow, paying bills, or, if they cannot, preventing themselves being disconnected or evicted. Very simply it is in this defensive and survivalist basis upon which people mobilise, encourage and identify with and through each other.

This raises the question of the relationship between identity or identities of an organisation and the ideology or ideologies of its participants and supporters: is ideology indeed a component of identity, or its manifestation? Desai (2002) is right to argue that, initially, for most participants action is primary in motivating them to get involved and ideology is secondary. In this way, if they think of themselves as being in the CCF, or at least if they think of themselves as belonging together, then essentially they do. As such, identity is related to 'ideology', though this does not have to be formal or elaborate but can be embryonic.[35] Although most participants are often mobilised around specific or local issues,

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[34] This is not to suggest that sexism does not exist amongst CCF participants - as several male and female participants pointed out, it does. The point is that in moments of struggle, socially constructed divisions can at least begin to be broken down through acts of solidarity that engenders mutual respect. However, this is not an automatic process and several participants thought non-sexism could potentially be sustained by political discussion and education. For a contrary example of this in post 1994 South Africa, see Pointer (2004 forthcoming).

[35] Ideology is used here in its broadest sense to understand the ideas people hold that are usually related to their social situation, and not in a narrower sense as prescribed political thought (see Harris 1971).

several participants subsequently come to identify more broadly with other people working on (what they then come to understand as being) related issues (see below).

This brings to mind the distinction between 'class in itself' (objective class position) and 'class for itself' (subjective class consciousness and class struggle) (see Marx and Engels 1985). Drawing on this distinction, Thompson (1986) argues that class can only be said to exist in the latter case, or in other words, that movement only exists where there is ideology and identity. This would suggest that the general relationship between ideology, identity, and mobilisation in the CCF is that identity is one aspect of ideology. Necessarily, participants have a range of, sometimes contradictory, understandings of how the environment in which they live works, the causes underlying the issue they are seeking to tackle, how they can take action to resolve that issue, who they can call on for support, etc.

These are not always shared understandings, but for the CCF to operate practically there has to be some kind of dialogue between participants and groups, and that can broadly be understood as 'ideology'. In this dialogue, the questions noted at the start of this report are ones that participants attempt to answer (e.g. when deciding who to try to mobilise). Yet this does not exist in isolation from other problems mentioned above, which arise from the practical situation of participants.

In practice, these concepts overlap. However, they have certain points that characterise them. Identity is related to the questions 'Who am I?' (individual identity), 'Who are we?' (collective identity) and 'How do others see us?' (public identity). Objectives are related to questions such as 'What are our goals?' (generally strategically, and tactically). Ideology binds these aspects together with a coherent world-view that explains how the world is collectively represented.

Who are we and who are they
'The community' was (and still is) an initial mobilising referent and has a strong resonance within and around the CCF. However, some participants had no illusion that this meant everyone in a township is 'in the same boat'. For as one described, 'No, we are not all one, we are rich and we are poor. . . rich people were not involved, rich people. . . oppress, they are the people who collect the rent, they are the landlords. . . ' (Interview, anonymous, 24.06.03a).

Charlton (1997) argues that written and spoken language can be of use in understanding the motivation and intention of participants in social movements, provided we show the context in which they were used. In this way, we can see how social class location helps frame the experiences and ideas (positive and negative) that people bring to the CCF and the language they use to articulate them.[36] Many participants clearly recognise that there is a divide between the rich and the poor for 'The aim of the CCF is to fight this class issue and fight this poverty. . . ' (Interview, anonymous, 10.8.03a). Another tells how, 'I started understanding this class dynamic and now I am fully into this whole class thing and everywhere I go that is

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[36] Whilst we must be careful of economic reductionism, we should also be careful to not underestimate the influence of social and economic factors. The dread of economic reductionism may lead to an unsatisfactory idealism as it is possible to assign a social value to language in context (see Collins 1999).

always the thing I think of' (Interview, anonymous, 24.06.03a). For one or two it is based around a notion that 'we are fighting against capitalism' (Interview, anonymous, 10.08.03a).

Therefore, although some participants did not specifically articulate exactly what class the CCF represents, it is not unreasonable to assume that the vast majority of people mobilised by the CCF understand that their experiences and identity are defined by the problems they have in contradistinction to others. For example, one participant tells how CCF deals with '. . . problems in the community, people are unemployed, people don't have water, people don't have electricity, people have AIDS. . . ' (Interview, anonymous, 13.09.03). From this, it is self-evident that for participants those who are employed (but not part of the working-poor) or do have constant supplies of electricity, are not the same as them.[37]

A study of press releases and what was said by 'spokespersons' for the CCF or some of the groups affiliated to it, reveals that at a collective level the CCF identified both the local municipality and national government as the cause of their problems. In many press releases they identify the (eThekwini Municipality) 'Unicity' councillors of all parties as part of the problem, and link them to the rich or elite. For example, in one press statement they say how councillors' children '. . . move seamlessly from Model C schools into expensive Universities and then into jobs-for-pals' (Concerned Citizens Forum 2002a). A press release from the Mpumalanga Concerned Group on 16 April 2002 in solidarity with the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC), talks of '. . . our new oppressors – the privatisers, the elite, the sell-outs, the ANC' (Mpumalanga Concerned Citizens 2002).

In the process and in appeals for moral and political superiority, the CCF often refers to the anti-apartheid struggles. For example, Des D'Sa, chair of Wentworth Development Forum, talks of how, 'We who have suffered in the past are going to suffer again' (cited in Horner 2002). Often this is invoked when discussing plans to relocate people, for example from Chatsworth and Wentworth. In one instance Brandon Pillay, chair of Bayview Flats Residents Association, simultaneously notes how former ANC activists have betrayed their principles whilst getting good jobs in local government, and the irony of how those who once fought forced removals '. . . are now sitting in their air conditioned offices and giving out execution orders to relocate the poor' (cited in Naidoo 2002). Whilst invoking past injustices, they also draw on current legal rights to protest. For example, in one press release Zelda Norris of TASH complains that the eThekwini Municipality ' . . . is victimising us for knowing our rights, just as the apartheid city managers did' (Indy Media South Africa 2002a).

Religion also plays a part in identity and mobilisation and in sustaining some participants. Meetings I attended in Mount Moriah, Sydenham and Wentworth began with a prayer. Yet, only two participants interviewed made explicit reference to religion (Islam and Christianity) and their involvement in the CCF. For one, 'For me personally, it is also a religious kind of thing. The Koran says this, so that is why I would also support this because he also served the

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[37] Neither did rich always represent 'white' or 'Indian'. For example, at several public meetings I attended, when some tried to claim that black people (this could mean 'Africans' or 'Africans' and 'Indians') were all in the same position, others who then pointed out the class divisions amongst black people (usually by referring to 'rich and poor' or a 'new black elite' or poking fun at the government policy of Black Economic Empowerment, even 'Black Elite Empowerment') often received thunderous applause.

community, what are the needs of the oppressed, who are the deserving people. . . '
(Interview, anonymous, 24.06.03a).[38] For others, however, a secular, socialist ethic informs
their identity and involvement. One talks of how, 'I cannot hide from the fact that I believe
that the alternative to the neo-liberal agenda is a socialist situation' (Interview, anonymous,
26.07.03b).

We have already noted how others in the CCF are influenced by ideas such as anarchism and
nationalism, and consequently it is unusual to find participants in such 'loose' types of
organisation sharing the same social and political ideas and analysis. Slogans can be shared,
but ideologies may still differ, and so we should be careful not to mechanically read off from
slogans and chants on demonstrations that this means participants are imbued with a
particular (shared) ideology or 'consciousness'. For example, despite several political
education workshops at UDW and the Workers' College, several participants from the
Kwamashu Activist Forum told how people from Kwamashu who had protested against the
World Economic Forum (WEF) and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD)
in June 2002, did not know what they meant.[39]

Some CCF participants also draw ideas, slogans and reference points from movements
elsewhere. The declaration of the Durban Social Forum (see Desai 2002) makes explicit
reference to the protest outside the G8 summit in Genoa, Italy in July 2001. Several
participants refer to videos about similar protests against the World Bank in Prague in
October 2000. At other times, they have referred to the Zapatistas in Mexico, the poor in
Thailand and Nigeria. (Concerned Citizens Forum 2002c). At protests outside the African
WEF in June 2001, 2002 and 2003 people held placards reading 'Nepad puts profit before
people' (Sapa 2002). This and similar slogans clearly draw on the language of the
international anti-capitalist movement (see for example Bircham and Charlton 2001).
However, it is hard to disagree with the participant cited above, as there is little evidence
beyond the city based participants and a handful of prominent activists in affiliate groups who
clearly understand what this referred to.

Though, in making use of such beliefs and discourses, and given that most organisations
strike up a dialogical relationship with participants, the CCF also encourages the use of such
referents. A press release notifying a solidarity protest outside Durban Magistrates Court in
April 2002 in support of arrested activists in Johannesburg, identified the CCF as 'We are the
poor'.

In all, whilst drawing on a range of, often contradictory, histories, discourses and symbols,
these people identify common cause with each other but largely through shared similar
experiences and problems in post 1994 South Africa. This is implied by one when he talks of
being 'united' and so the 'CCF was the home whereby communities can come and share their

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[38] The CCF also draws on religious discourse and symbolism. For example in one press release they refer to the
biblical notion of betrayal '. . . the 30 pieces of silver you have received to betray your own' (Concerned
Citizens Forum 2002a).
[39] This transpired at a meeting I attended in May 2003 to plan for a protest against the WEF meeting in Durban
in June. In later discussions several participants from Hammarsdale raised similar concerns in relation to the
term 'globalisation'.

problems and fight as united when we started to establish it' (Interview, anonymous, 10.08.03b). For another, being in the CCF, 'It meant to me that we are all one, that we are part of one big family and that we are all facing this disease of poverty and that we want to do something about that and that we want to unite to combat poverty' (Interview, anonymous, 18.06.03). The theme of coming together with others, uniting, is a strong one. One participant says how the Bayview Flats Residents Association, to which he belongs, explicitly drew this from their experiences in the CCF and now have printed on their T-shirts 'united to combat poverty'.

Thus just as Thompson (1986) characterises the moral reciprocities of eighteenth-century English paternalism, many South Africans regard the developmental guarantees of the state (as embodied in the RDP) as legitimate rights and express their protest in terms of injustice when the social pact is violated.[40] In the historical specificity of post apartheid South Africa we can see how a perceived failure of delivery does not match the expectations generated during and after the liberation struggle, and that this gives rise to the potential basis for mobilisation, campaigns and protests.

Strategy and tactics
One of the three main areas of focus of all theories of social movements is that of structure and organisation of movements necessary to facilitate action. The concept of political opportunity structure is associated with the assumption that changes in the wider political environment render governments more susceptible to political challenges, and thus as a reaction to this movements emerge and develop (see McAdam et al 1999). However, as Tarrow (2003) notes, 30 years of social movement research has shown that grievances alone are insufficient for explaining what produces collective action.

This suggests that the ways in which participants fuse resources and political opportunities is crucial. That is, it is not 'political opportunities' or 'resource mobilisation' that 'do this' or 'don't do that'. For these organisations to have an (enduring) impact, opportunities must be recognised, seized and given a physical expression. This is what Barker et al (2001) mean by politics and 'leadership'.[41] This practical (and inherently political), social and communicative task is neglected and under-theorised in social movement theory.

When Tarrow (1994) notes how social movements are still in the process of forming when they appear publicly, it is a reminder that the participants are still 'working things out' as is clearly the case inside the CCF. What the evolution of the CCF shows, from the initial small meetings of 12 or so people in crammed flats in Chatsworth to the 20 000 marching outside the WCAR, is that opportunities must be linked with processes of grievance attribution, so motivating people to take action and form coalitions.

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[40] Walton and Seddon (1994) argue that the wave of 'IMF riots' in the 1980s and early 1990s is an example of this globally.
[41] Understood as '…a set of doubly "intellectual" and practical "directive" or "organizing" activities. It consists essentially both in thinking about what movements can and should do, and in urging the conclusion of that thinking on others' (Barker et al 2001: 5). Moreover, Barker et al (2001) do not confine this type of activity - intellectual and directive i.e. argument and persuasion to an elite in a group, but more in the Gramscian sense that potentially includes all participants in an organisation (see Gramsci 1998).

This means people becoming active using the (often limited) resources at their disposal whilst drawing on and constructing existing and newly created 'repertoires of contention' in a creative manner.[42] The strategy of the CCF has shown immense variety and flexibility in its tactics. These have differed over time and space (and resulted in intense debates and disagreements), with some participants making a virtue of and celebrating tactical contradictions.

There are no hard and fast rules that govern the strategy and tactics of the CCF.[43] Desai (2002: 79) notes how big debates took place within the CCF about whether to participate or not in local elections in December 2000, and how the CCF agreed to do this whilst keeping up extra-parliamentary forms of action. Such tactical flexibility is captured when one participant tells how, 'one day the CCF in one area could be voting. . . and in another area maybe 5 kilometres away this very same CCF was campaigning vigorously against the vote in Bayview' (Interview, anonymous, 15.07.03).

Leadership
Looking back at the history of the liberation struggle, Anthony Marx discusses how, 'activist elites' played a different role in the process of 'interpreting, debating, and implementing responses to changes' in the course of the South African liberation struggle (1992: 255). Similarly, as one participants makes clear, not everyone in the CCF has the same role: 'there are people who do the job of writing memorandums, planning a march, working for funds but our job is putting people into buses' (Interview, anonymous, 24.06.03a).

Nash also notes that one of the major innovations of the liberation movement in reviving the struggle after the repression in the 1960s was 'a flexible approach to leadership [that] emphasized continual recruitment and training of new layers of leadership' (1999: 67). Perhaps such an emphasis is needed again. Albeit learning the lessons from other experiences and political traditions globally in clarifying what 'leadership' means. As several participants made clear, the CCF is not about creating 'leaders' in the sense of an elite, or organisational bureaucracy.

Desai notes how a 'powerful leadership began to emerge' in some areas of Chatsworth and that they relied upon 'the grounding they had received as shop stewards in the union movement of the 1980s' (2002: 44). Once the CCF and the individuals it comprised began to practically engage in defensive and other struggles questions about organisation and leadership took on an immediate and organic meaning.

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[42] One participant from Chatsworth notes how making contact with city based comrades enabled them to develop the CCG and cement a victory in court '. . . we didn't have the resources and the skills or networks or the contacts and at that stage we started getting lawyers to come in and give us advice on certain matters. And we were actually successful in stopping that eviction. . . ' (Interview, anonymous, 18.06.03). It is also possible to see this as an example of the application of leadership skills.

[43] Mobilising for a Palestinian Solidarity Campaign rally in return for provision of transport for the WCAR march in August 2001 resulted in some participants saying they felt manipulated to attend a rally not relevant to their grievances. Because of a perceived lack of transparency another participant recalls how 'There emerged from all communities some suspicion of who, what was commonly called "city-based" people, were and what their agenda was. . . Thus suspicion became "racialised" (Interview, anonymous, 26.07.03b) between "Indians" and "Africans"'.

Whilst a focus on 'leaders' or 'leaderships' is important (especially in relation to the debates around internal democracy and transparency), the exclusive focus or tendency to concentrate on what leaders say or do is in danger of reducing organisations to the question of 'leadership'. This can contribute to the simplification of an organisation or movement to a leader or leaders, so exaggerating their importance and influence.

However, as has already been established, a particular group of people, most of whom did not live in townships, played a pivotal role in co-ordinating initiatives and eventually the formation of the CCF. It is likely that these are the people that Durban Mayor Obled Mlaba had in mind when he accused the CCF of being 'self-styled leaders' (Mhlanga 2001). One participant describes the leadership as 'a group of city based people who are not part of other community based organisations who do meet up and interact on a social or political way' (Interview, anonymous, 24.06.03a). Together with Fatima Meer, this core group included several who had previous political activism during apartheid and some trade union organising experience, people such as, but not exclusive to, Heinrich Bohmke, Ashwin Desai, Joe Guy and Mandla Sishi, and who provided a pivotal link in the chain that was initially forged between different townships groups.

Participants differentiated between different leaderships. For example, 'leadership' in their own community organisation and a CCF 'leadership' – often meaning 'city based comrades' – as one participant put it, 'an informal leadership'. From the participants interviewed to people attending rallies and protests (including several of those who have political disagreements with the leadership and have drifted away from the CCF), a certain respect for many of the city based leadership was evident. 'Those are the real people who do the graft, that stand behind the organisation' (Interview, anonymous, 24.06.03a). The relationship was not too different from the type of relationship Bonnin describes between workers and shop stewards, in which she notes, 'the membership regards them as knowledgeable in the "ways of the material world"' (1999: 53). These, then, are the different 'layers' of collective and individual agency that drive the CCF.[44]

Nevertheless, differences over who is and what constitutes leadership are prevalent at different levels. Firstly, it was discernable that within several constituent groups, notably in Hammarsdale and Wentworth, tensions exist between community leaders and participants. Leadership is also contested between a constituent group, such as Mount Moriah Residents and the CCF (city based comrades).

Finally, within the city based leadership, tensions and debates also exist. One city based participant who actively identifies himself as part of 'the leadership' acknowledges that 'inside the city based people I can understand there being gripes because our approach [was sometimes] . . . decided very much in an undemocratic fashion. . . '. (Interview, anonymous, 15.07.03). This was not due to some inherent 'will to power', but an unintended outcome of the practical and sometimes urgent necessity to react. As this member of the leadership put it, 'But somebody had to take the initiative…it means taking centre stage and giving orders to a

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[44] It is clear that if people do respond to leading activists it is through the dialogical interplay (listening as well as speaking) of 'signs' i.e. ideas, words, urges of other people, and in this way they award leadership status to certain others.

certain extent' (Interview, anonymous, 15.07.03). For some, the way in which this was done caused tensions. One participant based in a township group complains how 'the problem was between us we were fighting each other, the leadership in the CCF. . . ' (10.08.03b). Elaborating how some people in his township began to think that the CCF had become 'like private property' of a very small number of city based participants.

Another set of differences that emerged emanated from some in the city based leadership who are (or at least were) against all forms of leadership, and others who want complete transparency. One participant who found himself increasingly at odds with city based people perhaps best sums up the debates around leadership. Insofar as he believes, 'People are not against leaders. They are against leaders that have no connection with their will. We want people to lead us but we do not want them to impose that leadership on us, we want us to impose our will upon them' (Interview, anonymous, 26.07.03a). Understood in this way, accountability is about creating a mechanism of checks and balances, not stifling action or decisions.

Finally, these characteristics of leadership in the CCF challenge the common assumption in much of the new social movement theory that the organisational structures and leaderships of such organisations are segmented and have a multiplicity of leaders with multiple links between different cells forming a loosely bound network. Whilst elements of horizontal style leadership are evident, it seems to co-exist with what all participants identified as a core leadership around the city based comrades.

Contesting organisation
We noted how most participants understand the CCF as a 'loose coalition' and a 'network', and as one other person stated 'It is a loose organisation. It doesn't have formal structures' (Interview, anonymous, 23.06.03). This common acceptance of the organisational form and structure (and so in some respects the strategy and tactics of the CCF) is deceptive. For what emerges from interviews and discussions is that this was a highly contentious issue inside the CCF. One city based participant mentions how '. . . there was a big debate about structure, do we want structure. So in that debate things were discussed very explicitly, we don't need structure, it is not important some people would say, "what we need to do is practical things" some people would say "no, we need a chairperson". . . It turned out they didn't end up forming any structure. There was an attempt in one meeting, but by the next meeting it had been half forgotten' (Interview, anonymous, 23.06.03).

Others seemed to have naturalised what is still contested, so for example the formation of the CCF was described as follows: 'We didn't want a chairperson or a secretary or whatever, we just wanted all community organisations to be part of something. . . and we still didn't see need to have a structured committee and that's how the CCF started. . . ' (Interview, anonymous, 18.06.03). Several participants noted how the loose way of operating had a practical benefit in that it did not make component groups and individuals subject to particular organisational forms and pressures, so making mobilising easier. As such, this reassured some community representatives '. . . that you are not gonna have to buy into something, that's not gonna take over your way of operating. . . If you had come and said, no

you have to now join up with this and you will now be subject to this, a lot of people would have pulled out' (Interview, anonymous, 23.06.03).

Therefore, whether reacting to the threat of evictions or being pro-active by organising a protest march or a court case, people's means of contention requires adequate means of mobilisation and communication and this, organically, raises the issue of organisation. Certainly, Desai recognises the role of organisation in describing several of the existing community based groups that became associated with the CCF; he notes how they '. . . Functioned formally, met regularly, and painstakingly took mandates from public meetings' (2002: 77).

Consequently, many participants take accountability seriously and use previous experiences as a benchmark against which to judge the CCF. For example, some of these activists developed, politically, in the late 1970s and 1980s, when the independent trade unions were being built upon participative (rank and file), not representative, democracy that required much self-sacrifice, discipline, and accountability. Familiarity with the rhetoric, if not always the reality, of accountability and report backs from their representatives, and experience of participation in trade union and civic elections engendered a culture of democracy inside working class organisations. As such, the debate about organisational structure is not 'imposed' from outside or by those with an alleged 'political agenda', as some city based participants complained - it emerges organically.

What form an organisation takes is crucial, for whilst a particular framing process may encourage mobilisation, as people seek to organise and act the potential for framing is conditional upon participants' access to mobilising structures. Without sustained mobilisation and organisation, in social isolation people can fall back into blaming themselves or scapegoating others for their problems. Quite simply, in tough times, characterised by poverty, violence, fear, and powerlessness, organisation can provide a port, a compass bearing during a storm.

Additionally, it can provide the means through which people can meet to clarify ideas and share experiences collectively. Moreover, participants also need others to 'run things by' and swap advice (socially, politically and culturally). For example, when the eThekwini Municipality announced in late 2003 that they were writing off some debts, it caused much confusion. At one meeting in Chatsworth in August 2003, several people openly asked whom they should vote for in the forthcoming elections. One could not help being struck by how these people were not only happy to be in a mass political meeting after their absence for a while, but they were keen to talk through a host of issues with leading CCF people.[45]

A forum for and the facilitation of debate therefore seems important to people, and also important for the well being of the organisation. In discussing differences over organisational form and strategy in the anti-capitalist movement in Europe, one leading UK activist notes

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[45] We should not underestimate how politically isolating it can be living in a poor (and ironically overcrowded) township. At the spate of mass meetings across Bayview and Westcliff in August 2003 it seemed that the genuine bonhomie towards several high profile local and city based CCF participants reflected a lament for a bond that has been weakened of late.

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how, 'I went through the movements of the 1960s and 70s in the USA, Britain and Afghanistan. We got it wrong, and were defeated. I learned that it makes an enormous difference what decisions the movement makes, how you fight and what you say. . . The way you learn what is right and what is wrong in any situation is by arguing it out amongst yourselves. . . That is why in every great political movement in history, the air has been alive with arguments on every street corner. Arguing isn't sectarian. Sectarianism is refusing to act together because you haven't won the argument' (Neale 2002:16).

New ways of doing
Given the obvious differences that exist between members of the CCF, an important question that emerged early on in the research was whether the CCF collectively or individuals and those who identified with each other internally, are (or are capable of) devising (new) strategies suited to the nature of their evolving struggle in a post-apartheid government.

During the struggle against apartheid, it was relatively easy to forge a consensus and sense of purpose around the main reasons for the struggle: broadly, a struggle for democracy, the right to vote and political equality. As with all political transitions, the transition in South Africa was always going to create new rights and opportunities, as well as new interests, challenges, identities, and demands. There were, however, few indications as to how and if this would translate into political activity and generate new expectations and demands after 1994.

All the participants interviewed did clearly highlight how being in the CCF is an enjoyable and creative experience. Several older participants contrasted the fun of involvement with the CCF with dour moments and long-winded speeches that they felt characterised their previous political experiences in the ANC, SACP, and labour and student movements.

Whilst not exaggerating the progress made, one participant believes the CCF is at least beginning to experiment with forms of meetings and ways of holding events. For example, he tells how during the Ten Rand Campaign '. . . we had a 5 minute rule. Not one person was allowed to tune [speak] for more than 5 minutes and we had an hour of speeches which is usually taken up by one drone…' (Interview, anonymous, 15.07.03). Another, whose first meeting was in Chatsworth, excitedly relives how, '…what excited me about these things, was that it was a different kind of politics. There was excitement, a vibrancy and life and I had walked away from all those involvements because there was something soul destroying [in the ANC]' (Interview, anonymous, 24.06.03b).

All of the youth interviewed recall how they really enjoyed the 'Youth Camp' that was held the night before the Ten Rand Campaign march in May 2002. About 50 youth attended and one principal organiser tells how the explicit intention was to move away from the 'normal' way of doing politics by 'focusing on the idea of human interaction', the 'politics of friendship' and moving beyond 'stereotyped ways of interacting' (Interview, anonymous, 24.06.03b). With a big pot of curry and some paints they made banners and huge R10 notes on green paper that people waved around on the march the next day: 'people congregated in different groups and discussed, we lit a big fire, painted banners. . . and basically had a big party. . .' (Interview, anonymous, 24.06.03b).

Engaging the state: the demanding nature of the CCF
The CCF has been criticised by the ruling party and others for not engaging with the state in a constructive manner or for not having a programme. Yet standing in local elections, bringing court actions, invoking constitutional rights, taking and winning cases at rent tribunals is engaging proactively with the state and the institutions of constitutional democracy. That is, the CCF have made use of the political spaces opened up by the victory over apartheid, and so contribute to the establishment of liberal democracy - although some in the organisation are critical of the limitations of this form of democracy.

Moreover, to constantly berate movements for not having ideological clarity, is to misunderstand the nature and history of social movements. For often, in the beginning of the 'life cycle' of such groups, whilst there may be no clear definition or coherent purpose or vision, a definition of purpose (or to put it practically, a political programme) arises over time. This can be internally generated amongst participants, with other groups in the SMI and other individual and collective peers nationally, and for some leading participants, internationally. A good example of this is the evolution of the Ten Rand Campaign.[46] It can also be through their interaction with those "from above", invariably local and national representatives of government, the police and other security forces, the legal system, other political parties.

However, the CCF engages with the state by placing public demands on government officials. Taking a cue from the campaign for a Basic Income Grant, the CCF has demanded the implementation of a 'R1000 per month income grant for all those who have no income'. They also call for 'an end to privatisation and the implementation of economic policies that are people-centred. This means the scrapping of the disastrous Gear policy'. Building upon the links the CCF made with local Muslim groups and the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign at the WCAR, they have demanded that 'In solidarity with the people of Palestine …… the city of Durban break off all economic, trade, consular, sporting and cultural ties with the state of Israel' (Concerned Citizens Forum 2002a).

It is sometimes said that 'All politics are local', and in one sense the experiences of the CCF would confirm this. That engaging in 'local politics' (i.e. relationships between local government and its citizens) could become more important in the South African polity is suggested by several changes at the national level. Firstly, the coming into effect on July 1 2004 of a *Municipal Finance Management Act,* together with the government increasingly emphasising the need for municipalities to be more fiscally responsive (see Business Day 2004), is likely to result in local municipalities being less tolerant of rental and service arrears. Additionally, the government thinking of outsourcing (i.e. privatising) municipal billing and revenue collection (current debts stand at R26 billion) to raise revenue recovery levels is likely to add to this process.[47] Ironically, one outcome of such changes could be to

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[46] In June 2002, the eThekwini Municpality agreed to write off rental arrears of approximately R17 million for people living in council in Chatsworth, Pheonix and Verulam. In June 2004 the 'Site B Anti-Eviction Campaign' in Khayelitsha, Cape Town held a protest 'demanding that all poor residents pay a R10 flat rate for services' (press release posted to ccs-l@lists.nu.ac.za, June 3 2004).

[47] Other evidence of an increasing focus of cost recovery and fiscal prudence is the decision by national government to introduce a 'user pays' system for all branches of government to pay for use of state-owned properties (Business Report 2004).

shift the focus of conflict and dispute to that between a private company and the individual consumer, so distancing the ruling party from, essentially, political conflict or accountability to the citizens that elect it.

However, before concentrating on 'local politics', the CCF might do well to consider experiences of social movements from elsewhere. In his study of informal movements in Iran, Asef Bayat concludes by questioning the impact of the social weight (or lack thereof) that informal and community based groups, on their own, can bring to bear upon the state and capital. Bayat notes how many of the people that these type of organisations are composed of '. . . lack the institutional capacity to exert pressure, since they lack an organizational power of disruption' - .disruption in the sense of 'the withdrawal of crucial contribution on which others depend' that provides a crucial resource for wielding power over others (1998: 9). Consequently, he argues that for all their developments, 'it was the state that posed the major challenge to the street politics throughout the 1980s' (Bayat 1998: 164). Post-structuralist and discursive analysis aside, to ignore the uneven circulation of power is to ignore '…that like it or not the [national] state does matter' (Bayat 1998:164), functionaries of which continue to be central political players.

Engaging internationally
Whilst somewhat isolated during apartheid, the South African left has long had links and generated solidarity from other parts of the world. Dwyer and Seddon (2002) argue that the emergence of what has invariably been called the 'anti-capitalist' or 'global social justice' movement – 'a new wave' of popular protests has given birth to new hope and a sense of new possibilities for global solidarity quantitatively and qualitatively different to previous examples of international solidarity.

We have already noted how the CCF has drawn on the language, struggles, and slogans of this new movement, and identified with struggles in places such as Mexico and Nigeria. Yet, save for practically all the city based participants and some of the prominent participants from affiliate groups, it would be wrong to suggest that many of the participants in the CCF strongly recognise and identify with this 'new wave' of protests or struggles in other parts of Africa and elsewhere. It is with this caveat that any discussion of the CCF, its internationalism and references to and links with international organisations and campaigns, should be understood.

The WCAR in August 2001 provided an opportunity for the CCF and other groups to work with and march in solidarity with a range of international groups, and people in Chatsworth hosted delegates from the Indian Dalit People's Movement. Although it is apparent from Desai (2002) that the WCAR was largely used as an opportunity to build solidarity and connections with similar emerging groups in South Africa, the CCF was at the forefront of organising the structures gathered under the umbrella of the DSF, the name of which was taken from the Genoa Social Forum that organised the largest and most important anti-capitalist demonstration in Western Europe since 1968 against the G8 summit in July 2001.[48]

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[48] Several CCF participants helped set up a South African and Durban chapter of the global independent anti-capitalist orientated Indy Media news agency. However, the Durban chapter has barely operated. In part, this is

At another level, well-known international writers, such as Naomi Klein and Arundhati Roy, have been hosted by the CCF and visited areas such as Hammarsdale and Chatsworth. Such international connections have in part been sparked by and through events like the WSSD, the WCAR and the international recognition given to Desai's book *We Are the Poors*. Through participation at such events, conferences and workshops the CCF has also enabled a small number of core participants to associate with and learn about international issues and struggles.[49] Several of those who went to the 'counter-events' during the WSSD in September 2002 made explicit reference to how meeting people from other countries inspired them. One talks excitedly of how, 'I met people from Brazil we share our experiences, Italian, even in America. . . I meet people, comrades from Africa, DRC, Congo, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, we share experiences' (Interview, anonymous, 10.08.03b).

Additionally, through sending small delegations of people to SMI meetings, workshops run by Khanya College, the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation, and the Canadian run Municipal Services Project, the CCF has also been exposed to struggles and issues in other countries. However, due to the respite in CCF activity and fragmentation of the pool of contacts around which it initially developed, those sent to such events tend to be selected from a shrinking pool of about half a dozen people from Chatsworth and Hammarsdale.

As has already been mentioned at a public level, through press statements, banners and in speeches and the actions of some leading participants, the CCF has shown how they see a connection between their struggle and that of others, for example Palestine. Awareness of international events and campaigns was also evident at the small protests involving CCF participants outside meetings of the African World Economic Forum in June 2001, 2002 and 2003 in Durban. People held banners saying, 'Nepad puts profit before people' and 'Down with Nepad and WEF' (Sapa 2002). Several of those interviewed for this research situated the problems faced by working class people in Durban in a much wider context. For example, one argues that 'This is not a Hammarsdale problem, this is not a KZN and this is not even South African it is something happening around the world' (Interview, anonymous, 13.09.03).

The depth to which such analysis and awareness has penetrated the CCF is questioned by many of those who have been responsible for injecting a sense of international solidarity into the CCF. One in particular was very sceptical as to how much the majority of people in the CCF really related to, in any meaningful sense, the global movement, or events like Seattle and Genoa, other than watching a video about them. Whilst believing that a 'discourse' of referring to such protests does seem to have taken root in the CCF, he feels that it is more of a (legitimate) rhetorical device used to motivate and inspire people.

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due to lack of resources and skills, but it cannot be considered in isolation from the general lull in CCF activities.

[49] Possibly the one regular event that began to expose some participants to international issues, debates, struggles and left-leaning high-profile 'public intellectuals' is the monthly Harold Wolpe Memorial Lecture run by the Centre for Civil Society. Largely using a database of CCF contacts, anything between 30 and 150 people from local townships are bussed in for this event. Initially, workshops were run prior to each lecture so as to familiarise participants with the topic and this is probably, despite its limitations, the closest the CCF came to being involved in some form of regular political education work, although this activity has practically ceased to exist.

In sum, the CCF relationship to internationalism and awareness of global struggles is captured by another city based participant who believes 'But that understanding is not concrete, or if it is concrete it is concrete amongst a few. It cannot be said that it is generalised across the whole of the CCF. It is just those individual leaders who know and come and present a video on the WEF, the WSF in Brazil' (Interview, anonymous, 26.07.03b).

A fight within a fight
It is clear from this research that participation in the CCF is inherently a practical activity, an intuitive process, in which participants try to reconcile their individual and social-collective experiences. Often this is done through an appreciation of or dialogue with others and is effectively articulated as discussions around practical tasks. Conceptually it is linked to the 'who are we, who are they and what can we do about it?' type questions posited at the outset of this report. Effectively, what this represents is an argument, an engagement, for social change with people who share common frustrations, ambitions and social interests.

Consequently, the struggle itself becomes a fight within a fight, about the meaning and direction of their struggles. This intense ideological debate, sometimes resulting in very bitter personal clashes, has been a feature of all forms of popular movement. From the liberation movement against apartheid (see for example Anthony Marx 1992) through to a meeting of 500 people to discuss the way forward for TAC (see Dwyer 2003), intense debates and differences over strategy and tactics are the lifeblood of any movement.

Barker (1995) notes that at every stage in the evolution of popular movements 'a war of tendencies proceeds' between and within different organisations and individuals. Without some method through which people can come together regularly as a CCF collective so as to debate, discuss (and socially and morally support each other), the danger exists that participants can react by becoming demoralised, dropping out and turning on each other.[50]

Therefore, the way the CCF operated is akin to trial and error in relation to the very fluid conditions in which they found themselves, and so the ways in which they operate are likely to change suddenly, and drastically so. Whilst leading participants such as Ashwin Desai have stated that 'we do not believe in a political party' (City Press 2002), pockets of support has begun to generate its own pressures. Some people, particularly in Chatsworth, genuinely look to the CCF for guidance at elections, and several participants argue that there are growing calls for the CCF to contest them.

However, in the major public protests that took place in and around Durban between January 2003 and February 2004 the CCF was for all intents and purposes not involved (although several high profile individual – often 'city-based comrades'-sporadically played a part as did some of the groups once publicly identified with the CCF). These include the setting up the Durban based People Against War coalition that organised the February 14 2004 anti-war

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[50] For example, what were essentially political differences could be rationalised 'racially'. Several leading participants from Hammarsdale told of how some people started to say that money and equipment donated to the CCF was being taken to Chatsworth because the CCF was now an 'Indian organisation'.

demonstration (and subsequent anti-war campaign and events throughout the year). Although several high profile members associated with the CCF did help, the CCF did not mobilise people under the banner of the CCF. Neither did the CCF mobilise people under the banner of the CCF for the 'People's Speak Out' and joint protest with TAC KZN against the African meeting of the WEF on June 2003.[51]

Whilst a 'delegation' of people was sent to represent the CCF at the SMI in Johannesburg in February 2003, several of those who went said that internal debates within the CCF delegation about what could and could not be said on behalf of the CCF broke out. After which several participants drifted away from the CCF and have not returned. A delegation was sent to represent the CCF at the March 2004 SMI meeting, but was drawn from a very small pool of people.

Towards a conclusion
This report began by situating the emergence of the CCF in the global and South African contemporary context. However, it is clear that such struggles as those evidenced by the CCF share similarities with others that have taken place across Africa in the last 15 years, primarily because popular classes, particularly in urban areas, have been most adversely affected by neo-liberal policies. And, just as in other parts of Africa and the globe, some people in Durban have not been the passive victims of laissez-faire suffering in silence. They have, as Walton and Seddon (1994), Seddon (2002) and Zeilig, (2002 and chapters therein) detail, struggled, resisted and protested in various ways. Yet writers, such as Saul and Leys (1999), have lamented the defensive and survivalist nature of some popular reactions to austerity. Although, as Walton and Seddon (1994) and Dwyer and Seddon (2002) have shown, in many cases proactive movements have developed from defensive actions and humbled once seemingly steadfast governments.

Consequently, the very personal experiences of the people in the CCF remind us that, contrary to what some writers suggest, history is not without a subject, and demonstrate that agency does not exist in a bubble. But neither are agents puppets or bearers of ideology or structural relations; they have, linked to structural relationships, 'interests' to defend, and collective action most often refers to such interests that can be, as in this research, cultural, religious, economic and socio-political. Interests that, however 'spontaneous' they may once have been, become enmeshed in, and adapted by, other strategies and interactions, i.e. a radical anti-neoliberal populism espoused by leading participants. However, these were neither activists drilled with ideology nor passive victims of structure, but part of collective action undertaken – 'given a try'.

Conceptually, the CCF can be understood as a negotiated, relational, dialogical form of collective organisation that is continually constructed and reconstructed as part of an ongoing interaction between those it comprises and those it seeks to challenge (the local and national state, councillors, politicians, activists from other political parties, etc). Far from being fixed, its precise conceptual and practical boundaries are open to reshaping, challenges, and changes. Whilst most of those interviewed typically described the CCF as a loose

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[51] Although all these events and processes drew heavily on some CCF affiliates and contacts, and it is unlikely they would have developed had it not been for the existence of the CCF.

organisation, like all collective forms of political organisation it is in and of itself an arena of ideological struggle, and this has given rise to differences within the organisation.

In the process, what the CCF has done, and the broader social movement milieu they identify with, is to challenge the right of government to be the sole authority of what that struggle was about, and whether the aspirations contained popularly in the Freedom Charter and the Reconstruction and Development Programme are being achieved. In a country in which the collective and individual memory, imagery and propaganda of the liberation struggle is still common, and is extensively drawn upon by the ruling party and the state apparatus, this is not unimportant.

Whilst many of those involved quite rightly see spontaneity as a necessary basis for a successful challenge to the governments polices, it is not clear whether it is sufficient. Whilst opinions about what community based groups and action can achieve in the long run differs widely inside the CCF, some see the CCF as the basis for forming a new agenda based on a more democratic and self-reliant approach to local development. Given that the CCF won and defended a council seat in local elections in December 2000 and July 2001 respectively, participants may stand again in Westcliff and Bayview, where the biggest support base is.[52] Alternatively, working with other groups across the country, they could stand under the banner of the SMI.

However, noting the lack of generalised activity since late 2002 some former leading participants have lamented that groups like the CCF are finished. In response, Ashwin Desai and Mandla Sishi have questioned how something that has hardly started (the seeds of a new political project?) could be finished. Along with others they have called for more reflection of the need to use this period of 'downturn' in activity to reflect, and have in passing cited the experiences of the left elsewhere. For example, Chile from the 1970s onwards, and how in the UK, the far-left has managed to unite Muslims and Marxists in a mass based anti-war movement and are starting to establish a new electoral and campaigning coalition.[53] They suggest that the CCF and others need to consider more carefully how to engage with the government and state, work with others who are supportive of, but not committed to, the CCF, and how to build alliances without compromising principles.[54]

Likewise, Della Porta and Diani (2003) note how some organisations are commonly characterised by periods of intense activity followed by a lull. What then becomes crucial, is that in the periods of abeyance, activities should be directed towards inner reflection, intellectual development and thinking through strategy and tactics. This should involve as many people as possible in as inclusive a way as is feasibly possible given the limitation of

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[52] One national survey reveals, in order of preference, a call for a 'direct connection between local areas and legislators, greater grassroots control over legislators…' with 71 per cent saying they wanted to vote for a candidate from the area in which they live (Southall and Mates 2002: 14 and 20). This suggests an enduring desire for greater grassroots accountability, something that was a campaigning feature and political demand of the liberation movement.

[53] For a fascinating insider view of the anti-war coalition by a female Muslim, see Yaqob (2003). The website for RESPECT, the unity coalition, is http://www.respectcoalition.com

[54] Personal communication with Ashwin Desai and Mandla Sishi June 2004.

resources. If it does not, it is likely that some of the problems raised in this research are likely to resurface, perhaps with more debilitating consequences.

In some respects, the CCF is the slightly older relative of and led the emergent pack of organisations identified as 'the social movements' in contemporary South Africa. However, like an aging relative, they, perhaps, began to show the first signs of malaise - although this is possibly not a problem limited to the CCF. While it is not inevitable that this will become a terminal illness, what is clear is that, according to some former and existing participants, corrective treatment is required. It is in this sense that the success of the CCF has turned into a challenge – challenges outlined at the start of this report that have become obstacles to its further development (i.e. solving the questions of identity, organisation and resources).

The CCF is clearly made up of people who hold a 'medley of loyalties' (Rude 1980), identities and ideas that are constantly shaped and re-shaped through their 'normal' everyday personal and familial experiences, their interaction in their respective community groups and the like, and through further collective action around the CCF. This 'sharp jostle of experience' (Rude 1980) identified by these participants broadly as poverty, exclusion from work, and conflict with representatives of the local and national state and the identities and solidarity it generates, is the glue that that holds these people together.

However, the strength of that glue is continually tested by the ordinariness of their social experiences and their ability to constantly react to the episodes of outright friction with others by providing consistent solidarity. With few resources, this is not easy. But now the CCF is part of the Durban and national political landscape the pressure is also on to chart a way forward, such as whether to stand in elections, how to regroup using offensive campaigns to mobilise participants and make new contacts. In doing so CCF participants are being forced to confront some of the challenges raised in this report, challenges that one existing participant summed up as '. . . it is one thing that we are fighting, we have to understand how are we fighting, who are we fighting. . . ' (Interview, anonymous, 10.08.03b).

In discussing the future of the CCF, one participant recalls how an old activist warned of the dangers of the CCF becoming a 'popcorn organisation that just pops up every time there is an issue' (Interview, anonymous, 18.06.03). However, whilst the socio-economic crisis in South Africa continues there will always be fertile soil in which organisations like the CCF will be able to sow and nurture a larger community based organisation in Durban - if they get it right.[55] Categorically, Touraine urges social movements to recognise that 'it is not enough simply to denounce the order; one must show that it is not all-powerful, one must rediscover the spring hidden beneath the cement, the word beneath the silence, the questioning beneath the ideology' (Touraine, 1985: 55). In a small way, this is what the CCF, amongst other things, started to do. But the past is not always a guide to the future, and whether a larger and more sustainable organisation can be consolidated in Durban will partly depend on the lessons learnt by, and learning lessons from, CCF participants.

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[55] In Pheonix in June 2004 a young man, Marcel King, was shot dead by municipal security personnel, having tried to reconnect his family's electricity. Over 300 people attended a memorial service and whilst condemning all the mainstream parties, with the help of several CCF participants, local residents have vowed to set up action groups (Personal communication with Brandon Pillay June 2004).

Methodology

1. Naturalistic Inquiry
Given the parameters of this research (see Ballard et al 2003), the type of data sought was contemporary, recorded (secondary sources) - together with secondary materials such as local and national newspapers, videos, and photographs.[56] This was in conjunction with collecting unrecorded/original (primary) data - stories of lives, the experiences, a discussion of events and practices and the 'intangible' feelings and emotions of being involved in, say, preventing an eviction or those evoked on a mass march. Consequently, this had particular implications for research epistemology, methodology and data collection techniques.

This research drew on the methodological and broad philosophical tenets of Naturalistic Inquiry (NI) as a practical guide. Influenced by ethnography, anthropology and sociology, it highlights the study of behavioural phenomena 'in-situ' (often referred to as a 'naturalistic' approach).[57] NI encourages research with a view to qualitative rather than quantitative analysis (although it should not be understood as opposite, or in contrast, to quantitative research), and encourages an interpretative understanding of social experience.

Underlying this is a commitment to putting the observer and the observed at the centre of the research. This is done by trying to capture the individual's points of view through detailed interviewing, and by confronting the everyday world in action as it appears to the actor by directing attention to the specifics of particular experiences. As such, the type of empirical materials used were personal experience, introspective interview (single and group), observational, interactional and visual texts. The intention was to provide a specific account of social experience, as it where a 'snap-shot' – understanding that social experience is not static. As such, the data collected should be understood as a balance sheet of the CCF at a particular point in time.

However, like most research, NI does not start from scratch in an unplanned manner; initially some focus is derived around a set of categories or lines of inquiry of interest to the researcher; in this case, the main questions of the overall research project. The flexibility of NI allows the researcher to follow 'hunches' and intuition and pursue other avenues of inquiry without detracting from the main line of investigation, so adding to the research process. Such 'interference' to the original line of inquiry is not rejected but welcomed as it may add to our knowledge and greater sense of what is happening. In this way, inquiry is open to unanticipated factors and consequences, and is an important element of allowing the research design to emerge as it becomes grounded in the complexities of data collection.

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[56] Some archived material (mainly news paper cuttings, but also photographs, videos and T-shirts) has been kept by CCF participants. Other information has been drawn from reports on web sites such as Indy Media located at www.southafrica.indymedia.org, the news section and on-line library of the Centre for Civil Society located at www.ukzn.ac.za/ccs. This secondary data, together with primary data collected by the author, forms the basis of this research and all quotes are verbatim.

[57] For a detailed exposition see Lincoln and Guba (1985) and for a practical guide Erlandson et al (1993).

NI encourages researcher and informant to evaluate the subjective view of social experience and facilitates an understanding by the inquirer of what individuals perceive to be their objective world. This interaction influences the inquirer and the research, so creating a dynamic process that allows subjective factors such as political views and other dimensions of a person's experience, which may have influenced them, to be considered with external factors that constitute the South African polity.

Whilst it is essential that we affirm that each individual experience is unique, the features of experience are also shared as a facet of broader social relationships of which they are at once an interacting element, but simultaneously co-exist with others. This is not to deny individuality or chance, but as Rees notes, 'We only demand that a historic personality, with all its peculiarities, should not be taken as a bare list of psychological traits, but as the living reality grown out of definite social conditions and reacting on them' (1998: 280). Representativeness is captured through the shared and collective aspect of the social experiences that informants share in common with others. Consequently, this has implications for data collection and sampling procedure.

2. Purposive sampling
An NI approach encourages purposive and directed sampling over random or representative sampling. As my main concern was to maximise my ability to identify people who are 'information rich' - what can be learnt from interviewing them is of central importance to the purpose of the research - purposeful sampling is deemed appropriate. Erlandson et al (1993) note that using purposive sampling implies two major decisions be made: first select who and what to study, and then decide whom and what not to investigate: that is, there must be a process of elimination in order to narrow the pool of all possible sources. As such, there are no hard and fast rules governing sampling size, particularly as the research sought to establish richness not volume.

Those interviewed are representative as far as it is construed for the purpose of this research. A process of 'snowballing' was used to identify who to interview, stopping when it is believed that no more new information was being gained from each successive interview. This was supported, where possible, by secondary data, e.g. articles in the media, journals, and the like. However, it seems less a matter of testing one source against another than being aware of the shortcomings of both and seeing them as complementary.

Therefore, purposive sampling was selected instead of conventionally understood representative sampling because it provides a greater element of sensitivity to the data and is a way of identifying what is important and giving meaning to it. Sampling was therefore directed and deliberate, with conscious choices made about who and what to sample (interview) in order to obtain the data needed.

In this type of research, the co-operation of 'gatekeepers' is crucial.[58] Particularly as there was a growing suspicion by some social movement participants towards 'outsiders' (see

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[58] Persons or groups, who have by their very status or authority the ability to approve or deny access to informants, or who can use their influence to approve or prevent access to other informants or information (Erlandson et al 1993).

Pointer 2004 forthcoming), of researchers being seen as parasitic and of some participants feeling 'over-researched'.[59] Connections through colleagues at the Centre for Civil Society and the University of KwaZulu-Natal proved key in this regard. Through submerging myself in this milieu, contacts and 'name-dropping' initially helped me negotiate gatekeepers more easily. Through attending workshops, public meetings, protests, video-showings, co-ordinating meetings and actions such as, in one case, the illegal reconnection by CCF participants of electricity to a flat, slowly began to confer a type of legitimacy on the research. Subsequently, I was often introduced as 'a comrade from the UK doing research on the CCF' and was given successive contacts, meetings and events to follow up on.

The core of the primary data sought was built around the experiences of participants in and around the CCF. By building discussions around their experiences in (and before) the CCF, my focus started with the self-activity of the social individual expressed collectively through conscious political intervention - in this case primarily of working class people engaged in the struggle to stop evictions or from having their basic needs cut through the disconnection of water and electricity.

In collecting data it is common to propose in advance precisely how and what phenomenon is to be studied – creating 'evidence to order'.[60] Yet this is problematic when the phenomenon is human experience, and more so given that a painful economic restructuring process marks the political transition where the outcomes of these intertwined processes are far from settled. Given this, a hypothesis rigidly formulated in advance, with samples created and structured questions prepared, to which answers are then sought, seemed too rigid for studying social experience as it unfolds as part of a process of social change. Rather than placing constraints on the inquiry in advance, a 'framework' that encouraged an investigative approach to unfold whilst seeking other potential sources of information as the research process unfolded was adopted: that is, the research was iteratively based.

This, 'emergent research design', facilitates an 'expansionist' method in which the researcher enters the field and seeks to build 'outwards' from the initial enquiry, building up knowledge based on previous information (Erlandson et al 1993). This engenders a more open and exploratory methodology and consequently, theory is grounded – 'grounded theory' - in the complexity of the fieldwork as it develops.[61] Consequently, data accrues through building on previous data as it emerged making fieldwork flexible with design specified 'incompletely' in advance. In sum, the research design was emergent, variable and flexible.

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[59] These points were raised by several informants and in a variety of group discussions that I was privy to in and around the CCF and with participants from the APF and WCAEC at the SMI meeting I attended in Johannesburg 13-16 February 2003.
[60] Levins and Lewontin (1985) argue that an ontological assumption of such methodology is that a single, tangible reality, 'out there', exists and can be broken into pieces and is capable of being studied independently, and so a research methodology and sample is detailed in advance. See also Lincoln and Guba (1985) for a discussion of this and the epistemological and methodological implications of this type of approach for research.
[61] For more on this see Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Interviews

All interviews, meetings and public spaces in which data was collected took place between June 2003 and June 2004.[62] Individual or group interviews were conducted in an environment in which the informant(s) were encouraged to reflect upon what was said and interpret it in an interactive manner. They were flexibly structured discussions allowing questions to be posed about contradictory ideas and actions to unearth influencing factors on social experience. Consequently a thematic approach was chosen and encouraged informants to move beyond their own expectations and preconceptions of the interviews whilst allowing interviews to develop a balance between what the informant deemed important yet built around a number of themes that were not understood as a questionnaire, but more like an 'aide-memoir'. In this way, the interviews can be interpreted as a series of exchanges between the informant and me and between information and interpretation and, I believe, gave rise to information that is different from the factual, measurable type of data that is often used conventionally.

As such, interviews were conducted in an open and conversational manner, where I was not aloof or unresponsive and showed empathy for the informants point of view and experiences by using probing questions, where necessary, to encourage information without wanting to dominate.[63] At each interview I explained who I was, what I was doing, where I got their name from, and why I wanted to interview them, giving them an opportunity to ask any questions or clarifications. I would ask permission to tape record and would go over how the tape recorder worked and emphasise that they had full control over it and that it could be turned off whenever they decided.[64]

Importantly, I would stress that they were the expert on their experiences in the CCF and what they thought. In keeping with the tenets of NI I pointed out that I had no rigid formal pre-pared format or questions from which to structure interviews, but that the interview would be directed by what they chose to talk about, and that I might interject from time to time for clarification or to get more details. After each interview I listened to the recording, summarised what had been discussed to ensure interviews were yielding relevant information and to seek clarifications or ask questions I had missed out or I should follow up.

In all, the general approach to this research involved a practice of constant triangulation, revision and re-thinking. This was not a 'straightforward' experimental design type of research (if there is such an approach). In this way, the relationship between theory and research may be thought of as a 'double helix'. Theory is one helix, spiralling from the conception of an interest or idea and through modifications and extensions to eventual conformation or refutation. Research is the second helix, spiralling from identification of research questions through data collection and analysis of findings and recommendations for further study.

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[62] However, not all interviews and participant observation notes were used for this report.

[63] This approach applies to all the interviews undertaken for the research, all of which were conducted in English and all quotes are verbatim. Whilst only two informants spoke English as a first language, the overall standard of those interviewed was good.

[64] Although given the sensitive nature of the discussions (and to encourage more openness) we agreed to anonymity and direct quotes from key informants cited in the text are indicated by the date the interview took place.

Organisations affiliated to or once associated with the CCF
Avoca Hills Ratepayers Association.
Bayview Flat Resident's Association.
Chemical Engineering Industrial Workers Union
Ipisingo Development Forum.
Kwamashu Activst Forum.
Merebank Residents Association.
Mpumalanga Concerned Citizens Group.
Mpumalanga Youth for Work.
New Haven/Umkomass Residents Association.
South Durban Community Environmental Alliance.
Tenants Association of Sydenham Heights.
UDW Socialist Student Movement.
UDW Combined Staff Association
Umkomaas Ratepayers Association.
Umlazi Ratepayers and Residents Association.
Wentworth Development Forum
Westcliff Flats Residents Association.
Woodhurst Flats Association.

Timeline of major CCF events[65]
May 1999
> CCG go to Chatsworth to convince Indians not to vote for white parties.

June 1999
> CCG calls on Indian people not to vote for a white party in the elections held that month.

Sept 1999
> 1000 families in Chatsworth threatened with evictions.
> Solidarity rally held in Bayview/Westcliff.
> First major court victory as Mrs Govindasamy granted temporary reprieve against eviction.

Feb 2000
> 'Battle of Bayview' – attempts to prevent evictions result in violence.

March to Chatsworth rent office, after which council announce inquiry into violence.

March 2000
> Victorious 'test case' in Durban High court after water disconnection ruled unconstitutional.

June 2000
> Council reveals that CCG court action prevents 20995 planned disconnections.

July 2000
> Fifth action in a row prevents evictions in Units 2 and 3 in Chatsworth.
> Over 200 people from Umlazi who had water cut and read about CCG court actions in the press showed solidarity by turning up at a Bayview court case.

Dec 2000
> Over 300, mainly women from Ipisingo, protest at Illovo municipal offices.
> Unicity municipal elections at which CCG supporter Preggie Naidoo elected as only independent councillor.

April 2001
> Protests remerge in Mpumalanga as municipality try to install water meters.

May 2001
> Engen strike in which CCF and CEIWU work together.

June 2001
> Contact with Mpumalanga Concerned Citizens Group.

July 2001
> CCF officially formed. CCF candidate wins Isipingo by-election.
> Angie Pakkiri won by landslide in field of 11 candidates.

Aug 2001
> WCAR 20,000 march under banner of newly formed Durban Social Forum. First overt oppositional march to the ANC.

April 2002
> Solidarity protests in support of arrested activists in Johannesburg.

May 2002
> 5000 march to council buildings to pay R10 off arrears as part 'Ten Rand Campaign'.

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[65] Constructed with the help of several CCF participants.

June 2002

Municipality writes off R17 million worth of debts in Pheonix, Chatsworth and Verulam.

200 from CCF protest outside African WEF meeting.

August 2002

Hold solidarity rally of 2000 in Chatsworth in response to Mbongeni Ngema song claiming all Indians are racist.

Sept 2002

Send over 100 people to SMI march at WSSD in Johannesburg.

Dec 2002

LPM Youth and CCF march to City Hall over proposed relocation of people in Wentworth.

CCF help 360 families at Sydenham Heights win battle in the Rental Tribunal against levy imposed by council.

Feb 2003

CCF delegation attends first national SMI meeting in Johannesburg.

Aug 2003

Bayview resident with HIV-AIDS dies after water cut-off.

Arundhati Roy shows video of protests against dams in India to 500 people in Chatsworth on Womens Day.

Three meetings of several hundred people from Bayview and Westcliff over recent cut-offs.

Minister Ronnie Kasrils sends KZN head of Water Affairs to address Bayview rally.

March 2004

CCF participants attend SMI national meeting in Johannesburg.

April 2004

People from Mount Moriah Residents Association arrested for protesting against new development.

June 2004

Participants from the CCF attend the funeral of Marcel King who was shot dead after defying electricity cut offs.

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