Title: Of Ubuntu and the Rainbow: How Indian South Africans create Social institutions in the New South Africa

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Abstract: As South Africa looks back at its euphoric outcry of a 'New South Africa', the issues on the daunting path towards the reconstruction of state and society from 1994 onwards only seem greater. Suddenly one is fraught with the realization that South Africa is not only new but it is old as well: It is not only a new rainbow nation but also an old society which has dealt with many pleasant and unpleasant issues of race and colour. It is not only a new bubbling ground of democracy and its related hiccups but also an old polity with some pressing 'carry over' problems and lessons of Apartheid. Observing the social movements amongst the Durban Indians in South Africa helps us further understand this relationship between the old as well as the new in a nuanced way: From amongst Indian South Africans have emanated not only old, reform and self-help style social movements through and post-apartheid but also some new, community action based social movements. Adopting an ethnographic methodology for the case studies mentioned herein, this paper focusses on unearthing the memories, space and temporalities of a contemporary, community based anti-substance abuse movement and its significance for innovative institution building and social action. Waged and organized by Indian South Africans (ISAs) in Durban, the movement lifts symbols and frames centred around a 'non-territorial but a rooted context based ‘Indian-ness' as it proliferates its network and articulations. My research indicates that its actors, who belong largely to the historical Indian Diaspora, remain firmly rooted in an inherently South African mode of articulation and landscape. Based on examples from my field-work in Durban and interactions with the Anti-Drug Forum in Chatsworth in the year 2013 and 2014, I examine the evolving role of the peoples of Indian origin in the larger canvass of South Africa’s Ubuntu- democracy.

Keywords: Indian South Africans, Institutions and Collective social action; Anti-Drug Forum, Democracy and Social Spaces
I Themes and Methodology

Chatsworth, in Durban, is a large colorful suburb bustling in the new South Africa with a vibrant multi-community energy. Post-1994 it has been increasingly inhabited by a mixed group of people though the predominant communities continue to be the Indian South Africans (ISAs). Once upon a time, in 1960, the creation of the ‘township’ of Chatsworth was ordained by the pen of the Apartheid city planners. Envisaged as a compulsory, exclusive Indian area and township, its creation led to the eviction of people from established neighbourhoods around Durban- Indians were forcibly re-located into it. In February 2014, upon finishing our second round of field work on social movements among the people of Indian origin (PIOs), we couldn’t help but reflect that although it was the act of government that made the place- in reality, it was the people with their practices, attitudes and enigma alongside the problems of their life world, which have made Chatsworth the unmistakably warm, and democratic social space and landscape that it is. Unfortunately one of the most compelling social issues, besides the rising criminality in the area, is the proliferation of drug addiction that has swamped through the Chatsworth and areas around it. Many reasons such as lack of employment opportunities, operation of aggressive drug networks in its various units, moral degeneration and a changing notion of sexuality have been felt and cited by our informants to explain the phenomenon. This paper, however, concerns itself more with the study of a micro social endeavor that has arisen as an attempt to contain the problem as a collective self-help movement initiated by a Chatsworth based organization called the Anti-Drug Forum (ADF).

The focus of our research is to bring out an ethnographic, actor based notion of collective social action. Observing and spending time with the various participants and critics of the movement, following them in their mutual interactions and collaborations drives home the fact that how challenging it can be to deaden or erase, what is referred to as, the landscapes of memory (Till: 2005 and Taneja:2014). Irrefutably in the new South Africa, people operate under freedoms and rights to tackle newer issues.

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1 Many Africans now live in informal settlements in Chatsworth such as Bottlebrush and Crossmoor, in Welbedacht, while others have moved into the flats as well as places like Mbeni Heights. Migrants from the Asian sub-continent, who arrived post-1994, can also be found in many parts of Chatsworth (The Mercury: April 29, 2014). The schools have changed with African pupils from Clemont, Lamontville and Umlayi and from informal settlements within Chatsworth, attending Chatsworth schools (Adele: 2014).

2 The mid-twentieth pioneering teachers of landscape study, J B Jackson and W G Hoskins have lend a socio-cultural dimension to the idea of landscape. Jackson in his reflections on what landscape is, in, ‘Discovering the Vernacular Landscape’ quotes what he calls ‘the old fashioned but surprisingly persistent definition of landscape: “A portion of the earth’s surface that can be comprehended at a glance.”’ He saw landscape as ‘A rich and beautiful book [that] is always open before us. We have but to learn to read it.’ Hoskins asserted the significance of landscape in, ‘The Making of the English Landscape’, with a proposal that ‘The ... landscape itself, to those who know how to read it aright is the richest historical record we possess’. See for greater details: (Robertson & Richards 2003)
Yet, in their patterns of being, in their gaze, memories and trends of organizing for social action, there is an echo of the past alongside a vision of the future. Issues such as drug abuse were also present in the past, yet a peoples’ politics around them only derives meaning in today’s democratic context. If the issue is illicit drug use and its availability against which ADF organizes itself, then, what is the peculiar South African context of place and space that the movement confronts and coheres to? Methods, modus operandi, and goals of movements acquire special significance amid the local givens. Vahed, a historian from the University of kwaZulu Natal (The Mercury: May 14, 2014) reiterates, “As geographers and social scientists tell us, places are never frozen in time but are processes, always in the making. The same is true of Chatsworth”.

Unless we place the ADF among the Indian community as its physical-spatial base and entrench it in its rooted memories of space and time that have given it shape or examine it from the lens of its articulation and processes of gaze in it and around it, we would lose the message that such a micro-social action implies for its democracy. It is these aspect of the movement’s ‘landscape’ that the paper seeks to expand upon in every section. Situating connotations of landscape beyond the idea of a pretty picture or as a static text (Hoskin: 1955 and Jackson: 1951), the paper explores the concept by equating it as a site- which witnesses the unfolding of a cultural context. Examples of activities, views and opinions from the community and movement actors are included to reveal the roots as well as the routes which have collaborated, compelled, completed, complemented and even challenged the making of the anti-substance abuse movement that has stemmed from the landscape of Chatsworth. It is a thick look at the essence of what Mitchell in 1994 sees as part of a ‘process by which ... identities are formed’. The connections, therefore, between landscape and identity and hence memory, thought, and comprehension are fundamental to understanding of landscape and human sense of place and action.

Data was mainly collected through the circular, actor oriented approach called the Emic Evaluation Approach (EEA3). In the social movement context that we observed, the approach proved effective for accessing qualitative data owing to its proven relevance in circumstances wherein a multiplicity of actors are embedded in conflicting relationships, identities, practices and world views. Since the issue of a social action against substance abuse provokes strong discourses and methodologies on ground; entails provocative agreements and disagreements on processes and practices of rehabilitation and healing; places primacy to protection of privacy and; is rife with a dialects of dialogue and stalemates with the state, we wished to employ the aforesaid approach for taking into account the diverse set of circumstances shaping it and being shaped by it. We followed the ethnographic methods of immersion, observation, presence at interactive sites, conduction of open ended interviews and participation in ceremonies, meetings, marches and other events to collect data. Further, the paper is an outcome of reflections upon things seen as well as heard through written and oral narratives. Our findings, which

are based on inductive analysis of data from fieldwork, indicate that the ISAs – as SM actors are not a homogenous group. They champion the cause of a drug free society, but movement is not romanticist. Neither does it completely emulate any pre-designed patterns nor operate in completely formal, compartmentalized set-ups. It retains its independence, spontaneity and flexibility to deal with the demands on ground.

The participants and other actors in it have diverse set of cultural preferences, origins, identities, religions and faith. But in terms of belonging or identity, their obvious common denominator is their world of a shared and entangled double consciousness over their home - South Africa where their active memories are associated with. They also share some legacies from a distant ancestral homeland - India. Yet what binds them more strongly to their aim of a safe, substance free society for their youth is the firm faith that together they can make a change and impart their democracy a personal touch.

II The Ubuntu-Democracy, An Ubuntu-Social Action?

The rise of demonstrations, protests and service delivery movements continue to characterize the democracy of South Africa as it inaugurates in this year, its third decade of freedom from oppression. Interestingly the rise of service delivery movements and micro social action voices has not occurred in isolation from other trends - such as a declining voter turnout, boycotts with elections and a number of opinion polls indicating that popular confidence in the governing system and/or the ruling party is decreasing (Cronje, 2014). Though designated as the ‘protest capital of the world’ (Patel, 2013), South Africa is not an isolated case of the prominent emergence of vociferous protest and self-help action campaigns and movements. India for instance, that sits over a democracy more than triple the age of its South African counterpart, experiences the same public fervor with the continued rise of organized grassroots civil action. Equally noteworthy is the fact that these movements defy any stereotypical characterization and do not always benefit from a favourable glance from political party loyalists in both the countries. These action forms are many times dismissed as ‘chaos’ or ‘noise’ and skeptics raise the heat against such movements by asking, ‘must a democracy celebrate every time it sees a movement?’ - and Dasgupta (2014) urges us to turn the question around and ask, ‘need a democracy fear its service delivery and small issue based movements?’ In our conception, another fundamental question to ask is, ‘what is so typical about our time and so common about our respective spaces, that such movements organize their resources to assert their identity for causes that are dear to them?’

Through our research on the anti-substance abuse movement, we address the relevance of those messages and richness of contextual information that reading such movements can bring into the public debate. We propose that if there is no reason to celebrate movements which can be very popular without being very meaningful, at the same time, there is no reason to distrust public action of the new movements only because their agenda seems to enthuse a move toward radicalizing democracy. In our reading of the peoples’ action, it is linked to but not overshadowed by socialist imagination, secular thinking, rights discourse or nation building. While drawing on these concerns, the new movements are
additionally alert to the intimate everyday sources of marginalization, experienced in public spaces, especially by the have-nots and the social pariahs. The engagement with public space gives a concrete shape to their sense of freedom, physically expressed in a range of practical gestures, from the occupation of outdoors to turning bodies/action into text; and streets and communities into sites of collective social and visual imaginations.

In real-time politics however, the approach to assess these movements is a very narrow criterion of power and powerlessness: What value do one man led/ single leader or small issue based movements hold for vote politics?, asked RG, a bureaucrat from the ISA community in Durban and a supporter of the ruling African National Congress (ANC). In reference to the anti-substance abuse movement taken up by the Anti-Drug Forum (ADF), he portrayed skepticism and disapproval. Unhappy with small scale of the ADF, he contended that, “good movements must organize themselves into large entities and work on lines of OCMS- Organise, Coscientise, Mobilise for Struggle and ideally they need to be macro in thier impact and reach. For only then do politicians find such movements relevant and want to respond to their calls. What stakes does a majority political party have to loose if it does not support the ADF?...... And anyway, people need to depart from imagining themselves through victimhood.”

The opinions of RG, partial and unfair as they may seem, are valuable in their significance . Foremost his articulation symbolizes, a backwards gaze and the prevalence of nostalgia – the ruling party (and its followers) would respond to social engagements that function as it had itself functioned during its struggle against Aparthied. Second, it brings us back firmly to the present where the political enterprises of vibrant democracies do not always welcome social movement action. It is qualified as disruptive, fragmentative and noise producing action. Gazing vociferously at the community based movement as an irrelevant chaos, from within a vote-bank oriented thinking definitely leads to downplaying the importance of micro-social organizations. Third, by equating issue based contentious politics to victimhood, it works as an arraignment of democratic dissent establishing in its innuendo, a moral culpability around micro social action taken up on touchy issues that reveal stark state failiures. However the brief statement above offers a rich insight in that it answers its own question- If a social movement that does not have the eye-catching numbers is insignificant for a large party, conversely it may become doubly significant for smaller parties in the fray who might be more open to issue based politics being waged by small pockets/communities of voters (?).

As of now, turning into a vote-bank mechanism/instrument for individuals or leaders on their way to political routes of victories and losses is not on the cards of the ADF. Though voting is taken as an essential right by the actors, vote politics is not sufficient to explain the main impulse and motives of the kind of participatory politics symbolized and practiced by this movement. Rather, it is reminscent of the down-to earth ideal of Ubuntu. The cardinal spirit of Ubuntu is expressed in Xhosa, one of South Africa’s eleven official languages, as Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye abantu understood in English as “People are people through other people” and “I am human because I belong to the human community and I view and treat others accordingly “. In Zulu, another official language in South Africa, the word Ubuntu embodies a distinctive worldview of the human community and the identities, values, rights, and responsibilities of its members. It is about “we” – not “me.” ( Chaplin: Online pdf) Nelson Mandela
reminding the nation of the ethical values entailed in the concept of Ubuntu, in his message of acceptance of the first Ubuntu Award of the National Heritage Council (NHC, 2006: 26) reiterated,

“Ubuntu is about being human and that we are human only through the humanity of other human beings. It is not a parochial phenomenon, but rather has added globally to our common search for a better world. And our heritage should be lived in the present....we should strive for excellence in the living of Ubuntu and not allow it to become merely a subject of study by heritage institutions”.

Besides its ethical values, the practical aspects of Ubuntu are seen as a fundamental ingredient in nation-building. These values such as honesty, sharing, human solidarity, compassion, respect, humility, and communality are seen as the foundational material to building a new South Africa. Upholding these values might serve as a remedy for the many ills characterising the nation. Ubuntu is reflective of a re-imagined Afro-centric human identity relevant to the cultural heritage of South Africa (Bredekamp: 11).

The ADF headed by Sam Pillay is more than an organizational force. It works with the passion of Ubuntu. It is a social instrument of ideas and practices which empowers the community to imagine and re-imagine their role and to contribute to as well as share in building common heritages. Originating from Chatsworth, the ADF mainly operates by devising collective action strategies and forums such as smart clubs for the Youth or by simply approaching the larger Durban Indian community to come together for the cause and network with it. Depending upon their involvement in the issue, the people respond by providing it a tacit or an open support. A visit to the ADF or participation in its meetings, walks, protest marches, awareness campaigns, and workshops affords one the opportunity to come across diverse participant-workers, supporters and onlooker-actors - such as previous addicts helped in their recovery process by the ADF, families who have experienced and understand the affliction routines and outcomes, School Principals, students, social workers, maverick humanitarians, community -philosophers, passionate volunteers, informed professionals and staff from other supportive organizations from the vicinity and university lecturers.

III Interpreting the Place and the Space: Routes/Roots or Both?

Doreen Massey states, ‘There is specificity of place which derives from the fact that each place is the focus of a distinct mixture of wider and more local situations....this very mixture together in one place may produce effects which would not have happened otherwise......all these factors interact with and take a further element of specificity from the accumulated history of a place’(in Cresswell 2004: 70). What kind of ideas associated with space and place, memories and landscapes of self-gaze inspire and influence the Indian South Africans involved in laying critical foundations to raise networks and concerns over substance abuse? While the earlier notion of a place per se, from perspectives of human geography concerns a geographic, territorial boundary or non-boundary - such as the global or what the French anthropologist Marc Auge describes as non-places, for instance airports, motorways; however in post-modern and post-structuralists conception, place has undergone a change in focus from the importance of it as a location to the notion of it as historical roots and people who experience it. Massey describes a
street as a location that could have global enterprises and represent various non-local routes and realities (such as a plane flying over a busy London streets with Asian shops and Muslim businesses). This means that the the distance and degree defining GPS co-ordinates of a place all by themselves would have little meaning unless the place is defined by its name, characteristics, buildings and transactions (See Cresswell, 2009). Hence the idea of meaning has been central to notions of place since the 1970s in Human Geography. Location therefore becomes a place when it becomes meaningful.

At the same time, we would like to add, that a place derives meanings, over and above the other things/entities/phenomenon that compose it or vice-versa, by and through the experiences of its people as active subjects. The roots as well as the the rootedness of its people-subjects, residents and citizens are closely associated with any specific geographic area, converting it into a space, at specific points or periods in time. Complementing the notion of place with that of space, allows us to consider how people associate themselves to their specific, rooted and route-d historical experiences and futuristic perspectives. It allows us to analyse as well as interpret practices and imaginations behind action and collective action. In the case study used in this paper, we describe the socio-cultural implication of forced displacement upon the landscape, roots as well as routes taken by the Indian South Africans in Durban. One of the many changes in the life world of the Indians (as for the blacks and coloureds) occurred with the territorial re-grouping enacted upon them through a series of successive versions of the Group Areas Act. Also, called ‘the kernel of apartheid’ (see, Kathrada 2001:100), this act was the basis of spatial re-grouping of people into separate spaces for separate communities.

While forced spatiality under the act provided one kind of displacement, vacuum and silence, the fall of apartheid provided the context of quite another- nonetheless both processed remained juxtaposed with continuities in social evolution and community building. Hansen (2013:11) observes, the fall of apartheid produced a strong sense of an epochal event that turned entire social worlds, languages and imaginaries into anachronisms. Although freedom, the object yearned for was gained, yet nobody had fully anticipated how quickly the particular affective ties that had formed meaningful communities and pockets of operation during the decades of apartheid, as in- township cultures, the lingo of the comrades, aesthetic production opposed to the state, and so on- lost public validity public validity and coherence after 1994. Analysing the Indian situation in a cultural context he opines that “for minorities like the township Indians, real freedom and sovereignty within the new nation have been experienced as a partial loss, not of un-freedom but of its predominant experiential form: cultural autonomy”: (p. 294).

Effectively, for this research, we look at the various displacement/s in the old from the new South Africa, not only as a dislocation from place, but also as a series of disarticulations from space/s that the communities had constructed for themselves in accordance with changing socio-political status, existence and needs. Living through displacement and re-placement dialectics, between constructing and de-constructing their social worlds, the ISAs experienced and practiced diverse socio-structural evolutions and transitions- some of which also made them vulnerable to succumb to or willingly adapt substance abuse in their banadawagon. From the abuse and illicit trafficking of Mandrax through 1970s (Glenny, 2009:222) and the 1980s (Naidoo 1988) to the appearance of 600 Sheebens (local pubs) by
mid-1980s (Singh 1988); from street gangs transitioning into drug lords and dealers to the more recent 21st Century phenomenon of sugars addiction, which has brought on its heels, what Desai (2014: 308) calls, “sugar-coated crimes”, Chatsworth witnessed and bore many kinds of transitions of place and space.

It took until apartheid to be over and the drug menace to acquire a greater momentum for the Indian townships such as Chatsworth, for a new kind of non-partisan, non-religious collective social action to emerge around the theme. Hence it becomes interesting to analyse the arrival of such Micro Social Movement (MSM) which is different from and goes beyond community-based religious, charity or philanthropic organizations. By operating effectively in the public, private and in its own intimate political domains to connect and articulate the state and people in an effective relationship of open discourse, it reflects a different genre of democratic maturity. This MSM is spearheaded and articulated by the Anti-Drug Forum with Sam Pillay as its Chairperson. His team became active from 2006 onward after which numerous networks, campaigns, awareness drives, alternate politiking and collective passion activated by it have led to a growing voice projection over the issue. Under the impact of the strategies, sites, moments, periods and episodes of contentious, self-help politics resorted to by the ADF, the place of its operation stands converted into a space of operation. Some of the actors behind the organization of this social movement space are those who remember the history of substance abuse in Chatsworth under apartheid. They have witnessed the changing drug-preferences and rising cases of drug abuse among the ISAs during the transition period from the 1990s onward and have chosen to organize themselves in protest against the current situation of affliction. Notions of a safe society for the youth and minor students form part of their imagination.

Historically, majority of South African Indians are descended from indentured labourers who arrived in Natal between 1860 and 1911 to work on sugarcane plantations. These mainly low-caste migrants, mostly Hindus, came from districts near Madras city in south India and the Bhojpuri region in north India. Some arrived in family groups and there were some single women, but at least two-thirds of the migrants were male; the skewed sex ratio encouraged considerable mixing and intermarriage between Indians and members of other groups in Natal. When their indenture contracts ended, many Indians acquired land and became peasant farmers and market gardeners in and around Durban; they also became craftsmen and petty traders, small landlords, manual labourers and factory workers in the city. By the 1940s, most of the labourers’ descendants lived in Durban and a sizeable Indian working class was developing. The minority Indian population in South Africa is descended from the ‘passenger’ Indians, who came from Gujarat and north India as traders and businessmen; most were Muslims and the rest Hindus. These commercial migrants settled in Durban, but also spread across the country, and some of them – especially wealthy Gujarati businessmen – became the cultural and political elite of the wider Indian community. From indenture, racial discrimination, apartheid, group areas legislations to community solidarities, social evolutions amid liberation struggles, urbanization and now democratization, it has been a century and half of changing social and political practices for the ISAs. (Fuller 2012)
Kuper’s (1960) ethnographic monograph on the South African Indians (the first such study of the Durban Indians in the mid-1950s), written after apartheid had become official policy in South Africa reflected a different kind of close knit family and community life. Later studies showed how Indians – as well as its Africans and Coloureds – suffered a drastic change in their fortunes because, in 1958, the Durban city council began to force non-whites out of their old residential areas and into new townships. In this phase, the character of the extended and close Indian family structure started to alter, producing various social anomalies as well as innovations at the same time. A more recent publication i.e. Hansen’s (2013) ‘Melancholia of Freedom’ portrays the social imagery on or/ of Durban Indians in Chatsworth in the New post-1994 South Africa. In terms of the data they present, the theories they cite, and the styles of writing that they display as well as the times in which they were written and how they evoke the community, the two works present a different context of Chatsworth in socio-cultural terms. Comparing the two works one gets the feel how not only the context has changed between the two but also how much anthropology as a discipline has undergone a change. And also, how much Chatsworth itself has changed. (Fullers 2012). For our paper, Hansen’s work provided substantial insights, especially to the processes of gaze that we take up in a succeeding section.

Desai and Vahed’s (2014), edited volume on Chatsworth, is an important contribution to literature on the South African Indians and their transitions, transpositions and social configurations. By describing the Indian South African context in the voice of actors, the author’s usher in a world of memories and experiences of those who lived there. The book fills an important gap in pinning down the fact that the Indian South Africans were not only searching for an identity or clamouring for a cultural autonomy, they were themselves evolving as a community and as individuals in their ongoing context which together contributed to the many changes, pleasant and the unpleasant juxtaposed to the old and the new. Establishing home within the Apartheid architecture of exclusion, along streets without names, tens of thousands of new residents began building new lives and new communities, developing an urban space with a unique cultural vibrancy born of creativity and economic struggle. The book helps in bringing to life actors who share their processes of self-gaze and participation in all kinds of transitions they lived through- from dynamic, positive, happy, ironical to negative, traumatic and difficult changes in many social structures and situations.

Of specific interest for our paper are the narratives on drug use, drug peddling and the emerging social relations, structures and institutions around drugs in Chatsworth. For instance, on the one hand people were discovering their own and sometimes a new, freer way of being –some young Indian women, for example, were actually not complaining about the emergence of the nuclear families norm. For the first time they found their independence away from the extended family structure predominantly practiced among the Indian communities in general. On the other hand, the forcible relocation together with the disruption in the joint family system gave birth to a newer set of vulnerabilities. One decidedly negative outcome of the whole experience that relates as much as to the socio-political as to the individual context, was the growing indulgence of the Indian communities towards illicit drugs. Willing participation also mushroomed in various stages of the chain: from smuggling to being mules, runners as well as users. From ‘lightees’ (significant of someone younger/junior or of a lower hierarchical status in the underworld) to ‘lahnees’ (significant of a superior/ wealthier hierarchical position in the drug
world/underworld or otherwise, also meaning fancy or boss) (Desai and Vahed, 2014: 305-311), a new society had arrived.

In our interpretation, a new society had arrived not just on the heels of local changes common to South Africa, but also in resonance with the global changes taking place in many other parts of the world. Despite the pain and social trauma associated in the pre-1994 transitions, these were changes that the Indians in Durban underwent in tandem with many other parts of the globe. The nuclear -double income families with unmonitored (as compared to before) freedom to children, rebellious movement of youth towards drugs amid self-indulgent societies and an isolating, unbridled urban materiality were problems characteristic of the post-war decades of growth and development of the 1960s, 1970s universally4. United States experienced similar challenges in one part of the world as much as India in another. The taste of urbanization and breaking of the extended family system cut across many socio-political and geographic boundaries through these decades. What makes the case of South African communities unique is that its routes and pathways to such changes were not only related to a simple transition to urbanity in vulnerable contexts. There was a politics of forced displacement around the phenomenon which aggravated and accelerated the social degeneration more note worthyly for the local people, than elsewhere.

The growth of a new kind action- in the shape of an organized and networked micro-social movement with a specific dedication to work against substance abuse and with the goal to make the society safer for its youth is a very recent phenomenon. It represents a remarkable change in the ideas behind collective mobilization w.r.t. to the position of ISA actors on drug use. It is this little written about aspect that our paper wants to bring in for analysis and interpretation. Our findings indicate that there is an essential change in the way that the community perceives it role. The movement is reflective of the changing awareness and skills within the community pointing towards its maturity in negotiating the challenges and opportunities of democracy. Despite the prevalence of substance abuse since long back, such a movement has arisen only in recent times is significant many probable reasons. But more research is need to address the probable causes an anti- drug forum now as opposed to before: Could it be due to dedication of the collective spirit and resources to the struggle for freedom from apartheid in the earlier context? Or could the prevalence of vigilante action by groups such as the People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (Pagad) in the changing context of struggle during the 1980s and 1990s- which in

4 Rising Urbanity and changing social relations for instance: 1973, state-financed education was made compulsory for Indian children up to the age of 15. Two years later, the obnoxious inter-provincial travel restrictions and residential barriers were relaxed. A state sponsored Indian Development Corporation was established in 1977 and permission granted to set up an-all Indian New Republic bank to promote growth of Indian entrepreneurship. These diverse measures facilitated the increased participation of Indians in secondary industries. Weaving and clothing factories, footwear manufacture, garages and service stations, tyre retreading shops, furniture making establishments, printing presses, bakeries, food preparation units and super bazaars, as well as many other such small scale industries sprang to give gainful employment to thousands of Indians. (India, HLC Report 2001: 81)
its functioning valid or not, while it fulfilled an important gap, at the same time it could have deterred other social action forms against the issue of drugs? Or could it be due to statistical reasons- a lesser extent of drug abuse among the ISAs in the past in comparison to the current ‘sugars’ scourge witnessed by Chatsworth in the present day context? Or could it be that the society is undergoing a sense of moral outrage and a transformative moment- in the ‘between and the ‘be-twixt’ of liminality amid social change, to borrow and extend upon Turners (1967) conception, only now?

Liminal situations, from within a socio-historic understanding, can be periods of uncertainty, anguish, even existential fear: a facing of the abyss in void (Horvath: 2013). But Turner attributed a rather univocally positive connotation to liminal situations, as ways of renewal. During the liminal stage, normally accepted differences between the participants, such as social class, are often de-emphasized or ignored. A social structure of communitas forms: one based on common humanity and equality rather than recognized hierarchy. Communitas has positive values associated with it; good fellowship, spontaneity, warm contact...unhierarchised, undifferentiated social relations.(Also see, Douglas, 1984)

Moving from one liminality to another- between the Group Areas Act, apartheid struggle and the Ubuntu –democracy; and having witnessed the making of different communitas from locating and re-locating oneself in the space and place of communities pertaining to demarcated life to communities of comradeship in the struggle for freedom: the process carries on in the democratic South Africa. The history, memory and experience of the multiple liminalities leading to the diverse formations of communitas in Chatsworth and among the Indian South Africans in Durban build up the performance of community relations- in which suffering and healing related to successes and failures around substance abuse are shared across the board. Chatsworth’s struggle against substance abuse highlights the importance of in-between periods, but also allows us to understand the human reactions to liminal experiences: ‘the way liminality can shape personality, the sudden foregrounding of agency, and the sometimes dramatic tying together of thought and experience” (Thomassen, 2009: 51). It the journey of a place changing its character to claim an operational need based as well as an imagined space.

IV The Gaze: Evolution of a quotidian, contextual Ethnicity around substance abuse

With the dismantling of Group Areas legislation from 1990 and within South Africa’s continually changing political landscape, Chatsworth witnessed innovations of livelihood, shifting boundaries of identity and protracted social challenges and attitudes. Though post-1994 it has been opened to other communities Chatsworth remains an area where Indians continue to reside dominantly and from where many significant memories and practices, institutions and sites of the community accrue from and are related to. An important observation that helped us comprehend the daily life context of the social movement was that its participants function with a heightened sense of gaze. The circular process of peoples’ gaze, which seems to inseparably arise from and fit into the context, influences and gets influenced by their imagination and sense of being. How people continually look at each other, speak about public spaces and make socio-political assessments of the self as well as the other pulls an
observer firmly back into the context and therein emerges a day to day fact that shapes inter-actions and mutual subjectivities in the contemporary South Africa: Some of its current problems and envisaged solutions, from economic to political, are associated with its racial past, while some are derived entirely from its new phase of democracy and freedom. While there were similarities in the overall context of segregation and in the exclusion-inclusion matrix of Apartheid in the old past, the various communities of South Africa waged similar struggles in some ways but differently in others: For instance, although they came together and networked for the overall goal of freedom, in other social spheres problems such as drug abuse arose and manifested themselves differently for different communities—synchronizing the old and the new in various ways. With respect to the historical origin and context of continuing substance abuse among the Indian South Africans in Durban, RL, a dedicated social worker from the Aryan Benevolent Home (ABH) in Chatsworth reiterates,

“Peoples’ memory still runs very deep, especially among old and middle-aged among us. Hence, we find it difficult to forget all. Many of us continue to extrapolate with an inward self-analysis that we have inherited a load of difficult emotions, such as anger with a deep rooted sense of deprivation and discrimination, associated with the obligatory silence and suffering from our political past. If you spoke openly, you were imprisoned. While many of us chose to risk it and vent out our emotions, be banned and spend our lives in Robben Island or as outlaws, many had to remain silent. But not all were equipped to respond with a perpetual presence of courage and stoicness. As humans, they bought in a backlog of emotions from a suppressed political existence and these emotions influenced families in various ways. The business of life, education, looking after communities and carrying out social work among families had to carry on. And it did despite the lack of an equal-political voice and opportunity for all. Yet we also became a vulnerable ground for social degeneration that included rising cases of domestic abuse, alcoholism, drugs and disillusioned, escapist behaviour. Our problems have not completely ended with the end of Apartheid. Newer challenges have arisen such as the new phase of proliferating substance abuse amon the Indians in Durban. We continue our efforts and endeavours to help the communities in Chatsworth and areas around it”. (Also see, Luthra Sinha and Chetty, 2014: 382-383)

Thus people were pulled into processes that promoted an exaggerated gaze for the self as well as the other which still creep up and intersperse the everyday discourse. To quote a general example - there were numerous times during our field work, when our informants would look up and casually comment about a public space: ‘this was meant to be more of a white area’ or ‘this street still works as a black area’ or ‘in here its all Indian’ – reminding of what Till (2005: 15) suggests that re-visiting certain places bears and brings on traumatic memories and personal hauntings to subjects making them undergo transformative moments- and then the rest falls into place once again. These contextual reflections reveal the extent to which segregation became internalized both in peoples’ reflective-observational faculties as much as in their gaze towards self and one another. While the larger phenomenon of apartheid has been politically pushed behind, socially there are some challenges that still remain. In matters of day to day practice and people’s imagination, there is a reminiscence and reflection of ‘apartness’. On the one hand its acts like a left over, tell tale consciousness from the South African past and on the other hand it influences the character of their social action, which might become
community-specific in accordance with area/place governed needs. The rise of the ADF is a fitting example here.

This gaze matrix is also extendable to the self-identity of the ISAs who see themselves as constituting the historical Indian Diaspora which shares an entangled past with India, their ancestral homeland. This awareness imparts an ethnic undertone to their identity as well. They operate with the awareness of a non-territorial niche, a realm of their own that pertains to their common ancestral heritage with India. Simultaneously remaining clear about their South African identity, they show no interest in provisions such as dual citizenship, unlike the American and European Indian Diaspora (HLCID: 2000). Yet this double consciousness makes the Indian South Africans, different than the others, different for the others: within the South African racial system, Indians differ from black Africans because they can also claim a history and culture entirely outside of South Africa. They possess/are seen to possess an alternative, external point of reference (besides the common internal point/s of reference that they share with their other South African compatriots. This diasporic consciousness therefore works both ways and to this extent its double in both the senses: From an endogenous, internal gaze as well as a reverse, external gaze (see also, Fuller 2014). When actors from the community reflect upon the impact and origin of substance abuse as one of their lived experiences, they reveal an elaborate imagination around this double gaze. An insightful conversation on the issue of substance abuse during our fieldwork in 2014 can be quoted here as a relevant example. AVM (Open ended Interview, 31.01. 2014) from the 1860 Heritage Centre in Durban explains,

“For many of us Indian South Africans, the Diaspora consciousness is very intimate. Yet if someone were to ask me, ‘Who are you?...well, if I wouldn’t answer Xhosa, Zulu, English, Afrikaans, I wouldn’t even answer Tamil, Telegu, Hindu, Muslim, Gujarati. I would answer, that I am first a human being. As human beings, it’s the global picture that holds our attention. Majority of us, in this nation, suffer from an overwhelming sense of insecurity—since long back. Sugars, the current illicit drug of choice is a new drug. But drugs here is not a new phenomenon per se. I remember how, back in time, drugs were beginning to infiltrate the units of Chatsworth in the 1970s. The drugs during Apartheid, as now, spread through organized drug dealers. They would bring the drug in, plant runners, find ‘soft targets’ and give them free samples. With addiction appear other criminal patterns such as stealing and abuse as well. I have seen it in my own family and also as social malaise in the community. It was scary to see the overall impact of the illicit trafficking and abuse of drugs and related criminal activities amidst the lack of an overt community voice over the issue. Coupled with an unwilling government and a rapidly

5 Drug use correlates strongly rapid modernization and the decline in traditional social relationships and forms of family structure. Epidemiological surveys in South Africa suggest that high proportions of drug consumers experienced especially difficult family circumstances as children (Frank and Fisher 1998). The expansion of public education is uneven and contributes to anxieties about the loss of control over youth; unfulfilled expectations and early disillusionment are considered by many as key factors that encourage experimentation with drugs among the young (UNODCCP, Vienna: 1999). See also, (UNODC, South Africa 2002), (UNODC, Pretoria 2003) (UNODC, Vienna: 2006).
westernizing/changing family system, all contributed to empowering the drugs doubly. One moment it was like, ‘respect your extended family, your parents, your roles and responsibilities’; Enter Mandrax and Ecstasy, dope it up even more with your socio-economic disillusionments and political frustrations and then, the next moment, it’s all gone!:(Also see, Luthra Sinha and Gopal. 2014, Forthcoming).

Presence of an acute self-gaze as much as an exaggerated mutual gaze that strive to include as much as it ‘others’ the self and the other both, hence remained and continue to remain stubbornly significant in the transition and evolution from the old towards the new. This presents not only an embedded, layered contextual reality but could lays the ground for newer forms of a contextual solidarity. A freer solidarity. It has a two pronged impact on the post-1994 South African social movement space, that we analyse: The processes of gaze centre on a difficult common reference point of the apartheid past as well as the contemporary post-Apartheid social milieu. Beside the many other socio-political implications, this critical gaze of, from and across socio-political boundaries that the Indians have inherited, experienced, inculcated and practiced as South Africans has played its part in the rise of the anti-substance abuse endeavor by the ADF. The movement is able to sustain itself through its need-based politics and networking capacity by winning over local support that echoes the sentiment that, “we live here, we have lived here since so long as a community in Chatsworth and if not us, then who will come here to speak for us?;” (GA, Interview at the ISKON temple complex, Chatsworth: 12.01.2014). Its operational landscape is a thriving arena, what we refer as the ‘intimate political sphere’- a space that bridges the gap between the public and the private domain, and where the immediate challenges are actually confronted and solutions imagined. In conformity with the principles of the new South Africa and with the onset of increasing diversity in Chatsworth’s social profile post 1994, the social movement remains open and accessible to people of all communities, colour, race and religion.

V The Anti-Drug Forum (ADF) - A performance of identity, claims, space and gaze within democracy

In addition to the baggage of the discrepant development and discriminatory politics of the pre-1994 era, more recent socio-economic changes which have come together with growing urbanization and breakdown in traditional family structures have placed many communities in a provocative set up conducive to drug use⁶. Caught in the heart of the scenario are the people from the local communities.

⁶ South Africa is the most highly urbanized country in sub-Saharan Africa and the only one with over half its population recorded as urban (55.4% in 1996). (Johannesburg/Pretoria), Gauteng (96.4%) and the Western Cape (Cape Town) are the most highly urbanized provinces and have the highest rates of drug abuse. Cities are characterized by high rates of urbanization, limited employment opportunities, expansive informal sector exchange and, an erosion of so-called traditional values and family cohesion. The proportion of female-headed households, in urban areas has been rising steadily, and is now estimated at approximately one-third of all urban household. They are overwhelmingly concentrated in the poorest social and economic communities and studies indicate that single parent families experience increased susceptibility of children using drugs. Parent’s often return home late, leaving their latchkey
In case of the PIOs, there is palpable unease at the origin and growth of the problem, which went on unchecked for a considerable time until it exploded. Described variously, in hindsight and in the current context, by the community workers and social supporters that we came across in Durban, it was either linked to, “a denial, a hesitation to acknowledge their ‘addicted-children’ and youth on the part of the Indian families juxtaposed with the shock of eroding cultural values and fragmenting family life that it implies”\(^7\), or the rising use of illicit substances was plainly attributed to, “a growing disillusionment in the project of democracy owing to lack of employment opportunities”\(^8\).

The ISA’s initial resentment and unease over the issue, as much at the reasons associated with the private domain of the self as towards the state and the public domain, evolved into a sentiment of growing public concern and pressure for action in respect of illicit drugs. Law enforcement authorities, substance abuse researchers and service providers all concur that the nature and scale of illicit drug trafficking, consumption and related problems appear to be increasing in South Africa largely due to political, economic and social changes that have taken place in the country (Fajnzylber, Lederman and Loayza \(1998\)). In 2004, a year before the ADF came into being, the South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use, funded by the Department of Health published a report on the state of drug use and peddling in Durban. The findings confirmed that 50% of patients in Durban who reported Mandrax as their primary substance of abuse were ‘Indian’ but that only 20.3% of the overall figure were under the age of 20. This suggested that Mandrax, what was once the drug of choice in Chatsworth was being rejected by the next generation of drug-abusers. Many Mandrax dealers were reported to have started stocking sugars, in the process, leading to a turf war between peddlers of the two substances resulting simultaneously in risky social changes on ground. It also meant that of the many reasons leading to the current sugars addiction amongst the Durban Indian Youth, having grown up with the adults/parents addicted to or involved with Mandrax (etc.) trafficking was certainly one factor that upped the risk further.

In April 2005, a public meeting held at the Chatsworth Youth Centre to discuss the problem of substance abuse resulted in the establishment of the ADF. Recognizing the moment of intervention, a growing body of concerned citizens inspired the establishment of the Anti-Drug Forum. Starting as a process of self-gaze -where people came together, in the between and the be-twixt of the public and the private, it formed into a full blown intimate political sphere leading to a set of formal as well as informal social actions around the cause. Meanwhile challenges, that have consistently upped the ante of the anti-

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7 Interviews with a Social worker from the Department of Social Development, a Police Personnel, a Chatsworth Court Judge, at an ADF meeting. 17.1.2013.

8 Interviews with social workers and staff at the Aryan Benevolent Home. 5.2.2013
substance abuse movement continued to unfold in landscape of the movement. A year after the formation of the ADF, The Mail and Guardian, (Tolsi 2006), reported,

“Durban has become afflicted by and infamous for its ‘sugars’ rush’. Sugars is a mixture of residual cocaine and heroin cut with anything from rat poison to household detergents and baby powder, is a cheap, addictive drug that has swept the youth in this mainly Indian township south of Durban rising steadily in use since the past one decade. Activists and addicts allege that there is collusion between policemen and drug dealers in the township”.

The ADF has its roots firmly entrenched in the Chatsworth and surrounding communities and has a proud history of being one of the leading organisations that has mobilised its communities, community organisations, public and private sector alike in the fight against drugs. Many police operations which were conducted in the area to rid drugs was a direct result of the mounting pressure by the ADF. Established nine years ago, the organisation believed that there was a dire need in the community to educate, empower and train volunteers on how to tackle this ongoing scourge. The Anti-Drug Forum based in Chatsworth is not only proving to be a huge success in rehabilitating school children and young adults hooked on lethal drugs, but it has become one of the leading institutions in KZN in the fight against substance abuse. The ADF is now turning a new leaf in its history where it is taking a step towards a, as Pillay shared with us, “a tentative partnership with the government....where if agreements work out and are respected, it goes forward and if not it, continues in its endeavors independently as before” 9. Some of the benefits of the newly established centre in Arena Park, Chatsworth, are drug testing, counselling, education, awareness and support groups. At the launch of this new centre in early 2014, the ADF chairperson, Pillay stated,

“My team and I are working hard to have a drug free society. My short term goals for the ADF are to teach pupils at schools to understand addiction and that experimenting with drugs is not cool. They are being educated in a fun way through the Smart Club10 in the form of singing, dancing and involving themselves in community initiatives. We are also encouraging religious organisations to get involved. My long-term goal is to open a rehab station because we have knowledge about this and how it will change lives in our community.” (Thambiran, 2014).

The ADF experiments with a pioneering and multi-disciplinary method to wellness and healing for patients and families with traumatic drug use histories. Drawing inspiration from the Indian meditation

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9 Interview with Sam Pillay at the ADF smart Club Workshop in the Chatsworth Youth Centre, 07.02.2014. For the emerging partnership between the government and the ADF, see (Thambiran, 2014), “An upbeat Mrs. N G Mbanjwa, the MEC for Social Development said, “We must work together and support each other so that we rid our communities of all the vices and drugs.”; and, the keynote speaker at the function, Ravi Pillay, MEC for Human Settlements stated that the community should take a leaf out of the ADF’s book who is making an invaluable contribution in the fight against drugs in the community. “Government has finally recognised the efforts of the ADF and we should support all initiatives of the ADF,” he further said.

10 See Rising Sun, Overport: 2014, for news on the ADF’s Smart club network endeavours with local schools.
techniques, it has designated the India-based, non-governmental humanitarian and educational programme known as the Art of Living as a fundamental method in its re-habilitation activities. Designed to refocus the mind through the use of breathing, meditation and relaxation techniques, the programme is used by the ADF to provide crucial coping mechanism for those who are in rehabilitation. For it is during the first few weeks that the patient is often overwhelmed with conflicting emotions. Not being able to deal with these inconsistent feelings often causes the individual to relapse. The program also aids in managing one’s emotions and coping with the stress that the drug abuser not only inflicted on themselves but also on all those who love and care for them. Sam Pillay shares his insight regarding addiction, “The ADF firmly believes that it is essential to deal with the psychological aspects of addiction since this makes up to 95% of the rehabilitation process. Most addictions prey on the mind of the individual and thus it is essential to redirect the mind-set of the person in rehabilitation. This is why the Art of Living Foundation ‘Upliftment Program’ was adopted as a mandatory and crucial aspect of the rehabilitation process.” (Art of Living and IAHV, South Africa: 2014)

During our interactions with the ADF staff, helpers, and volunteers and with local school(s)-students, teachers and Principals, parents and families who visit and collaborate with the forum, the question that arose was: why was this peoples’ action so attractive for the participants and so vital for the context? SM actors indicate their want to participate in action in matters that directly concern them. While ubuntu is reflective of an enabling thinking, the people want to extend it to a space for enabling action. For what would be a democracy without enabling action for the people, of the people and by the people, they ask? Democracy needs more than procedures such as votes or mechanisms quotas. Especially in the South African context, it requires, an equal provision of services in pressing matters that cut across race and class (Allan and Heese, 2011). So while it is important to de-racialize, at the same time on the ground it is a pertinent task to re-contextualize the democracy and make space for an empowering politics. In practical terms, the following suggestions came up for re-contextualizing the system:

- The society and state need to pledge a sustained political, social, health and educational commitment to investing in programmes that will contribute towards reducing public health problems, improving individual health and well-being, promoting social and economic integration, reinforcing family systems and making communities safer. One problem faced on ground is that there is a perpetual lack of substantial funds to handle the problem - either from the state or from the society. Philanthropists and policy makers alike push the issue in the backyard of considerations. Added to this, there is a monetary nonchalance or a discriminatory attitude over substance abuse, wherein the tacit assumption is, ‘that it’s a problem of luxury or the users themselves are responsible’ -which is not always the case and which is certainly very unhelpful in alleviating the issue effectively. If the problem is expanding to the extent that it is expanding, the onus is collectively socio-economic and political as much as it is an individual and family based issue-if at all one needs to go by onus fixation.
• Improve living conditions and community safety through a combination of more effective policing, infrastructural upgrading and encouragement to participatory approaches like community policing. On the ground it is common knowledge that the structure of drugs is not just chemical or social but political as well.\textsuperscript{11} Sugars is a second generation synthetic drug that the community is dealing with. The foundation of illicit drug trafficking and its abuse among the Indian community was laid with the use of smuggled Mandrax, introduced by the connivance or negligence by many state and non-state actors, many of whom also pertained to Chatsworth. Hence the systems of corruption and apathetic bureaucratic gaze on the issue need to be replaced by a responsible approach to deal with the scourge. In this endeavour the community itself needs to adopt a cautious participation by promoting neighbourhood vigilance schemes.

• The state must enable decriminalisation by ensuring quality and not quantity of arrests: Politics and policy is not just about dealing with problems but about engaging with people behind as well as in those problems. As a grassroots feedback on the issue people propose a qualitative over a quantitative approach to arrests in drug use cases. The local participants and collaborators of the ADF narrate that the state policing approach is such that in a bid to de-criminalize the drug use context, many arrests are made to show the numbers on governance record-registers. However the real people and networks responsible for the problem are left untouched. So effectively, their observation from within their situation is that one big drug dealer arrested, bought to book and his/her networks busted, would be more relevant as a relief measure as well as a precedence than a 100 teenage users put behind the bars.

Therefore........

Adopting the mirror of the emic evaluation approach and further enriching it with interpretaion of the peoples’ self-gaze unshackles rich insights into the ongoing processes of social change. It is clear that among the ISAs, as among others, not everybody emerged a hero or became heroic from the day to day practice of living apartheid. In their self-analysis, one of the field in which the PIOs seem to have lost out and continue to face severe challenges is that of drug addiction and the related networks of drug affliction in their space and time. This is not to negate the peoples’ readiness to build or their sense of participation in their hard won Ubuntu-Democracy. On the contrary the more they self-analyse and

\textsuperscript{11} UNODCCP, Vienna (1999: 40) which cites some of the main “socio-economic” reasons for an expected deterioration in South Africa’s drug Problem. Note that the main reason indicated by many key informants was a purely political factor, namely, policing and law enforcement weakness, due not least to the legacy of the apartheid system and later inadequate policies. Weak policing and law enforcement, weak border control, economic pressure, insufficient services (drug treatment facilities), demographic pressures, decriminalization advocacy.
realize where they have come from, the more inspiring it becomes for them to live in their contemporrary new South Africa. An underling message in the movement is to read its landscape as a document of human history with its fascinating sense of time and layers replete with human values which inform the genius of the place. In their collective concerns, they project a desire to promote solidarity for taking the Ubuntu-Democracy forward in a participatory way. For understanding how it provokes participation in public life, three important observations resulting from our research are:

- The movement is not against the state but is pitched against its slow bureaucratic politics and lack of rehabilitation facilities in sparse recognition of the issue. The actors therefore frame and envisage a role for themselves in their own space, to alleviate the encumbrances faced by families, schools, youth, hospitals and neighbourhoods especially.

- while it negotiates the state apparatus to press for policy changes/ right implemantation, it also holds a critical dialogue within its own micro context. It imparts an enaging, enabling and reflective gaze towards the social ills manifest in society as a cause for and result of drug abuse. By contributing towards collective brainstorming and periodic reviewing of the situation from and at various platforms, it performs the role of tackling stalemates or forwarding social evolution around the issue.

- Motivated by an overbearing hope for building up a better place and space for the successive generations of their county, the movement searches for methods of collaboration between the state and the communities.

- The movement encourages one to think that, given the changing profile of the communities and schools in Chatsworth, the addiction malady has dangers of sweeping through and cutting across not only to newer generations of Indians but also to newer communities. Hence, by wanting to move away from the unpleasnt old as well as the unpleasant new and by perpetually learning to situate themselves in the ongoing challenges of the new South Africa, the movement participants imagine and strive to build a society the vicinity as much as the country, without the problems associated with illicit drugs. The movement becomes in this sense, local and national at the same time, converting the space and time of Chatsworth into a unique as well as a common site of transition in the contemporary South Africa.

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