

**SHAHBAG, A CRITICAL SOCIAL MOMENT:
A COLLECTIVE AGENCY CAPABILITIES ANALYSIS**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis sets out an approach to understanding the impact of change oriented ‘social moments’ on social practices and structures. The empirical case on which the thesis draws to develop this argument is the Shahbag protests in Bangladesh.

At the theoretical level, the thesis suggests that ‘Social Moments’ oriented to change (as differentiated from social movements) can be triggered by latent injustices occurring within a given society. Using a Critical Theoretical lens and the Capability Approach, the thesis sets out a Being-Doing-Impact Model oriented to an understanding of the conditions necessary for a Social Moment to occur. These moments occur where individuals from different parts of the social habitus come together, to create a scene, as a critical mass in order to effect change. Such moments can lead to shifts in systems and practices, and ultimately to a more just society.

The research assesses in detail the conditions that made the Shahbag Moment possible. These conditions include: the presence of the necessary agency capabilities of individuals; the effective mobilisation of instrumental freedoms; the substantive presence of networks of social support and solidarity (all of which bring into play an important affective dimension). The wider social context is also viewed as a crucial component. The thesis shows how, for example, the atmosphere at Shahbag can be considered as cultural, positive and safe. It also shows a willingness on the part of Government to listen and respond to the will of the people. Moreover, the role of the media and social media, which shared the Moment’s messages, and offered an open and transparent information platform to debate and discuss the issues was significant. An analysis of the case histories of the Shahbag Moment in Bangladesh allows for the further development of the theoretical approach in a concrete empirical context

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

Collective action is emerging as an important medium for social change, and although transitory, its impact can be profound, altering not only social practices but also the very structures of society. Although not a new phenomenon, its frequency and impact suggest an alternative way through which structures and practices can be changed in the contemporary context. One such example that I will explore in depth is the Shahbag event in 2013 in Bangladesh. This event was significant in the Bangladesh context as it was of historical importance, it was unique for Bangladesh and instigated changes in structure and practice. It also offers an example of a ‘social moment’ of collective action in the contemporary context. Shahbag generated a critical mass overnight through the use of cultural, peaceful protests, and within a month had generated a lasting impact with a change in the Law and its implementation.

The research question formulated was therefore: How and why does a critical social moment of collective agency and capability emerge and decline? This included developing an understanding of the conditions and catalysts involved, the role of agency and resistance by individuals and collectively. The research also looked at how Instrumental Freedoms changed during the Shahbag Moment and how the Moment had an impact on structure, policy and practice.

This research brings together different theoretical literature to develop a model that adds value to existing ways of understanding social phenomena in the contemporary context. The research uses the work of Critical Theorists such as Gramsci, Foucault, Hardt and Negri, Newman, Laclau and Mouffe to strengthen the Instrumental Freedoms outlined by Sen as part of the Capability Approach. Sen’s Instrumental Freedoms are developed using critical theorists using their understandings of active revolution, expansive hegemony and the role of the organic intellectual (Gramsci). The research also draws from Foucault’s understanding of the ethical self, resistance, agency, power networks and knowledge, in addition to Hardt and Negri’s concepts of the multitude of singularities and the potentiality of relationships in forming the commons and socially transformative networks. Laclau offers the notion of ‘moments’ of rupture and separation where Anarchists believe there can be the construction of an alternative space outside existing systems. This conceptual framework creates an argument that resistance should be relational, that there is a need to be equally free to have equal capability and agency to effect change through changing relationships.

The analysis of the case histories builds on the work of Sewel, Gamson, Snow, Castell, Goodwin and Jasper, exploring the social mechanisms of injustice, networks, communications, culture and emotions in social phenomena. Sewel contributes an understanding of how networks, and different individuals with different positions and knowledge, offer the ability to change structures. The key resources that need to be mobilised include moral, cultural, human, material and networks (Snow et al). Also, to motivate action there needs to be an injustice, a common identity and individuals with agency (Gamson). Goodwin and Jasper, and Opp, suggest different groups that need to be mobilised in order to create critical communities to motivate action. Castell highlights the role of social media and communications in contemporary contexts.

I argue that current theories fall short of being able to explain the shift between social protests and the formation of a critical mass that can lead to changes in structure and practice in the contemporary context. Thus, recent examples of social phenomena such as the Arab Springs, or the Occupy Movements, do not fit existing models, were not anticipated and could not be fully explained in relation to how and why they occurred when they did, and the conditions that were necessary. Although Shahbag offers a similar example of a contemporary social phenomenon it was directed against a judicial injustice rather than capitalism or the State. I argue that collective agency and capability played a key role in this process. In the modern contemporary context people from a diverse range of networks and positions have formed temporary solidarity, to find meaning and purpose collectively for a just cause. Shahbag offered a unique opportunity to explore a contained example of such a social phenomenon and the process of its emergence and decline. It was unique for Bangladesh even though protests are common place. This is because it brought together a critical mass of people from a diverse range of networks; it was positive, cultural and safe and had an impact on structure and practice within a short time frame. The research to understand Shahbag needed to bring together different but overlapping theoretical disciplines to inform each other and develop a deeper understanding of the Shahbag Moment.

While exploring the literature regarding civil society it became evident that there was a conflicting assumption that civil society was the source of social change: however, this was limited by the overshadowing influence of market and statutory sector forces. Critical theoretical insights helped, by positing that civil society had become an ‘empty signifier’ and that rather than being perceived organisationally, it could be reconceptualised as a ‘sphere’ where social change was still possible. Critical theorists however also limited the potential of

civil society as a sphere of possibilities, and tend to neglect emotions, culture and the process of social change in reality within the contemporary context. To fill this gap, I explored social research on collective entities. Although they lacked the networked understanding of Foucault's power and knowledge articulation applicable to the contemporary context, they give useful insights into mechanisms that support the development of social collective entities for social change. The Capability Approach further offers an insightful framework of Instrumental Freedoms to consider the changes that need to occur to effect change individually and collectively through agency capability. However, the capability approach does not incorporate critical theoretical and social research insights into how collective agencies and capabilities could form.

This research argues that civil society is a 'sphere', rather than an organisational form, and is the main sphere where collective action can occur to effect changes in structure and practice beyond the market and the state. It uses insights from Critical Theories and the Capability Approach's Instrumental Freedoms as a framework to explore the case history of the Shahbag Moment in 2013 in Bangladesh. As part of this research I introduce a distinction between a movement and what I term a 'moment'. A moment occurs where people from a diverse range of backgrounds are motivated to join in and create a 'field of discursivity' within public discourse, where a common identity is formed to enact change by a large number of people (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001). Through a dialectic and constructionist understanding of power relations, agency and resistance, Critical Theories offer an ontology of how social transformation can occur in contemporary contexts. The Capability Approach is used as a framework, where social, economic, political, security and transparency freedoms facilitate our understanding of how collective entities can emerge. The case history of the Shahbag Moment highlights the significance of emotions, responsibility and cultural enactment. These generate solidarity which underpins collective action at a critical social moment in time.

Why the Shahbag Moment as a Case Study

In Bangladesh, the capital city Dhaka has a number of main transport links and roads that intersect each other, Shahbag Square is one of them in the south of the city. Shahbag Square is a main intersection between old and new Dhaka, the cultural, university quarters, and the business quarter. It has a number of significant spaces around it including Rumna Park, the Race Course where the famous speech was made by Sheikh Mujib on the eve of being arrested

before the outbreak of the Liberation War, as well as the Shoheed Minar a symbolic monument to the Language Movement. It is usually an area for festivities and days out with the National Museum and Shishu (Childrens) Academy, flower market and tea stalls, the Bangla Academy book fairs and exhibitions. The main road interchange, Shahbag Square, became the scene of the Shahbag Moment for three weeks in February 2013 and was occupied by protestors so that no cars or public transport could use it. During those three weeks thousands of people came participated in the Shahbag Moment, from all walks of life, celebrating and protesting for an equal and just verdict from the ICT Trials.

The Shahbag Moment offered a unique case study for my research. It was a time limited peoples protest that developed a critical mass and had an impact on structure and practice. In its emergence it reflected the instrumental freedom dimensions of the capability approach: politically, with the Government responding in a positive way to the demands of the moment; economically, with local people, Government and businesses all giving their support in kind and crowd sourcing food and logistics for the moment; socially with the bringing together through diverse networks of a wide range of people from all walks of life; security wise the Shahbag offered a safe, positive, cultural space where women and children felt free to join the public protest; and transparency which was provided through the media and social media and online coverage of the moment.

In an historical context it was interesting as it was one of the few times that there was such a public critical mass in Bangladesh regarding an injustice, where ordinary people who do not usually join protests actively participated. In a time of violence, hartals (strikes) and intimidation, it became a non-violent cultural protest. It was spontaneous, not pre-planned and emerged in response to the judgement made against war crimes committed in 1971. The use of social media by ‘new faces’ (bloggers who were unknown), who freely expressed their views with the backing of key non-party political opinion formers was a key component. Shahbag was seen by many as the last window of opportunity for justice, the denial of which was perceived as a sitting time bomb. The re-imagining of Bengali identity was also of interest, as the initial demand was for the hanging of a collaborator, and yet the protest itself was reconstructed as a celebration of cultural identity and the ideals of the Liberation War. In addition, unlike most protests in Bangladesh, the Shahbag Moment had an impact, there was a petition, Parliamentary debate and Amendment Bill that was passed in Parliament to ensure that there was an equal right of appeal during the ICT Trials.

The rationale for using the Shahbag Moment as a case history was because of the finite nature of the moment. Shahbag, as a physical protest at Shahbag Square started with the announcement of the verdict of the second trial on the 5th February 2013 and ended on the 21st February, Bangladesh Language Movement Day. In such a short space of time, the momentum gathered, and the impact achieved, was very unique for Bangladesh. Globally it was also of interest, given similar mass people protests such as the 2011 Arab Spring and Occupy Movements in America and the UK. I wanted to explore in detail this new, emerging, social phenomena of a collective protest using the capability lens, and critical theoretical insights.

There are a number of significant dates leading to and during the Shahbag Moment:

Year	Date	Event
1971	26 th March	Beginning of the military crackdown by the Pakistani Army with the help of Bengali collaborators
	16 th December	Independence of Bangladesh
1972	24 th January	Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunals) Order was passed to establish a War Crimes Tribunal and establish a court to try the collaborators of the 1971 Liberation War.
1973	20 th July	Passing of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act (ICT Act 1973), to authorise the investigation and prosecution of the persons responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other crimes under international law committed in 1971.
1975	15 th August	

		Military coup and assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family at his home, and counter coups to take over Government power
	8 th November	The Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunals) (Repeal) Ordinance was passed to stop the Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunals) Order of 1972 so that the collaborators were freed and could no longer be put on trial.
1992	26 th March	Nirmul Committee established a ‘gono andalat’ public mock trials of the 1971 genocide collaborators. These ended in the imprisonment of those involved by the then BNP Government.
2008	29 th December	General election in Bangladesh where the Awami League won, with an election pledge to reinstate the ICT Act and try the 1971 collaborators.
2010	25 th March	Revoked the 1975 Ordinance, which was found to be illegal and the ICT Act was re-established so that the Tribunal could be set up and the collaborators of the Liberation War of 1971 could be tried once again.
2013	23 rd January	Verdict of guilty and judgement of capital punishment made against the first ICT case (although the defendant had fled the country).
	5 th February	Verdict of the second case was made, and although found guilty a judgement of life imprisonment was given which sparked the Shahbag Moment.

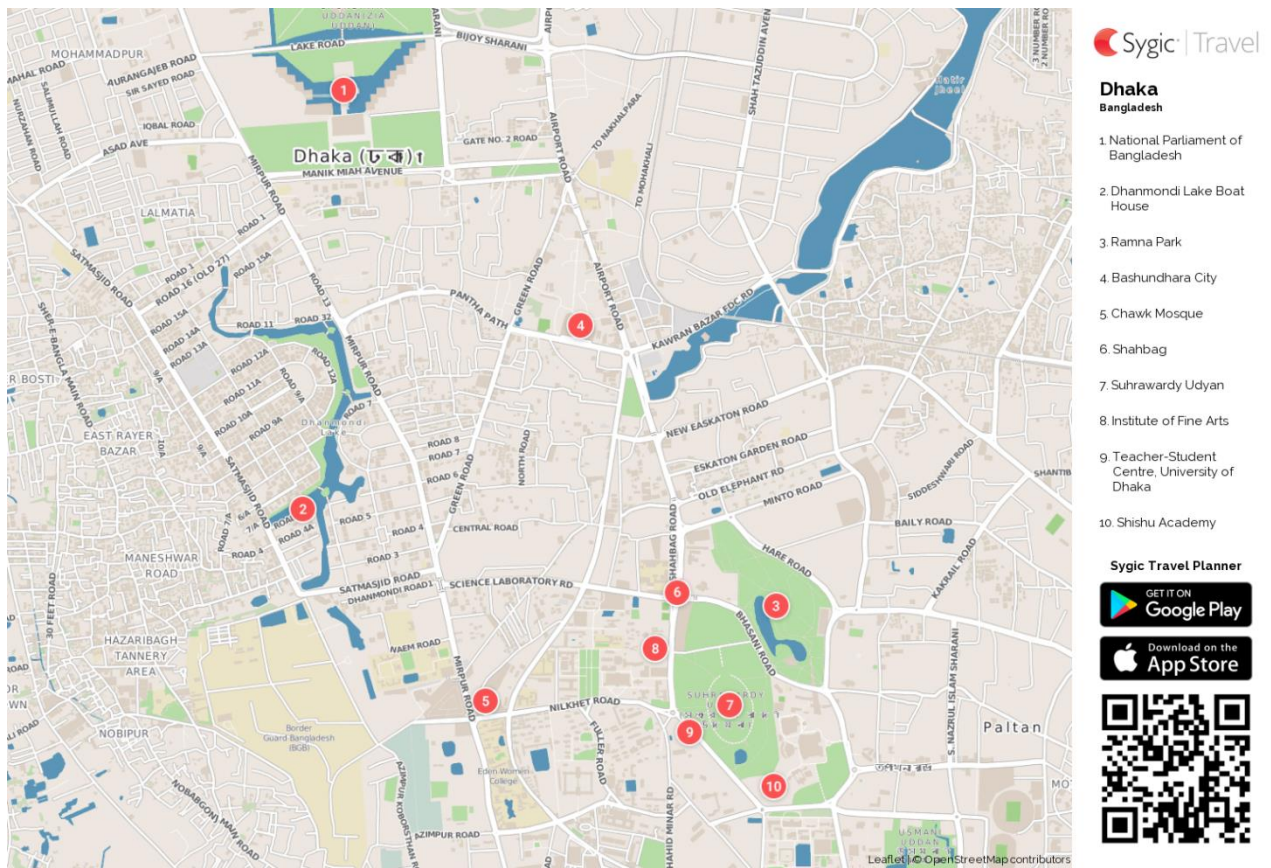
	8 th February	Big rally was held at Shahbag Square and a petition signed and submitted to the Parliament with the demands of Shahbag.
	10 th February	Major ddebate in Parliament supporting the Shahbag Moment and the Parliament set in motion a Bill to amend the law to allow the equal right of appeal.
	12 th February	Three minutes of silence observed across Bangladesh and the diaspora in support of the Shahbag Moments demands.
	14 th February	Candle lite vigil held in memory of the victims of the Liberation War to show solidarity for the Shahbag Moment.
	15 th February	Blogger killed when returning home from Shahbag.
	17 th February	Amendment Bill was passed to allow the equal right of appeal.
	20 th February	Balloons in the name of each of the victims of the Liberation War released across the country and Bengali diaspora.
	21 st February	Language Movement Day, the Shahbag Moment's 24 hour protest at Shahbag Square ended.

Shahbag Square was not the usual place for protests in Bangladesh. It sits at the interchange between major roads running between old (Lalbagh) and new Dhaka, the Business district (Motijheel) and cultural quarters. Nearby is the University of Dhaka Campus and major institutions such as Dhaka Medical College, BUET and is usually associated with street markets and festivals. Nearby is the Shoheed Minar (the Monument to commemorate the Language Day martyrs), Bangladesh National Museum, the Shishu (Children's) Academy, Bangla Academy and Central Public Library. To the east is Ramna Park and the Supreme Court, to the south the University campus and Race Course, in the north the Sheraton Hotel

and to the west the Sonargoan Hotel (the main International Hotels) and the Law Courts. The Parliament (Sangsad Bhaban) and NGO/Charity quarter (Mohammadpur) is further north east along with the old residential quarter (Dhanmondi). Much further north is the Military Residential area (Cantonment), and new (Gulshan) residential quarters, and the airport below Uttara. (See Shahbag Square as indicated on Map 1, and on Map 2 at blue dot).

MAP 1: Tourist Map of part of Dhaka City

Source: <https://travel.sygic.com/en/map/dhaka-printable-tourist-map-city:3173>



Map 2: Dhaka City rail and road map

Source:

https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.researchgate.net%2Ffigure%2FLocation-and-administrative-map-of-Dhaka-city-13_fig1_320292356&psig=AOvVaw0e89vZEBdzzLRumKISUFVI&ust=1586091569101000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=2ahUKEwibut3V6c7oAhWFIRoKHZBtDIEQr4kDegUIARCWAg



Summary

I start by briefly explaining how civil society can be understood as a ‘sphere’, rather than as an organisation that is distinct from the state or market. Chapter One will argue that academic and practice conceptualisations of civil society have developed through a neo-liberal narrative, where civil society is being crowded out by the market and the state. This needs to be reframed for civil society to be seen as an affective sphere for change in contemporary society. Within current discourses there are implicit assumptions that civil society has ‘agency’, such as the capability to determine itself, albeit within a given structural context. Using Bourdieu and Foucault, the notion of agency, and its potential to transform structures in contemporary social networks, is explored. In Chapter Two I explore critical theoretical understandings of agency, power and resistance and their perceived limitations of civil society. This includes insights into how a collective is formed as a ‘populous’ and as a ‘multitude’; singularities with agency who come together at a given moment in time. In Chapter Three, using the Capability Approach, I further build on the understanding of the collective entity, introducing the notion of Instrumental Freedoms, collective capability and agency capability to aid my argument. Chapter Three concludes by considering how social theories contribute to our understanding of the process involved in the development of a collective action, and the role of resources, political opportunity and frames in this context. It also explores the dimensions of protest and space, time and emotion. Part I brings together the different theoretical strands to set a framework for the analysis of the case histories, and also informs the way in which we can understand and analyse the Shahbag Moment, its agency and capabilities.

Part II, Chapter Four outlines the methodological considerations involved, the method used in collecting and analysing the data and the challenges and issues that needed to be addressed as part of this research. It explains why qualitative interviews were used to gather case histories of those involved in the Shahbag Moment. The chapter then explains how the interviewer effect was mitigated when conducting the research. It then outlines the process used to gather data and the coding structure that was developed to analyse the interview texts. It concludes by elaborating on new emerging themes that came from the data but were not initially anticipated in the literature reviews. Chapter Five sets out the historical context for the case histories of the Shahbag Moment in Bangladesh including the liberation war and creation of Bangladesh and the ICT Trials that sparked the Shahbag Moment. Based on the interviews conducted and the triangulated real time data a historiography was produced, which includes

feedback from the participants. The historiography is a compilation of the case histories recounted by the interviewees of the events that unfolded, the emergence of the Shahbag Moment, during the moment, its decline and impact. It also explores beyond the Shahbag scene, the responses and reactions along with other key factors mentioned. It concludes by offering some reflections on the Shahbag Moment and the dominant storyline narratives involved. Chapter Six offers a detailed examination of the analysis of the interviews, the frequency and patterns in the case history narratives from the diverse range of those interviewed based on each of the codes in detail. It then details each of the three stages: prior to, during and post the Shahbag Moment. It concludes by offering some reflections in relation to the literature review.

Part III, Chapter Seven starts by exploring the notion of freedom and free will as a permanent condition in society. It then unpacks the analysis of the Shahbag Moment using Critical Theoretical insights and the Capability Approach including the conditions leading up to the Shahbag Moment, the process during the moment and the outcomes from the moment. It then compares the analysis with Sen's Instrumental Freedoms Framework and the literature review. Chapter Eight brings the research together by developing a Being – Doing – Impact Model informed by the Instrumental Freedoms framework. It starts by using a conditions matrix regarding the wider context within which Shahbag occurred. It offers a model to show the changes that can occur in Instrumental Freedoms to support a social moment. It concludes by offering recommendations and self- reflections regarding the research.

1) CHAPTER ONE: CIVIL SOCIETY AS A SPHERE FOR COLLECTIVE ENTITIES TO FORM

In this chapter I define civil society as a spatial rather than organisational concept outlining the key relevant concepts of civil society, agency and collective action. I then explore understandings of agency, within the structure-agency debate and within networks, and finally how collective entities can form.

1.1 Civil Society

Current definitions of civil society suggest

'... a sphere of interaction between the economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of association (especially voluntary, social movements) and forms of public communication' (Cohen and Arato, 1992, pp. ix).

Cohen and Arato (1992) echo a dominant narrative of the need to protect civil society and its agency from the destructive penetration of the economy and the state. As argued by other theorists, (Newman, 2011; Anheier and Toepler, 2009) civil society here is also seen as having a resource base and it has functions that are heavily influenced by commodification (the infiltration of market principles). It is also affected by state oversight, which influences its 'civic' nature (Anheier and Toepler, 2009, p.153). Wider narratives regarding civil society therefore perceive it as having an assumed agency, although, this is limited in relation to the market and the state. Agency is defined in the International Encyclopaedia of Civil Society as the decision process and capability to pursue individual or collective action, in order to bring about a desired future society (ibid p.152). This definition imagines civic agency to be mislocated in civil society and critiques the limitations of a sectoral analysis of civic agency (ibid). However, if civil society is a sphere, which is not limited by, but rather reaches beyond the boundaries of the state and market, we can reconceptualise civil society as a space where collective entities can form and have agency. However, this must be done in a way that does not erode the concept of civil society itself.

It is argued that civil society has become a term conceptualised within a neo-liberal narrative whose 'chain of equivalences' has been extended to the status of an 'empty signifier' (Laclau, 2007). The term 'civil society' has been used in such a wide range of ways, becoming all things to all people, that its meaning and its significance are still undetermined. As Laclau asserts,

'... the more extended the chain of equivalences that a particular sector comes to represent and the more it's aims become a name for global emancipation, the looser will be the links between that name and its original particular meaning, and the more it will approach the status of an empty signifier.' (Laclau, 2007, p.34-36).

This has occurred through civil society's popularisation as a solution to social injustice and the democracy / development challenge. Neo-liberal policy has assumed the agency of civil society and invested in civil society as a key partner in the development 'aid' agenda, transforming and democratising society but with limited substantial impact (Easterly, 2001 and Evans, 2004). This is owing to the general premise that effectiveness has been idealised in Anglo-American institutions, e.g. Non-Government Organisations (NGO's), as being an optimal development instrument (Evans, 2004, pp.33-34). Thus, as a panacea to social ills, civil society has been unable to fulfil its promise, and its relevance and credibility has been put into question. This research offers an alternative understanding of civil society where agency is possible and where it can be filled with an alternative meaning.

Civil society, by being defined organisationally, has become conceptually weakened. As Laclau notes '*... the chains of equivalence which are unified around this signifier tend to empty it, and to blur its connection with the actual content with which it was originally associated*', (Laclau, 2007, p.45). Civil society has lost its significance in different discursive contexts, as it has been purposefully whittled down through additional equivalences being drawn: the more that is being attributed to civil society, the less meaning and significance civil society has. 'Empty signifiers...can only (become) so on the basis of reducing to a minimum their particularistic content. At its limit, this process reaches a point where the homogenising function is carried out by a pure name' (Laclau, 2005, p.7). This dilution of meaning and significance is explained by Billis (2010) who provides an alternative approach. He accepts current realities, highlighting the blurring of boundaries between different spheres of the public state, private economy and social civil society (where different hybrid models of organisations adopt different characteristics e.g. social enterprises, mutuals, community interest companies). In the modern context then, civil society cannot be protected from state and market forces, but it has agency to decide the type of organisation it wants to be, even if it is only within the boundaries of the market and state. Billis echoes critical theorists in suggesting that there is no longer a clear distinction between the state and civil society, as new organisational models appear, or because civil society is being penetrated by the state and economy. Here again there is an organisational rather than spatial understanding of the diversity of forms that civil society entities can take. It is accepted that many civil society entities are formal organisations that

have become more and more ‘professionalised’ and have adopted practices that are market and state service delivery driven. There are, however, a large number of civil society entities and activities ‘below the radar’,¹ which have not taken this approach in the current context to survive. I argue that this is where the potential for civil society to develop agency, capability and free will, can be found.

In reconciling the blurring of boundaries and plurality of definitions, Muukkonen (2009) uses Wittgenstein’s argument of ‘family resemblance’: that there can be common characteristics, even if they are not shared elements in a diversity of common entities. Mouffe (2009) builds on Wittgenstein’s break with universalisation and homogenisation in liberal political theory, suggesting a contextualising rather than a Universalist rationalist approach. This contextualising approach fits in with a more spatial understanding of civil society. A more relational understanding of civil society, as a public sphere for all, means that theoretically we can conceptualise civil society as a space where people from all spheres of life, public, private and voluntary, can come together for a common purpose. Furthermore, I suggest the need to re-assert a more contextualising understanding of civil society as a sphere of collective action beyond state and market relations, where people come together for a ‘moment’ to effect change.

Edwards (2004) recognises that civil society is a contested territory in both theory and reality, and that the shape of civil society is changing. He argues that civic engagement is decreasing along with the membership of mass-based organisations, such as trade unions. However, engagement with NGOs, professional associations and smaller informal groups are on the increase. In this climate of change, we need to re-examine civil society and reframe the notion in terms of a more spatial and temporal definition. By reclaiming and re-conceptualising civil society, as a sphere where ‘collective action’ can occur independent of market and state forces, we can develop an understanding of its potential agency and role in social change.

In the theoretical literature reviewed above there is an implicit assumption made of the capability of civil society to have agency for a purpose conditioned by its role in maintaining relations with the state and market, through democracy and the status quo. None of the current discourses see civil society outside and beyond the triad of state and market influence. Consequently, social change is seen as limited within these boundaries of relations with the state and the market. Even when considering the role of civil society as a space of activists and campaigners, where public power and solidarity is enacted through democratic participation,

¹ Term used by ESRC Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC) www.tsrc.ac.uk research stream

the role still falls within these boundaries. Therefore, the assumption remains that civil society has agency for the purpose of change, but this is bounded by existing triad paradigms.

Somers (1995) criticises modern political sociology for using an Anglo-American centric narrative. He suggests that the current structure and understanding of civil society is grafted onto an epistemology of social naturalism. This dominant meta-narrative continues to constrain research. He suggests that civil society is therefore essentially a contested and under-theorised concept in political discourse. Somers states that

'(t)he naturalism of modernity, civil society, and markets is fixed in opposition to the arbitrariness of tradition, the state and regulation. In the process the entire structure is naturalised...the hidden narratives in these conceptual categories are the source of persistent impasses in the attempts...to reconcile oppositions such as structure and agency, the individual and society...' (Somers, 1995, p.258).

To reclaim civil society within this dominant neo-liberal narrative, we need to reframe our understanding of civil society and return to a fundamental spatial notion of civil society as a space for collective entities rather than as organisational. Civil society can then be reclaimed as a public space, virtually or in reality, where new relationships can be formed, and where the power dynamics of relationships and practices in society, the state and the market can be resisted and transformed. There has, more recently, been a move towards a more spatial definition of civil society in relation to its capability as an arena of participation (Fioramonti and Fiori (2010) and Heinrick and Fioramonti, (2007) as cited in Fioramonti and Kononykhina, (2015)). This has been used as part of the development of the CIVICUS Enabling Environment Index to understand the conditions that can increase the capability of participation. This research is predicated on reframing civil society as a sphere, arena or space for collective entities which can develop agency capabilities, in a given 'moment', to effect social change in structure and practice.

Building on the notion of an empty signifier, the opposite is also possible, where in a given moment in time, through discourse, meaning can be attributed to a floating signifier by a critical mass for a specific purpose. This is the process where meaning comes to be attributed – a political process. A moment, in this instance, is not just a concept of time, but for this research is expanded based on Laclau and Mouffe's work on discourse theory. Thus, within a given public discourse, the elements of the discourse, the 'floating signifiers' can be connected through 'articulation' to form 'moments' around 'nodal points' (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001). This articulation of the 'signifier' generates 'fields of discursivity' (ibid pp. ix) where public discourses can be rearticulated. Hence, signifiers can be nodal points when their meaning is

fixed in a given ‘moment’ through discourse, by creating a chain of equivalence that does not empty the signifier of a fixed meaning. In this way, a common understanding of a concept, issue, problem or theme can form in a given moment. This is not just relevant to the notion of civil society for the purposes of this research, but also as demonstrated from the case histories can generate a ‘moment’ where a ‘nodal point’ of collective entities form a critical mass, co-constructing a common identity against a perceived injustice for a given signifier. As suggested in Chapter Two, post-anarchists view this in terms of ‘moments’ of rupture and separation from the status quo, inventing political spaces outside the system. The Shahbag Moment would suggest that this theoretical understanding of how a nodal point is generated outside the status quo is possible in reality.

1.2 Agency

In the International Encyclopaedia of Civil Society (Anheier and Toepler, 2009) the notion of ‘civic agency’ is defined as a predisposition toward, and a capability for, leading life together with others in a society and being concerned for the whole (ibid., p.151). This definition views agency as a capability, which can be used in collective action, but as outlined earlier, and once again in common with other theorists, civil society as defined is not seen to offer an appropriate ‘space’ because of the heavy influence of the market and state. However, as argued above, if civil society is not conceived organisationally, but as a sphere where collective entities can emerge, then agency is possible beyond the boundaries of the state and market reach.

Hegel believed that

‘...man is never clear what he is doing at the time; for the agency is not simply man. We are all caught up as agents in a drama we do not really understand. Only when we have played it out do we understand what all the time has been afoot ... in an important way therefore the agency is not fully ours’ (Hegel cited in Taylor, 1993, pp.419-20).

As such, traditional views have been coupled historically with theorists’ preoccupations with the structure and agency debate (Toepler and Anheier (2009), Emirbayer and Mische (1998)). More recently Hay (2002, p.116) argues that there are three ways of conceiving the agency-structure relationship: reductionist (either, or), oppositional (separate and autonomous), and dialectic (duality of influences). In line with the first conception, structuralists believe that structure is foundational and explains the ‘subjects’ failure to achieve final or full determination. This reductionist approach uses rigid causal determinism, which loses the efficacy of human action and agency (Sewell, 1992). Structures thus become the ‘determining mechanism’, rendering redundant the consideration of orthodox conceptions of agency

(Conner, 2011, pp.102). Although oppositional theorists see agency and structure as separate and autonomous, there is an interplay between the two, where their possibilities and potentials are constrained. Here the structural conditions of existence, inherited from past forms of thought and action, determine the realisation of agency and the realm of freedom (Bieler and Morton, 2001). However, in the dialectics approach, in every historical development possibilities to break free always arise: being embedded in historical structures does not imply that agency is necessarily determined, but that the past shapes the conditions for change in the present through the agency of social forces (Cox, 1987 & Cox and Sinclair,1996). Here then structure and agency are interrelated and influence each other on a continual basis, and neither can exist without the other (Wetherly, 2005, p.74). This is the understanding of agency-structure dialectics that I have adopted for the purposes of my research.

Bourdieu (1977) informed this dialectical approach through his studies of the basic parameters of agentic actor-hood, suggesting types of agency for the self, for others, for non-actor entities and for principles.

'The conditions associated with... existence, produce 'habitus' systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structuring structural predispositions to function ... as principles that generate and organise practices ...' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53).

As such, for Bourdieu, 'habitus' is a set of dispositions that engender agents to act and react in different ways, shapes agency, but it is the hegemonic elites who shape the 'habitus' (Clever, 2007). Bourdieu argued that '... the habitus engenders all the thoughts, all the perceptions, and all the actions ...' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 95); it works '... as a system of lasting transposable dispositions which integrate past experiences as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions ...' (ibid., p.83). Within these systems there are 'fields', networks of positions defined by a particular distribution of knowledge that endows the field with a specific practical logic. The field is not a static structure but seen as 'spaces of struggle' reconstructed by agents within the habitus (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, Ch 6); it is within these fields that collective entities with agency can form.

Giddens (1984) developed the dialectical approach differently, suggesting an analytical dualism of structure such that human agency and structure presuppose each other, based on the assumption of a knowledgeable agent. Giddens argues that the structural constraints of habitus within which agents operate can be overcome with the exercise of reflexive agency (Greener, 2004). In his theory of structuration, he argues that '... structures must not be conceptualised as simply placing constraints on human agency, but as enabling ...' (Giddens, 1976, p.161).

He argues that the self is not a passive entity, determined by external influences but that individuals forge their own identity and contribute to social influences (Giddens, 1991, p.2). Thus, humans can transform the way structures give them the capacity to act, through human agency, i.e. reflective action and non-reflective practice (Greener, 2004).

Furthermore, the way in which resources (allocative and authoritative) are accessed and deployed by the agent is the exercise of power and agency: ‘... (R)esources are the structures properties of social systems, drawn upon and reproduced by knowledgeable agents in the course of interaction (Giddens, 1984, p.15). Here Giddens redefines structure as ‘rules and resources’ rather than context, which he sees as the system. Thus, the agent’s ‘intentionality’ is within the layers of structure which conditions agency and defines the range of potential strategies deployed by the agent to realise their intentions (Hay,1995, p.99). Giddens believed that subjects have the capacity to resist and act otherwise with ‘intentional agency’. However, it is argued that his approach is problematic as it underplays pre-reflexive and embodied aspects of self-identity, conflating identity and agency with choice within existing systems and structures (Barnes (2000), Caldwell (2007)). By focusing on the agent, and the choices they make within the structural constraints, Giddens ignores the impact of structure, culture and other factors on the formation of the agent’s identity. It is argued by Bevir (1999) that the individual subject is therefore not an autonomous agent but a social construct. However, although agents exist in regimes of power and knowledge, agents can determine the way they exercise reason and perform actions. This is because we cannot individuate actions based on social context alone (ibid., pp.67-68).

Here, Foucault’s understanding of power and how it works has implications for Giddens. The agent can never truly be ‘intentional’ given that the agent’s thoughts and actions are limited by the normalising technologies of power. Giddens counters Foucault, suggesting that ‘... he cannot analyse the relation between body and agency since to all intents and purposes he equates the two. Essentially the body plus power equals agency’ (Giddens, 1991, p.57). But this still sets boundaries on the potential agency capability of the individual and collective and cannot explain examples of paradigm shifts or major social change that go beyond limiting structural boundaries and constructs.

Significantly, it is argued by Sewell that knowledge of the structural boundaries, constructs or as outlined earlier ‘habitus’ and ‘field’, means the ability to transpose and extend these boundaries, structures and systems. Thus, agency is the capacity to reinterpret and mobilise an array of resources in terms of the systems and cultural schema, to new contexts by

competent members of society. As such, the capacity of agency is a given (Sewell, 1992, pp.18-20). Furthermore, the occupancy of different social positions in different fields gives people the knowledge of different schemas to access different amounts of resources in the system. This generates different possibilities for transformative action, as structure empowers agents differently (Sewell, 1992, p.21). So, while the structures, systems and schemas of society exist and shape behaviours and actions, this is not always restrictive. When individuals from different parts of the system, with a given capability to have agency, have a knowledge and understanding of these schemas and structures, this creates the potential to mobilise resources to resist. This is a fundamental aspect of my research and theorises how collective entities can have agency and break free of normalising structures and effect change.

The argument above is further strengthened by other theorists, including critical realists and those interested in the notion of free will. Although ideology and norms exert powerful influences on conduct, there is still agency or free will, as noted earlier. Neither structure nor agency can exist independently of each other (Wetherly, 2005; Hay, 2002). Agency and structure are thus present simultaneously, they are therefore relational (mutually constitutive) and dialectical (Hay, 2002, p.127) and must be conceived in relation to each other. Jessop (1996) elaborates on the notion of dialectic realism as structures that have no meaning outside the context of specific agents pursuing specific strategies. As agents are reflexive, and capable of reformulating within the limits of their own identity and interests, they are able to engage in strategic calculations about their current situation (Jessop, 1996, pp.124-126). Wetherly criticises this understanding for neglecting the structural location and positions of actors. He argues that in this way it limits identity, location and interest to agency, thus conflating agency with conduct, and losing the notion of 'free will' (Wetherly, 2005).

Critical realism addresses the ontological hiatus between structure and agency by seeing them both as relatively autonomous.

'... (S)ociety must be regarded as an ensemble of structures, practices and conventions which individuals reproduce or transform, but which would not exist unless they did so... society, then, provides the necessary conditions for intentional human action and intentional human action is a necessary condition for it'
(Bhaskar, 1998, pp.36-7).

For Bhaskar, (1989), agency in critical realism is embodied intentional causality, or processes that would not otherwise have occurred. It is within emergent social structures, where present collectives encounter structural conditions for the exercise of agency that are contemporary manifestations of past forms of collective agency (Archer, 1995). Bhaskar's TMSA

(Transformational Model of Social Activity) avoids the subject/object dualism seeing agency and structure as mutually interdependent and irreducible, rather than being determinants of each other, so that they are seen as enablements and constraints (Dean et al., 2006), similar to the dialectic approach mentioned earlier. Thus, the position occupied by an individual influences their practices and agency in the structure (Bhaskar, 1998, pp.40-1). Although the structure that they inhabit may condition them, their interaction with it modifies the structure and changes its elaboration (Archer, 1982). This is reflective of earlier discussions regarding Bourdieu's habitus, fields and Sewell's elaborations of networks for social change. This dialectic between structure and agency, however, is still within the networks of power as suggested by Foucault, which then questions the possibility of agency in the sense of a 'free will'.

Although I cover Foucault's contribution in more detail in the next chapter, he offers insights to inform our understanding of agency here. For Foucault, those (subjects rather than agents) who have agency practice the subjugation of knowledge, give attention to the nature of power and refuse the meta-physics and ontology of power.

'Agency of any who are able to refuse to objectify power as an object and instead recognise that relations of power that look fixed or stable may become at each moment a changeable strategy of confrontation ...' (Foucault, 1982, p.348).

It is given that the ramifications of Foucault's argument, that the subject is constituted within power relations, is that it explicitly denies the possibility of *a priori* agency but does offer the potential of a relational agency (Picard, 2010). Thus relations of power do not negate notions of agency '... to claim that the subject is constituted is not to claim that it is determined; on the contrary, the constituted character of the subject is the very precondition of its agency ...' (Butler and Scott, 1992, p.12). Thus, if the subject is constituted by power, and is productive, there is always the possibility of re-signifying the process and networking the possibilities of being. Foucault argues that individuals in modern society typically use their agency only to regulate themselves in accordance with social norms. However, Bevir has argued that Foucault suggested in his later work that agency is only used properly when resisting the pressure to normalise, by challenging morality through our personal and ethical conduct (Bevir, 1999, p.76). Therefore, we are free in so far as we adopt the ethos of enlightenment as a permanent critique through resistance. Foucault's contribution is the recognition that any definition of agency is contingent upon the system of thought in which it emerges, but any system of thought is never permanent (Butler and Scott, 1992, p.181). Foucault's legacy can therefore be re-conceptualised as a theorisation of the decentering of agency consisting of discourse, power and

knowledge, embodiment and self-reflexivity. This re-conceptualisation allows new possibilities for resistance, and for the dispersal of agency and change in organisations and society (Caldwell, 2007; Allen, 2000).

Foucault's destruction of the 'subject' is thus not an end of agency, but a partial reinvention. The moral agent, by resisting what they have become, create possibilities for redefining what they are and what they can become, and rediscover embodied agency (Caldwell, 2007). Although Foucault sees no room for agency within the nexus of institutional, disciplinary and discursive constraints, there is a '... frontier possibility of self-determination' (Foucault, 1989, p.452). Freedom is not the absence of constraints but the utilisation of the power that circulates and is productive as much as constraining (Tobias, 2005). The subject is therefore perversely capable of resistance and freedom, although limited by the subject's own submissions to, and compliance with, social forces (Brown, 1995, p.63). The possibility of agency is dependent on the coordinated construction of subjectivities in relation to existing regimes and networks of power and knowledge. Epistemic shifts are possible, albeit non-linear and unpredictable, and a new episteme and systems of thought can emerge even if power is omnipresent. Complex emergent systems develop when individual behaviours of agency and freedom aggregate into collective patterns, shifting systems into new patterns (Johnson, 2001). This line of thought is further explored in Chapter Two when we consider critical theoretical understandings of social transformation.

So even within Foucault's notions of power as being omnipresent, he had started to develop his thoughts on the ethical self with decentred (self-reflectivity) and embodied (redefining what we are) agency (Caldwell, 2007). Agency is where self-forming activity is a component of the 'conception of ethics' (Foucault, 1984, p.355). Although this focuses on the subject (micro agency) and their ethical self, other theorists who have moved beyond the agency /structure debate focus on a more macro, fluid societal understanding of agency for the contemporary age. We can therefore reconnect decentred with centred agency in order to rethink agency and change in a world of organised global networks (Lash, 2003).

Bourdieu and Foucault offer ways to consider agency beyond the structure and power dynamics: the possibility of creating paradigm shifts through a network of resistance in a collective entity. Bourdieu and Sewell demonstrate how the knowledge of schemas from different positions in structures can inform collective entities' capability to have agency and initiate action that shifts the constraints the habitus can impose. Foucault's work on power and resistance demonstrates that even when power is normalising and conditioning, individuals can

resist and question this through their own agency. Moving beyond the structure agency debate, and normalising power, recent theorists of structural constructivism explore agency within contemporary cultural and networked society, where the subject has multiple identities and interrelations. We next explore how individual agency and relations with others in different positions and networks can emerge to form a collective entity within the civil society sphere.

1.3 Collective agency

Collective agency is the ability to make a difference, to produce effects, and to initiate action distributed across an ontologically diverse range of actors. Here, agentic capacities go beyond the intentional (pre-programmed and reflexive) and motivated (a human making a choice) agents (Bennett, J., 2005; Burke, 2003) to that of a collective acting together as an entity. Motivated agents articulate and manipulate intentionality within a social context and can also collaborate with other collective agents and assemblage agents (Deleuze et al., 1987; Brighenti, 2011). An individual has agency but negotiates this with a variety of subject identities and positionings, which makes up their ‘person’ in different social network domains influenced by their and others’ motivational and intentional agency (Rotman, 2008). Thus the ‘person’ has ‘distributed agency’: a web of shifting and evolving agencies in different network domains. This development in the notion of agency situates the individual not in structures, or systems of networks of normalising power. Instead it places them in a diverse range of chosen network domains, within their network of relations with a multiple range of identities and positions. It is argued that the critical nodes/individuals in social networks must have agency for social mobilisation to work. Therefore, the key connectors/individuals between networks must have a diversity of networks that they are members of, and a high stage of agency to form ‘bridging capital’ between groups. This can then enable dialogue to occur between networks and for a collective agency to emerge (Dale and Sparkes, 2011). This notion of ‘bridging capital’ is incorporated in analysing the case histories. Social capital is explored in more detail through the work of Bourdieu below, however the community development field also uses this notion, and this is explored first in relation to agency. Here agency is seen as an *a priori* condition for social capital and sustainable community development (Dale and Sparkes, 2011). Furthermore,

‘The implementation of community development requires agency at multiple scales, networks can build social capital, but agency is essential for mobilization of social capital for sustainable community development’ (Dale and Onyx, 2005).

The type of social capital is dependent upon the stage of agency of the individual in combination with the openness of group members of other networks (Dale and Newman, 2005).

Here then, agency is acknowledged as an essential prerequisite for change, and for the development potential of social capital.

These networked notions of agency move beyond structural determinism and instrumentalism (actor activity utility) to structural constructionism. The latter adequately conceptualises human agency and its potentially transformative impact, as it takes into account historical process, culture, agency and social structures (Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994, p.1426). Here agency is the dynamic face of networks, not only as a by-product of control but also as ways of upending regimes and initiating fresh action (White, 2008, p.292). Identity strives to control in, and of, contexts and social processes. Agency takes different identities in different network domains. Here agency is both ‘ambaguous’ (unconventional) and ‘ambigious’ (open to multiple interpretation) in its weaving together of interests and issues via actors, events and delegation (ibid., p.314). White (2008), however, acknowledges a central paradox in initiating action and achieving agency amid mutually constraining processes, structures and stages. Social and cultural contexts are seen as boundaries in social actions that are subtle and complex products of action that have to be constructed, negotiated and maintained (ibid., p.345). There is therefore a need to reconceptualise the interrelationship among networks structures, culture and agency (Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994), but agency is still a fundamental. *a priori*.

Building on this it is argued that structural conditions of existence, inherited from past forms of thought and action, determine the realisation of agency and the realm for freedom (Bieler and Morton, 2001). Thus, structures and networks are constructed by social forces (including agency) but, as already argued, being embedded in historical structures does not imply that agency is determined. The past shapes the conditions for change in the present with the potential for change through collective agency. Negri goes further by suggesting that ‘material agency’ is a force that bursts apart, breaks, interrupts and unhinges pre-existing equilibrium and continuity (Negri, 1999, p.10). Although Negri rejects the notion of the subject, Foucault believes that ‘...subjectivity is formed and transformed in the interplay of subjection and subjectification’ (Gros, 2005, pp.177-78). Thus ‘... counter conducts can be employed to enable new kinds of subjectivities, modes of existence and non-repressive forms of life ...’ (Pyykkonen, 2005, p.29). This notion of human agency decentres the historical agents of social transformation reclaiming a space through ‘deterritorialization’. This is achieved through rhizomatic (non-hierarchic and non-concentrated network) structures where spontaneity is the primary mode of mass action (Lewis, 2002). This suggests the need to adopt

a historical method to analyse social relations and agency (Cox and Sinclair, 1996) to understand the context within which collective action and agency occurs. Even so, human agency can go beyond historically inherited structural positioning. Agency can therefore be seen as network based, where individuals have agency to work within, and use their positionings in, different networks for resistance and change. This focus on the individual's agency in relation not only to historical conditioning structures but more importantly in relation to other agents in a collective, of given and chosen networks, is further explored through my research case histories analysis.

There are limited references made to power relations in more recent notions of network agency, and how these impact on the networks that can be 'chosen'; power hierarchies within and between networks or to 'collective agency'; and how networks work together. Theorists have developed models of the types and forms of agency, the attributes of agency (Dale and Sparkes, 2011) and the position and types of identity for agents (White, 2008). But theoretical notions of agency have not considered in detail the implications of faith, age and world views on agency (Dale and Sparkes, 2011), and the risks of mobilising agency (Rai and Madhok, 2012). It is also noted that in current theories the agent is conceived as prior to society, abstracting them from the social and political, from relationships, language, culture and a whole set of practices that make agency possible (Mouffe, 2009, p.95). Although these limitations are partially addressed in this research, the networked understanding of agency is fundamental for my research. For the purposes of my research, agency capabilities are embedded but not determined by historical, cultural social, economic and political factors in a range of networks and positions.

1.4 Conclusions: Solidarity, public power and social scenes in civil society

Solidarity offers the 'why?' collectives are formed, public power the 'way' this happens and free spaces the 'where' for democratic participation and freedom to be enacted in civil society. Tarrow argues that we can '...create a social movement only when we tap into and expand deep rooted feelings of solidarity and identity' (Tarrow, 2011, p.11). Durkheim was the original theorist on collectivism and suggested two types of solidarity, the first theme required for a collective to form. He developed these types to deal with the reality: that through the process of industrialisation individuals were becoming more autonomous, but yet more dependent on society (Callinicos, 1999, pp.127-128). The first solidarity type – mechanical solidarity – brought together a segmented society based on beliefs and sentiments common to all members (Durkheim, 1984, p.83). The second – organic solidarity – was where a 'collective

consciousness' could occur in the divisions of labour where individuals had different social roles but joined together (ibid, p.61). However, for Durkheim the state was the highest expression of collective consciousness to overcome collective particularism (Callinicos, 1999, pp.137-8). Tonnies (1974) comments that there was 'Gemeinschaft' in the pre-modernised organic community present in rural society and 'Gesellschaft' in the self-interested association of the mechanical urban aggregate; the latter being an example of mechanical solidarity. This would suggest that organic solidarity is possible only in the rural, less developed or less market-dominated public sphere. For the purposes of this research the focus is on the emergence of organic solidarity, where a collective consciousness is formed, if only for a 'moment', but beyond the state within civil society. The second theme is public power and the freedom to form the collective in civil society.

Among the theorists that have explored the notion of the collective in the public sphere, the most notable is Arendt (1990) for whom the central role of politics is to perpetuate the good life. That is, society is only possible if the citizen creates an atmosphere of public freedom to engage in political activity and inquiry, inspired by a revolutionary spirit. She argues that no one can be happy or free without participating and having a share in public power. Freedom, for her, is participating in public affairs via unfettered speech, thought, free assembly and association, a civic republican notion. Here then, the essence of freedom through public power is the second theme for the collective to form. Not in the democratic sense of representation but through collective participation and action in public power. This notion of freedom and action is built on below in the discussion of social theories and has been elaborated on in the last chapter after the capability approach.

Habermas (1985) believes that civil society should be seen as the locus of communicative action, as a public sphere, in which ideas and values are discussed through rational civic debate. Arendt and Habermas thus see the public sphere as social spaces and social practices in which people engage in dialogue on issues of social and political concern in ways that affect policy and shape social change. However, others argue that there is a crisis of the public sphere in contemporary capitalist society (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, Ch.7). As detailed in this chapter civil society is being crowded out by the market and the state, with normalising networks of power, which limit what individuals think is possible. So public power is possible, and the freedom to act feasible, but only if, as suggested earlier, we have agency and can question and resist the status quo. The final theme which is linked to this idea of the public sphere is the notion of democratic participation.

For Aristotle, democracy exists when free men, being in the majority, are invested with power. Piven and Cloward, remind us, however, that ‘Aristotle underestimated the controlling force of social structure where people conform, believing their life to be inevitable and just’ (Piven and Cloward, 1979, p.302). Aristotle further argued that even when people do resist ‘...strategies employed ... (are) the result of constraints imposed by their location in the social structure’ (ibid., p.306); moreover, ‘...institutional patterns shape mass movements by shaping the collectivity out of which protest can arise ...institutional roles determine the strategic opportunities for defiance’ (ibid., p.312). Evans and Boyle (1986, pp.17-18) offer instead that democracy is action, dependent on ‘free spaces’ where people, through the struggle for change, create a common good. Free spaces, in this context, are particular sorts of public spaces in the community, set between private lives and large-scale institutions, where ordinary citizens can act with dignity, independence and vision (ibid.). As argued previously, if people do not question, resist and therefore do not use agency to act, they will not be able to be ‘free’. Coelho and Cornwall (2006) elaborate on the key notion of new democratic arenas, or participatory spheres, which are spaces of contestation and collaboration. They caution that ‘...for people to be able to exercise their political agency, they need first to recognise themselves as citizens rather than see themselves as beneficiaries or clients’ (ibid., p.8). Individualisation is seen as contributing to the crisis of democracy. However, this ‘space’ can be virtual as well as physical and can also be a ‘scene’ rather than a physical space as explained below.

Ostrom (2000) is cautious and notes that rational, self-interested individuals will not necessarily act to achieve their common or group interest unless the group is small, or a coercion device is in place. She suggests that we need to be aware that states and institutions ‘crowd out’ the intrinsic motivations of individuals, and that not all participants will be rational egoists when understanding theories of collective action. This point has been made in this chapter and is key in understanding participants’ motivations for engaging in social moments. Ostrom (1995) also argues, with others, that the role of social networks within civil society in democracies is important for the public good (cited in Elster, 1998; Polletta, 1999; Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1993; Somers, 1995). However, civil society does not depend on democracy, or idealised understandings of democracy, to exist and play a role in change. When social networks have either been latent because of a historic event in the past, and, or grown and developed virtually over time in the public sphere, this has been the platform to initiate mass public action. In these cases, the state, rather than being the ‘collective conscious’, has not offered free spaces for democratic participation, and historically has suppressed public

power. Newer forms of contemporary social collectives also enact new practices as part of their repertoire of resistance finding ways to go beyond and outside state influence and power in creating new scenes.

There is a distinction between spaces and scenes: the former generates the cultural challenge that precedes or accompanies political mobilisation (Polletta, 1999, p.1); the latter is a network of people who share a common identity, belief set, values and norms,

‘...the scene offers a sense of community... people feel connected to the scene, they are much more likely to increase their stage of commitment... as long as the scene remains culturally attractive’ (Johnston, 2009, p.270).

Johnston (2009) argues for a focus on collective practices (scenes) where people feel safe to be different, not just as a discursive meaning shaped by physical space. He offers a set of propositions for scenes, which include: that they preserve a subculture; that the conditions are conducive to squatting; that they are more likely to develop in advanced welfare states; and that the movements scene is a gateway to the movement (ibid., p.269). However, these propositions place unnecessary (American and Euro-centric) limitations on our understanding of ‘scenes’, which have also notably occurred elsewhere in the contemporary context. To understand how action in the public sphere can occur, we therefore need to go beyond the assumptions that groups have to be small, that coercion is involved, or that it has to be a democratic state, as more recent examples in contemporary social moments defy these assumptions.

As Steinberg (p.124) aptly states ‘...in the end neither structure nor culture causes anything; social practices and their attendant cognitions do.’ Thus, it is the way in which structures and cultures are interpreted and reproduced in practices that are key. These ‘... mobilising structures are not given but rather must be assembled’ (Johnstone and Klandermans, 2013, p.432). Ultimately, collective entities do not frame, people do – individuals need to feel mobilised to act because of the issue at stake. We cannot neglect the role of agency and emotions in the process of forming social moments.

This section has elaborated on theoretical understandings of agency, structure, the habitus and collective entities. I have built on the argument that within civil society there is a space, where collective agency can break free of structural and historical constraints, and normalising power. I have argued that this can be achieved, through individual agency and coordinated resistance, by mobilising a diverse range of networks into a collective entity in a given habitus for a moment. I have also shown that there are key elements of solidarity between

individuals with agency, public power, and that democratic spaces exist for scenes to develop in civil society for a collective entity with agency to form. Next, we explore critical theoretical understandings of the development of social transformation, power, resistance, hegemony, the populous and the multitude.

2.) CHAPTER TWO: CRITICAL THEORISTS: POWER, HEGEMONY, AGENCY AND THE MULTITUDE

In Chapter One I argued that civil society is a sphere where a collective entity can emerge outside the control of the state and the market in a given scene. Even within given structures and normalising power, the collective has the capability to have agency and resistance by engaging a wide range of individuals from different schema in a given society or 'habitus'. This is possible where there is solidarity, and an opportunity for public power to emerge in a given social scene in civil society. In Chapter Two we will undertake a review of critical theoretical understandings, of the motivations and process for social transformation and change, and the role that collective agency in civil society can play in a social moment.

2.1 Why a critical theoretical approach?

Civil society and social networks provide a space 'where' a collective entity with agency can form in a social scene. Individuals with agency and solidarity are the 'who' with public power that form a collective entity. Critical theorists offer insights into 'why' collective entities form within socio, economic and political dimensions with moments of resistance and agency to rupture the norm.

This chapter reviews critical theories on power and social transformation, in order to understand the motivations and reasoning for the formation of collective entities. Post-structuralist theory helps us to differentiate three approaches to social transformation within political philosophy (see May, 1994). The first, (formal), assumes that the individual is a rational self-interested being, where the state must intervene in order to ensure justice and equality (liberalism). The second, (strategic), suggests that the state systems and structures in place alienate people from who they are, their true nature and what they create, and that they must come together to struggle and campaign for social justice against the system (Marxism). The third, (tactical), sees power as operating in a different way, such that without realising it people reproduce social systems, and all individuals and institutions participate in perpetuating current conditions of injustice but have the potential to resist (critical theorists). This understanding of power and how it is articulated in contemporary society is fundamental in understanding how to transform society. The critical theoretical stance (tactical approach) goes beyond normative assumptions of current conditions of society, and the traditional notion of individuated efforts for social change. It offers post-structuralist insights into changing the fundamental dynamics of contemporary society. It also complements the dialectics approach

outlined earlier, and social constructionist approaches outlined below. This critical theoretical approach is the one I have adopted in my research.

However, the fundamentals of critical theory stem from Marx's work on the economic base, and class struggle, which is where I start, followed by an overview of Gramsci and Foucault's understanding of the social and political. The work of more contemporary theorists is then used to understand recent developments in relation to bio-politics, the populous and the multitude, along with relevant contributions from anarchism.

2.2 Marx and economic emancipation

For Marx, social justice, equality and freedom were only possible with the abolition of class and differences, along with a change in the economic base and distribution of wealth. This contrasted with the liberal capitalist understanding of equality and freedom as something that was achieved through the use of market forces and the free circulation of labour and goods. Both approaches interpreted the notion of equality and freedom differently. In the former, power needed to be taken to manage the process of wealth distribution and ensure equality, but individual freedom was lost to whoever held power. In the latter, there was a freedom of market forces but a loss of individual equality as the mechanism of distribution relied on market forces of demand and supply (Wood, 1998, p.193). Neither offered individual freedom, unless there was agency to resist and rebel. Although the collective agent in Marxism was the working class – the subject of the political struggle – subsequent critical theorists rejected class reductionism and economism. Marx saw civil society as outside the sphere of the state/political community, and as part of the 'private' sphere of the individual, family and community. Although Marx acknowledged that being a member of civil society was the basis and precondition of the political state, he equated being a member of civil society with being a member of the bourgeoisie. Marx identified civil society with the economic base, where '... the anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy' (Surin, 1990, footnote 25 p.52 citing Marx's Preface to 'A Critique of Political Economy' in McLellan, D ed., (1977) 'Karl Marx: Selected Writings' p. 389).

'The atomism into which civil society plunges in its political act follows necessarily from the fact that the community, the communal being in which the individual exists, is civil society separated from the state, that the political state is an abstract from it.' (Marx and Engels, 1975, p.79).

For Marx, the economic means of production are at the base and core of all other aspects of politics and society. '... Marxism singles out economic structural explanations because it is a causal power ... a fundamental determinant.' (Wetherly, 2005, p.102). Thus, the nature of the

economic structure (the independent variable), determines the superstructure (dependent variable) (ibid.).

Agency is seen as an exogenous variable (a sense of free will, choice or autonomy) (ibid.). For Marx, therefore, a political revolution would be based on ‘... the fact that part of civil society emancipates itself and attains general domination ...’ (Marx and Engels, 1975, pp.184-5). Therefore, for a state to be the state of liberation, there must be an obvious state of oppression. Although Marx acknowledged the transformation of society as the condition for the realisation of ideals (e.g. freedom and justice) he was unable to offer an analysis of how capitalism could lead to a transformed politics without revolution (Surin, 1990, p.40). He did argue that the downfall of capitalism depended on the development of the working class into a self-emancipated, self-conscious political subject capable of taking control of society (Callinicos, 1999, pp.94 & 97). Marx criticised the modern state as an abstraction alienated from an atomised civil society and proposed its dissolution along with civil society. Thus, ‘... freedom consists in converting the state from an organ super-imposed upon society to one completely subordinate to it’ (Marx and Engels, 1975, p.94). Foucault has argued that Marxist theory and practice was closed theoretically and politically to new forms of political struggle, like those post-Paris 1968 (Macdonald, 2002, pp272). Poulantzas (1969, pp.67-8) criticises Marx for his neglect of the problem of state power because of his pre-occupation with capitalist modes of production, arguing that this reduced the political dimension of state power to the effect of the capitalist economy.

The notion of capitalism as a principal barrier to social change is widely asserted: Weber argued that modern capitalism subverted the dream of a normative organic community (Surin, 1990, p.42) and Hegel went further, suggesting that the total sublimation of civil society into the state has been brought to completion by capitalism this century (Burbridge, 1981).

Negri elaborates further

‘...that in the present global capitalist conjuncture the state and civil society have in fact been metamorphosed into moments of a new complex ... the abolition of any final distinction between the state and civil society has been brought about by integrated world capitalism which has very considerable implications for the traditional Marxist politics of civil society’ (Surin, 1990, p.43).

This would suggest that rather than civil society subsuming the state, as anticipated by Marx and Gramsci, the reverse has occurred as suggested by Hardt and Negri. Also, Foucault’s conviction was that

'... both classical political science and Marxist social theory failed in the project of adequately understanding the predominant mechanisms of social integration in developed societies because both are bound to the theoretical prejudice of a concept of power situated at pre-modern forms of power' (Honneth, 1997, p.154).

As such, Foucault questioned the Marxist analysis of power being deduced from the economy and emphasised the need to concentrate on the techniques of power in a certain context to understand its mechanisms of governmentality (Foucault, 2004, pp.13 & 30). However, given that capitalist modes of wealth distribution are inadequate for economic freedoms to occur, there must be scope for alternative mechanisms for the distribution of economic resources. This must be based on need rather than market mechanisms, which are controlled by elite power. Marx's theories help us critique market mechanisms, but they need to be reviewed in relation to modern forms of power, alternative modes of wealth distribution, and a spatial understanding of civil society rather than an organisational one, for which we turn to Gramsci and Foucault.

2.3 Gramsci and Foucault and political empowerment

After the legacy of Marx and the challenges faced by Marxists in explaining historical changes from the past half century, post-Marxist theorists have developed alternative models for social transformation. For example, Gramsci critically confronted the fact that economic crisis did not lead to a political crisis, as Marx had predicted (Holub, 1992). Gramsci was resistant to economism as the primary determinant. He could not envision social, political and economic change without an assessment of the stage of knowledge of workers' existing conditions of force and consent (Landy, 1994, p.65). Gramsci therefore moved away from the economic determination of Marx, placing the ideological superstructure over economic structures, and the primacy of civil society (consensus) over political society (force) (Bobbio cited in Mouffe, (1979, Ch.1)). However, Mouffe went on to argue that rather than a rejection of the economic sphere, Gramsci's work is a rediscovery of the economic sphere, not only as characterised by the production of goods, but also of social relations (Mouffe, 1979). By taking this line of argument further, one could suggest that economic factors have a determining impact on wealth and resources, but also on social relations; i.e. not only the need to have money and resources to live a life that you value, but also your position, networks and role in society.

Gramsci also offers insights into our understandings of the political sphere with his conception of hegemony. Simon (1985) argues his ideas were teleologically driven, based on mechanical determinism through political class and ideological struggle in the civil society sphere. Hegemony was created through a 'war of position' in civil society (consensus) rather than a 'war of manoeuvre' by the state (conflict), but only if civil society was developed and

sufficiently robust. Gramsci argued that hegemony within civil society operates principally in the decisive nucleus of economic activity when there is an organic crisis. Hegemony therefore is a dynamic process of being and becoming. It can be achieved either via limited hegemony/passive revolution, where the bourgeoisie neutralise other social forces. Or expansive hegemony/active revolution, where the interests of the subaltern are adopted in full (Jones, 2009). Hegemony is established through the organisation of consent, by maintaining systems of alliances through a political and ideological struggle between social relations and organisations that embody them in civil society (Simon, 1982). Hegemony was seen in terms of where, ‘(a)n historic political bloc has to be dismantled and a new one constructed so as to permit the transformation of the relations of production’ (Mouffe, 1979, p.67). This development of hegemony incorporates Foucault’s understanding of power being normalised, such that only by breaking free of existing paradigms can true transformation occur. However, this is again limited in relation to production and market forces.

Active revolution also needs ‘organic leadership’ (intellectual and moral), which Gramsci sees limited to its existence within the political party. Intellectuals must be organic to those they educate and persuade in order to have hegemony. The organic intellectual functions as a deputy/agent to organise hegemony in civil society and needs to have an emotional bond with the people in order to be a ‘permanent persuader’, organiser, constructor and active participant in practical life (Gramsci, 2007, p.10). This connects with agency as seen in social networks in Chapter One (i.e. Bourdieu and Sewell), with the need for agents to mobilise different positions in different networks to effect change. It is argued that only a fundamental class (one which occupies one of the two poles in the relations of production) can be hegemonic. Therefore, those whose interests coincide with the limitations of all exploitation can be capable of successfully bringing about expansive hegemony, active revolution (Badaloni in Mouffe (1979, p.183)). However, this line of argument presumes economic determination and class essentialism.

More recently theorists have adapted the notion of the organic intellectual to the current context ‘... it is typically the role of organic intellectuals ...to elaborate hegemonic projects rather than members of the economically dominant class’ (Jessop, 1990, p.214). Therefore, organic intellectuals do not just exist within the elite and political parties but within civil society and the state system, and they are no longer only from the capitalist class. So, for our research, we can build on the need for organic intellectuals to negotiate expansive hegemony through active revolution by empowering, persuading and maintaining alliances in civil society

networks. We do not need to limit ourselves to those at either pole of the relations of production, given the changing structures of the economy in the modern age. In addition to Gramsci's limitations of who can be an organic intellectual, and generate hegemony, there are also limitations in his understanding of civil society in relation to the state, as argued in Chapter One and elaborated below.

For Gramsci, civil society is midway between the economic structure and the state; the state is the instrument for adapting civil society to the economic structure (Mouffe, 1979). The state and civil society are not antithetical but variable according to given historical circumstances. The issue of power, therefore, is closely tied to the conditions of civil society and encroachment of the state. Civil society is seen by Gramsci as the sphere of class struggles, of popular democratic struggles, where hegemony is exercised (Simon, 1982, p.26). Three types of relations between civil society and the state can be identified: in conflict reciprocal and civil society subsumed by the state (Landy, 1994). All organisations that make up civil society are the result of complex networks of social practices and relations (Simon, 1982, pp.68-69). Civil society is seen as a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks behind the state (Gramsci, 2007, p.238), an 'integral state' that permeates civil society. For Gramsci the state's goal is its own demise where the state (coercion) is subsumed by hegemony within political society plus civil society (Gramsci, 2007, p.263). Through expansive hegemony, civil society absorbs the political realm in which the state and society become reunited (Landy, 1994, citing Sasson, p.224). Gramsci can see the state functions being taken over by civil societies', as voluntary autonomous organisations get stronger, and penetrate the relations of production (Gramsci, 2007, p.263). Gramsci identified civil society as the key mechanism for the maintenance of authority, by blurring the distinction between political authority and everyday life. Here then, although civil society is perceived spatially, it is still seen as instrumental to state mechanisms of power and as taking over state functions. So, the blurring of the boundaries between civil society and the state is seen as a positive outcome, rather than a negative one.

Civil society is thus the primary sphere of cultural political contestation; but the proletarian takeover of civil society is, for Gramsci, essential to revolution and change (Surin, 1990). The political transformative project must address the economic base and the civil society superstructure; the latter being the motor of history, as this is where meaning and values that can sustain or transfer society are created (Jones, 2009, p.33). The transformation of civil society is a precondition of radical social change. For Gramsci the nature of ideological struggle

is not a completely fresh start, but a process of transformation where elements are rearranged and combined in different ways with a new nucleus of a new ideology and is theoretically complex (Gramsci, 2007, p.195). For Simon it is a transformation of social relations that is key:

'The process of revolutionary change from capitalism to socialism consists therefore in the transformation of social relations of civil society, as the basis for the transformation of state apparatus and of the organisations of civil society...' (Simon, 1982, pp.74-5).

It is argued that even within a revolutionary context Gramsci assumed a world in which both subjects and institutions were relatively stable; in order to apply Gramsci's categories in the current context they have to be redefined and radicalised (Butler et al., 2000, p.53). It is further argued that Gramsci's concept of hegemony is no longer viable, as Gramsci's '...trenches of civil society have proliferated and intersected and have been smothered into a vacant free space.' (Yudice, 1995, p.2). Thus, it is argued, in the current context civil society no longer has the capability to fulfil its hegemonic role, as it has lost its agency by vacating the space of possibilities between the state and the market. This would have implications for collective action and agency in civil society. However, as argued earlier, we refute the assumptions made regarding power relations and the agency/structure dynamics and the limitations that these may impose. These shortcomings of Gramsci have been addressed by critical theorists to some extent, by developing alternative perspective on power, politics and society to which we now turn, in the work of Foucault.

Foucault conceives power to be relational. Power thus operates in a capillary fashion from below, where subjects are the producers of power (Smart, 2002, p.68).

'Hence although power is an omnipresent dimension in human relations, power in a society is never fixed, nor a closed regime, but rather an endless open strategic game.' (Burchell et al., 1991, p.5).

'For Foucault, political rationalities, are more than just ideologies, they constitute part of the fabric of our way of thinking about and acting upon another and ourselves' (Barry et al., 1996, p.7).

Foucault's aim was to isolate, identify, and analyse the web of unequal relationships set up by political technologies that underlie and undercut the theoretical equality posited by law and political philosophers (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, p.185). Foucault was epistemologically driven to historicise the different truths, bodies of knowledge and rationalities, ultimately to construct a new concept of power that facilitated capitalism, where discourse was a function of state control.

'Foucault does not find the characteristics of discourse in its representative function, not in its communicative function, but in its function as a means for control ... to comprehend and control natural and social processes' (Honneth, 1997, p.141).

Thus, Foucault saw discourse as a way of generating 'hegemony' by normalising power through discourse, so that subjects unknowingly reproduced power relations through 'consent'.

Although civil society can spontaneously generate forms of casual subordination, distinct from and maybe opposed to formal established power, Foucault does not believe we can have Gramsci's passive revolution (Foucault cited in Burchell et al., 1991, p.136). As Mouffe suggests, a transformation cannot occur within existing paradigms. For Foucault the enclosures of civil society and institutions of state constitute the paradigmatic terrain for the disciplinary deployment of power in modern society. Power, therefore, produces normalised subjects and exerts hegemony through consent, such that we can make no analytical distinction between the state and civil society (Hardt, 1995, p.32).

'Civil society is ...the correlate of a political technology of government. The distinction between civil society and the state is a form of "schematism" for the exercise of political power. Foucault describes civil society as in this sense a "transactional reality" existing at the mutable interface of political power ...' (Burchell et al., 1991, p.141).

This perception of civil society again limits its potential for resistance and social change: seeing civil society as an organisational entity reduces its potential for agency within the technologies of power. Understanding civil society as a sphere where collective entities can form for action offers more potential for resistance for Foucault, as his writings on biopower demonstrate.

In his later writings, Foucault advanced his understanding of power from governmentality to biopower. This has been radicalised by Hardt and Negri and is elaborated on below. Biopower is the production of self-regulated subjects, which creates social relationships and forms, but which is strategically reversible into resistance (Burchell et al., 1991). 'Biopower produces the self-regulating subject. Practices of ethics can be used as a technique for resisting oppressive power' (Danahar et al., 2000, p.63).

Foucault, in his work on the 'ethics of the care of the self', suggested ethical strategies for the subject to construct, rather than discover, themselves. Freedom, then, is an ongoing ethical practice where relationships are continually interrogated, where 'the ethics of the concern of the self is seen as a practice of freedom' (Newman, 2011, p.282). Therefore, power can only be exercised over free subjects, 'human beings are formed as subjects and objects by virtue of their location within a network of positive and productive power and knowledge

relations ...' (Smart, 2002, p.63). However, '... where there is power, there is resistance, as power depends for its existence on the presence of a multiplicity of points of resistance' (ibid., p.77 citing Foucault). Individuals are therefore not agents of power, but are an element of its articulation. Thus, 'control is not centralised but dispersed: it flows through a network of open circuits that are rhizomatic and not hierarchical' (Rose, 1996, p.234). So, by mobilising these networks, power dynamics can be changed, and social, economic and political relations transformed.

'Liberal civil society is a space of possibilities for collective action and organised association, it enables at least in principle, a repertoire of citizens' resistance never seen before in the history of mankind' (Pyykkonen, 2015, p.32).

Ironically, then, as producers of power it is possible for resistance and agency to occur by not reproducing normalised power behaviour, not only as an individual but also as a collective. This is elaborated on below with the concept of the 'multitude' of Hardt and Negri.

For Foucault there are three forms of struggle: against domination; against forms of exploitation; against subjectivity and submission (Dreyfus and Rabinow, (1983, p.212)). Consequently, resistance to social development can come only from within society and from those places that have not been fully co-opted (Couzens Hoy, 1986, p.14). For Foucault, truth is a mask manufactured by power, so he cannot envisage liberating transformations within a regime. Unmasking the regime can only destabilise it, as the regime is entirely identified with its own imposed truth (ibid., p.94). Foucault believes that we can make no analytical distinction between the state and civil society, as power cannot be isolated: he denies the analytical separation of political society from civil society. As such '... civil society is a society founded on discipline and the education it offers is a diffused network of normalization ...' (Hardt, 1995, p.33). This would suggest that no individual within the normalising system of power can truly resist. However, by developing an understanding of power as a diffused network of normalisation, and developing the ethics of the self, we can resist.

It is argued that Foucault's concepts are restricted by his inability to move beyond a structuralist epistemology; his approach effectively sacrifices the dynamics of the system, and the creative temporality of its movements (Fillon, 2005, p.66). Also, Foucault limits the ontological substance of culture and of social reproduction (ibid., p.67). From a dialectical approach (Hay, 2002) the interaction and interplay between power networks, and the collective with agency capability, can push the boundaries of thought and possibilities for social justice and change. Thus, through the de-centring of agency and political empowerment, the subject's

construction of subjectivities can be collectively transformed. As such then, the subject's relation to existing regimes and networks of power can be transformed through the formation of a collective entity. Here, then, new patterns of behaviour in relation to other networks and structures can transform society.

An additional critique is that Foucault's theoretical visions no longer hold, as we have moved from a 'disciplinary society' of governmentality to a 'society of control' with bio power. Here the social space defined by civil society is in crisis, as everything is fluid, moving and changing (Hardt, 1995, p.35 citing Deleuze, 1991, p.5). Thus, the social conditions necessary for civil society no longer exist, we are in a post-civil society era, our task being to discern the salient characteristics of the social formation that succeeds civil society (Hardt, 1995, pp.37 & 40). Although Foucault conceptualised biopower, it is argued that his approach did not grasp the real dynamics of production in bio-political society (Hardt & Negri, 2001, p.28). It is further argued that the '...systemic nature of our realities increasingly delimits the possibility of agency, responsibility and autonomous and self-determining action...' (Holub, 1992, p.179). However, in reality there are ongoing examples of resistance and collective agency within the civil society sphere that need to be explained.

Building on the work of Foucault, theorists have more recently explored biopower and the collective, or 'populous'. Post-structuralists have argued that state power reflects the changing balance of social forces such that no single theory can predict or determine the way causal chains converge or interact (Jessop et al., 1984, pp.212 & 221). Even when we think we have found a point of opposition to domination, we realise '...that very point of opposition is the instrument through which domination works, and that we have unwittingly enforced the powers of domination through our participation in its opposition' (Butler et al., 2000, p.28).

So, for Foucault, we can never truly be free to resist on our own terms as we exist, and think, within existing paradigms of knowledge. Ironically, even if we have a fully reconciled society, a transparent society, which is entirely free in the sense of being self-determined, this would mean we have nothing to be free from. Therefore, the act of freedom against the system and society which is unjust is the very essence of freedom. Thus the

'... full realisation of freedom would be equivalent to the death of freedom, for all possibilities of dissent would have been eliminated from it ... social divisions, antagonisms and its necessary consequences are the true conditions of a freedom that does not eliminate particularity ...' (Laclau in Butler et al., 2000, p.208).

Thus, resistance is the very essence of freedom, and any meaningful struggle must transcend sectorial identities and articulate a 'collective will'. This can also be seen as a 'populism', constructed through political action of particular demands, which create a populist demand for the very social entities to be emancipated (Laclau, 2007). This universalism or totalisation cannot, however, occur within institutions because

'... an institutional discourse is one that attempts to make the limits of the discursive formation coincide with the limits of the community ... The opposite takes place in the case of populism: a frontier of exclusion divides society ...' (Laclau, 2007, p.81).

A process of 'crystallisation' must occur around a demand, and the plurality of links becomes singular through its 'condensation' around a popular identity (ibid, pp.93-94). Thus

'... there is in any society a reservoir of raw anti-status-quo feeling which crystallises on some symbol quite independent of the forms of their political articulation and it is their presence we intuitively perceive when we call a discourse or a mobilisation "populistic" ...' (ibid., p.123).

The aim therefore is to maintain particularities at different points of resistance (singularities) and to work collectively (the multitude) when necessary for social justice: this allows for, and supports the need for collective agency, rather than a universality of a permanent condition of the unattainable 'good society'. So, resistance and agency are possible, even when state power is normalised in civil society networks, through a collective will that forms an entity in a given 'moment'.

Foucault, Laclau and Butler offer insights into post-structuralist understandings of the dynamics of power relations in contemporary society. This understanding of power, and particularity within the collective will/populous can be taken to suggest the limitations and potentials of resistance and agency in the current context. This is explored in more detail through Hardt and Negri's understanding of a network society and how social transformation is possible in the contemporary society of their 'Empire'. However, Gramsci and Foucault have given us an insight into an alternative understanding of power networks and hegemony and how power can be resisted.

2.4 Hardt and Negri and social transformative networks

Hardt and Negri agree with Foucault's notion that the network form of power is today the only one able to create and maintain order. Such '... that freedom and resistance are necessary

preconditions for the exercise of power' (Hardt and Negri, 2009, p.59). Thus, power can only be exercised over free subjects, only insofar as they are free (ibid., p.58). Hardt and Negri build on Foucault's notion of the 'dispositifs', allowing them to conceive of an alternative collective production of the common. The dispositif is seen as a network of heterogeneous elements oriented by a strategic purpose with the material, social, affective and cognitive mechanisms active in the production of subjectivities (ibid., p.126). They acknowledge that there are new mechanisms of exploitation and capitalist control, and agree with Marx's assertion; capital is in essence a social relation via the creation of surplus value by producing commodities (ibid., p.136). But they take this further to encompass Foucault's bio political process, which they believe represents the potential of an autonomous process to destroy capital and create something new.

Their political project offers a continuation of Foucault's

'... critical interrogation of the present, ... critical ontology of ourselves, ... an historical analysis of the limits imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them ...' (Hardt and Negri, 2004, pp.284-5, citing Foucault in Rabinow, 1997, pp.303-319).

They argue that

'Foucault defines three forms of subjectification ... different modes of capital ... practices of division ... power which assumes scientific divisions and classifications in order to over determine them through techniques of discipline and control' (Negri, 2003, pp.127-8).

But for Hardt and Negri the key issue is how the subject reacts to these technologies of power. They want to win back and expand the 'common' and its powers, cutting across false alternatives e.g. public/private, capitalist/socialist to open up new spaces for politics, to find ways to translate the productivity and possibilities of the poor into power (Hardt and Negri, 2004, preface).

'The common (in the multitude) is never identical, it is not community (Gemeinschaft), it is not purely society (Gesellschaft) in other words (it is) a diversity of possessive individuals' (Negri, 2003, p.103).

The 'common' is seen as a relationship rather than as something, a constant becoming, a potentiality, and the key to collectivity and revolutionised new forms of common being (Parmett, 2012). They believe that the proletariat is created as a 'multitude' of the poor, which emerges at the centre of the project for revolutionary transformation (Hardt and Negri, 2004, p.56). The double character of poverty and possibility defines the subjectivity of labour, creating an 'immaterial paradigm'. Thus, the wealth created may be taken away and be a source

of antagonism, but labour retains its capacity to produce wealth, and this combination of antagonism and power lies in the making of a revolutionary subject (ibid., p.153).

'We see the multitude ... as an ensemble, as a multiplicity of subjectivities, or rather singularities ... not reduced to that of a mass but which is capable of autonomous independent intellectual development ...' (Negri, 2003, p.101).

The project of the multitude is not only to express the desire for a world of equality and freedom, not only to demand an open and inclusive democratic global society, but also to provide the means to achieve it (Hardt and Negri, 2004, preface). The multitude is composed of innumerable internal differences that can never be reduced to a unity or single identity. It is a multiplicity of all singular differences. It is the struggle against misery and poverty, and the desire for democracy, a rule of all by all based on relations of equality and freedom. Hardt and Negri believe that freedom and equality can be the motors of a revolutionary reinvention of democracy, with the conceptual and practical invention of new institutional forms (ibid., p.220). Thus, we can only all rule when we do so with equal powers, free to act and choose as each of us pleases (ibid.). The multitude is not a political body, it does not have a unity or will. The multitude is plural, incoherent and unable to rule itself. The vision of the multitude is composed of a set of singularities and based on practices of self-determination, common needs, constant metamorphosis, mixture and movement. Every singularity is a social becoming, resistance and collaboration being a transformative experience, creating alternative social relations based on the common, an 'alter modernity' (Hardt and Negri, 2009, pp.112-3).

The multitude is latent and implicit in our social being. The theory of the multitude is a way of organising based on the freedom of singularities that converge in the production of 'the common'. Singularities need a political project to bring the multitude into existence. Singularities act in concert like a swarm, producing and innovating together in networks, composed of radical differences. These singularities that form the multitude can never be synthesised into one identity. The biopolitical production of the multitude, is in the space of 'the common'. The multitude is generated when singularities meet, discovering and creating resources of 'the common' through expansive circuits of encounters and inventing strategies for survival (ibid., pp.250-260). This understanding of the multitude resonates with the case histories in this thesis. The way in which the Shahbag moment was formed, was like a swarm of singularities gathering as a collective entity in a moment for social change. The social transformative networks came together around a common project in a given space and moment. However, unlike Laclau's and Mouffe's 'populous', Hardt and Negri offer an assertion of

individual agency and collective agency as well as a more sustained understanding of how the multitude can lead to change through bio-politics.

Hardt and Negri use Foucault's notion of biopower, power over one's own life, and expand it to biopolitics, power over life to resist and determine an alternative production of subjectivity (ibid., p.57).

'(The) distinction between biopower and biopolitical ... biopower when the state expresses command over life through its technologies and its mechanisms of power; but we speak of biopolitical when the critical analysis of command is done from the viewpoint of experiences of subjectification and freedom ... from the bottom.' (Negri, 2003, p.73).

Thus, the biopolitical event poses the production of life as an act of resistance, innovation and freedom, through the figure of the multitude as a political strategy, where the 'intransigence of freedom' disrupts the normative system (Hardt and Negri, 2009, pp.59 & 61). Thus, in a contemporary society of networks, where power is produced through biopolitics, the individual or singularity is the key to articulating an alternative future. It does this through mobilising its networks with a given project for social transformation.

'We use the term biopower to identify big structures and functions of power; we use the term biopolitical context or biopolitics to refer to the spaces in which relations, struggles and production of power are developed.' (Negri, 2003, p.73).

It is this biopolitics, the relations of power and subjectivity that are fundamental to developing the conditions for collective agency and action.

'The multitude is not a unity... in contrast to the masses and the mob, we can see that it is organised. It is an active, self-organising agent.' (Negri, 2003, p.87). Hardt and Negri argue that '... the freedom required for bio political production also includes the power to construct social relationships and create autonomous social institutions' (ibid., p.310). They go on to argue that the multitude's march of freedom and equality is lasting, strengthened and consolidated in the formation of social and political institutions; and that there is a need to

'... develop a logic of encounters and articulation among singularities, a logic of democratic organisation and decision making that governs the revolution which in order to be sustained must take an institutional form by creating lasting political bodies' (ibid., p.344).

So, the long-sustained process of transformation, the transition initiated by the multitude is spontaneous and must be guided to be sustained. A structure is needed for resolving conflicts within the multitude, but this organisational process must be from within the moment of the multitude, from institutions of the common (ibid., pp.351-360). Such a body must maintain the

rhizomatic structure of the multitude but organise itself without sacrificing the autonomy of the singularities that compose it (ibid., p.166).

Hardt and Negri negate the role that organisational civil society can play in supporting the multitude,

'... recognising the heroic efforts of ... religious organisations, NGO's, UN agencies and supranational institutions like the World Bank, but also the limitations of all such efforts that leave the system unchanged' (Hardt and Negri, 2004, p.299).

As mentioned above, Hardt argues that the social foundations necessary for the construction and sustenance of civil society, the conditions of its possibility, have been undermined in contemporary social formations, and that we now live in a post-civil society era (Hardt, 1995). For Hardt, the configurations of social relations, social production and ordering have changed; the new apparatuses, structures and deployments are no longer conducive to civil society. Negri insists that the power of the state is expressed in the subsumation of civil society into global capital (Landy, 1994, p.74).

So Hardt and Negri see the multitude as the global population of socially oppressed people, who circulate, re-appropriate spaces and constitute themselves as the active subject. They see the multitude as a historical agent, and spontaneity as the primary mode of mass action, although they limit this to migrants as the potential collective body. This suggests a naive understanding of migrants and how they suffer, and the social apartheid of contemporary capitalism (Boron, 2005). 'Hardt and Negri get caught up in a Foucauldian framework ignoring the locations and specificities of social forces through which power congeals' (Sprague, 2011, p.204).

Critics of Hardt and Negri also argue that their work on Empire and multitude amount to the politics of the society of the spectacle, where masses gain immediate experiences of empowerment and agency, even if these are only ever episodic and unsustainable (Balakrishnan, 2000). Thus, the multitude can only be the true force for change if their motives are for the cause rather than just to be part of the spectacle. The critique extends further: that they rely on a particular view of human agency in order to explain the oppression and possible emancipation of the world's masses (Lewis, 2002); their image of reality is distorted, they limit the role of the state, and ignore the inherited unevenness in both spatial and temporal development (ibid.). Elsewhere, the critique targets their emphasis on immaterial labour, that the role of the UN agencies and international law is grossly exaggerated (Boron, 2005), and how the potential role of the global networks of migrants is a 'utopian fiction' (Lewis, 2002).

Browning added to this discussion, by suggesting that Hardt and Negri's definition of Empire and of the multitude lacks 'empirical authentication'. Also, that

'... the notion of Empire... relies fundamentally upon its essentialised, and indeterminate suggestive conceptual specification. A similar generality, and lack of convincing empirical specification applies to the notion of the multitude' (Browning, 2011, p.144).

The limitations of Hardt and Negri's application of their theoretical conceptualisations of the multitude may be misplaced in migrants and the role that UN agencies can play. However, my research suggests that their conceptualisation of the multitude and the common is potentially applicable to contemporary social moment formation. The notion of the multitude as a swarm resonates with the realities of contemporary social moments. It does this, not in the way they envisaged (as a mass strategic movement for social transformation) but as a tide of social moments gradually pushing the boundaries of thought and possibilities, shaping and responding to structures and systems.

Critics of Hardt and Negri are also critical of Global civil society:

'... abstract internationalism believes that the solution for most of our problems lies in the empowerment of civil society and the construction of a global and cosmopolitan citizenship ... the so called global civil society, far from being liberated from class limitations ... suffer from the same limitations even more acutely, riddled as it is by abysmal economic and social inequalities and by the oppressive features inscribed in its structures, norms and rules of operation.' (Boron, 2005, pp.89-90).

The neo-liberal agenda, it is argued, has led to the proliferation of civil society organisations, giving rise to the illusion that there is an opposition mobilised outside the state, as a powerhouse of oppositional politics and social transformation (Harvey, 2006, p.28). My research argues that by re-conceptualising civil society spatially and relationally, rather than as organisations and institutions, we can overcome these critiques of the role the multitude can play in effecting change. I also argue that the notion of the multitude as a social network of singularities, as part of a highly networked organic society, resonates with current developments in social moment formations. Before exploring this further, and how I use it in my research, there are critical theorists who have suggested the possibility of social transformation without reference to the state, whose theoretical insights are relevant to my research.

2.5 Anarchists and a rhizomatic alternative

Negri was a key influence in the autonomist Marxist tradition, which suggested that the sovereign state negates the creative social forces of spontaneous self-organisations, a

movement of 'the common' with collective potential, embodied in living labour and the general intellect. In Newman (2011), it is argued that Negri suggested using Spinozian ontology to theorise the central tension between constituent and constituted power: the former as the radically democratic power of revolutionary classes; the latter as the uncertain crystallisation of revolutionary desire in a political system. From this derives the understanding that there is a paradoxical relationship, between democratic innovations embodied within the revolutionary force of the multitude, and sovereign regimes which act to contain them. Anarchism maintains that democracy is irreconcilable with state sovereignty and that political solidarity must be actively constructed rather than relied upon to emerge organically from a social and economic process (Newman, 2011, p.91). Rather than integrating social, economic and political structures and the bio-politicisation of life, post-anarchists argue that we should think in terms of 'moments' of rupture and separation from Empire, inventing political spaces outside Empire. Post-anarchists therefore reject Hardt and Negri's notion of revolutionary spontaneity, economic determinism, historical stageism and technological fetishisms (Newman, 2011). Liberation for anarchists, then, arises through the construction of the alternative, not through the destruction or reformation of unsupportable realities (May, 1994, p.48). So, in the language of Bourdieu, by moving beyond the market, state, civil society triad for a moment, we can actively construct an alternative field in a given habitus and be liberated.

Post-anarchists such as Jun and Wahl (2010) differentiate their theoretical tradition as rhizomatic (no centre, shooting out in all directions and along any path), rather than the arboreal tradition (like a tree with a root system and branches and stems from the trunk). They reject the need for a central controlling authority such as the state, or any centralising power or forms of representation (May, 1994, Ch.3). But they still believe in organising through social agencies that structure their identity on non-exploitative rules and values of social solidarity. They argue for federalism, and communal rather than capitalist systems of productions, where resource distribution is based on needs and availability and not demand and supply. Thus a 'just economy' is possible because what seems to be unchangeable is historically contingent and therefore always capable of being changed (Sheehan, 2003, p.63). It is argued that we can radically modify the field of power through striving for ongoing practices of freedom (Newman, 2011, p.63). The political dimension of antagonism is inherent in all human relations and operates outside and in opposition to the ontological order of state sovereignty. Liberal notions of the state's role in the protection and redistribution of rights positions the subject as a passive recipient within a capitalist market state (May and Semetsky, 2008). These notions

have no understanding of the subject's agency for self-organising and collaborating with others for collective autonomy. For anarchists, the state is destructive of organic social relations; all forms of domination are an obstacle to social revolution, as society contains the seeds of its own emancipation (Newman, 2011, pp.28 & 39). For post-anarchists, liberalism subordinates the political to economic and legal orders, so that political movements of action and contestation are swallowed up by private interests and the market preoccupation by civil society (ibid., p.11). Thus, any moment of resistance is confined within the market state triad, with anything outside acceptable parameters seen as deviant. For anarchists, then, ongoing practices of freedom through antagonism is possible through collective agency, without a central force, but through networks of relations.

Liberal notions of equality and liberty are based on the self-interested individual whose competition with other individuals must be balanced by the state. For Anarchists such as Bakunin and Lavinias, freedom must be seen in relational and communal, not just individual, terms. Hence, we are only free when all human beings surrounding us are equally free, including all forms of social and economic freedom within political equality. Economic and social equality should not be at the expense of individual freedom and autonomy. To be free is to have agency, to actively refuse the limits of what could be. A post-foundational approach to the anarchist subject offers a more contingent and situated view of political and ethical agency (Newman, 2011, p.59). The moral rational agent who revolts against immoral and irrational powers is unsettled by the desire of the state to dominate society. So, agency capability must be collective and organic, and not controlled and managed, and can only be truly free if all those in the public sphere have equal agency and capability to resist.

In contemporary society there is a plurality: of movements, identities and demands, and the politicisation of social relations provides fertile ground for emerging antagonisms (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, p.162). Critical theorists argue that radical politics is confronted with biopolitics and the need to develop internal micro-political spaces to organise social, political and economic relationships;

'[t]here has been a certain paradigm shift in politics away from the state and formal representative institutions, which still exist but increasingly as empty vessels, without life towards movements' (Newman, 2011, p.182).

Thus, there is a need to see networks instead of pyramids and static structures, and move beyond current structures of institutional power, rejecting the logic of hegemony.

For anarchists and post-anarchists, revolution and resistance should be situational, in everyday life,

'... revolution against power must also be a revolution against identity and roles: a process of radical subjectivisation by which we work ourselves outside the bind of power' (Newman, 2011, p.65).

A future anarchist society is a society based on decentralised structures of free and voluntary social arrangements. This transformation in society cannot be achieved through a social revolution against power, or by a political revolution aimed at seizing the state, or by a reformist process that works within parliamentary and state power: revolution has to be libertarian in means as well as ends. It must not work through state power but outside and against it, it must be an insurrection, the dissolution and transcendence of the state. The politicisation of social forces thus dislodges and ruptures social process. Liberal notions of identity politics that characterise much of new movement theory is inadequate, new forms of political organisations are needed (Badiou, in Newman, 2011). We need to conceptualise a political space between society and the state, between the social and political order.

However,

'... there is no empty space that gets filled in by political relations, there are only relations themselves, social space is the set of these relationships, not the space within which they arise' (May, 1994, p.53).

So, resistance and revolution are relational, changing the way we are and act, outside and beyond the binds of state systems and power networks. Only by 'politicising' and empowering social forces through relational networks as a collective, and creating new spaces for relational networks with different possibilities and practices, can there be social change. Although I support this line of thinking, the impact of agency is more than just relational, especially if it is manifested in a collective form through social network capital. It has the potential to form a critical mass of collective agency and action to transform structures and practices permanently.

However, anarchists do not see civil society as forming this 'space' in current contemporary society:

'Indeed, state power has intensified and expanded in recent times rather than contracted, to the point where the distinction between the state and civil society – the conceptual distinction that was central to liberalism, and in a different way, to Marxism – has all but collapsed' (Newman, 2011, p.80).

This echoes Hardt's perception of civil society as having become coextensive with the state. Anarchists believe that the problem of state power has gone 'all the way down' into civil

society, and that therefore any form of emancipatory transformation of social relations must start with the transformation of power relations on the everyday (micro) stage (ibid., p.62). They nevertheless accept that

'... this does not mean that we cannot speak of movements at the stage of civil society against the state – this is precisely where a post anarchist politics is situated' (ibid., p.103).

So, by adopting the notion of civil society as a spatial collective entity of singularities, with network relations, transformation is possible, but only with collective agency and action.

It is worth remembering, however, that the state is more than simply an institution, it is also a set of relationships between people, a mode of behaviour and interaction. We destroy it by contracting other relationships and behaving differently (Newman, 2011). We should focus on creating alternative, non-statist, non-authoritarian relationships between people, rather than the citizen, the state and political domination. We need to change the way we think, how we relate to others; voluntary servitude must be overcome in the hearts and minds before it is possible in external institutions (Newman, 2011, p.162). Newman argues that we need to continually interrogate relations of power and to invent new practices of freedom. The state is not just a series of institutions and structures of power but an authoritarian relationship, a particular way of thinking and structuring our lives. The subject may be conditioned by external structures, systems and language, but they are not determined by it in an absolute sense, there is a large degree of autonomy and free agency (ibid., p.141). My research supports Newman's idea that freedom can occur through establishing a series of power relationships that allow for a much greater degree of equality, autonomy and reciprocity (ibid., p.63). Here a revolution against power is a revolution against identity and roles, '... a process of radical subjectivisation by which we work ourselves out of the bind of power' (ibid., p.65). My research concurs with Newman, in that it is possible to develop an alternative, non-authoritarian relationship in political practices, along with new ways of thinking and modes of living through collective action. Practices need to carve out spaces that allow the possibility of alternative practices. Thus, agency and resistance are enacted as 'situated freedom' within the context of networks of practices which are subject to power relationships within those networks (May, 1994, pp.115-6). We find this extensively reflected in the narratives in the case histories.

Collectivist anarchism offers a regime where all citizens directly govern themselves together through consensual deliberation, rather than deliberative democracy. This may be the rule of the majority but is still governed by an oligarchy, an elected elite (Jun and Wahl, 2010).

Anarchists focus on relations and practices even within structures as an example of post-structuralism.

Post-structuralists reject existentialist notions of focusing on a prior human essence of the subject, and structuralist notions of the domination of structures and systems of conformity; they dissolve the subject/structure dichotomy by studying ‘practices’. The practices of social forces, between the subject and the social, economic and political structures (in a given cultural and historical context), is the key to understanding how agency is articulated in contemporary society. We need to analyse the ‘given’ in its multiplicity and diversity rather than look outside it for founding principles (May, 1994, p.53).

‘A revolution, then, is not a change from one fundamental form of society to another; rather it is a change or set of changes whose effect sweeps across the society causing changes in many other parts of the social domain’ (May, 1994, p.54).

The politicisation of social forces involves the displacement of social identities, a dislodging or rupturing of normal social processes. Discursive formations are integral to understanding the micro and macro practices of contemporary society, or as suggested by Lyotard (1984), the post-modern condition. This suggests a shift from understanding the meta-narrative,

‘...post modernity represents the collapse of these grand narratives, the abandonment of any attempt to cast the entire historical process into a single interpretive scheme.’ (Callinicos, 1999, p.2).

If we therefore need to change the relationship between dynamics and practices, then we need to change the discourses around them and explore the way power is articulated through discourses. The post-modern condition not only limits the autonomy and self-determination of the subject in relation to the state, but also limits the function and possibilities of the pre-viewers, producers and disseminators of knowledge and value (Holub, 1992, p.176). Post-modernism interrogates the ontological foundations and discursive limits of society, questioning the coherence, unity, stability and universality of discursive formations in order to spot, confront and work against political power for the purposes of social change (Hicks et al., 2004). So rather than revolution needing to change formal structures, the focus is on relationships and practices. Thus discourses – the way agency and collective action renegotiate the way we are, and the way we interact with others – thereby change the dynamics of power and the way structures work.

2.6 Conclusions

This chapter has highlighted the need for an interactive understanding of the relationship between agency and structure, a dialectic relationship. Here then, agency is a moment of relative autonomy, not economically determined in the Marxist sense. Although the economic base creates a condition in need of emancipation for agency to be realised, it is governed by opportunity and choice. The concept of Gramsci's hegemony is still relevant today, with a shift from coercion to consent, and normalisation in the Foucauldian sense; where organic intellectuals can still play a role in supporting the agency capabilities of the collective in a given moment for a political project. Foucault's conceptualisation of power, knowledge and resistance is very relevant to contemporary society, where agency and the potential to resist are possible through decentred agency and political empowerment. Here agency represents a permanent critique of the systems and networks of power, generating new patterns of behaviour and practice to transform society. When this occurs as a collective, a populous or multitude of radical revolutionaries, a critical mass can form. In the contemporary context this is where a group of singularities converge for a political project, resisting at different points of the system, but working collectively as a critical mass. This common is a constant becoming, a potentiality; according to Hardt and Negri it is latent in our social being, and made up of a multitude of singularities. The multitude is generated by mobilising different social networks simultaneously for a common cause but with the potential to have a transformative impact even if for a moment, without the need for an organisation.

Civil society and its networks of capital is the main sphere where democratic participation through discourse and deliberate social action can form, the other spheres are controlled by market forces and state party politics. However, solidarity must be actively constructed through moments of rupture and separation from the system with the construction of an alternative according to anarchists. They view resistance and revolution as relational, where practices carve out the spaces for situated acts of freedom, which collectively can create paradigm shifts in our being and doing through public power. However, none of these theorists address the capability of the individual or singularity to have agency, or how communications, emotions and culture are used as part of forming the collective. These theories do not address the role that security and trust plays in the development of the revolutionary subject into a critical mass for transformations in practice and structure.

These critical theoretical insights, along with our understanding of the essence of civil society and agency explored in earlier chapters, help inform the development of our use of the

capability approach and its application to the notion of collective agency and capability in the next chapter.

3.) CHAPTER THREE: CAPABILITY APPROACH AND COLLECTIVE MOBILISATION

In this chapter I cover the capability approach in detail, and theories on collective mobilisation, and how these contribute to our understanding of agency and collective action. From the previous chapters it has been argued that social science theorists, (Giddens amongst many), have minimised the potential of agency capability because of their non-Foucauldian understanding of power. 'Sen's vision is similar to that of Giddens (1987) for whom agency indicates the individual capacity for action' (Dubois and Ballet, 2007, p.192). By offering a different understanding of power and agency to the capability approach, I argue that collective agency capabilities can be developed in a social moment.

The capability approach

'... concentrates on our capability to achieve valuable functionings that make up our lives, and more generally, our freedom to promote objectives we have reason to value' (Sen, 1992, p.xi).

Capabilities are thus freedoms, the chosen functionings (objective beings and doings) that a person can achieve, where the person has the agency or freedom to choose from alternative ways of living. This approach shifts the focus from subjective views and resources to understanding wellbeing and agency. Freedom has not only instrumental value but is intrinsically important for a good social structure (ibid., p.41). Sen, the pioneer in the capability approach, believes that agency freedom is the 'freedom to bring about the achievements one values, and which one attempts to produce' (ibid., p.57). Thus, agency assumes the capability to choose freely and follow through on your choices. Although he notes that the '... freedom of agency ... is qualified and constrained by the social, political and economic opportunities that are available to us' (Sen, 1999, pp. xi-xii).

Sen argues that there are principally five types of instrumental freedom: political freedom to scrutinise and criticise authority; economic facilities, the opportunities to have and use economic resources/entitlements; social opportunities, to live in society where others enjoy goods; transparency guarantees, to be able to trust others and know that information is clear and honest; and protective securities, to prevent deprivation (ibid., pp.38-40).

He states that '... there is a strong rationale for recognising the positive role of free and sustainable agency' (ibid., p.11). Freedom is the process that allows for agency, through actions and decisions, given the opportunities available based on personal and social circumstances. There are thus 'conversion factors' in the personal, social and environmental domains that can

influence the individual's achievement of what they can be and do, and the capability sets that are negotiated (Morris, 2010, p.68). Sen argues that individual freedom is

'... quintessentially a social product and there is a two-way relationship between (i) social arrangements to expand individual freedoms and (ii) the use of individual freedoms to improve the respective lives but also to make social arrangements more appropriate and effective' (Sen, 1999, p.31).

Thus agentic freedom is one's freedom to bring about achievements one values and which one attempts to produce either through one's own efforts ('instrumental agency success') or that are aimed to be 'realised' even if not directly through one's efforts (Sen, 1992, p.57). However, it is argued that Sen distinguishes agency from capability, based on the difference that exists between what he sees as general freedom (agency), and a specific area in the act of freedom for wellbeing (capability) (Comim et al., 2018, p.88). Although, then, Sen rejects making agency a capability, Crocker (2009) believes that agency is a capability, he argues that the '... ultimate freedom to exercise our agency, to be master of our own lives – is the capability of capabilities' (ibid., p.223). I argue that agency must be *a priori* to articulating capability, as without the agency to resist and have 'free will' we would not be able to act and function on our capabilities to choose the lives that we value.

Sen and Nussbaum (1993) expand on the notion of agency with three understandings of the limitations of freedom. Firstly, although the subject is a free agent, they may still undertake actions which are against their interests for the greater good (i.e. to meet others' 'needs'). Here then the notion of 'responsibility' comes into play. Comim (2018, p.82), argues that agency capability is revealed in the way individuals act responsibly, and Robeyns (2005) states that the concept of 'responsibility' needs to be developed in relation to agency and capability. Although Sen is committed to ethical individualism (Sen, 1985, pp.185-7) and opposed to communitarianism, he recognises the social construction of sets of capabilities and responsibilities. Secondly, the subject may also not have the capability to act freely as an agent due to ill health, social deprivation, or difficult economic circumstances, as these circumstances can erode the capacity of the subject to have agency. As such, the destruction of subjectivities undermines agency, eroding the capacity of the subject to function as an active agent within networks of power (Tobias, 2005). Thirdly, there is the issue of adaptive preference a

'... lifelong habituation to adverse environments induces people to accept current negative situation with cheerful endurance ...' (Sen, 1984, p.209).

Here, there is a subjective misunderstanding of the true reflection of objective reality and circumstance: the agent is free, but personal conditions and perceptions may limit their agency,

and in a collective they may compromise their wellbeing and use their agency differently than anticipated. However, in a collective, others can compensate for each other's agency limitations to strengthen the collective moment for change. I would argue that there is no object notion of agency, that through the act of resistance within a given social, economic and political context, agency can be articulated, the dynamics of relationships and responsibilities changed, thus agency is subjective to the individual.

More recently Sen has argued that we need to focus on comprehensive outcomes, by analysing the actions, the agencies involved, and the processes used to understand aspects of freedom (Sen, 2009, p.215). Agency is thus understood as the individual's right to judge which opportunities to use, depending on how we value them. Sen argues that we need to consider the social influences, both in terms of what we value and what influences operate on what we value, and how these affect our choices, thoughts and actions (ibid., p.244). He believes that deliberative democracy is the most effective path to development, as individuals are free to negotiate their agency to prioritise the set of capabilities needed to achieve what they value. A space for democratic participation is therefore vital to enact agency collectively.

'Sen, we shall argue draws on his ideal of agency to argue that each group should itself select, weigh, trade off, and sequence capabilities as well as prioritise them in relation to other normative considerations such as agency, efficiency and stability.'
(Morris, 2010, p.72).

However, as discussed earlier with reference to adaptive preferences, and in Chapter Two, critical theorists such as Foucault would assert that individuals may be conditioned by networks of power as to what they value and prioritise. Thus, individuals are only truly free when they resist with a permanent critic, the 'ethical self' and push the boundaries of what is possible. This is touched on in earlier case work by Sen and Dreze in India, in which they highlight the distinction between 'reasoned agency', acting for a goal or purpose, and 'critical agency', scrutinising and deliberating about reasons and values (Sen and Dreze, 2002, p.19). They argue that

'... what is needed is not merely freedom and power to act, but also freedom and power to question and reassess the prevailing norms and values' (ibid., p.258).

So here agency relates to personal and collective process freedoms, the process through which goals are attained (Biggeri et al., 2011, p.4) and is critical in connecting capabilities and functionings (Sen, 1999, p.19). Therefore, in our understanding of agency we need to analyse actions and their agencies, and the processes used beyond the power to act but in resisting prevailing norms and values.

Theorists, such as Stewart and Deneulin (2002), have criticised Sen for focusing too much on individual capabilities and freedoms, giving groups or ‘collective capabilities’ (coined by Evans (2002)) little attention. They argue that priority is given to capabilities and free choice of opportunities (what people may choose to be or do) rather than functionalities (what they actually are and do) in deliberative democracies. Although the capability approach is an advocate for deliberative democracies theoretically, Stewart and Deneulin (2002) strike a note of caution regarding its limitations in practice and reality.

‘Where there is democracy, opinions tend to be filtered through and influenced by political parties, social norms and power relations within society ... There may be no consensus.’ (p.64).

They suggest that we need to assess the structures that influence agency and the formation of objectives, to differentiate between valuable (good) and non-valuable (bad) structures/groups, and not just see them as instrumental to individual agency (ibid., p.190). Stewart also suggests that we need to understand how best to promote valuable group capabilities at a meta-stage (social norms), macro stage (systems), meso-stage (communities) and micro stage (family) (Stewart, 2005, p.201). Sen, they argue, misses the role that the structures of living together play in facilitating the exercise of agency: not just the structures’ instrumental value, but also their intrinsic value and their value in influencing choices (Deneulin et al., 2006; Stewart, 2005, p.190)). Some theorists go further and negate the potential of individual agency, given that social agency is a long and continuous religious evolution, a cultural system that constructs the modern actor and their capacities for responsible agency (Meyer and Jepperson, 2000). The notion of responsible agency is further developed as the notion of ‘anterior responsibility’ which is defined as

‘... the subject’s capacity to take on moral obligations or commitments ... to commit oneself to do something in the future ... It is this capacity the subject has to take on for a duty that constitutes him as an ethical subject; without responsibility there is no moral subject ... Agency ... therefore requires the recognition of anterior responsibility ... (and) constitutes the first dimension of the capability of agency ...’
(Comim et al., 2018, p.97)

This notion of the ethical self resonates with Foucault’s ideas regarding the ethical self who has agency by constantly resisting the normalising systems of power. By being responsible for each other’s freedom, it is argued, agency can be a source of collective capability (Dubois et al., 2007). Thus, we are only truly free to have agency when those around us are also free.

'One important aspect of lives that we consider worth living is being involved in a project greater than ourselves ... this desire to live, what one might call a significant life ... such meaningfulness can be achieved by the exercise of agency of people joining together ...' (Biggeri et al., 2011, p.87)

Theorists also suggest that

'(t)he individual ... is embedded in social organisations, but ... the individual is also entrapped in standardised agency more than in explicit social control schemes' (ibid., p.110).

Standardised agency can be seen as part of Foucault's understanding of normalisation of conduct, limiting what is perceived as possible. We have already explored this earlier in the chapter and argued that through self-reflective embodied agency, and the ethical self, boundaries can be resisted, and social change is possible. However, some of the criticisms raised regarding collective agency and the capability approach will be addressed through my research.

Pelenc et al., (2013) argue that focusing on socially dependent capabilities of the individual does not allow us to understand the wide range of mechanisms for social change (citing Evans, 2002; Zimmermann and DeMunch, 2008). This focus also fails to explore the interactions between capabilities and social structures (Ibrahim, 2006) and does not make it possible to address capabilities that can only be achieved through group action (Panet and Duray-Soundron, 2008). There seems to be limited consideration both of the consequences that interdependence may have on capability (Dubois, 2007, p.194), and how the agent's capability depends on the context, and personal situation within which they find themselves, as capabilities are situated and contingent (O'Neill, 2001, p.197). In addition, there is limited understanding of the how and why a capability is prioritised, who decides or should decide which capabilities are the most important, how these decisions should be made and who should act to affect change within a collective context.

As suggested recently:

'... there have been few empirical studies on how collective agency and capabilities are generated by a group of individuals (see Kabeer, 2003; Ibrahim, 2006)...(but) collective action can help establish social and environmental conversion factors and instrumental freedom ...' (Pelenc et al., 2015, p.226).

Pelenc cites Dubois et al (2007) to argue that collective capabilities allow states of being through collective actions that would not be possible if individuals acted alone. Drawing from Evans (2002), Pelenc also argues that organised collectives are fundamental to people's capabilities to choose the lives they have reason to value. Pelenc offers diagrammatic flow

charts of the connection between the individual and collective stage and parameters that determine the agency of the collective, suggesting that empowerment is the improvement of agency (Pelenc et al., 2015, p.230). More recently, in a paper produced for the HDCA Collective Agency, Capability and Empowerment Group (webinar 29th February 2016), Pelenc has suggested that collective agency formation leads to collective capability emergence, which I build on in this research. Although I agree in principle with the main arguments presented regarding collective agency and capabilities, from my research it is evident that there is a multiplicity of factors that impact on the conditions that enable collective agency and capability to develop. Although empowerment may be one aspect of this, agency goes beyond the confines of empowerment within existing parameters. Thus, agency is more a sense of ‘free will’ that can resist and change, break free beyond the boundaries of the norm to transform structures and practices, rather than just being empowered within a given context.

Although theorists agree that our values and individual capabilities depend on collectivities (Ibrahim, 2013), they also argue that individual agency shapes and is shaped by social relations and institutions, and that people act collectively to negotiate norms, challenge inequalities and defend rights (Cleaver, 2007). They suggest that

‘... collective capabilities need to be agent orientated, free, voluntary and empowering in nature and need to generate benefits accruing to the individual and the collectivity at large.’ (Ibrahim, 2013).

In order to achieve this, social arrangements should be evaluated according to the extent to which people are free to promote or achieve what they value most (Alkire, 2005). Moreover, for sustainable human development we need to consider the role of groups and societal structures too (Volkert, 2013). Sen concurs that collectivities are indispensable in ensuring sustainable human development and in achieving agency success (Sen, 1992, p.58). Although, in an ideal world, most capability theorists believe that the state ‘is a collective’ providing the prerequisites of agency and necessary conversion factors (Robeyns, 2005) this may be frustrated. They argue that institutions are important in bringing about sustainable human development i.e. through the agency of others in society, not as a result of purely individual agency (Crocker and Robeyns, in Morris, 2010, p.77). However, in reality the state and institutions, as argued earlier, tend to standardise agency and reduce its potential to support change. Thus, collective agency through collective capability and action, is more likely to establish the social and environmental conversion factors for instrumental freedom than the state. However, collective agency cannot be imposed; it has to emerge organically, through a learning process based on interactions between people. The exercise of agency is not just about

choice but about challenging power relations and the way that things are commonly done (Cleaver, 2007). Volkert argues that direct agency can be provided in civil society groups, which can achieve outcomes that are intrinsic and instrumental in value (Volkert, 2013), but these may be limited if not organic. In essence, there is a productive interrelation between individual agency, collective capability, institutions and structures.

Thus, it seems that within the capability approach structure/agency dualism remains to be determined, and that there is a need to develop a greater awareness of how critical theorists understanding of agency and resistance impact on agency capabilities. These issues will be addressed through the case histories in Part II, but before moving on there are aspects of collective agency capabilities that need to be explored further.

As mentioned earlier, deliberative democracy is advocated by Sen as the way to ensure agency of freedom. This type of democracy is seen as ‘thick’, messy with the continuous involvement of the citizen in setting priorities, rather than the typical ‘thin’ democracy that is prevalent, based on a regular electoral process (Evans, 2002, p.56). I agree with capability theorists who argue that individual freedoms are dependent on collective capabilities, and that

‘... for the less privileged attaining development as freedom requires collective action. Organised collectivities ... are fundamental to “people’s capabilities” to choose the lives they have reason to value’ (ibid., p.57).

However, Evans believes that

‘... institutional strategies for facilitating collective capabilities are as important to the expansion of freedom as sustaining formal electoral institutions. Indeed, without the possibility of collective mobilization formal elections too easily become a hollow farce.’ (ibid., p.59).

Sen sees a key role in analysing this with the capability approach, arguing that

‘... the assessment of societies and social institutions can be deeply influenced by the information on which the capability approach focuses, and that is exactly where the capability approach makes its main contribution’ (Sen, 2009, p.233).

The capability approach is thus a normative framework to conceptualise, measure and evaluate institutions and policies that affect inequality and freedom (Morris, 2010, p.61); the capability approach can therefore be used to evaluate policy according to the impact on people’s capabilities and functions. The approach can identify if people are able, and have the means and resources necessary to realise their capabilities, and whether the conditions are present for their capabilities to be realised as functions that they value (ibid. p.64). The capability approach focuses on the information we need to identify social constraints that influence and restrict

agency and the institutional policies and practices that promote and protect agency (ibid., p.65). Through ‘rational construction’, it is argued that four conditions must be met in the ideal of agency: self-determination, reason orientation, deliberation and action to have an impact on the world. So, although the agency role is fundamentally important in the vision of good institutional arrangements and change, one challenge for Sen and others is to give an account of how democracies, including public discussions, provide procedures for collective agency (Morris, 2010, p.84) and how this might be measured (Alkire, 2009). However, Mouffe is highly critical of deliberative democracy as it ‘... tries precisely to eliminate the contingent nature of the articulation, to turn it into one of necessary implication’ (cited in Laclau, 2007, p.168).

The question of whether collective capabilities and agency can be facilitated by institutions remains, given earlier arguments that collective agency capabilities cannot be imposed but must emerge organically. The limitation of deliberative democracy is the institutional nature within which it facilitates participation, engagement and deliberation, because it acts within the normalising nature of power. My research suggests that within civil society as a sphere, collective capabilities can form through collective agency, by individuals from different networks in a given habitus. Through this formation, the relationship between agency and structure can be dialectic and lead to social impact and change. Thus, the conditions for the ideal of agency is not to be found in deliberative democracy but in the sphere of civil society, where individuals feel free to collectively resist for a social moment for a given cause.

Critical theorists offer a broader ontology of social change, an understanding of social transformation and the alternative conception of power, which we can apply to develop Sen’s Instrumental Freedoms (Comim et al., 2018, introduction). The contributions by critical theorists for three of Sen’s Instrumental freedoms can be defined as follows.

When considering the conditions needed to fulfil Sen’s instrumental freedom of *economic facilities* (the opportunity to have and use economic resources and entitlements) Marx’s work would suggest the need to consider power and non-capitalistic modes of resource distribution; Gramsci’s would suggest (as outlined in Chapter Two) that our status, position and networks of power and influence are established through economic factors, and is also relevant here. This helps us see that economic emancipation also has implications for Sen’s instrumental freedom of social opportunities, because we are situated in a given habitus through our economic position.

Therefore, Sen's notion of freedom *of social opportunity*, to live in society where others enjoy goods, is bound up with economic relations and thus has significant implications for capability and an individual's potential agency. The need to work and earn in order to pay for our basic needs as well as capitalist goods also impacts on the freedom of social opportunities available to us. Agency through social networks can create collective entities for action, and the capability approach demonstrates that the subject through collective agency capability can theoretically establish a new reality. Based on Hardt and Negri's notion of the Multitude, from a capability perspective this would be the dynamic free will by the collective of individuals/singularities with agency capability. The need for social spaces for social transformation is a key capability for civil society to have collective agency in contemporary society. It builds on Sen's instrumental freedom for social opportunities and will be further developed through my research.

In relation to Sen's instrumental freedom, *political freedom* is the capability to scrutinise and criticise authority, to counter and resist the norm. Political empowerment is thus a move from biopower to biopolitics where 'civil society is an expression of their collective freedom ... as a counterbalance to the state' (Davidson, 2008, p.90). Foucault's understanding of power as circulating through a network as a force of normalisation, where the individual reproduces power relations by conforming, is relevant here. Thus, Instrumental Freedoms relating to political empowerment has the potential capability of resisting this normalisation process.

Foucault's view of the political can also be used to develop Sen's instrumental freedom of *political capability* to scrutinise and criticise authority, i.e. where the empowered agent can resist and transform the conditionality's of power networks. Post-anarchists understanding of current forms of democracy resonates with Evans' (2002) notion of 'hollow democracies' and the implications this has for how capabilities can develop. If Sen argues that agency capability can only be realised through the process of democratic deliberation, then anarchy may be a more appropriate theoretical tool for conceptualising collective agency capabilities. The theory of anarchy suggests the potential of people power outside state and established institutions, without a centre or a leader, without taking over regimes of power, but through changing the dynamics of relations as a collective force for change in structures and practices. Through changing the networks and dynamics of power relations, structures can be changed in a sustained way through moments of biopolitics that destabilise existing norms and reconfigure relational dynamics of power.

Before we move on to exploring the analysis of case histories, there are additional theories relating to the process by which collective mobilisation can occur. Social theorists have explored the reality of social movement and collective mobilisation, and their insights are used to inform the coding and analysis of the case histories of the Shahbag Moment.

3.1 Collective mobilisation

I have argued that civil society is a sphere within which collective entities form, that agency can go beyond the confines of structures and normalising power, and that it is possible for collective agency and capabilities to emerge. I now explore the mechanisms and conditions that support the development and mobilisation of social moments of collective action.

The focus of this research is not a social movement, but a social moment, where a collective entity forms into a critical mass and is mobilised to act and effect change in structure and practice. Forty years ago social movements were defined as ‘socially shared activities and beliefs directed towards a demand for change in some aspect of the social order’ (Gusfield in Piven and Cloward, 1979, p.301). More recently, in the Blackwell Companion to Social Movements, social movements are defined broadly as:

‘... collectives acting with some degree of organisation and continuity outside of institutional or organisational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organisation, society, culture or world order of which they are an part’ (Snow et al., 2007, p.11).

Collective identity and defiance against the status quo are the cornerstone of these definitions and are fundamental to collective mobilisation. Collective defiance, which is omitted or understated in standard definitions, is the key distinguishing feature of protest events (Piven and Cloward, 1979, p.301). Protest events are elements of collective action which are public and make a claim or express a grievance to change or preserve a system (Tilly, 1978). In social movement literature the collective action problem is how to transform isolated protest events into a series of collective action events that generate enough mass public engagement over a specific period of time to effect change in structures, systems, politics, economics or society.

Olson’s theory of collective action (referenced by Friedman and McAdam (1992)), gave instrumental reasons for broadening mobilisation to include rational actor theory, cost beneficiary calculators and the dilemma of free riders. However, Klandermans (2007, p.361 and pp.364-9) emphasised the role of ideology and identity in the process of mass mobilisation, in the form of moral indignation and emotion. Piven and Cloward (1979, p.77) also argues that the ‘... emergence of protest movements entails a transformation of both consciousness and of

behaviour'. A social moment emerges from an initial protest event into a critical mass within a few days and is triggered by a spark incident that engages the mass public, rather than being pre-planned or orchestrated and prolonged as with a social movement.

A social moment is distinct from an organised sustained social movement, and a one-off protest event, or series of collective action events. For the purpose of this research we view the social moment as an act of defiance against the social order, motivated not to gain power, but to gain a sense of meaning in people's lives for a brief, time limited moment. A moment is where people from a diverse range of backgrounds are motivated to join in to create a 'field of discursivity' within public discourse where a common identity is formed in a given moment to enact change by a large number of people (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, p.ix). A critical mass is formed, because people from a range of different fields, in a given habitus, identify with the new discursive field in a given moment and, using their agency, defy the normalisation of power for social, political or economic change. The difference being that the people's motivation is fuelled by emotion and solidarity against an injustice, rather than just because of their pre-existing membership or affiliation to an organisation or cause.

I briefly review theories which contribute to our understanding of collective mobilisation. This draws on their contribution in analysing the fundamental mechanisms involved in our case histories, including resource mobilisation, political opportunity structures, cultural turn, collective action framing and constructionism. These latter theories are more dynamic, interactionist and constructive in their approach and therefore for the purposes of my research, offer a deeper understanding of the dynamics of contemporary social moments.

Resource mobilisation places emphasis on the ability of collective members to acquire and mobilise resources and people to achieve certain goals.

'Resource mobilization theory is at root aimed at better understanding how groups are able to overcome prevailing patterns of resource inequality in their efforts to pursue social change goals' (Snow et al., 2007, p.118).

They prioritise an organisational and structural approach to group resources, and organisational opportunities for collective action (Jenkins, 1983).

'But the simple availability of resources is not sufficient; coordination and strategic effort is typically required in order to convert available pools of individually held resources into collective resources and to utilize those resources in collective action' (Snow et al., 2007, p.116).

There are five resource types: moral, cultural, human, material and socio-organisational. Moral resources include legitimacy, solidarity, support, and sympathy and are used to motivate

engagement in the social movement. Cultural resources are artefacts, cultural knowledge and cultural products, which are used as conceptual tools to develop cultural competencies and collective identity. Human resources include labour, skills, expertise, leadership and human capital which are used to develop relationships and organise the development of a social movement. Material resources include financial and physical capital which are needed to support the ongoing activities of the social movement. Socio-organisational resources such as networks and infrastructures are used to organise and mobilise resources as needed for the sustainability of the movement.

Even with these resources being available, there are issues in relation to their value, transferability, access and control, as they are unequally distributed among different social groups. If the resources are not available indigenously and need to be sourced externally, this can have an impact on the social movement's goals and activities. There are also the challenges of how to mobilise resources, put in place structures and processes, and organise them to ensure that a social movement is sustainable. What kind of resources, and how resources were mobilised during the Shahbag Moment, will need to be analysed as part of the research.

Political opportunities offer insights to explain why at a given time a collective mobilisation can emerge:

'Political Opportunity Structures are composed of specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization which facilitate the development of protest movements in some stances and curtail them in others' (Kitschelt, 1986, p.5).

For Tarrow (1996) there are five key dimensions of political opportunities: opening of access to participation; evidence of political re-alignment; appearance of influential allies; emerging splits in elites; decline in state's capacity/willingness to repress dissent. The development of collective mobilisation can thus be predicated on the political opportunities, constraints and new openings that emerge from political changes and shifts. However, they can also be as a result of changes in the wider public narratives and discourses.

Tilly (1978) offers a political model that rejects a pluralist image of power as being static, seeing collective action as a conflict of interest leading to an aggregate calculation of individual actions of solidarity, which leads to a strategic interaction between conflicting groups. McAdam (1982, p.132) assumes a concentration of elite power with variable factors affecting the political opportunities including: their structure; strength of the counter organisation (i.e. their membership, solidarity, communications and leadership); and cognitive

liberation (the perception of how unjust the situation is, the potential for change and the efficacy to make change). The political environment influences the chances of success, where the receptivity or repressive nature of the political system plays a key role. The political context plays a significant role in the development or curtailment of a social moment, the dynamics and responses during the process of the emergence of the social moment therefore needs to be explored in my research.

In addition to structural mechanisms that facilitate collective mobilisation, there are theories relevant for my research which explore the role of culture. Rochon (1998, p.9) states that ‘culture consists of the linked stock of ideas that define a set of common-sense beliefs about what is right, what is natural and what works’. Rapid cultural change is when issues have been named, raised, discussed and diffused, and new ideas are normalised. He argues that ‘critical communities’ are needed to identify and name issues and problems where discourse is the driving force behind value change. These critical communities create a new habitus where new cultural meanings, scripts and know-how that motivates action are formed (Bourdieu, 1990). Activists with ‘radical habitus’ possess ‘protest capital’, as they have been involved in community activism (Crossley, 2002). Thus, ‘cultural performances that meld politics with entertainment ... are an important tactical repertoire to articulate grievances and construct solidarity’ (Snow et al., 2007, p.279). Johnston (2009, p.7) sees culture as performative and fundamental, stressing the agentic and collective aspects of culture. He argues that social performance is fundamental and is where human agency is located, constituting the ontological basis of culture, where culture is accomplished. Thus, static accounts of culture are insufficient to understand the process of challenge contestation and change (Snow et al., 2007, p.100). Also, locating culture within individuals or social movements misses the public enactment of culture (Williams, 1995, p.128). A focus on the cultural environment also constrains the enabling capacities of actor agency to shape action (Snow et al., 2007, p.101).

Culture is how beliefs, values and understandings are played out. For my research I favour an older definition of culture, which is seen as a collection of shared symbols, stories and public performances that people use to understand the self and their world (Geertz, 1993). In this understanding human consciousness is an historical emergent product of their active relationship with material nature and culture (ibid., p.215). Culture itself is a historic achievement by each generation. ‘Creative agency’ is therefore the use of a cultural ‘toolbox’ which gives people the capability to take advantage of structural opportunities. Hart (1996) identified three dimensions of culture: socio-psychological (sets of values, beliefs and

meanings individuals carry); signs and meanings (in the production of culture, practices and cultural change); macro cultural frames (of the world view, social situation and ways of life) (Snow et al., 2007, p.522). Collective mobilisers use these dimensions of culture to engage the public to their agenda ‘... collective actors ... draw on established cultural schemas that structure social life ... meaning motivations and recipes for social action’ (Sewell 1996, p.842). Tilly (2004, p.34) criticises those who situate culture in individual minds and bodies, rather than in social relations and interactions. Tarrow (2004, p.43) suggests that political theories try to explain movements as outcomes of a combination of both structural and cultural, long term and contingent factors within the political struggle. Theorists’ fixation on political opportunities thus ignores identity formation within collective action, historical roots and broader historical cycles of contention. Culture was a key component of my case histories, its reimagining and enactment in order to solidify latent identities for a social moment.

Building on this cultural understanding of developing collective mobilisation, some theories explore how messages are framed, addressing issues of meaning, perception and social construction to explain why people engage.

‘Frames not only perform an interpretive function in the sense of providing answers to the question ... but they also are decidedly more agentic and contentious in the sense of calling for action that problematizes and challenges existing authoritative views and framings of reality’ (Snow et al., 2007, p.385).

Frames therefore arise out of a shared interpretation of the same situation based on shared past experiences, or common cultural backgrounds (Johnston, 2009, p.137).

Frames are ‘... schemata of interpretation (that enable individuals) to locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large.’ (Snow et al., 1986, p.464). Melucci (1988) argues that collective action theory considers the ‘collective phenomena as the result of multiple processes’ (ibid., p.331), where the actor produces collective action through their interactions. Framing is thus

‘... an interpretive schema that simplifies and condenses the “world out there” by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences and sequences of actions within ones present or past environment’ (Snow and Benford (1988) in Benford (1997) p.415).

The move to a critical mass, it is argued, is dependent on ‘cultural opportunities’ and context (Williams in Snow et al., 2007, pp.95-6). Gamson (1992) suggests that there are three components for a frame to go from understanding to motivating action (diagnostic to prognostic tasks): injustice, identity and agency. This understanding resonates with my research findings.

Injustice arises when there is an unwanted situation which is seen as unfair and unjust cognitively and emotionally; identity depends on a collective sense of ‘we and they’, where there is an adversarial causal attribution of a response; and agency exists where there is belief in the possibility of altering conditions through collective action. Thus, the process of developing a collective action frame include:

‘...changes in the perceived seriousness of the condition such that what was previously seen as an unfortunate but tolerable situation is now defined as inexcusable, unjust or immoral, thus connoting the adoption of an injustice frame’ (Gamson et al., 1982 cited in Snow et al (1986, p.474).

McCarthy (1994, p.134) echoes Gamson and argues that for a frame to be effective it requires three elements: a definite root of the problem and its solution collectively; its ability to define the antagonists (us and them); and defining how the injustice/threat can be corrected through the challenger’s actions. It is argued that

‘... the meaning of certain events or structures is not presumed to be given or known but is to be reconstructed. Collective identity therefore requires a shared common cognitive framework, concerned with the orientations of actions and the fields of opportunities and constraints within which actions take place.’ (Opp, 2009, p.210).

Kladermans (1994) argues that framing and identity are emergent processes where history, social structure, cultural arrangements, constraints and actor’s interpretations are all dependent on perceived realities. Collective identity also implies a constructivist view of collective action: it is a process of construction through active relationships, it is not just a ‘thing’ (ibid pp.43-58). Hank further argues that

‘[c]ollective identity enables social actors to act as unified and delimited subjects and to be in control of their own actions, ... as collective bodies because they have achieved ... the constructive process of collective identity’ (ibid., p.46).

McCarthy and Zald (1977), Snow et al (1986; Benford and Snow, 2000), Goodwin and Jasper (2004), and Opp (2009) have identified a number of categories of groups to mobilise: adherents, constituents, bystander publics, potential beneficiaries, conscience adherents, conscience constituents, media, political allies, elite decision makers and opponents/antagonists/counter movements. These are useful for categorising the different interviewees in my analysis of the case histories collected. Adherents believe in the moment’s objectives and accept its goals. Constituents provide resources. Bystander publics witness the activities. Potential beneficiaries may or may not participate but can benefit from the outcome of the moment’s goals. Conscience adherents are part of the social moment but do not benefit directly from its success, compared with conscience constituents who are direct supporters of

the moment but again do not benefit directly from its success. The media, political allies and elite decision makers comment on, and respond to, the social moment and contribute to its dynamics and development. Opponents/ antagonists and counter movements do not accept the moment's goals and can offer an alternative position. I differentiate the perspectives of the interviewees in the case histories to explore the similarities and differences in their understanding of the Shahbag Moment.

As argued earlier 'the social arrangements that are ordinarily perceived as just and immutable must come to be seen as both unjust and mutable' before collective action is likely (Piven and Cloward, 1979, p.12 cited in Snow et al., 1986). However, resisting the status quo depends on a 'cognitive liberation' (McAdam, 1982) by those involved, and the general public and other stakeholders need to be engaged.

Although '... creating a sense of collective agency is central to the idea of collective action frames ...' treating potential participants as objects to be manipulated '... directly undermines the goal of increasing people's sense of agency' (Snow et al., 2007, p.257).

Gamson (1975, 1992) argues that there are two types of success: when the challenger's goals are realised, or when the challenger is accepted and gains legitimacy. The danger with the latter is that the group becomes normalised into the status quo, and therefore loses its agency and ability to resist, as elaborated on in Chapter One.

Constructionists argue that our reality is shaped through our experiences and interactions with others, such that there is no finite reality, everything is constructed. Goodwin and Jasper (2004) suggest that the blind spot of process theorists is their failure to recognise and incorporate insights from cultural constructionism. There is a need to give fuller attention to other dimensions of culture besides framing, the need to balance agency and structure, conscious intentions with unintended consequences and that structures are imbued with culture. This dynamic model of opportunities, organising and framing, and how they combine to trigger initial mobilisation and by what intervening mechanism, are largely absent from theories of the origins of movements and forms of contention (McAdam, 2004). 'Organising contention draws upon cultural artefacts, historical memories and political traditions' (Tarrow, 2011, p.121). Thus, collective entities make meaning by framing contentious politics and constructing interpretative schema which defines, crystallises and constructs collective identities with boundary mechanisms, reflecting, capturing and shaping emotions (ibid., p.143). This historical, interpretive perspective of contention resonates well with my research case histories.

It is argued that the way meaning, and collective behaviour, arise is central to a collective's emergence: this is where collective identities are continually interpreted through mutual influences between individual identities and the collective identities of the group (Larana et al., 1994, Chapter 1). So '...meaning is socially constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed and derived from social interaction and interpretation, negotiated, contested, modified, articulated and rearticulated' (Benford, 1997, p.410). Constructionists therefore do not focus on what happens, but under what conditions people believe a particular version of reality. Klandermans argues that there are three stages of social construction: firstly, public discussion and formation, which constructs and transforms collective identity; secondly, persuasive communications during campaigns, which builds consensus, mobilises people and develops counter alternatives; and, thirdly, conscious raising during collective behaviour where there are changes in meaning. This understanding of constructed contention is used in my research to build up the layers of a dynamic relationship between different actors and networks.

As discussed above, the existence, or perception, of unjust acts is a prerequisite to action: '... before collective action is likely to occur, a critical mass of people must socially construct a sense of injustice' (Benford, 1997, p.415, citing Benford and Hunt, 1992; Gamson et al., 1992; McAdam, 1982; Piven and Cloward, 1979).

The perception that an unjust act has occurred is important, and not all acts are interpreted as unjust. Also, there is a difference between constructing meaning around an unjust act through interactions, and searching for meaning as a motivational reason for joining a collective with a purpose. The analysis of the case histories in Part II will demonstrate the interactive, and constructionist nature of constructing meaning through organic interaction that led to the emergence of collective agency.

As part of these theoretical understandings of collective mobilisation, there are assumptions that someone or some organisation must be leading or initiating the process. This element is criticised by McAdam (1982), who argues that excluded groups have latent and potential power from their structural position and can therefore leverage power and resources through extra-institutional means. This echoes previous literature by Bourdieu and Sewell regarding networks and how people in different schema in the habitus can use their positions and knowledge collectively for change. Although a collective can grow out of pre-existing formal group networks, it is more commonly formed around tightly networked informal groups as societies tend to have high social atomisation (Crossley, 2002, p.93). This again reflects the

notion of mechanical and organic solidarity, and the limitations of formal group networks. Crossley further argues that

'... resource mobilization would be much better served if it abandoned its loose and somewhat tenuous grip on rational actor theory and embraced a more appropriate theory of agency' (ibid., p.101).

Assumptions that all people perceive political opportunity and threat in a similar way are challenged by theorists. Polletta (2004) argues that we need to understand how people make sense of shifts in political alignments as this will illuminate how and when mobilisation occurs. We need to probe the resources and constraints generated by the cultural dimensions of political structures. Opp (2009) argues that political opportunities offer a subjective definition of perceptions of opportunities. So that perceptions of their actual opportunities would be different for different groups, and that this approach only works if human behaviour is based on perception alone. This notion of perceived political opportunities is relevant for my research as there was confusion as to the actual political motives involved.

In my research culture is a key underlying component, where it is co-constructed and performative in that it brings together, but also develops, a common identity and frame. Williams (2007, p.100) criticises those who make static accounts of culture, which he argues misses the 'public enactment of culture'. We need to view culture as an interpretive, multi-vocal and socially constructed element with constraining and enabling capacities to shape actions, agency, and the cultural environment. My research builds on this cultural understanding of social constructionism with the use of collective agency. Koopman (2004, p.69) criticises frame analysts for failing to systematically account for why some frames are successful and others are not, suggesting the need to also consider other factors like culture and political opportunities, which I will utilise in my research analysis.

We finally turn to additional literature that considers emotions and agency as these are fundamental to my research and elements of the capability framework. Also to more recent literature exploring the role of government and social media, and literature on protest in relation to time, space and collective emotions.

The first of these, emotion, is not the glue of solidarity that mobilises, but a social sentiment, the experience of readiness for action, always experienced in patterned ways by structured non affective processes (Steinberg, 2004, p.126). However, Benford (1997, p.419) adopts an instrumentalist view, arguing that emotions are a vital social resource which actors produce, orchestrate and strategically deploy. More recently, however, Gould has suggested

that emotional ‘resonance’ goes beyond the strategic use of emotion; people have an emotionally charged motive where

‘... emotions are a component of all interpretive processes, affecting, for example, how external opportunities and threats are understood and responded to, how resources are allocated, and why a collective action frame succeeds or fails’ (Gould 2004, p.162).

Gould goes on to assert that we need a deeper analysis of the working of emotions, their effects on protest politics and their interaction with factors like framing, resource mobilisation, political opportunities and external environments. Opp (2009, p.210) further suggests that social network actors have emotional investments (bonds) and construct collective identity through the process of repeated activation of relationships, that link individuals as part of emotional recognition.

Solidarity and commitment need to be conceived, enacted and must be felt (Jasper, 1997; Goodwin, 2001). ‘The dialectic constituting process between commitment, solidarity and collective identity ... is largely a matter of emotional work’ (Snow et al., 2007, p.446). Thus ‘protest becomes a way of saying something about oneself and one’s morals and of finding joy and pride in them’ (Jasper, 1997, p.415). As a form of ‘emotional liberation’, Cognitive Liberation must occur, which breaks the emotional ties and loyalties that people have to authorities, thereby withdrawing their legitimacy in the eyes of the people (Flam, 1993, in Benski and Longman, 2013; *c.f.* McAdam (1982)). There are four emotional concepts according to Ruiz-Junco (2013): emotional work, framing, cultures, and opportunity structures. The first two are micro and explore how emotions are managed and channelled in dominant discourses, and how meaning is attached to actions. The latter two are macro and consider: collective patterns of emotions; expectations and the sharing of feelings with a group (Stryker et al., 2000, p.274); and the shape of discursive strategies by movement actors (Whittier, 2001, pp.250). This would include the expression of emotions that are deemed socially and conventionally unacceptable (Jaggard, 1989, p.160) such as in Shahbag, with the key slogans and chants demanding justice and the hanging of a convicted war criminal ‘*fashi chai*’ (we want a hanging/justice).

For the second, agency, Meyer counters a pure cultural interpretation by suggesting that

'...the wisdom, creativity, and outcomes of activists choices, briefly their agency, can only be understood and evaluated by looking at the political context and rules of the games within which those choices are made (structure)' (Meyer 2004, p.50).

However, Klandermans (1994, p.218) suggests that '... the element of internal rationality highlights the role of human agency that tends to be neglected in structural approaches'. Morris (2004) argues that even when agency is considered, it is placed in the hands of external actors, which truncates the analysis of collective entities origins. Thus, agency is assigned to elites, those in power, or the leaders, rather than the participants themselves. By only seeing human agency as operating indirectly, as a reaction to external forces, theorists gloss over cultural and emotional processes that inspire and produce collective action.

Building on the earlier arguments by Klandermans (1994) regarding agency, Flacks (2004) reminds us that Marx's 'dialectic style', the search for opportunities and oppressions inherent in social institutions, needs to be considered. 'One of Marx's central analytical strategies, however, is missing from contemporary theories, namely, his effort to embed power relations in an analysis of the political economy as a whole' (Flacks, 2004, p.139). Flacks argues that the power of the powerless is rooted in their capacity to stop the smooth flow of social life, and that there is a standard assumption that 'agency' rests with the organisers or leader of social movements, whereas in reality this is much more complex (ibid., pp.141 & 144). My research aims to reintegrate an understanding of agency capability and resistance to normalising power into social moments and the dialectic relationship between agency and structure. The limited notion of agency being situated primarily within leadership is also echoed by Morris 'Movement agency is contained in leadership configurations where pre-existing leaders have the capability to mobilise social networks because of their nodal positions'(Morris, 2004, p.242). Flacks further argues that a threat is not a sufficient condition for collective action, it must be shared, and the source of the threat must be human agency rather than a natural event which through collective action can be stopped or alleviated (Flacks, 2004, p.148). However, although the formation of collective agency is based on the common construction of a shared solution to the threat, the issue of agency of the collective, rather than of leaders, is yet to be addressed appropriately, although it is argued that innovation and creative characteristics come in part from how human agency is accomplished through the playing out of multiple identities (Johnston, 2009, p.10). Insurgent identities are therefore not inherited wholesale from the past, they are actively constructed through agency into mobilised ones, which it is argued is because of cultural leaders (Tarrow, 2004, p.40).

Meyer (2004, p.54) argues that a meaningful understanding of agency can only come with attention to structure. But structures are cultural schemas that reproduce and reflect unevenly distributed power (Sewell, 1992, p.92). We need therefore to recognise activists' strategic abilities to recognise and create opportunities (Polletta, 2004). 'To become a subject capable of change, to assert agency, individuals and collectives have to free themselves of constraining norms and roles' (Benski and Longman, 2013, p.534, citing Touraine, 1995, p.274). Although culture remains structural, theorists fail to explain variations in agency in relation to cultural, political and economic structures, and '... yet it is the exercise of agency that is at the heart of strategy, strategic thinking that is reflexive and imaginative' (Bruner, 1990). Polletta goes further in pointing out that

'... a tendency to conflate culture with agency has made it difficult for sociologists to grasp objective (rather than only subjective), enduring (rather than transient), constraining (rather than only enabling) aspects of culture and made it difficult to see culture operating within political institutions as well as outside them.' (Polletta, 2004, p.108).

As part of my research, the construction of emotional and cultural identity offers a key point of mobilisation: cultural identity is progressive but rooted in the emotions of the past, through individual's agency, forming a collective to resist the status quo.

Steinberg (2004, p.122) believes that collective action and social agency are inseparable from the unfolding dynamics of a situation. Here, agency is always a dialogical process, path dependent as well as situationally embedded, and signifies modes of response, sometimes over broad expanses of time and space (Emirbayer, 1997, p.294). Structuralist and culturalist therefore have a deterministic view of the potential of the individual for autonomy, choice and agency even as a social construction (McAdam, 2004, p.207). Most models also tend to emphasise external agency while failing to shine a light on agency within challenging groups, but Morris argues that '... through movements people discover a collective agency that they were unaware of previously, or perceived only dimly' (Morris, 2004, p.245). My research will build on this notion of collective agency and explore the conditions necessary to support its capabilities in different contexts.

There are two further issues that are not traditionally considered, but which are significant for my research: the positive role of the state; and the role of social media and modern forms of communication. The state and social media both played dynamic, interactive and constructionist roles in the development and emergence of the Shahbag Moment, and this

was captured through the discourses and narratives of those interviewed, and through media reporting during the moment.

The first aspect relevant to my research is the potentially positive role of the state, other than in relation to political opportunity structures. Traditionally, collective action is seen in relation to its opposition to the state, or where a political window of opportunity is taken advantage of, due to splits in the elite. However, there are growing examples of collective entities in which there are suggestions that independent agency on the part of state segments can play a supporting role in their development (McCarthy and Zald, 1987; McCarthy, 1994). This is where individuals within the state system actively create opportunities for collectives to mobilise, for example during the American civil rights movement (McAdam, 1982). I would argue that this is where organic solidarity with public power becomes greater than the normalisation power of the state. Here, those with agency positioned within the state system used their knowledge and understanding of the system to go beyond the boundaries of the state, to support a social moment in civil society. McAdam argues that the defining quality of a collective is the mobilisation of previously unorganised or non-political challenges to form a mass movement (2004, p.219). He also suggests that this is when elite contentions (within institutionalised political groups) turn into popular contentions (within previously unorganised non-political collectives) with new types of actions and new actors (ibid., p.223). Melucci (1994) argues that the task of the analyst is to explain how outcomes have been collectively constructed, how they are maintained and how they alter over time because of how different actors engage. Here, the role of the state is not seen as structural but as relational, where individuals with agency within the system support and facilitate the collective from within, because they identify and find meaning with the emerging collective entity. This is further developed in my research, as the interaction between individuals within the state system and those in the social moment was a key element of its construction and destruction.

Indirect network ties are developed through the mass media, which can share stories and messages from the collective, and generate solidarities that transcend the boundaries between communities, familiarising individuals all over the country with the motives and details of the collective (Snow et al., 2007, p.297). However, this can be filtered, and is covered as new news, so is not a sustained, transparent form of communication, unlike social media. There are now emerging references in the theoretical literature on the role of social media and communication discourses, and the role they can play in creating free spaces or scenes for collective entities to form.

'(T)he fundamental power struggle is the battle for the construction of meaning in the minds of the people. Humans create meaning by interacting with their natural social environment ... this networking is operated by the act of communication ... the process of sharing meaning through the exchange of information ...' (Castells, 2015, pp.5-6).

For Castells, the internet is potentially an autonomous space of communications, facilitating a new type of mass communication of the self, directly related to the development of social and political autonomy (Castells, 2009, pp.53-71; 2015, p.7). Digital scaffolding, he argues, through social media, offers fast communication outside prescribed channels, for decentralised network structures to maximise chances of participation.

In the context of global theory,

'Castells perceives informational communication to facilitate and to be facilitated by networks ... A network allows for information flows between heterogeneous social actors, who can operate flexibly and effectively in ways precluded in hierarchical arrangements' (Browning, 2011, p.91).

Castells compared a wide variety of rhizomatic social movements in different contexts, but all displayed

'... homogenous populations, the high penetration of internet use and an outraged people with a strong sense of injustice, but also with a diminished fear and increasing sense of hope and empowerment ...' (Hands, 2014, p.278).

Here, then, there can be self-reflective cooperation and solidarity, leaderless deliberation, where everyone speaks for themselves, everyone represents themselves and no one else. 'The movement is not a single entity. But multiple streams that converge into a diverse challenge to the existing order.' (Castells, 2015, p.190). The mainstream media can also play a critical role, and populations do not always have to be homogenous to form a collective entity. McCarthy et al., (1996), caution the role that media plays in privileging certain events that satisfy 'news values', ascribing legitimacy to certain actor's demands and strategies. Myers (2000) argued that mass media plays a crucial, but understudied, role in the diffusion of protests in modern democracies. Bennett (2003) further argues that digital media is changing the nature of activism and extending the range of social networks engaged in social movements. The construction of emotional bonds which form solidarity can only occur through regular and intense interactions and communications, something that social media has played a significant role in accelerating and extending to wider networks in the current context (Castells, 2015). This aspect of social movements is further developed through my research, as emotions and social media played a fundamental role in mobilising collective agency. The research explores how social media was used to support the spread of the moment and its message, and the meanings attributed in the

discourses used through virtual propaganda ‘wars’ online in framing the narrative around Shahbag.

3.2 Protest and time, space and emotion

In recent literature on protest in relation to time, space and collective emotion are re-emerging as important categories in exploring and explaining social behaviour (Hardy, 2012). This literature offers another way to consider the Shahbag Moment through the dimensions of time, space and emotion.

In relation to the time dimension of protests there are a number of aspects to explore: the engagement levels of an individual over their lifetime, at different life stages; when they are more or less likely to engage given their daily life commitments, capability and health; how long an individual engages in a given protest over time; in what way and intensity (daily/weekly/annually) they engage in protests; and historically the growth, decline and re-emergence of a protest and the influence of recent protests in other places.

Brodie et al (2011) undertook a review of literature and research into why individuals participate in social action. Participation it was found was widespread and embedded in communities. They found that individuals had more than one motivation for getting involved and these shifted over time according to people’s life circumstances, needs and aspirations. Individual motivations to participate were determined by their values and beliefs, their networks, as well as the issues and interests that were important to them. Their ability to participate was determined by access to resources such as time, money, skills, knowledge and experience. This study explored social action, mainly through ongoing membership and voluntary work. Traditionally, protests are usually planned by organisations and involve their members, with participation by those who have free time e.g. young people, or depending on the type of engagement needed those who are retired. What is unique about current protests is that they are in response to a social phenomenon and usually attract a representative cross section of the population over a specific period of time. In more recent protests, people are

motivated to engage, irrespective of their current life situation or previous experience or commitment to social action.

Traditionally models of engagement in protests are determined by the nature of the protest itself. For example, the membership of organisations involved in a campaign or movement over a long period of time, or by giving regular donation, rather than a daily active physical engagement in a protest. However, the use of online media has now made it much easier to have a presence and engage in protests virtually, as outlined above (Castells, 2015). Thus, a person can engage virtually over time without physically engaging in the protest space, making it much easier to engage. However, there is a correlation between online activism leading to joining offline protests (Steinert-Threlkeld et al, 2015). So that by reading and engaging with protest issues online, a commonality and shared meaning is created, which can lead to joining in physically when a protest is organised. This makes the time commitment more flexible and easier to fit around daily life. Shahbag and more recent protests such as the Arab Spring and Coloured Revolutions across Eastern Europe have been time limited, making engagement short term rather than needing to be sustained (Meirowitz and Tucker, 2013, p.478). However in some protests such as Occupy the physical presence at the protest scene became a key sign of seniority and commitment, which was valued by other protesters.

Protests over time, historically also have an impact on engagement. Said (2015) in understanding the Tahrir Square movement in Egypt explored the notions of space and time. Tahrir Square (Liberation Square) had an historical significance in hosting past movements, both successful and unsuccessful that influenced others to engage in the 18 days mass protest that ousted the President during the Arab Spring. For many at Tahrir Square there was unfinished business from historical protests that needed to be addressed. This is similar to the Shahbag Moment where there was a previous Nirmul 'Peoples Court' to try the collaborators of the Liberation War. There is also the dimension of protest and time and space in relation to other protests that have occurred recently influencing the emergence of new protests. During the Arab Spring each protest influenced the next: in 2011 Tahrir Square in January, which influenced the Madrid and Athens square occupations in May; Wall Street and Zuccoti Park Occupy was in September and there was a national march in Rome in October (Donatella della

Porta, 2015). Most of those interviewed for my research cited the Arab Spring and protests in India as having an influence on them engaging in the Shahbag Moment.

Protest in relation to space is another emerging aspect that explores different dimensions including virtual and real spaces; personal and collective spaces, their location geographically; the symbolic use of public spaces; and size of protest space. Social media has meant that communication about a protest can be spread across a vast array of networks at high speed, so that different protest spaces can emerge simultaneously and coordinate activities (Castells, 2015). Social Media offers an alternative space from mainstream media, giving subjective rather than 'objective' reporting in real time, offering a commentary and a space where the voice of the protestor can be heard directly (Harlow and Johnson, 2011).

In relation to 'real' spaces there have been a number of studies on the significance of public spaces especially the 'street' and parks as a space of action. A UK example would be 'Reclaiming the Streets' in the UK since 1995 with non-violent direct action in public streets. Another would be Occupy which also occupied New York City's Zuccotti Park in 2011, or Gezi Park in Istanbul, Turkey in 2013. Here public spaces were taken over as part of a protest of space, either because of the local connection to the space and the protest, or because it was a symbolic public space and could be used to hold the protest. This politicization of a public space to occupy or reclaim rather than for a few hours, but for days and weeks is a much more recent and frequent social phenomenon. Where protestors create a space of politics, but also where a politics of space is created, including those who belong to that location, and excluding the 'other' (Marom, 2013). In the case of Occupy the 'other' were the outsiders who were not actively and regularly involved in the occupation, didn't know the symbols and gestures used in the gatherings and the 'norm' inside the occupation space (Baates et al, 2016). In the case of Gezi it was the local community and the 'other' were the statutory sector workers who were imposing the changes on the lived environment. Shahbag was a little different as the space was not connected to the protest issue (it was not outside the law courts for example where the verdict had been given). Shahbag was a space near to the student bloggers university, where local journalists and cultural activists would meet in the local tea stalls to talk, at a major interchange in the city. The 'other' were the Jammāt Islam, or those who supported the collaborators and had made public threats against the ICT.

Koopmans in Snow et al. (2008) separated the personal intimate space of meaning, purpose and history, from the collective space where the individual uses their agency to protest for an external justice for the greater good. Here there is a symbolic use of space to reclaim and position the 'citizen' by re-inventing a new habitus of resistance. The space must be legitimate, somewhere where the individual 'wants to be seen' as part of their personal identity. With an 'atmosphere' that '...traverses distinctions between peoples, things and spaces...the shared ground from which subjective states and their attendant feeling and emotions emerge' (Anderson, 2009, p.78). From the research on the Shahbag, there was an emotional connection to the protest space, the atmosphere, the need to be socially seen to be part of it, to contribute towards it and to join in. For those who couldn't physically be there, they engaged virtually or established their own physical Shahbag as a show of solidarity at their local Shoheed Minar, so that they too could be part of an historical event.

The location of a protest space, its size, historical significance and influence as a space is also important. As in the case of Tahrir Square with its historical significance and scale being at the heart of downtown Cairo and 11.5 acres of open space (Said, 2015, p.352). Occupying key sites where an injustice has occurred which disrupt the general public however brings added burdens of the need to legitimise the protest in order to gain social acceptance (Lundgren and Nilsson, 2018). It can also lead to clashes with those in authority, which can aid the protest as in the case of Gezi Park, Turkey in 2013 (Elsen-Ziya et al, 2019). In the case of Shahbag Square, Dhaka, Bangladesh the square was in a key interchange between the old and new quarters, the cultural and university quarters and was big enough to host the Shahbag Moment. Although it disrupted major bus routes and access to key hospitals and cultural centres it was supported logistically for a time by the authorities.

The final dimension is in relation to protest and emotion. Collective emotions change during the process of engaging in a protest, '...emotions are defined as interactive reactions that are mutually formed by individual level and collective level experiences and expressions' (Coskun, 2019, p.1198). There are seen to be four spaces of emotions: place, temporal, self and interpersonal (Brown and Pickerill, 2009). Starting with the self, there is anger or rage at an injustice because of a 'moral shock'. At a given moment in time others have the same emotion

and this then turns into a sense of collective and affective solidarity. A site or place or scene or space is formed virtually or in reality, where these meanings and feelings can be shared interpersonally ‘...rituals underpin much activism that serve to emotionally sustain activism at the same time as creating new spaces of resistance.’ (ibid., p.29). There is seen to be a process of three levels starting with negative anger and fear which turns into positive solidarity for action and collective identity, which then leads to hope and joy as a collective emotion (Coskun, 2019). During the Shahbag Moment, moral outrage and shock at the verdict, turned to the anger of an injustice and the need to make a stand, which then turned into a celebration of Bengali identity and the reimagining of the Liberation War ideals.

More recent literature explores how emotions and feelings are constructed, performed and felt collectively. There are seen to be two types of emotional movements: identity, and instrumental (Walgrave and Verhulst, 2007). These types of protests are usually triggered by a ‘critical emotional event’ or a ‘moral shock’ which is unexpected and highly publicised, leading to public outrage and the search for protest possibilities. Protest and activism are informed by emotion and space where emotions are contextual and relational across a given space (Brown and Pickerill, 2009). Belonging to a space and its co-constructed identity justifies the emotion of outrage and legitimises and gives meaning to the need to take action as in an emotional echo-chamber (Eslen-Ziya, 2019). Sharing an identity through a common cause and having collective emotions leads to solidarity and hope, ‘As our participants took part in the protest, anger was converted into hope and feelings of belonging’ (ibid., p.10). Participating in the emotional protest creates a new social persona, a sense of belonging and common ground between diverse groups. Thus, joining the protest means they become part of an emotional collective, and generates ‘...an emotionally charged construction of a space and identity...’ (Lundgren and Nilsson, 2018, p.18).

Anger is a response to an injustice, rather than just having sympathy for a victim, the former instils a sense of agency and generates an emotional habitus (Henderson, 2008). However, a sense of safety is needed for emotional stability to occur in a protest (Brown and Pickerill, 2009, p.30). Thus, although there were ongoing issues and protests, apart from activists, the ‘ordinary’ person didn’t usually engage in political and social protests in Bangladesh. When interviewed, many stated that they were engaging with a protest for the first time, not just

because of the injustice and the need to act, but because Shahbag was seen as a respectable and safe space to be for women and children. As the protest was non-violent and cultural it was a stable positive space for people from all walks of life to engage in, in whatever way they wanted to and felt comfortable doing.

The Shahbag Moment was a key example of how an initial outrage and public outcry at the verdict of life imprisonment led to a call to protest at Shahbag Square by bloggers. People stated that they felt they had a moral duty to take action, where their emotion led to a collective solidarity between a diverse group of individuals. The use of cultural non-violent protests meant that it was safe for those who did not usually participate in protests to engage, and the co-construction of meaning and purpose because of their commonly felt emotions led to a collective emotion of solidarity to continue the protest until there was change. The interviewees had deeply experienced emotions that were evident when recounting their histories of Shahbag, two years after the Shahbag Moment.

Before concluding this chapter, more recent research on movements such as ‘Occupy’ question how it is possible to encode dynamic shape shifting collective entities, a social organism. They argue that existing approaches are challenged in applying themselves to a network of collectives arising spontaneously, a concentric model of interlocking circles that radiate out from several core nodes of highly committed activists. They argue that this creation of a ‘... spectacle or aesthetic response to injustice and oppression ... is reliant on a positive public image’ (Welty et al., 2013). They are social organisms, dynamic and shape shifting, their development is a form of polygenesis, arising spontaneously, and not linearly aligned, ebbing and flowing, arising and receding (ibid., p.16). These contemporary collective entities represent networked systems rather than structures, horizontally fragmented and dialectical, integrated rather than static (ibid., p.38). We need to develop additional frameworks and tools to help understand and analyse these new ways of emerging collective agency, the capabilities of collective being and doing in civil society.

The question of how to theorise a collective that occurs, because of a dramatised event that highlights the glaring contradictions between social values and practice, because of a suddenly imposed grievance, that is highly publicised and unexpected, remains unanswered. The work of theorists who focus on frame alignment and political opportunity structures have

not been able to address this question adequately (McAdam, 1983; Tilly, 1978; Tarrow, 1996). It is acknowledged by Melucci (1994, p.103) that ‘... contemporary movements detach themselves from traditional models of political organisation ... and political systems.’ My research develops a method, process framework and ways of analysis to try and address this need to understand modern moment dynamics.

It has been argued that ‘oppositional consciousness and solidarity are constructed and sustained by a movements narratives’ (Polletta, 1999; Snow et al., 2007, p.446). The use of discourse and narratives is fundamental to the development of collective action frames, the construction and understanding of injustice, and the enactment of culture and emotions. It is through discourse, either at the scene, or through social media and mainstream media, that collective identity is formed through resisting the normal narrative that leads to agency. Even in constructionist theories, discourse has limited reference in the literature on social movements. Steinberg (1998) criticises framing for not problematising the role of discourse in the interpretive process, where collective behaviour is not just the cognition of discourse but its co-creation. He offers a method to reconstruct the schema that shows the relationship between experience and speech analysis based on pragmatic intent, social roles conveyed, and interpretive categories, which are coded into social action, problem setting and reflexivity (outlined in Johnston, 2009).

Klandermans argues that

‘... in order to study a movement’s collective identity and the webs of meaning where it develops, the analysis of discourse used by actors to describe their experiences and motivations becomes a strategic tool that completes and enhances the qualitative method traditionally used by symbolic interactionist scholars’ (1994, p.217).

But social discourses are always framed in the larger social context, so analysis provides clues about the structure of social interactions within networks where collective identities are constructed. My research addresses these issues by analysing the discourse of a range of case histories, to understand the meanings attributed by different actors in different positions and how Shahbag’s collective agency was formed. The method used is detailed further in Chapter Four, Part II.

3.3 Conclusion

Tarrow (2011) argues that social theory has its origins in the work of Marx, within which conflict is inscribed in the very structure of society where collective action is rooted. Marx attempted to understand why members of the working classes failed to act to overthrow capitalism via collective action. It was argued that false consciousness was the reason why we fail to act because we are ‘... cloaked in a shroud of ignorance, woven by our class enemies’ (Tarrow, 2011, p.17). As aptly put in a recent paper on Occupy by Bates et al (2016)

‘Solidarity and cooperation are a precondition of human flourishing ... collective transformation is a political action [where] ... the multitude is not outside the system, as the exploited, they are the very condition of possibility through which the system functions.’ (pp. 23-24)

By understanding the articulation of power differently, and how this can be resisted, critical theorists offer additional insights relevant to my research.

The above strands of thought, as well as earlier mentioned theories on solidarity, public power and democratic participation, suggest a number of tools for analysing the case histories. These are clearly aligned with the capabilities approach which we outlined earlier and the Instrumental Freedoms which we will use as a framework of analysis

PART II

INTRODUCTION

In Part I, I have developed a theoretical understanding of a critical social moment, using insights and lenses from: social research literature, critical theorists and the capability approach. These three different theoretical approaches contribute to our understanding but have been unable to satisfy our need to fully analyse a critical social moment in the contemporary context. Using a case history of a social phenomenon, with qualitative data from a wide range of perspectives, will provide valuable insights into the contextual, relational and theoretical understanding of a unique, but increasingly frequent social phenomenon. It will also explore the applicability of existing theoretical literature through these three different approaches to inform the development of a framework to refocus future research. This chapter therefore elaborates on the methodological implications given the type of context and phenomena being researched: why we have chosen a case study approach and why we have chosen the Shahbag Moment; the reasons for the method used and its limitations i.e. qualitative interviews; the process of collecting and coding the data; and the final categories of themes.

My research question is to understand why, and how, a critical social moment of collective agency and capability emerges and declines. It explores the catalysts and conditions that led to a critical social moment, and the role of Instrumental Freedoms and capabilities in the process, along with the impact of the collective agency capability on structure and practice. From the literature review I have developed a research proposition:

- that civil society offers a sphere for collective agency capability to emerge;
- that solidarity, and the co-construction of identity and unity around an injustice, can lead to a critical social moment and a critical mass that can effect change and impact on structure and practice;
- and that Instrumental Freedoms and capabilities shift from being, to doing, in order to have impact as a result of the collective entity emerging.

4.) CHAPTER FOUR: METHOD, AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although this research was originally intended to be theoretical, we are using a case history of the Shahbag Moment to explore our theoretical understanding of collective action and capabilities for a given critical social moment. The process adapted for this research is taken from Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p.30), where the researcher uses a theoretical paradigm to develop a research strategy, which informs the method of data collection and analysis and the way that the data is then interpreted. The theoretical paradigms adopted for this research is critical theorists and the framework of Instrumental Freedoms from the Capability Approach. The approach of this research is interpretive and constructionist to understand agency and the way people construct the social world, allowing for an emergent research design (Denscombe, 2003, p.21). My epistemological position is social constructionism (Burr, 2003) which approaches text using discourse analysis, seeing text as a manifestation of available discursive resources, drawn upon to construct a particular version of events (Willig, 2013). Based on Bryman (2012) my research is also interpretivist, as the research tries to understand the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants. My ontological position is constructionist, as I believe that social properties are the outcomes of the interaction between individuals, structures and systems, rather than a 'phenomenon out there' to be examined. The purpose of my research question is to explore how structures, cultures, and discourses are constructed as part of social reality to explore their conditions of use, and how they manifest as collective agency and capability and the implications for structures and social practices in reality.

The research method uses case histories as instrumental to illustrate and represent an example of collective agency and capability in a critical social moment. This research design can provide insights into the conditions and processes involved in the case histories' development in order to facilitate our understanding of other examples of peoples' movements (adapted from Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p.123). The research considers the discourse of oral histories of a diverse range of actors involved in the Shahbag Moment in Bangladesh, along with triangulated discourse data from online and media sources. Given the rise in peoples' movements since 2010, based on collective rather than organisational mobilisations, we need to develop a deeper theoretical understanding of the conditions and processes by which these contemporary moments, as collective entities, emerge, and the extent and duration of their impact.

The capability of the collective to effect change is of personal relevance to me, as someone who has actively been involved throughout my career in building community resilience and agency. I have for the past 25 years been an advocate of organic civil society, the community empowerment agenda, both paid and voluntary as well as representing the community perspective on National Government, Health and Regional bodies. From my experience and knowledge of the research area the strategy and method adopted are based on a critical theoretical approach, assuming social interactionism and constructionism, where the interplay between collective agency and structure can push the boundaries of thought and possibility. The approach moves beyond traditional approaches to understanding social moments and capabilities, by gaining critical, theoretically informed, insights to explain and expand on the reasons for collective agency capability and its impact on structure and practice.

From the literature we know that individuals are part of collectives in a number of social arrangements, or 'fields' (Bourdieu), which impact on their capabilities and Instrumental Freedoms (economic, social, political, security and transparency). As detailed in Part I these capabilities are initially historically determined by the 'habitus' but have an interactive relationship with resources and means available, social conditioning, their position in society, and the opportunity and process freedoms they have. There are conversion factors from the individual themselves, their social networks, and the environment and context around them, that create real opportunities for them to choose and negotiate their capability sets. Agency is the process freedom individuals possess to determine and use their capability sets and networks, to negotiate, choose, weigh, trade off, prioritise and select the functions of being and doing, to reach their goals in life. Theoretically we have argued that when brought together collectively, agency and capabilities can generate a paradigm shift in structures and practices which create conversion factors, which in turn affect the conditions of capabilities and functionings in the future. To understand this agency, we need to find out why individuals decided to change their being (capability) of normalised behaviour and move to a stage of doing (functioning), engaging in a collective moment. We do this by collecting and analysing in-depth case histories, with a wide range of individuals offering different perspectives.

'Society is not the sum of individuals, but the system formed by their association which represents a specific reality which has its own characteristics' (Durkheim, 1982, p.35). Therefore, collective agency and the capability for social change is not the sum total of agency capability of all the individuals involved in a given collective; according to critical theorists it is the agency of the singularities, as they form a collective as an 'entity' in itself, a system of

relational network capital, in a given context, at a given moment, which has a sustained transformative impact on structure and practice. To understand the collective agency and the capability of a 'collective entity', we need to understand, *from the diverse viewpoints and perspectives of those involved*, the way that the 'collective entity' and its singularities, in civil society, has capability, agency and functions in the contemporary context. So, for this research, I explored the discourse of a wide range of perspectives from those involved in the Shahbag Moment retrospectively. I sought out patterns, similarities and difference across the different perspectives, the conditions that led to Shahbag, how meaning and unity was formed, communicated and emerged during the Shahbag Moment, and people's understandings of the impact afterwards.

Discourse analysis focuses on how discourse practice constructs the social world (Kvale and Brinkman, 2015, p.18). It is suggested by Foucault that

'... language is not merely contemplative or justificatory, it is performative. An analysis of discourse helps us elucidate not only the systems of thought through which authorities have posed and specified the problems for government, but also the systems of action through which they have given effect to government' (Miller and Rose, 1992, p.177).

So the political discourses in the case histories and media coverage need to be viewed in relation to how power is being articulated before, and during the Shahbag Moment by those involved, the social media, and other discourses, in relation to how they are resisting these technologies of power through their practice of discourses. My research captures a range of discourses regarding a historical phenomenon, to develop understandings of the meanings attributed and why it emerged, how it was understood and why it initiated collective action. Somers and Gibson (1994) argue that people construct identity, however multi-faceted and changing, by locating themselves or being located, so research on action and agency needs to focus on behaviour norms and values, seeing it as temporal, relational and cultural (ibid., p.41). However, identity is articulated through our narratives, how we make sense of the world and constitute our social identity: '*... narratives are constellations of relationships, connected parts, embedded in time and space'* (ibid., pp.58-9). The analytical challenge is thus to develop concepts that allow us to capture the narrative through which agency is negotiated, identity constructed, and social action mediated (Cohen, 1985; Somers, 1992). The Shahbag Moment was based on the development and construction of a collective identity to have agency for change, so there is a need to explore this aspect in more detail. When exploring the collective there are two main approaches: the structuralist, which explores the mobilisation of resources,

institutions and context; and the social constructionist, which explores culture and framing processes which through ‘interpellation’ shapes the subject’s position, ideology and motivations. Most theorists now agree that reality is a mixture of the two, and how they interact as a process; so as mentioned previously it is more dialectical in nature. Thus, for the purposes of my research, collective agency is an ongoing social construction of the collective in a given context. Discourse analysis, therefore, needs to explore the process of construction of unity of a collective, rather than evidence it: seeing it as a result rather than an assumed starting point and as dialectical. This requires exploring how the actors ‘produce’ the collective action through negotiation, interaction and opposition (Johnston and Klandermans, 2013, pp.43-44).

Generalisability is clearly an issue with the use of a single case study. However, my research is concerned with developing ideas about what might be the case in such instances of protest by developing a framework of analysis for future research and less concerned with its generalisability. However, Yin (1994) argues that external validity can be achieved from the theoretical relationships between the research, and future research in the area, where generalisations can be made. ‘It is the analysis and the cogency of the theoretical reasoning that underlies it that is the source of the generalisability of qualitative data’ (Edwards and Holland, 2013, p.91). Bryman (2001, p.283) also states ‘...it is the quality of the theoretical inference that are made out of the qualitative data that is crucial to the assessment of generalisations’. By using a case study to challenge the theoretical understandings of a social moment with collective agency capabilities, and developing a framework based on Instrumental Freedoms, I hope this research can be generalisable and inform future research.

My case histories are instrumental, and my method is analytical, resting on a rich and contextual description and argument which offers the potential of transferability (Kvale and Brinkman, 2015, p.299).

‘A mechanical application of method does not guarantee knowledge that is objective, reliable, valid or generalizable ... the quality of the product is determined by the competency of the craftsman who applies the tools...’ (ibid., p.275).

It has been argued that there is a ‘... paradigm proliferation against methodological fundamentalism’ (Lather, 2006): my research method is therefore rooted in my agency and interpretation of the data.

Bryman (2012) details criteria for reliability, validity and generalisability for semi-structured interviews in relation to their quality, rigour and wider potential. The quality of the case histories, to construct validity both internally and externally, was developed in two ways:

firstly, through online and hard media accounts of the Shahbag Moment as it happened in real time; and secondly, by interviewing a wide range of individuals who were involved in the Shahbag Moment in different ways and from different positions in the habitus two years after the moment. The design of the interviews was semi-structured and adaptive to ensure a rich collection of information from the interviewee. Reliability was developed through a holistic understanding of the issues involved, and having embedded case histories by exploring the issues through one to one and pair interviews, as well as focus groups with those who were involved. As I was the only researcher there was consistency in the way the research was conducted. Sampling of those interviews were purposive as the goal was to select participants in a strategic way, to offer diverse perspective on the research question (Bryman, 2012, p.416). Sampling was sequential, in that it was contingent on an evolving sample, initially through the snowball method, until the sample reflected the range and types of individuals that needed to be interviewed. There was respondent validity, in that all interviewees were sent a copy of the historiography for feedback. There was a match between the theoretical ideas developed and the findings from the research. Using a wide range of perspectives in the case study helped explain both the process and outcome of a phenomenon within a given context and can help to overcome the limitation of generalisability when linked to a theoretical framework (Tellis, 1997).

Principles of case studies were maintained by the triangulation of data using multiple sources of evidence. Using my own experience during the Shahbag Moment, field notes from the interviews and a personal in-depth understanding and knowledge of the issues involved in the Shahbag Moment and ICT trials. The interview questions covered: why and how Shahbag was different from other movements; how they heard and became involved in Shahbag; what they considered to be the key processes of decision making and action, and their involvement; why it was important for them to be involved in Shahbag; their reflections on the agency of Shahbag; and what was gained by being involved.

4.1 Case Histories

According to Yin (2014) a case study is used to understand how and why a social phenomenon occurs, and offers an in-depth description of it. It is particularly useful as a method when the researcher has little or no control over the behavioural events, and it occurs in a real-world context. It is a useful method as a critical case to test formulated theories, to confirm or challenge a theory where a ‘... single case can represent a significant contribution to knowledge and theory-building ... to refocus future investigations’ (Yin, 1994, p.38-9). Another rationale

for the use of a single case study is that it is an extreme or unique case in nature (ibid.): Shahbag had not happened before and has not happened since; or when it is a revelatory case, as Shahbag has not been studied in detail in this way before (ibid., p.40). Case Studies are ideal when holistic, in-depth investigations are needed offering a multi-perspective analysis (Feagin et al., 1991). Case study research allows the exploration and understanding of complex issues through holistic in-depth investigation, by understanding the behavioural conditions from an actor's perspective (Zainal, 2007). Yin's (1994) case study recommendations have been followed to counter the criticisms of case studies i.e. the design protocol, its conduct, analysis and conclusions. Yin also identified six sources of evidence for case study research, three of which were used for this research: documentation from social media and media coverage, interviews, direct observations (ibid., p.80).

The unit of analysis was the Shahbag Moment in Bangladesh, where those involved in the moment were interviewed as a rich source of data, and the literature and research question offered the criteria for interpreting the case study findings. For this research we are using one case study in one context. However, we used a wide range of interviewees from different backgrounds and positions in Bangladesh society who played different roles during Shahbag. We also used social media and paper media reporting of the Shahbag during the moment. Generalisation from the case study research is therefore an issue, however the purpose of this research is to develop an analytical model of how to explore other moments in future research.

During the course of starting my PhD new social phenomena emerged: the Arab Spring in 2011; and the Occupy Movement in the UK and US, which was gaining momentum, however these were large scale critical social moments. These contemporary social forms of collective action suggested a step change in the way people were organising and creating impact. In Bangladesh around this time there was growing unease and tension around the trials of collaborators involved in the 1971 Liberation War, and in February 2013 the unexpected happened, the Shahbag Moment emerged and captured the hearts and minds of the Bengali people not only in Bangladesh but across the diaspora. This form of collective action was unique for Bangladesh, and as I followed its emergence and growth, I realised that it resonated with the Arab Spring and Occupy Movement, and with aspects of the literature and research I had already undertaken for my PhD. In a very short space of time the demands of the Shahbag Moment had a major impact on structure and practice, with a debate in the Bangladesh Parliament, and a change in the Law and in practice in Bangladesh. The Shahbag Moment was a time limited event, on a cause I knew much about, and so it lent itself well to a case history

for my research. With my family connections it was possible to go out into the field and conduct interviews and access a wide cross section of those involved in different ways in the Shahbag Moment, even though it was two years after the event. What was most significant about the Shahbag Moment was that in a hostile violent environment created by Muslim extremists, Shahbag was a non-violent, safe, cultural protest that brought women and children to the scene to protest for the need for justice alongside usual protest participants and activists. There was no leading group or NGO running the event, ordinary people engaged in their thousands with their own agency, not because they belonged to a group who told them to attend as would usually be the case.

In analysing the case histories and formulating and developing the Instrumental Freedoms framework, I use my insights and knowledge of the case histories to understand the frames and schemas for structuring. The research therefore uses the theoretical framework and understanding to interrogate interviewees' perspectives of reality from different fields within the habitus, to develop a richer understanding of the emergence of collective capabilities and agency in contemporary moments. By interrogating the discourses of a wide range of actors with different perspectives, at different stages of being (capability) prior to the moment; doing (functioning) during the moment; and impact after the moment, we can further understand the opportunity and process freedoms involved. In addition, by triangulating the discourse within a historical and structural context, using additional data sources from media and social media, we ensure that we develop a 'deep description' (Geertz, 1993, p.6) of the different and complex facets of society. Using discourses from different viewpoints, considering the interconnectedness of discursive and other social practices and structures, within a given historical and political context we thus expand our insights into a given phenomenon.

4.2 Method

This section covers the method used for data collection of interviews, media coverage, videos and social media. It covers: how the data studied was obtained (access and consent); the method used to gather data; how reliability was ensured with pilots; sampling; triangulation; and how they were undertaken (interview guide and questions asked, the interpretation and translation of responses). It also discusses the approach to theoretical sampling for the case histories, issues faced when organising the interviews, including language and cultural issues and the insider/outsider dimensions, reflexivity and the role of researcher agency.

Language for the purposes of my research is seen as a social performance, it is productive, and a constructed version of reality to achieve social objectives. Discourse analysis

is an alternative way of conceptualising language, it explores the patterns in and across statements and identifies the social and political consequences of socially constructed meaning systems. The aim is to understand the collective agency capability of civil society through the lens of a discourse analysis of a range of oral histories and on- and off-line media coverage of the Shahbag Moment

Methods and data used include gathering and analysing the discourses of interviews of case histories, media and social media coverage during the Shahbag. Semi-structured interviews were used to capture the case histories in this research. The interviews were retrospective, held two years after the event, on a one to one basis, in pairs or as a focus group of those who attended Shahbag together. Sampling was purposive, based on the research question and the need to gain an insight into a wide range of perspectives. The interview questions were open ended, and prompts were used when needed to focus the interviewee. The questions were structured and informed by the literature review and theory and worded to ensure ease of understanding as the interviewees were native Bengali speakers, and English was a second language. Although the questions were always asked in English, the interview usually drifted into Bengali in which I am fluent. The list of interviewees appears in Appendix A and the interview structure and prompts in Appendix B. A pilot was undertaken prior to the beginning of the interviews to ensure that they were appropriate and comprehensible.

4.3 Qualitative Interviews

On the spectrum of interview types, from structured to guided (Bryman, 2012; May 1997), face to face interviews are appropriate to gain an in-depth insight and understanding of meaning within a given context. Qualitative interviews are interactional: an exchange of dialogue on a thematic narrative, where knowledge is situational and contextual, and where meaning is created, coproduced and reconstructed (Mason, 2002). Semi-structured qualitative interviews offer a rich data source, by exploring the language used by participants to capture an understanding of their meaning: the context where relational aspects are significant (Gillham, 2000). In line with the research aim, the interview's purpose is to use the discourse stimulated by questions to provide insights into the research themes.

There are different approaches to interviews (Edwards and Holland, 2013): positivist, where there is seen to be an external objective reality and truth which is different from the subjective understanding by participants; interpretive, where we understand the social phenomena from the perspective of those involved; emancipatory, which focuses on power and liberation enabling marginalised voices to be heard on their own terms for social justice;

feminist, where the gender dimension is explored; post-modernist, which challenges the legitimacy of the meta narrative where the significance is the exchange rather than the outcome; critical realist, where the world exists independently of people's perceptions of it; and psychoanalytical, where emotions and the unconscious process, and subjectivity is studied. For the purposes of this research we use qualitative interviews using an interpretive approach. There are also different forms that an interview can take: ethnographic observations; eliciting interviewees own stories; narrative and interpretive; focus groups and couple interviews. For the purposes of this research we adopt three of these forms: oral histories to elicit stories, and the participants understanding of a past experience of a particular memory in time retrospectively; focus groups, for groups of friends who experienced Shahbag together, to understand the social interactions through a collective discussions and how the social phenomena is recounted; and couple interviews, with those who experienced the social phenomena together. The tools used can be through talking, writing and seeing. I observed the event as it unfolded, and through the eyes of social media, images and videos, I talked with those involved and then analysed newspaper reports and produced a historiography which the participants gave feedback on.

Interviewing complied with Kvale's (1996) criteria for success. I had a sound knowledge of the issues involved, had a semi-structured outline of the areas to cover, and was clear, gentle, sensitive and open during the interview. During the interview, when necessary, I steered the interviewee back on topic through prompts, and questioned their memory if they made factual errors or distortions, always allowing their voice to come through. By undertaking pair interviews and focus groups, I explored the joint construction of meaning, the issues when disagreements arose, and how the group interacted.

The content of the interviews, although prompted by the questions outlined above and in Appendix B, were consistent in raising issues that could be coded, in particular with reference to injustice, culture and emotions. During the analysis, I started with theoretical codes based on the literature review. As re-occurring themes emerged, I added them to the list of codes, and then regrouped them to minimise the number of total categories for each stage as detailed in Chapter Six.

4.4 Interviewer Effect

When undertaking qualitative interviews, interviewer effect must be taken into consideration. 'In particular, the age, sex and ethnic origin of the interviewer have a bearing on the amount of information people are willing to divulge and their honesty about what they reveal'

(Denscombe, 2003, p.184). There are also the 'demand characteristics' (Gumm, 2004) where the response is influenced by what the participant thinks the situation requires: ultimately the cooperative nature of the interview and how the interactions play out affect the outcome. There is also the power dimension to consider. Although the interviewer frames the topic, and defines the situation and course of the interview (Kvale, 1996), there is an 'interview dance' where there is a continuous shift in the dynamics of power from the knowing expert being interviewed and the vulnerable knowledge seeker. When interviewing elites there is a status imbalance that needs to be addressed (Edwards and Holland, 2013). When the elites are political, different modes of being and saying by the researcher have to be contingent on the interviewee's political colours (Ross, 2001, p. 162). For the purposes of this research I interviewed elites and those of different political colours and had to adjust, find common ground, build trust and have situated knowledge to be seen as equal.

It is important to manage the subjectivity of the researcher in order to maintain the rigour of the research. Key considerations that I addressed, detailed below, included: how I positioned myself in relation to the conceptual and theoretical framework and research method; the research procedure, the setting, how I gained access to the participant and collected the data; how I catalogued activities, structured the analysis and arrived at the choices and themes; and when discussing the data what I found, what I learnt and how the data provided the evidence (Holliday, 2010, Ch. 4). During the interview process itself, I was conscious and mindful of the subjective nature of the interview: there is an assumption of shared meanings with the research subject, which are socially constructed; the interviewee may not hear the question through the same meaning frame as the interviewer; they may invest in a particular position in the discourse to hide a vulnerability; there is also the objectification of the interviewee, and the need to have symmetry in the social identities of the interview pair; also the interviewer may listen but still sets the agenda and controls the information produced (Hollway and Jefferson, 2002, p.30). During the interview process subjectivity was mitigated by using open ended questions, eliciting stories, anchoring people's accounts with key events, and using the respondent's wording and phrases in the data (ibid.). Given that the dynamics of the interview has an impact on the data produced, I reduced this by adapting to the cultural, linguistic and ideological situation to reduce tensions and put the respondent at ease, while still remaining consistent with the interview process. During the interview I consciously mitigated against their positioning of me as female, as the daughter of someone connected to a political party and as a researcher from the UK. I did this by agreeing with their criticisms of my father's

political party and also by sharing my involvement in the Nirmul Committee in the UK, thus countering their narrative of who I am.

'The agency of the researcher is also being acknowledged more and more as an ideological fore which impacts on the relations with people in the research setting and the way in which they are perceived.' (Holliday, 2010, p.120).

By triangulating the data with other sources, and using multiple perceptions from a diverse range of actors and perspectives to clarify meaning, I demonstrated the replicability of the observations and the interpretations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p.133). I also gave respondents the opportunity to give feedback on my understanding of their case histories, six months after the interviews, to reduce the issue of subjectivity.

Insider/outsider literature is relevant for my research, as although I was not an insider during the Shahbag Moment, I was not a total outsider to the social justice cause. My family has a history of involvement in the Liberation War and Independent Crimes Tribunal (ICT) from London, and I had been involved in the UK branch of the Nirmul Committee, so I had insights into the main issues and themes that were being discussed by the interviewees. I was continuously informed by differentiating perceptions of 'me' by the interviewee (Ergun and Erdemir, 2010). My status emerged differently depending on the interviewee's status, gender, age and class from the interaction, and the social and political context where the interview happened (Kusow, 2003). There were also power relations at play in relation to me being female, the daughter of a known political activist with strong connections to the political elite, although this was only the case when I was introduced to the interviewee through this connection. I overcame the ambiguity of my insider/outsider status by embracing commonalities and denying difference; addressing concerns regarding my neutrality; and being open about my political preferences not necessarily being the same as my heritage (Ergun and Erdemir, 2010, p.24). Sometimes I had to demonstrate to interviewees my commitment, understanding and knowledge of causes of the Shahbag Moment to show that I was not a total 'outsider'. At other times I had to demonstrate that I was open as a researcher, that I would not make judgements if they were critical of Shahbag or make assumptions that were politically biased. It is acknowledged that conducting field research as a female in a male dominated Muslim society also has its challenges (ibid., p.29, citing Saktanber, 2002; Berik, 1996; Wolf, 1996). Access was facilitated for some of the more senior interviewees through my family's male networks, and by being accompanied by a male member of my family when needed. Given the nature of the research area on social justice, I also had to negotiate politics and emotions, managing in the field relations through demonstrating a shared ideology, as both an

outsider and someone ‘within’ (Shariff, 2014). My presence, and influence, as a researcher was unavoidable, a resource on which I capitalised by being reflexive in understanding my effect as a catalyst in the interactive process (Holliday, 2010, p .137).

The interviews were held two years after the Shahbag Moment, in a continuing climate of political *hartals* (political strikes) and *oboroths* (political public transport bans). During this time, travel was sometimes hampered due to violence on the streets, so some appointments had to be cancelled, rescheduled or alternative arrangements had to be made to hold the interviews nearby, in hotels, at our home, or in coffee shops, rather than the respondent’s place of work or home. For safety reasons I was always accompanied to the interview by a male member of my family, this presented me in a respectable light, as conforming to cultural values. I was usually on my own with the interviewee during the interview unless the respondent was older and preferred otherwise, or if the contact had been made through a family member. If I was interviewing someone political (a party worker, politician or political activist), who viewed me in a political light (as my father is a ‘known’ person in the politics of Bangladesh), I also had to assert my independent and non-political bias at the start of the interview.

4.5 Triangulation

In addition to interviews, I triangulated my data through other sources. Triangulation is a method of using multiple sources of data to improve understanding, to ensure a rich, robust, comprehensive and well-developed account of a phenomenon. Methods include elucidating complementary aspects of the same phenomenon, using data from different points in time, from a public and private setting and comparing people with different perspectives (Holliday, 2010, p.76). The purpose of triangulation is to generate validity through gaining a quantity of different viewpoints of the same phenomenon from different angles (ibid.). This was achieved not only through using a range of data sources but also through the sampling of those interviewed. I created the opportunity for in depth ‘thick descriptions’ (Geertz, 1973) from my data from interviewing a wide spectrum of individuals involved in different ways in the Shahbag Moment. I further triangulated my interview data with real time coverage of the Shahbag Moment using the public chronological accounts of the Moment as it unfolded in one hundred and eleven reports from the media, social media and video footage of Shahbag. This included coverage as part of the announcement of the first verdict on the 23rd January, prior to the second verdict on the 5th February, between the 5th – 28th February the height of the Moment, the outcome of a prominent element of the Shahbag core group’s ultimatum on the Government on the 26th March and the arrest of prominent Shahbag bloggers on the 4th April

2013. This complemented my oral histories. I did not include written publications to date on the Shahbag movement, which are in Bengali and have been written for a particular audience rather than as real time accounts or oral histories of the movement. There were also numerous talk shows in Bengali with leading personalities debating different aspects of Shahbag which were perceived by many participants as mere ‘performances’ by leading civil society personalities, which I have not included as they would not contribute to the purposes of my research. A pen sketch of the triangulation data collected is available at Appendix C and was included as part of the Nvivo coding analysis.

4.6 Process

The interview structure and prompts, Appendix B, consisted of 5 open ended questions, which were slightly rephrased after five pilots to understand: how and why the Shahbag Moment was different, how the interviewee heard about and got involved, what they believed to be the key actions and decision making processes, why it was important for them to be involved, and any reflections they had about agency and impact of Shahbag. Theoretical sampling was based on ensuring a diverse range of perspectives from individuals involved in different ways in the movement, and from different networks of society, to ensure triangulation and thick descriptions. A mixture of one to one, pairs and focus groups were used for the interviews with a cross section of perspectives, from those involved in the core activities, to fringe participants of Shahbag, supporters, and commentators. As well as individuals who were senior figures in the political, legal and media networks, key personalities from civil society and the cultural networks, young bloggers, professionals and students were included in the sample. From an initial target list of 118 names based on social and media coverage of the event, and initial scoping meetings with key contacts, participants were identified, and their contact details accessed through a snowball sampling of interviewee contacts and networks. Initial contact was either made directly by myself (if younger than me) or a male family member (if a known senior person), or through contact referrals (if unknown) as appropriate. The initial lists of contacts were put on a matrix grid in relation to their position/occupation and their role in the Shahbag Moment. There were eight categories for position/occupation: key social activist (26 contacts), journalist/TV/social media (12), cultural activist (10), NGO/Civil society (13), academic (15), government representative officer/MP and other political party representatives (13), legal experts (5), participants – professionals, students and party workers (24). There were four categories for roles in Shahbag: as a core activist/advisor/organiser, as a regular fringe participant, as a supporter political/structural/civil society and as a critical commentator

media/academic/other. This reflects Snow et al., (1986) categories of groups to mobilise outlined earlier in Chapter Two (adherents, constituents, bystander publics, media, political allies, antagonists/counter movements and elite decision makers).

I collected oral histories retrospectively through one to one interviews, couple interviews and focus groups, with individuals from different fields and different forms of involvement in Shahbag. Each participant was given an information sheet, and was asked to sign a consent form before the interview started, it being clearly stated that their responses were confidential and that no names would be attributed to the responses to comply with the ethical approval of my proposal. All interviews were recorded with the consent of the participant, unless they requested otherwise, or when recording equipment was not permitted e.g. in the Law Courts and Shangshad/Parliament. The majority of interviews were held in Bengali, but the questions were always asked in English. Notes were taken during the interview, and any issues during the interview (such as the interviewee's hesitations, attitude, comments before and after the recording) noted, these were written up within 24 hours of the interview.

I interviewed 59 people during 41 interviews in total (some participants were interviewed together in pairs) and held 4 focus groups. I carried out 31 one to one interviews, 26 of which were in depth, and 6 couple interviews all of which were in-depth. Of these 29 were recorded. There were also 4 focus group held (3 groups of participants and 1 group of core activists) of between 3- 8 people who went to Shahbag together regularly, 3 of which were recorded. Some interviews could not be recorded because of refusal (2), because they were done in public places and background noise made it inaudible (3) or due to restrictions e.g. at the Law courts, and Parliament building (5). I included people with different roles in the Shahbag Moment: 13 people with known roles in organising the Shahbag Moment, 21 people who participated in the activities at Shahbag regularly, 18 people who supported Shahbag through donations and other activities and 7 people who commented on the moment as journalists and opinion formers in the media (See list of interviewees in Appendix A). I also kept a reflective journal during my time in Bangladesh where I noted additional issues and thoughts that emerged while undertaking the interviews and reflected on their implications for the research.

4.7 Data analysis and coding

Using the theoretical insights from Part I, I analysed the discourse of the case histories, continually reflecting and refining the decisions made. In order to study the moment's collective identity, we needed to analyse the moment actors' webs of meaning developed in

the discourse used by the actors to describe their experiences and motives (Johnston and Klandermans, 2013). We also explored how the data relates to Sen's Instrumental Freedoms of STEPS (security, transparency, economic, political and social) capabilities. Through this analysis of the Shahbag oral histories and triangulated data, informed by our theoretical literature review we used our theoretical framework to understand the conditions and processes that facilitated collective agency and capability during the Shahbag Moment. This section covers the development of a model for the coding of interviews and triangulation of data used from the literature review in Part I. It then reviews the process of conceptualising and grouping the relationship patterns between codes for analysis. I use my agency as a researcher to adapt methods for the analysis of the data, given what I want to uncover from the data and the theoretical paradigm within which I am interpreting the data. This process is also informed by my knowledge and experience of the topic area and cultural understanding of the case histories. 'Each of us brings to the analysis of data our biases, assumptions, patterns of thinking and knowledge gained from experience and reading' (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.95).

As discussed in Part I of the thesis we use a case history to illustrate our different theoretical understandings of a collective entity and how it forms a critical social moment. Critical theorists suggest agency, resistance, organic intellectuals, social networks, and a political project focusing on the role of the individual to enact change (Chapter Two). Capability theorists suggest that individuals have capabilities, but that Instrumental Freedoms affect their capabilities being acted on as functionings, and how collective agency can impact on Instrumental Freedoms as conversion factors (Chapter Three). Social theorists suggest resource mobilisation, political opportunities and framing as key components of this process with an organisational understanding of civil society and the role it plays in social collective action (Chapter Three). Although social theorists focus on where and how collective action can happen, critical theorists consider the role and agency of the individual to resist systems, structures and normalising power networks in the economic, political and social dimensions. The contribution of the capability approach is that Instrumental Freedoms necessary for collective agency capability go beyond the economic, political and social with security and transparency playing fundamental roles on the process of change. Initial understandings of critical social moments suggest additional factors regarding the role of emotions and social injustice as a stimulus for generating a critical mass which brings together a diverse range of networks from different fields in the habitus.

For all social phenomena there are historical contexts that exist prior to the event, the roles of different structures, practices and process during the event and the after effect and decline of the social phenomena. The three stages in the process of the critical social moment being formed and ending: prior to the moment, the 'being' stage; during the moment, the 'doing' stage; and after the peak of the moment, the 'impact' stage. The coding structure for undertaking the discourse analysis of the Shahbag Moment oral histories to understand the conditions for collective agency and capabilities was initially based on social theories of collective action, frames, political opportunity, resource mobilisation, and the capabilities approach's Instrumental Freedoms and is outlined below. However, during the course of the coding additional codes were identified and added, and these were subsequently grouped together once patterns started to emerge.

The data captured from the interviews were intentionally not structured, however the stages emerged through the narratives. The first stage details the structures and conditions before the moment, the second the agency and actions taken during the moment and the final the 'impact' of the moment on the structures and practices for social change. Within the first stage I consider the history, structures, the characteristics and conditions of existing instrumental capability freedoms STEPS (social, transparency, economic, political and security), to understand the normalised state of 'being'. In the second stage I consider agency and choice and the collective action, frames, identity, resources mobilised and political reactions during the Shahbag Moment, and how instrumental capability freedoms functioned, the process of 'doing'. In the third stage I consider the changes that occurred and its impact on structure and practice. The model is dynamic and constructionist. By understanding the structure and social practices that inform the discourse, and the collective agency produced by the discourses, we can understand the impact of the moment on the wider context of structures and social practices, and the conditions that facilitated this process of change.

Data analysis was qualitative, using themes from the theory for initial coding, and then emerging themes from the interviews were added and then grouped together. The coding was categorised into the three stages: prior to the Shahbag Moment, during the moment, and after the moment. This was informed by the theories outlined in Part I of 'being', 'doing' and 'impact'. Across the three stages we noted the changes in Instrumental Freedoms from the capability approach, the interaction and co-construction of the moment and its identity, unity and solidarity, and how this formed a critical mass and subsequently dissipated. Although there were overlaps between what the theory expected as key aspects and what the case histories

raised, there were also other aspects of the critical social moment that required the development of a new model and framework to capture all aspects involved.

The aim is to explore whether the codes and stages have relevance to what is spoken about in the interviews and other sources of data. Given the interactionist and constructionist approach, texts and their codes cut across all the three stages of prior to the moment (structure/being), during the moment (agency/doing) and after the moment (impact). For the purposes of the method the focus is to identify and analyse the primary stage of emergence in the texts. The initial theoretical codes are therefore based on:

Stage A – Being prior to the Moment – the capabilities of ‘being’ within a given structure through the characteristics of the text, identifying any references made to Sen’s five Instrumental Freedoms; social roles and interpretive categories of action, problem setting and reflexivity; and to understanding the webs of meaning developed in relation to the structural, historic and normal social practices.

Stage B – Doing during the Moment – the agency functions of ‘doing’ through text production, identifying the collective action, frames developed in the text and notions of identity, injustice and agency; how the situation is defined, the causes attributed and emotional responses, and how the frames are adhered to and influenced; how the process of construction of unity was produced through the collective action; the political opportunity structures available; and the resources mobilised.

Stage C – Impact after the Moment – the impact on the ‘orders of discourse’ and wider social practices and structures and other changes mentioned. What were the causal mechanisms that combined? What were the dynamics of the contention and how the discourse changed over time, the implications of this and any unintended consequences or additional changes that were not anticipated.

On return to the UK I systematically went through each recording again to double check the accuracy of the written notes with a native Bengali speaker, before loading them onto Nvivo (2015 version) for coding. There was an issue on occasion with whether to translate the Bengali into the literal meaning, or intended/insinuated meaning, given that the research is focused on the intended meaning of the participant the latter was used. This was cross checked by offering all the participants an opportunity to give feedback on the historiography produced from the interviews.

The final process used for coding was as follows:

1. Code all text in relation to all relevant stages and initial theoretical codes, and consider emerging Nvivo codes, park on stage if not sure. Review after first 10 interviews coded, finalise emerging Nvivo codes and add them.

2. Go through parked texts on each stage and allocate to codes as relevant across the stages. If certain codes no longer fit a certain primary stage given their content, move them. Once all texts are coded ask a supervisor and colleague to review coding to ensure consistency and reliability.

3. Go through all texts allocated in each code to check that the texts are in the right codes and add and take away code allocations if required to ensure fit. Summarise the different angles/positionings for each code theme, draw a mind map and causal tree to identify connections and patterns between codes.

4. Take each actor classification and for each code segregate sources based on actor to explore lack of, or greater references for particular codes, and patterns that emerge.

5. Simplify and group codes based on patterns, connections and similarities, and cross check stage references in each code text to ensure dominant emergence in stage code is situated and note references to other stages.

During the course of the coding it became apparent that the conceptual theoretical framework was too simplistic, as there was an ongoing construction and interaction between relations before, during and after the Shahbag Moment. The emerging Nvivo codes also went beyond the capabilities framework of STEPS highlighting the need to consider culture, emotion and injustice.

Therefore, the definitions of final groups and codes were:

<p style="text-align: center;">STAGE A Prior to the Shahbag Moment</p> <p>All texts that refer to anything before the Shahbag Moment started.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Historical context references, including the Liberation War of 1971 (ii) The wider context, existing practices and structures and references to Jamaat Islam and activities for and against them (iii) Frame of existing injustice before the verdict (master frames and political opportunities structures)
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<p style="text-align: center;">STAGE B</p> <p style="text-align: center;">During the Shahbag Moment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">All texts that refer to everything that happened during the Shahbag Moment in February 2013.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Defining the problem, attributing meaning, references to identity and unity of Shahbag (ii) Political Opportunities, interpreting, and other politics (iii) Resource Mobilisation, agency and decision-making process (iv) Emotions, non-violence and cultural protests, women and Security (v) Different groups' involvement: youth, media and social media; NGO and civil society
<p style="text-align: center;">STAGE C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Post the Shahbag Moment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">All text references to the impact and lessons learnt from Shahbag after February 2013.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Causal mechanisms (ii) Impact on structure and practice (iii) Unintended consequences, core group splits and counter propaganda

The data analysis from these codes was then used to develop a dynamic Being-Doing-Impact model based on the Shahbag Moment case histories, which helped inform the responses to the research questions in Part III.

4.8 New Emerging Themes

For Stage A, historical and wider contexts were expected within the case history narratives; however, historical injustice was a reoccurring theme as a cause of Shahbag and a key motivation to transition from 'being' and accepting the norm to 'doing', feeling solidarity and taking action. Similarly, in Stage B, during the Shahbag Moment, expected themes include defining the problem and attributing meaning (identity and unity), political opportunities, resource mobilisation, agency and decision making. However key elements that were repeatedly cited as making the Shahbag Moment so unique and significant were emotions

attached to the issue, the use of cultural protests, the fact that it was felt to be a safe, positive and a non-violent space, so that women and children were able to join in. Another element was that a wide range of groups, who would not usually engage together, did come together for the greater cause of justice for the critical social moment.

All the interview transcripts were coded under three Stages, Stage A (A) was used for any reference made to context, structure or conditions prior to the Shahbag Moment. Stage B (B) for all commentary made about the actual moment, comments, actions and processes involved. Stage C (C) focused on references made about the impact of the moment, the consequences and reactions after the moment.

In Stage A, all references to the historical context of Bangladesh from the Liberation War, existing context, structure and norms were coded as A(i). Any comment about wider issues, other movements around the world, external views on Bangladesh or the international context was coded under A(ii). There was an emerging code around the notion of injustice during and since the Liberation War that was referenced by all interviewee's at least at one point during their interview A(iii). This suggests the need to ensure that in future research there is a need to consider emotional historical events and latent social injustices as part of the being coding.

Stage A, Nvivo code group (i) included all references made to the historical context and the Liberation War. This included references to: the need for justice given the audacity of the war criminals; that the new generation was in the dark about the true history of Bangladesh, but that the internet was finally giving access to the truth; that institutions had failed the people and denied justice so this was a time bomb waiting to explode; that there was a need for a space to reimagine the values that people sacrificed their lives for.

Nvivo and theoretical codes group (ii) brought together references to the wider context, social practice, structure (theoretical codes) and Jamaat Islam (Nvivo code). The wider context included references to: being against wider globalization and capitalism; the ambiguity between the law and human rights; the Arab Spring and Indian social movements; the post 9/11 context and the impact of the war against terror on Bangladesh. Social practices and structures references included: ongoing cultural and awareness raising activities to celebrate Bengali identity and ideas including Bengali 'samaj' (community); blogging and counter blogging online with the rise of the use of the internet in the younger generation; how ordinary people were holding back their anger and resentment and were suspicious of political parties; that parts

of the media were controlled; that there was no platform or space in the current climate to talk publicly about the injustices; that the ICT trials were happening. The final code regarded Jammāt Islam (JI): that people were unsure of the Government agenda given; that they had collaborated with them before and were allowing them to have protests and *hartals* (strikes) even when they were violent; that women, atheists and anyone speaking out against JI were threatened with violence; that the Nirmul mock trials were unsuccessful because of the power of JI.

The final Nvivo code group (iii) was injustice. This code included references to: restlessness and resentment by ordinary people regarding the existing injustice; that collaborators had not been tried for crimes committed against humanity and that they were being allowed to hold positions of authority and power; how fresh young voices were standing up to the injustice even though they were born after the war; that people felt they had a duty to protest against this injustice as institutions had compromised with religious politics.

Stage B covered the bulk of the interviews, and so has a number of theoretical and emerging codes. The B (i) code focused on mentions relating to the identity of Shahbag, how it was unified, how the problem was defined, and meanings attributed. B (ii) focused on all references made regarding political opportunities, and reaction from those involved in politics during the moment. B (iii) covered comments in relation to how networks and resources were mobilised, examples of agency and decision-making processes, and how individuals coordinated their efforts to support the Shahbag Moment. Emerging codes included the emotional sentiments that most interviewees expressed as a prime motivation for their involvement, the use of cultural non-violent protests, the sense of security and cooperation at Shahbag given the context and the active role of women and children in the moment at the scene B (iv). The final emerging code was the role of the diverse range of groups involved in the Shahbag Moment, especially young people, another unique feature for Bangladesh that generated a critical mass B (v). Thus, future research coding needs to consider the emotional and culture dimensions of collective social moments, and how a wide range of actors engage with the social phenomena, security and transparency of communication in the process of the emergence of a critical social moment.

Stage B theoretical codes group (i) included defining the problem, attributing meaning and unity and identity formation. Within the defining the problem code references included: the injustice of the crimes and that the ruling was wrong; that they have a duty to fulfil in response to the victims of the war crimes and their families; that this is the last chance to defuse

this time bomb; there is a suspicion of compromises being made, so a stand must be taken; that extremism needs to be controlled and to show that the people are pro-liberation; that people need to stand up for the spirit and ideals of the Liberation War. The attributing meaning code included references to: upholding the lost spirit of the Liberation War and re-awakening 1971 identity; that there is a need for justice and truth; that we have to stand up against religious politics; that we need to raise mass awareness and show mass support for the trials; that because institutions have failed, the people have to do something to have closure to free Bangladesh from the legacy of the past.

The final code refers to identity and unity referring to: that the need for justice comes from the heart; that there is a mass awareness, feeling and ideology at Shahbag; that they are maintaining integrity and identity by not involving party or religious politics; that Shahbag is about nationalism, justice and the Bengali identity fought for during the Liberation War; that there is trust and understanding between those involved; that people are shifting and aligning for the greater cause to create a unifying force because they have a duty to ensure justice; the impact of the slogans and responses, singing, chanting created an atmosphere of solidarity that they kept on wanting to return to; most of those involved were participating in their first protest event; the unity was there because of the common demand for justice, once this changed and the counter propaganda developed, the unity was split.

The second theoretical code was Political Opportunities, which included references to: how the Shahbag demands supported the Government agenda; that the Government offered a positive environment for the trials because of their election pledge; that the AL Government historically had always promoted an historical understanding of Bangladesh that highlighted the negative role of collaborators; there were references that Shahbag was being engineered or and supported by the Government, that they were strategically behind it or enabling it; that politicians were nervous about what Shahbag might become, who might end up controlling it; that the Government had a public duty to protect Shahbag because of the women and children who were involved and participating; that the Government withdrew their support once the demands had been met and the numbers declined; that Shahbag was perceived as not having any direct connections with party political networks, but needed backing and support to ensure that it was safe; Shahbag did not really address the power question.

The third theoretical code was resource mobilisation, agency and the decision-making process. Resource mobilisation references included: that networks of people from businesses, civil society and political groups were involved; the uniqueness of having women and young children, school children attending Shahbag; that the student groups of private, public schools and political parties all came to Shahbag and coordinated volunteers to help; that there was competition to show support for Shahbag; the use of social media to communicate and coordinate support for Shahbag; that people acted spontaneously in response to the needs at Shahbag using their own networks and resources. Agency references included: that the bloggers had freedom of speech, were independent and neutral; people decided for themselves to participate; they brought food and resources using their informal networks because they felt they had a 'duty' to do so; that Shahbag offered a free and safe space to express themselves on a public platform; that Shahbag gave a feeling of an uncontroversial right to demand justice; that different groups shifted their position to align with the spirit of Shahbag; that people spontaneously set up Shahbag solidarity protests across Bangladesh and throughout the diaspora; that Shahbag grew very big very fast with an endless flow of people coming and going; that people were curious and wanted to learn about Shahbag and the Liberation War; that when the demand had been met, and things became confusing and controversial they left. Decision making references included: that it was a joint process of messy negotiations and consultations on a daily basis; that the original organisers were unknown, unorganised and ad hoc; that once something was agreed including general protocols it was even harder to implement and ensure; that it was a sensitive balancing act to keep everyone together; that the dilemmas started once the main demands had been met; that people followed plans and participated in planned events to show their support and solidarity, it was very disciplined for Bangladesh; that they did not know how and when to stop.

The fourth Nvivo code included emotions, cultural and non-violent protests, and women and security. Emotions included references regarding: the anger and hatred people felt against the collaborators and that they felt insulted and humiliated by the judgement; that there was shock and frustration at the verdict and judgement as hopes for justice had been shattered; Shahbag was an outburst of national feeling that had previously been suppressed; people felt that they had a duty to ensure justice was fulfilled to have closure through the war crime criminals being convicted; that Shahbag offered a break from the violence and intimidation of JI. References to the cultural and non-violent nature of the protests included: the symbolisms of 1971; the celebration of Bengali identity; that the Shahbag experience was positive and

reaffirming and responsive to participants' needs; that the activities were engaging for everyone, with no danger or risk; that it was entertaining and that the ambiance and vibe sucked people in; that it was a safe space to express yourself freely; that it was a different kind of politics. References to women and safety included: that women played a unique role as it was a respectable and safe space for them to take a lead; families and children came; that it was a double blow to JI as women were involved and demanded justice against their leaders who had been convicted of being collaborators; that there were three rings of security organised by the Government; but that there was a feeling of trust between all those involved to make sure no negative incident occurred.

The fifth Nvivo code included the different groups involved, young people, media and social media, NGOs and civil society. References to youth included: that Shahbag had been led by young people born after the liberation war; that they wanted to be educated and learn from the older people who had been part of the war; that they were 'spoiled' or atheist; that the youth surprised them with their spirit and Bengali identity; that they compromised their political beliefs to support the higher cause. References to the media and social media included: that the bloggers on social media were independent and a free voice; that they offered direct, 24/7 communications and coverage; that there were virtual propaganda wars; that the history and facts were available in the public domain and could not be ignored or hidden anymore; that the bloggers crossed the line; that at the beginning the media helped amplify the message of Shahbag to a wide audience but later turned it into a show distorting the message. The reference to NGOs and Civil Society organisations included: that they supported Shahbag from behind; that key personalities offered solidarity at the beginning and gave strength to Shahbag which helped legitimise the demands; that later these personalities showed their face at talk shows and gave commentaries of Shahbag but stopped attending; that international donor funding meant that many could not get involved in Shahbag formally; that no NGO could have managed to create and sustain Shahbag; that the youth were not part of civil society and had not participated in previous protests they had organised; that civil society organisations have lost their social character because of western interests and the double standards in Human Rights.

Stage C focused on the causal mechanisms: political, social and judicial, that the participants believed to be involved in leading to Shahbag and its impact (Ci). Comments on the impact Shahbag had for them on political and social structures, and practices by the Judiciary, Government, politicians, activists, the media and wider public discourses and narratives (Cii). The final emerging code was the unintended consequences of Shahbag, the

splits within Shahbag once the initial demands had been met, and counter-propaganda and reflections on what has happened since Shahbag (Ciii). Thus, in future research the code for unintended consequences need to be incorporated, and why the collective agency was lost, and the critical social moment faded.

Stage C had three theoretical codes, the first group was causal mechanisms. The references included: the political pledge that initiated the legal process; that the Government had to respond to the popular demand; that the AL student wing and networks offered the base of support during Shahbag; the logistical and security risks became too much to be sustainable; social media was free, unknown and seen as neutral, offering access to the truth and a space for virtual warfare; the older generation were passing on the legacy of injustice to the younger generation; the youth went from being seen as in the dark and spoiled to being enlightened; there was an explosion of fundamentalism verses the pro-liberation and secularism sentiment of the people; there was a convergence of different campaigns and groups at Shahbag, and a counter movement by JI; the education system in Bangladesh – westernised, with the use of English as a medium , or government schools or madrassas which were Islamised.

The second group included the impact on structure and practice. References regarding the impact on practice included: there was a paradigm shift to accepting the need for justice; that a new level of understanding and awareness was raised regarding the liberation war and the injustices; that the spirit of liberation was rejuvenated in the post-liberation war generation; that Shahbag helped break the psychological barrier to speak out about the war criminals; that there was a realisation that justice was possible; that there was a potential for people power to demand and effect change; that the trials were now being held at a faster pace and more confidently; that Shahbag sharpened the divide between religious and Bengali identity; that the JI strategy changed because Shahbag showed that the masses were against their violence; that there was a shift by those in power from playing safe to holding criminals to account for their actions not matter who they were now; took the slogan of ‘joy bangla’ from AL to be used by all.

In relation to the structural impact references included: the changes in Government legislation and the changes in the legal process; peoples’ justice reflected in the systems and structures and people have more confidence that justice will be served; Shahbag offered a boost to the Judicial process against the international pressure against the trials; Shahbag made it easier to implement the appeals against verdicts which went against the claimant.

The third Nvivo group included unintended consequences, core group splits and counter-propaganda. References regarding unintended consequences included: if the only justice was hanging was there still a choice; that the Government engineered Shahbag so that its spirit was broken; that the bloggers went too far against public sentiment; that the youth and some of those actively involved became overconfident; that people became confused after the initial demands had been met; that a tension developed between Bengali and Muslim identity; that no one was able to control or stop Shahbag; that JI countered Shahbag. Splits in the core group were referenced by: inexperience of the different groups involved; that they could not agree on how to deal with the extremist propaganda or Government issues; that they became overconfident and stopped consulting with others; as it was spontaneous there was no clear leader; that it was fresh and credible because they were all unknown; there was no organised structure so easily fell apart; there was no backbone only group consensus so when this stopped Shahbag fell apart; because the unity was issue based, once this issue was resolved the unity was lost.

References to counter-propaganda referred to: bloggers insensitivity and crossing the line of public sentiment; the Government arresting bloggers in response to Bangladesh public being conservative regarding religious sentiments; the distortion of images of those involved and participating as 'spoiled', or pro-India or Hindu or atheist; that because Shahbag supported a Government agenda it had a political agenda; the risk on security once the blogger was killed; the issue regarding the validity and purpose of Shahbag once the initial demands had been met; that Shahbag was still not strong enough to have JI banned, but that JI can no longer do mass attacks as does not have popular support.

5.) CHAPTER FIVE: HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE SHAHBAG MOMENT

5.1 Introduction

Although Bangladesh is a country that has a history of protests and demonstrations (particularly since 1991 when the military regime fell through a peoples movement), the Shahbag Moment (hereafter ‘Shahbag’) in 2013 is the most significant in Bangladesh’s history because of the number of *gono*, ordinary people, who participated and the impact it had on Parliament, the Judiciary, policies and procedures. Somewhat surprisingly, however, given the success of Shahbag Moment, there has not been another moment like it in the last five years. This chapter offers an overview of the historical context of the moment in Bangladesh from academic literature in the English language. This is followed by a detailed historiography taken from the interviews, online and offline media coverage, videos and social media real time updates before and during the moment. The interviews are based on the oral accounts of the moment, two years retrospectively, by core activist, organisers and advisors, participants, supporters and commentators. It concludes by reflecting on the key reoccurring storylines and aspects raised by the interviewees and the media coverage.

5.2 Background

The underlying politics of Shahbag Moment has deep roots in Bangladesh’s history, dating back to the ‘Liberation War’ of 1971, when Bangladesh established its independence from Pakistan. The Shahbag Moment was a direct response to the Independent Crimes Tribunal (ICT) trials, which were established to try individuals (known as ‘the collaborators’) accused of taking part in atrocities during the Liberation War. The Liberation War occurred after an Election victory by East Pakistan’s Awami League Party. The party demanded secularism, democracy, nationalism and socialism, and the outgoing Pakistan Government’s (based in West Pakistan) response was a military crackdown in East Pakistan.

As part of British India, Bengal played a pivotal role in the history of the region, which we briefly outline to set the context. It is part of the delta area south of the Himalayan mountains (where the main rivers from the mountains meet the Bay of Bengal). Calcutta (now ‘Kolkata’) was originally the region’s capital, and Bengal became famous as the mainstay of the British East India Company trading routes into the subcontinent, accounting for 75% of its traded goods by 1750 (Lewis, 2011, p.46). An attempt to reduce British trade interests in Bengal ended with Lord Clive’s victory at the Battle of Plassey in 1757, and led to the indirect rule of Bengal

by absentee landowners and Princes or Nawabs (*ibid.*, p.47). It was the first region taken over as part of the British Empire under the 1813 Act in Parliament, effectively ending the Company's trading monopoly. Bengal was a centre of Indian political resistance, with a Muslim majority living on, and cultivating, land owned largely by Hindu landlords (Zamindars) who lived in Calcutta. Social movements and unrest were common, most notably the Sepoy Mutiny Rebellion in 1857, and Indigo Riots in 1859. Bengal was also the birthplace, in 1906, of the Muslim League, an organisation that sought to represent Muslim interests during the negotiations for partition at the end of British rule in 1947. It continued to be an active region in the anti-British campaigns in the 1920s such as the non-cooperation movement. In 1940 the Lahore Resolution was passed demanding the division of India to protect Muslim interests from a Hindu majority; the Muslim majority in Bengal was a key argument behind the Muslim League's push for partition and an Independent Pakistan, in opposition to the Indian Congress Party.

During the partition of British India in 1947, Bengal was separated into a Hindu majority West Bengal including Calcutta (now Kolkata) which became part of India, and a Muslim majority East Bengal, which became part of Pakistan. There was no option offered for a united Bengal. Pakistan became a nation of Muslims, geographically separated into East and West Pakistan by Indian territory and ruled from Lahore in West Pakistan. The people of East and West Pakistan were, however, culturally and linguistically very different. Pakistan was seen as 'a unique experiment in state making' as it was built on religious nationalism, with two geographically separate wings and had no existing central institutions carried over from the former colonial authorities (Van Schendel, 2009, p.107). The people now living in East Pakistan, who culturally identified as 'Bengali', found themselves ruled by relative strangers in West Pakistan.

A pivotal moment came on 21st February 1952, when student protests in East Pakistan were organised to retain Bengali as one of the state languages, against the plans of the Pakistani authorities to make Urdu the only state language. Although the movement was successful, students were killed by the Pakistani Army and the 21st February (known as Language Movement Day), became immortalised in Bengali culture as a national celebration of the struggle to retain Bengali identity. It has since taken on international significance – this date was recently adopted by the UN as International Mother Language Day. In the 1960s a political party, the Awami League (AL), (which had developed out of one arm of the Muslim League

in 1949), launched a Six Point Plan program for a federal constitution based on the 1940 Lahore Resolution.

In 1966 key figures of the Awami League (AL) were arrested and tried in the Agartala Conspiracy Case for sedition against the Pakistan Government; they were later acquitted with international support. In 1971 the first Pakistani elections were held based on an adult franchise; the AL, who pledged the ideals of secularism, democracy, socialism and nationalism, won an absolute majority based on their Regional Autonomous Six Point Plan. Negotiations were held to try to work out the arrangements for rule from Dhaka, East Pakistan, but these were unsuccessful. On 7th March the AL leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gave a historic patriotic speech stating that ‘this time the struggle was for freedom and this time the struggle is for liberation’.

In the early hours of 26th March 1971 there was a military crackdown by the Pakistan Army in Dhaka, to try and squash the move for autonomy. They arrested the leader of the AL and took him to Pakistan, and during the ‘civil war’ (according to Pakistan) or Liberation War (according to Bengali nationalists) started arresting, torturing and killing all known supporters of autonomy with the help of local (East Pakistani) collaborators (hereafter ‘the collaborators’). The Pakistani administration did not expect that the people of East Pakistan would resist and fight for their autonomy as part of their ‘struggle for freedom’. In the climate of the cold war, internationally the UN and key countries perceived this war as a ‘communist’ secession movement and then later, as an Indo-Pakistan War, and were reluctant to get involved even with the unfolding humanitarian crisis (Bass, 2013). India was trying to end the violence and the refugee crisis but without military intervention, until Pakistan instigated an unprovoked act of aggression against India, by flying into Indian airspace. This resulted in India’s retaliation, and the subsequent surrender of the Pakistan Army to joint forces of India and Bangladesh. This led to Bangladesh gaining its independence after a bloody 9-month war. The international humanitarian community and supporters campaigned to support the victims of the war and to end the violence, and actively established NGOs in the post war Bangladesh. The newly independent nation, Bangladesh was so devastated that it was coined by the then US Foreign Affairs Advisor Henry Kissinger as ‘a basket case’ and became a forgotten chapter in the history of the cold war.

In 1971 Bangladesh was eventually recognised by the International community as an independent state. As information and documentation of the war emerged, and the extent of the atrocities committed against the people of the region became clearer, many referred to the war

as an act of ‘genocide’ by the Pakistani army. Reports estimated that 3,000,000 people were killed, half a million raped and tortured, and 10 million people were displaced or become refugees in neighbouring India. The term *razakaars* was used to refer to those who collaborated in the violence, predominantly Bengali residents of East Pakistan with affiliations to the Muslim Jamaat Islam Party (JI). The stories and images that slowly emerged of the use of rape as a weapon of war, mass graves, and the torture of vulnerable people, remained prominent in Bangladesh’s cultural and political memory. The killing of key intellectuals across the country by the Pakistan army and their collaborators the night before the official surrender on the 16th December left a lasting legacy.

The AL formed the first Government and their leader was released from the Pakistani prison and returned to the newly independent Bangladesh (literally meaning homeland of Bengal). In 1972 a Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunal) Order was passed and in 1973 the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) Act was created to establish a special court for crimes against humanity to try Bengalis who collaborated during the 1971 genocide. During its time the Special Tribunal processed 2,484 cases and sentenced 752 people with a further 11,000 in jail awaiting a sentence. The AL Government established a new Constitution based on their ideals of secularism, democracy, socialism and nationalism and faced a major challenge in rebuilding a devastated war-torn nation in the face of a series of manmade famines (1973-4). Internationally, during the cold war era, although the big powers recognised the newly created Bangladesh, there was tension. This was due to the socialist nature of the administration, their resistance to taking aid from America, and the strategic location of Bangladesh with its natural reserves of oil and gas, which meant the cold war powers had an interest in securing the new nation’s cooperation. Bass (2013) argues that this led to the military coup in 1975, when the leader of the AL, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and his extended family were killed in their home. Only two daughters, who were abroad studying at the time, survived. Subsequently, an Indemnity Ordinance was passed in 1975 to repeal the 1972 Order and 1973 ICT Act, giving an amnesty to the collaborators. During the intervening years of military regimes (1975-81 General Zia Rahman, later head of BNP, and 1982-90 General Ershad, later head of Jatiya Party) many of the known self-confessed collaborators held positions of power. In 1978, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) revoked the ban on Jamaat Islam as a political party in Bangladesh. Further, in 1988 Islam was declared the state religion, it had previously been a secular (neutrality in religion) state based on the Liberation War ideals.

However, the rewriting of the history of the Liberation War was a national preoccupation and during this time there were ongoing activities to document and record the events of the Liberation War, resisting each military regimes' attempts to destroy the evidence and to rewrite history. Military rule ended in 1991, when a peaceful mass opposition movement lead to General Ershad being removed as the militarily appointed Prime Minister. While this created an opportunity to begin to redress the crimes that had taken place during the Liberation War, many of the collaborators who would be likely to be tried had, by now, forged their own religious and political careers, most notable as senior Muslim cleric and within the JI party.

In 1992, the Nirmul Committee was established, with the support of 101 high profile cultural, academic and political personalities, to expose the killers and collaborators of the Bangladesh Liberation War. They created a mock trial, *Gonoadalot* or Peoples Court, to try key collaborators including the head of JI. At the time the BNP were in power (1991-96) and they charged the members of the Nirmul Committee with treason, stating that their activities were unlawful. The AL, headed by one of Sheikh Mujib's surviving daughters, won the subsequent election, and began to put in place the legal case to try those who conspired and killed Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family, as a legal precedent to try collaborators. However, in the elections in 2001, when the BNP came back into power (2001-2006), as part of an alliance with JI, key collaborators were given Ministerial positions. After a military backed, interim Caretaker Government (2007-2008) elections were finally held in 2008. The pro liberation AL party won the election, with a pledge to re-establish the Special Tribunal court to try the collaborators of the 1971 Liberation War. They started legal proceeding and in 2008 the Ordinance of 1975 was found invalid, with the International Crimes Tribunal Act of 1973 being upheld and given constitutional protection. In 2010, after numerous delays, the special Tribunal was re-established as part of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT).

Internationally there was much criticism regarding the establishment of the ICT, without external international judges, and four decades after the crimes had been committed. This criticism was exacerbated by the fact that Bangladesh uses capital punishment. There were also huge threats of violence from within Bangladesh by Jamaat Islam (JI), many of whose senior members were being put on trial for war crimes by the ICT. There were ongoing death threats, strikes, intimidation and other violent activities to try and stop the trials. There was also a growing number of counter activities, ongoing blogging, student action, cultural activists, commentaries and media coverage in favour of the trials. The first verdict to be publicly announced was a verdict of guilty with a sentence of the death penalty, but the

defendant had left the country before being taken into custody. The verdict of the second case was announced on the 5th February 2013. This time the defendant was found guilty of five of the six cases against him and given a sentence of life imprisonment. He left the court room showing a 'V' sign for victory.

5.3 The Shahbag Moment - a Brief Overview

There was an ongoing atmosphere of disquiet around the trials and reports in the media of intimidation of judges. There was regular violence on the streets with *hartals* (strike days) against the ICT trials, which were enforced with gangs on the streets burning cars and buses that defied it. Jamaat Islam made public threats at meetings: that if there was a death penalty verdict for the second case there would be civil war (see Appendix C Media coverage). There were also suspicions that a 'deal' had been made between the Government and JI for a compromised verdict. The majority of people were unhappy with the verdict; however, from the public discourse in the media and social media, and from the interviews, I conclude that they were unsure what could be done. The Shahbag Moment emerged after the verdict announcement on the 5th February, as people gathered in Shahbag Square (a central interchange between Dhaka University, the Cultural Quarter and Business District) to make a stand for justice. Demonstrations and protests are an everyday occurrence in Dhaka, with rallies, speeches, marches, human chains, strikes, protests and *hartals* making regular news. However, while people did march and 'sit in' at Shahbag Square, this soon became a different kind of protest. Unlike usual human chains, marches and demonstrations, ordinary people mixed with senior personalities in huge numbers to show support and solidarity to the cause for justice. Students and bloggers initiated non-violent sit in protests, using social media to spread the message. They ensured that the movement remained apolitical by denying leading politicians a platform to address the gathering, and positioning the protest as pro-justice, rather than anti-ICT or anti-Government. Shahbag included the active involvement of female students, mothers and their children. The atmosphere was uniquely safe, respectful and positive. The authorities maintained a presence by providing basic logistical support and protection. Local businesses and ordinary people offered in-kind support to the protesters and the moment spread (via social media) across the country and the globe through the Bengali diaspora.

The Government responded, and a process was initiated to address the demands of Shahbag by introducing an Amendment Bill to the 1973 ICT Act. This would allow equal rights to the prosecutor and defendant to appeal the verdict and sentence, as previously only the

defendant had that right. Subsequently there were requests by the Government and media to encourage the Shahbag to slow down and reduce the 24hr sit in, but people continued to join the moment. On 15th February the organisers announced that as the Act was being passed the 24hr sit in at Shahbag Square would have to stop. However, that evening a blogger writing on the movement was killed. This changed the mood of the people and shifted the emphasis of the demands to targeting JI (who were seen as responsible for the blogger's killing). The propaganda also changed to emphasise the atheist, anti-Islamic nature of the movement, especially when the Amendment Bill was passed on 17th February and included the right to try organisations such as JI. During this time the BNP distanced itself from JI, and JI accused the AL Government of being anti-Islamic. International coverage criticised the ICT process, the use of capital punishment and the changes to the law using the Amendment Bill, which added to the tensions. On the 21st February the 'spokesperson' of Shahbag announced the end to the 24hr sit in at Shahbag Square and reframed Shahbag as a nationwide program, on 22nd February after *jumma* prayer the JI and other Muslim groups instigated violence against the Shahbag Moment, with media reporting of attacks on student halls and journalists and burning the national flag outside a main mosque in central Dhaka.

5.4 Interviewee's Historiography and Real Time Coverage

As discussed in the methods section, this historiography is based on 41 interviews with 59 individuals including 6 pair interviews and 4 focus groups undertaken in Dhaka, Bangladesh between January and February 2015. Participants were also given the opportunity to comment on a draft of the historiography in July 2015 and their feedback was incorporated into the data. The presentation of events and issues below are based on interviewee accounts, rather than actual historical records, and have been selected based on my research aims to understand the conditions that created the possibility for a collective to emerge with the agency capability to effect changes in structure and practice. By bringing together the case histories in the historiography below, along with the real time media discourse (triangulated data), we validate the narrative of the Shahbag Moment from the different perspectives and accounts. We note the number of people who have mentioned a point to illustrate its significance in the narrative to a wide range of interviewees, and we note quotes where relevant from individual interviews noting their actor role in the Shahbag Moment.

The number of participant mentions is represented in the text when significant by [...], and direct quotes from the interviews by {Sh..} and the interview number and initials where relevant to represent the type of respondent (see List of Interviewees Appendix A and 'Actor

Analysis' Appendix D). The types are Core Activist (ca), Core Advisor (cad), Core Organiser (co), Participant (p), Supporter - Civil Society (scs), Supporter - Political (sp), Supporter - Structural (legal, academic or civil servant) (ss), Commentator (c). The real time media coverage is included with the relevant date of publication and the data referenced in Appendix C. The media references are represented in (...) brackets, with the day of the month and represent the reporting of events of the previous day in the paper media. Pictures that offer a visual representation of the Shahbag Moment and social media coverage are in Appendix E.

5.4.1 Background references made to Shahbag Moment

The historical account of why the Shahbag Moment occurred reflects existing undisputed narratives in literature. The focus has emphasised an inability to ensure justice for the victims of war crimes over the past 40 years. During the 1971 Liberation War [32] collaborators of the Pakistani Army committed crimes against humanity through their acts and atrocities against the people of Bangladesh. In 1972 Dhaka University students campaigned for collaborators to be tried and held a mock trial. The Government started the process of trying the collaborators by establishing the Collaborators (Special Tribunal) Order 1972 and passing the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) Act in 1973. In 1975 following the military coup an Indemnity Ordinance was passed to repeal the 1972 Order and 1973 Act, thus giving amnesty to the collaborators. During the intervening years, with numerous coups and military regimes in place, Jamaat Islam (JI) regained strength. In 1990 the Nirmul Committee was created to counter the rise of JI and to raise awareness and bring justice for the victims of the Liberation War. In 1992 during the first elected BNP Government, the Nirmul Committee held a mock 'people's court' to try the collaborators [21] they were arrested and accused of treason. In 1996 AL was elected to Government and started the legal process of proving that the 1975 Indemnity Ordinance was illegal. During the next term, from 2003, the elected BNP made an alliance with JI to form the Government appointing collaborators as Ministers [6] which was seen as an insult to the victims of the Liberation War and their families. 'The last four decades, the expression of audacity and war criminals positioning in the mainstream politics made the people and particular the youth very resentful' {Sh35co}.

From 2006, bloggers started to comment on the ongoing political situation:

'We learnt that even within the distorted misinterpretation of history, because of social media, young people were able to learn the real history – from original broadcasts by international media at the time, this couldn't be hidden. No political party can amplify a falsehood in this environment of open information if there is no history from before' {Sh32ss}.

In 2008 the Awami League (AL) re-established the Order of 1972 to uphold and give constitutional protection to the 1973 Act, to bring justice to bear on the collaborators as one of their election pledges; this gained support from the new generation of voters, students and young professionals [6]. AL won the elections, but there were many delays and difficulties in establishing the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), which frustrated many people and put doubts in people's minds about the possibility of ever having justice [17]. There were also ongoing *hartals* and violence by JI in protest against the ICT trials [25].

'Since 1948 the Islamists have tried to counter any pro-secular democratic movement as anti-Islamic (labelled as Hindus, communists or Indians) but the people of Bangladesh 'manney na', don't believe or accept it' {Sh4ca}.

'The state and institutions failed to uphold the spirit of the Liberation War... the participants took Shahbag as an opportunity to express their anger, resentments around the issue of the trials of the war criminals which had been held back for decades' {Sh41p}.

'Shahbag was unique and fundamentally different in that it was a reawakening...it was the 'resurrection', against the plan to make people forget the truth of liberation' {Sh2c}.

There were ongoing awareness raising activities by cultural activists, civil society and pro liberation parties during the period from 1975 to 2013, but these had never produced a movement like Shahbag.

'The field work had been done from before as people had been involved in previous activities...over the decades by different socio-political groups who created/evolved in a concentrated collective resentment. So Shahbag was the manifestation and the culmination of these' {Sh25ca}.

'The ground was there, but the Shahbag people had the freedom of speech, and a neutral stand that gave them a better reception from the masses for people to support them' {Sh1p}.

'Shahbag involved and engulfed us, people all over the world, ordinary people came not to be leaders but to give Shahbag strength' {Sh30c}.

'The spirit of liberation was dormant and Shahbag helped rejuvenate it. Shahbag created curiosity in the people, and the youth, to learn what the Liberation War was about' {Sh11c}.

'The Liberation War spirit is a never-ending process, for a long time we couldn't engage in this – Shahbag was a heart and soul movement. We can finally stop going backwards and go forwards' {Sh32ss}.

'Shahbag happens once in a lifetime...a paradigm shift, no one should claim Shahbag - it belongs to all... memory is a very important tool to keep the flame and spirit alive... Shahbag was a confluence of struggles and currents' {Sh14scs}.

5.4.2 *The Shahbag Moment*

Just prior to the verdict of the second trial, there were ongoing media reports of the progress of the ICT trials. After 23rd January 2013, when the verdict of capital punishment in the first case was announced, media headlines read 'Justice at last'. Reports triumphantly announced that Bangladesh had come out of a culture of silence and vindicated itself through the trial process (1a).

Coverage praised the Government: 'no other Government would have done it; the verdict has started a process of accountability' (1b).

'We celebrate the verdict because it starts a process of accountability...it helps to restore our ownership of history... There is a tremendous pent up resentment among the public against those who were well known for their role against our independence.'(1b)

The maiden judgment was celebrated on the streets, but also raised expectations for forthcoming judgments and verdicts (1c). By 31st January JI was flexing its muscles with violent *hartals* on the streets, backed by BNP, with the aim 'to foil much awaited war crimes trials ... with plans for massive violent demonstrations to release top party leaders facing trial' (1d). International coverage reported the tribunal as controversial because the first verdict against a leading 'Muslim Cleric' who had been tried *in absentia* had been sentenced to death and was a fugitive from justice (1e).

The following is an outline taken from the interviews of the day of the verdict. On 5th February 2013 the second verdict of the ICT was given and although found guilty the judgment was life imprisonment, ‘...the judgment that should have happened didn’t happen’ {Sh31p}. As the defendant left the court building, he gave a ‘V’ sign

‘...it was an insult to all those who had fought, died and had been the victims of the Liberation War’ {Sh30c}.

People were resentful that the death penalty had not been given [19], people felt that justice had been compromised.

‘People didn’t accept the verdict; they couldn’t stop until they got closure in order to go forward’ {Sh35co}.

Bloggers gave out a call and decided to meet at Shahbag Square to protest [6] from 5pm and they were joined by the Progressive Student Alliance (who brought together most of the student fractions for the first time) of Dhaka University and members of the Cultural Alliance of Bangladesh, and later, around 8pm by the Pro Government Student Alliance (AL, and fourteen party political party alliance student wings), with their members from across Dhaka. That evening they were undecided about what to do but wanted to maintain a non-violent presence at Shahbag with cultural protests, until justice had been done and the defendant had been given the death penalty [29].

The reporting from 5th February indicated a general mood of tension regarding the pending announcement of the verdict, with reported threats being made by JI that

‘... a one-sided verdict could provoke civil war and that if anything happens to Mullah every house will be set on fire ... as our activists are ready to sacrifice their lives’ (5a).

There were also reports that JI and AL might be reaching ‘an understanding’ (5a).

Online news reported the message on social media of the reaction to the verdict announcement, actions being taken to assemble at Shahbag, and that the AL student wing were joining them (5b).

‘The souls of the 3,000,000 are crying out for justice’.

The following morning media coverage started to grow and became live [24], with ongoing engagement through online networks and

*‘...social media played a role to speed up the message, it spread like wildfire’
{Sh17cad}*

leading to thousands of ordinary people joining the protest [34]. ‘It was a civilian movement which does not happen often in Bangladesh’ {Sh26co}, ‘... with rhythmic slogans, music and songs – culture’ {Sh25ca} dance, drama, poetry and art. It was

‘... spontaneous, no leader, people gathered as a mass. All together, we were not in front or behind, not to gain power but for justice’ {Sh28p}.

‘We had a duty ... to fulfil our responsibility, so we can sleep peacefully, why can we not have justice ... we were never involved in previous movements’ {Sh22p}.

‘People who were not supporters of any political party came, they believed in the ideals of the Liberation War, they came, with their families and children, and it turned out to be a ‘holy place’ for the liberation struggle ... this was a different kind of politics’ {Sh12scs}.

‘If the issue doesn’t come from your heart, if the politics is not clear, who is right we are not getting involved’ {Sh22p}.

The reporting on 6th February focused on the verdict that the defendant had been found guilty of 5 out of 6 charges and was sentenced to life imprisonment (6a). Online comments included:

‘Are elite influences the reason he was not given capital punishment, that most people’s reactions suggest that they don’t agree with the verdict, and that any opposition of AL who get into power in the future would release him’(6a)

It also covered Bangladesh Online Activist Network’s (BOAN) call to protest via social media, along with expressions of solidarity being reported from politicians and senior figures (6b). Online comments on the article say:

‘...that they are ashamed and disgusted at the verdict, that it is not fair justice, that it is a victory for Jammata. That we must have respect and confidence in the judiciary, but that JI will be encouraged to have another spree of violence. That the ICT trial is not fair and that it betrays the honour of the nation.’(6b)

The notion of a ‘deal with Jamaat’ being negotiated was also mentioned, along with the idea that elite influences had been involved in the compromised verdict (6a & 6d). Most reporting suggested that people were unhappy with the leniency of the verdict and saw only capital punishment as proving justice (6a-c, e-f). Online comments include:

‘The very birth of Bangladesh is being insulted by the verdict...we didn’t expect this verdict it is not satisfactory....what will happen to the witnesses if the convicts come out of jail, the verdict does not reflect the aspirations of freedom fighters given the culture of impunity’(6c).

TV news coverage included interviews with participants (6f) commenting that:

'...since the verdict, we had to come, the shame of the verdict, we want 'fashi' hanging to free us from this injustice to realise the dream of Bangladesh....we want justice and hanging of razakaars, we will continue the movement until our demands are met.' (6f)

The core group of bloggers, students and cultural activists planned a big rally for Friday 8th February, and drafted a petition with one million signatures, '... everyone had the same demand' {Sh35co}, which they took to the Speaker of the Parliament along with their six-point demands. The main demand at that stage was to change the sentence in the second case to death by hanging. Through ongoing debates, it was realised that this could potentially be achieved by adding an amendment to the ICT to allow an equal right of appeal to the prosecution. Over 150,000 people attended the rally on 8th February [15] and subsequent events, where the pledge was made to continue the protests at Shahbag until there was justice:

'...the way people joined was self-motivated and that is why it is unique' {Sh35co}.

'The control of Shahbag was not in our hands it was in the hands of the people; it was growing every moment' {Sh30c}.

The student groups (including from private universities), continued to give logistical support through their organised member networks, and the general public who came in their thousands made Shahbag what it became. So much so that all that could be done was to '... try and manage the flow of people' {Sh26co}.

Reporting on 7th February focused primarily on the mood and nature of participants at the Shahbag protests, reporting that they rejected the verdict, were refusing to leave until their demand for justice was realised, and were using a new form of cultural protest, in the Bangladesh context, with a festival atmosphere (7a, d, f, e).

'That the demand for capital punishment has the spirit of the movement has spread across the country with spontaneous agitations, with the sentiment of the liberation war rekindled, as they refuse to leave the streets. It began as a people's movement and has now been joined by parties chanting and singing in unison, painting, hanging effigies, performing plays and dancing. It's a festival atmosphere in the air with candle vigils in the evenings. The passion and dedication of the young people is impressive, with a collective that is driven to the demonstration by their consciousness.' (7a)

The AL storyline was that they had instructed their party to join the protests (7a), that they intended to appeal the acquittal of one of the cases (7b). However, senior AL figures who expressed solidarity with the protesters, and went to Shahbag Square to give a speech, had been refused and stopped by the crowds (7e). It was reported that JI had softened their stance and called for *hartals* rather than civil war as they had not been supported by BNP (7c), and that

BNP students were supporting the protests (7d). Online comments questioned why this had not happened before for other pressing issues, and claimed that protesting was a luxury that workers could not afford. Commentators also suggested that the protests were blocking access to major roads and hospitals, and that the light sentence was a quid pro quo between AL and JI (7a).

8th February was the first big rally as it fell on a Friday, a non-working day in Bangladesh. It was reported that Shahbag reflected the Liberation War spirit, with speeches, slogans and an oath repeated by all those present, the masses of ordinary people (8a, c-i).

‘Editorial “An auspicious event”: states that the liberation war ethos and spirit is not remote from the consciousness of our younger generation. That this has been brought to the fore by the public disdain for the war criminals and the need to repay the debts to the martyrs to whom we owe our independence, and to the women to make them feel that justice has been done, through the spirit of solidarity.’ (8c)

There were also reports of the demands being made by the Shahbag protestors, including the banning of JI and the boycotting of all organisations linked with them (8e). The BNP suggested that the government had staged the demonstrations at Shahbag (8b). Political leaders showed support for the protests but were not allowed to address the gathering (8a, d) and all organisational posters and banners not relating to the demand for hanging and justice had been requested to be removed to keep the protest apolitical (8d).

‘The sea of humanity was the grand rally at Shahbag, where all banners of different organizations were removed unless they were relating to the demand for death, to give an apolitical look to the rally. The air was filled with slogans. Dhaka Water and Waste Authorities supplied drinking water, and Dhaka City Corporate mobile toilets. They report that the protest resonates with the masses, so they all turned out to the huge gathering, and no political leader was allowed to speak to the rally.’ (8d)

Similar protests across the country were reported to be underway (8f). Videos showed that women, children and families were also participating (8f-i). It was reported that the Government was providing water, sanitation and security to the protestors (8d), along with participants sharing food like in a commune (8a). But some online comments were sceptical that Shahbag could change the verdict with cultural protests given that the ICT was not neutral (8c).

The reporting on 9th February continued the coverage of the rally, and the daily increase in numbers using cultural protests to demand an end to religious based politics, verdicts of capital punishment for war criminals and an equal right of appeal (9a-c, g-i).

'Tens of thousands of people raised their voice against religious based politics, and demanded capital punishment. They vowed to boycott JI and families flocked to the rally with flags, banners including young school children and college students. Although the movement was launched by BOAN it has transformed into a people movement, people took an oath to continue the movement until the demands were met including the banning of JI, boycotting of businesses. This is another 1971 with slogans against the foreign media's negative portrayal of Shahbag. Online comments include that Shahbag is a renaissance against the dirty politics of compromise, that we need to keep the spirit of positive activism alive, and that this is an awakening. We need to use this window of opportunity to take Bangladesh forward, with this patriotic historical gathering which depicts the spirit and determination of the people.' (9a)

The theme of rekindling the 1971 spirit also continued in reports including those covering similar protests across the country, and the unique style of protesting with colour and creativity (9a, b, d-g). The reports highlighted how people, and particularly the youth, were all contributing and working together with the basic services to support the movement (9d, f-h).

'The unique style of protesting, where people from all walks of life, ordinary people are able to express solidarity through a colourful exhibition of artwork, music, peace and harmony with the use of 1971 slogans, songs, poems, drama, art, flowers and candles. Online comments elaborate on this new phenomenon as a platform for the spirit of national unity.' (9b)

The 9th February is the first reporting on the idea that a solution could be giving the victim the right to appeal in the ICT trials for a harsher sentence not just if they are acquitted (9c).

5.4.3 Decision making, activities and logistic support during February 2013

The core group '... didn't want a committee' {Sh17cad}, they were mainly '...unknown fresh faces ... no one knew who was the nucleus' {Sh26co}. But they '... had the trust and confidence of the ordinary people' {Sh29ca} through their blogs, student and cultural activities, which had raised awareness of the issues. Most protests in Bangladesh are instigated by a political party or group with a political affiliation, and hierarchical power structures,

'...in a world of structural politics in Bangladesh, bloggers were a "non-entity" who spearheaded the movement' {Sh20ca}.

Although there were tensions between the different groups, justice was the higher motivating factor:

'...it was agreed that such a big injustice needs to be dealt with first' {Sh29ca};

'...a big signature of the movement was that groups shifted their positions to align with the spirit of the movement' {Sh25ca}.

'People gave suggestions, it was a very messy decision-making process, no structure or plan' {Sh20ca};

'No one dominated in the decision making within the core group' {Sh17cad}.

Shahbag was sustained logistically [9] through the coordination of support by student groups, and ongoing donations and support by ordinary people [18]. Food, water, Wi-Fi, banners and other goods were also given by local and national businesses, with toilets, medical support, refreshments and security provided by Government institutions, who all worked to ensure that the people's movement could continue.

'Economically, I saw hundreds of people, we donated funds, food and water spontaneous, with participation of the people even at the dead hours of the night. Finance was not a problem. {Sh1p}.

'On the first night we collected 14,000 tk. Donations of food also came from individuals – some students sold posters to make money to buy and cook food on the spot, at the beginning. Mothers, of sons who had joined the movement used to send food for them and their friends, they organised volunteers to distribute the food' {Sh26co}.

'The uniqueness of Shahbag was the participation of women in a social movement in their 1000s all night unique (at least 20k – 30k women), they brought food for the workers' {Sh17cad}.

Security and safety were key issues [12] and Shahbag created an environment with women and children feeling safe to participate in the movement, it was '...the most peaceful movement' {Sh38co}, which was unique for Bangladesh. The core group played '...a monitoring and steering role as people were spontaneously gathering in circles, singing and continuing the protest' {Sh17cad}. The Shahbag movement spread across the country with '471 platforms, formed spontaneously ... and in 26 countries too' {Sh29ca} – with events held across the diaspora in support of Shahbag. They joined in with key planned events including the 3 minutes silence, candle events, singing the National Anthem, hoisting the flag, and releasing balloons in the name of the martyrs and freedom fighters.

'It was a spontaneous movement, not organized, it was not centralized, with lots of groups together in circles, with the periphery also being the same strength, no one could control it. Actual people were the strength even if they were on the periphery {Sh17cad}.

5.4.4 Beyond Shahbag Square - Response, Reactions and Roles

'So the movement paved the way for people to be aware of the verdict and its limitations and consider and explore different possibilities as a way out. It came out spontaneously' {Sh25ca}.

There was a Parliamentary debate [6] on 10th February where '... even the PM said her heart was with Shahbag' {Sh4cad} and it was agreed that a Bill to amend the ICT Act be put forward to Parliament. The amendment was passed on 17th February and formally announced at Shahbag on 18th February. On the night of 15th February, a blogger was hacked to death [12] outside his home and the counter-propaganda against Shahbag started to escalate [14].

'The killing ... turned the whole thing with the counter-propaganda ... now they are fighting over something that is dead' {Sh41p}.

The emphasis of the movement changed from being that of justice, for the hanging of the collaborators, to the banning of religious political parties, namely JI. On 21st February this became the basis of the one-month ultimatum to the Government.

'Ironically there are already laws in place that ban JI e.g. when the Pakistani Army surrendered on 16th December 1971, all forces had to surrender, which included JI, and in the Constitution of the provisional Mujib Nagore Government in exile, the order to ban JI remains standing' {Sh23sp}.

The success of Shahbag's demands, along with the bloggers killing, shattered the fragile but resolute unity of the collective entity, the Shahbag Moment started to decline. There was a dilemma as to how and when to finish the movement:

'Shahbag grew out of the spontaneity of the people. All supporters joined in because it was aligned with their cause. Shahbag was already happening, Government had to protect and support it, there were thousands of people, they couldn't have done anything else against such a growing crowd ... it's the Government's responsibility to protect the public and ensure their safety' {Sh25ca}.

'... but you can't stop a mass movement with orders, it has its own dynamic and way of working' {Sh23sp}.

'When the powerful entities – bigger political groups came they wanted to manage and control it, without consent. It was so large you couldn't really get consent from anyone, it just emerged' {Sh39p}.

'The Government realized that it would become a force that would demand things that they did not want to deliver... not allowing its spontaneous fruition, that's when skepticism developed and the moral authority of the movement started to decline....control from within to stop it flourishing' {Sh15c}.

So, people joined Shahbag for different reasons, some to be seen as supporting the cause, others because

'... in Dhaka there is no outlet for entertainment, so Shahbag was like 'berathe jawa' going out, people put up their facebook status that they were "at Shahbag" they said that they were "with the people", but there was no risk, it was like a street party, but the spirit and emotion was evoked by the mass people this must not be undermined' {Sh18c}.

On 10th February there was a Parliamentary debate based on the 6-point demands, which had been submitted to the Speaker by the Shahbag movement the day before. Media reports covered different aspects of the movement from interviews with the key personalities connected to Shahbag, about how decisions were made and the aims of the movement (10b,d), the cyber dimension of the movement (10c,d), and the continuing protests in solidarity from the Bengali diaspora (10e).

'Interview with a key organizer that the leadership of the Shahbag movement is not a political group, organization or network but ordinary people. But that the guiding forces directing and managing the crowds are volunteers and organizers who never imagined that their call would result in something of such magnitude. People see it as their own movement and that is why it is so successful; the movement belongs to everyone. Compromise and patience are needed to reach a common ground between the different groups and networks for the sake of the movements sustainability they have to rise above individual and group identities' (10b).

They reported that the movement, which was not about anti-Islam, religion or politics, but just sought justice, had forced the Government to consider an amendment to the ICT to protect the equal right of appeal on behalf of the victims (10a, d).

The reporting on 11th February outlined the details of the main 6-point demands of the Shahbag movement and the discussion in Parliament which had vowed to respect the oath of the people at Shahbag (11a-c).

'The Prime Minister, at a debate on the 10th in Parliament hails the Shahbag youth and vows to help keep their oath and translate it into action. She expresses solidarity with the 6-point demand that was submitted to the Speaker and agrees to close the loopholes in the current ICT' (11a)

Reports continued to describe the scenes and activities at Shahbag and share information about the groups and people who were supporting Shahbag and the Liberation War spirit, like the national Cricket team, prominent personalities, politicians, students and teachers (11d, f - j).

'Interview with key organizer reports that there is no committee to run the movement, decisions are made after discussions with all the parties involved in the agitation, organizers want to avoid giving the movement a structure as they want to ensure its spontaneity. The tide like inflow of people has added to our courage, but we are tired. We work in turns and in groups while others rest, no one is experienced in organizing a movement of this extent, so we are all learning. General people and volunteers are assisting. Our main demand is clear to hang the war criminals. The movement is not bound by a deadline but by a cause.' (11i)

It was reported that the Government was set to amend the War Crimes Act (Order of 1972 and ICT Act of 1973) with a Bill in Parliament within the week (11c). This was reported along with claims by JI that the Government was behind Shahbag to create anarchy and force the tribunal to give a sentence of death (11e).

On 12th February there was a three minutes silence of solidarity across Bangladesh, with many publicly planning to participate on the streets wherever they were (12b). There was confirmation that the cabinet had approved the Amendment to the right of appeal for the trials, and that this would be put to Parliament in time to allow for an appeal to be made against the second verdict (12a). There was also a change in tone in reporting, stating that the PM was worried about the safety of the youth at Shahbag and that they should start to limit their protest times to allow access to the local roads and hospitals. An Editorial also suggested that this phase of the movement with 24hr protests should come to an end, as the public will had been demonstrated and responded to (12c, d).

Reports on 13th February continued coverage of Shahbag activities (13b,d,f) and highlighted how successful the three minute silence had been, with people coming out of their offices, stopping sports matches, classes and Parliament to participate where they were (13a), along with solidarity protests across the world (13g). There were also reports of BNP's claims that AL were trying to control the movement (13c).

On 14th February a candle-lit vigil was planned. Reports reflected on the first of *falgoan* or spring and the movement, with children coming to learn about their national history (14a, b, e). Reports also mentioned that the Government had tabled the Bill to be debated within a few days but warned that vested interests may be taking over Shahbag (14c, d).

5.4.5 Post the Peak of Shahbag Moment

On 15th February (the evening when a key blogger was killed near his home), there was a decline in front page coverage, the reports reflected on the latest candle-lit event, the activities

on the cyber front battle against JI propaganda, and that the Amendment Bill was going through its due course in Parliament. The verdict

'seems to have awakened people, as for the first time they are raising their voice in unison against the culture of impunity since the war' (Sh15).

Coverage of Shahbag on 16th February continued to decline, the organisers of Shahbag who had announced the day before that they would be reducing their protests to 7 hrs a day, in response to the bloggers killing returned to the 24hrs sit in, and were now joined by groups claiming to finish the fight once and for all against the collaborators (16a,b).

'The parameters of the movement were so slim, we wanted to go against Jamaat, but are Muslims, some were atheists ... the main 'dabi', demand had happened, which way is the movement going now?' {Sh36p}.

'We were countering Jamaat because they had been countering justice' {Sh26co}.

Splits started to emerge by 21st February [11] because Shahbag was seen to be aligned with the Government [29], and because of the leadership issue [13], but also due to counter-propaganda [14] and the fact that the main initial demand had been achieved. The amendment to the ICT Act now allowed the appeal by the prosecution retrospectively regarding the judgment that had initiated the Shahbag Moment, and established the possibility of real justice [25] and the death penalty [19].

'People can't carry on for a long time, and they wanted to give the people a positive outcome to go home with, but then the blogger was killed so they decided to carry on ... because if they stopped Jamaat might call 'hartals' strikes, start attacking people etc ... they needed to continue showing strength on the street' {Sh26co}.

'This Jamaat propaganda divided and created confusion ... they took advantage as there was a gap in Shahbag, at the beginning there was speed with the hype in demands and announcements' {Sh39p}.

'The bloggers ... took freedom of expression to a stage and gave a handle for the extremists to develop counter-propaganda' {Sh15c}.

'So we had to deal with religious (atheist) and political (pro Government) criticisms. When people found it complicated and confusing many slowly began to leave' {Sh24scs}.

'No one could have predicted the spark of the incident of the verdict would have shown the new reality of innovative communication ... the massive involvement of the new generation, but a continuity of the legacy of the past ... the strength of Bengali society 'samaj'... but we wanted the spontaneity of Shahbag to be its strength, it shouldn't be harmed and interfered with by organizational structures ... Shahbag opened a new reality' {Sh14scs}.

'It's a shame that such a big movement fizzled out because of conflict ... now when they call people only a few hundred come ... but I am doubtful that the Amendment would have been possible without Shahbag' {Sh12scs}.

Shahbag was a platform for the renewal of the Bengali identity and the spirit of liberation for secularism, democracy and justice, where the '... peoples' sentiment became clear' {Sh38}.

'This movement was not addressing power, but justice. A pending justice, for four decades, we were waiting, emotions played a bigger role more than logic' {Sh25ca}.

On 17th February the Amendment Bill was passed in Parliament (17c), but most of the coverage focused on the death of the blogger and people's reaction to it (17a, d, e). Reports suggest that he was targeted because he was an atheist (17b).

On 18th February coverage was again extensive, covering the details of the Amended Bill which included the right to try organisations like JI and allow not only the Government but also others to appeal the verdict on behalf of the victims (18a).

'The parliament passed the amendment bill and included the trail of organisations, a key demand of campaigners, and empowered the Government, informants and complainants to appeal verdicts retrospectively with effect from 2009. It reports that JI have stated that the amendment will lead to civil war as it is wiping out Islamic idealism and putting the country into anarchy.' (18a)

Reports reflected on the achievements of Shahbag and their responses to the Amendment Appeal Bill and death threats by JI (18c). There was also coverage of the response from JI, who stated that the amendment was trying to wipe out Islamic idealism, that it would lead to anarchy and civil war (18a, e). There were further reports that international human rights organisations had lobbied the Government not to pass the Amendment (18c). The BNP are reported to have not delayed the passing of the Bill in Parliament, which they normally try to do (18a). Reports also claimed that the BNP had held their rally without their alliance partner JI, and that they had claimed that the Government had no moral right to be in power given that the people had rejected the verdict, and criticised the Shahbag movement for being pro AL (18d). Online comments welcomed the achievements of the movement, but suggest that the protests should now end given the inconvenience it was causing, and that it was time to move on and return to normal as they did not want to see any more killing of protesters (18b).

'It is time for the Shahbag protest to end because of the inconvenience to common people. That the nation has shown and given full support and now it is time to move ahead with normal business. They don't want to see any more killing of protestors, the Shahbag movements has fought for the cause and everyone has contributed.' (18b)

The 19th February reporting covered the failure of the JI *hartal*, with Shahbag organisers encouraging everyone to defy the *hartal* and wave black flags for all the victims (19a). There were reports of the heart attack of one of the protesters, and that the PM was still worried about the security and health of the protesters (19b), but that groups and people were still joining them (19b, c). There had been ongoing international coverage of the Shahbag movement, but an Al Jazeera program 'The stream' focusing on Shahbag had received 39k views, and included interviews with key participants in the movement, with Al Jazeera trying to promote a narrative that Shahbag's key participants refuted.(19d)

'Respondents suggest that it shows the agency of the people, that the selection of Shahbag as an historical site to mobilize the common people has meant that the youth feel and have taken ownership of the movement, that it is empowering and intergenerational, with women participation in a public space taking ownership for the accountability of justice.' (19d)

Reporting on 20th February, when symbolic balloons were released with letters to martyrs, focused on the counterpropaganda against Shahbag and the reactions from the

Government, BNP and JI. The Government stated that they wanted to stop the harming of Islamic sentiments, but the BNP accused them of anti-Islamic activities, and the JI stated that they wanted to

'foil the conspiracy of the Awami atheist in the name of the Shahbag movement and that bloggers should be killed' (20a).

Shahbag is reported as seeing this as propaganda, but online comments suggested that the blogs were full of anti-Islamic comments, that Shahbag encouraged men and women to be together all night and that there were no prayers held at Shahbag (20b).

The editorial questioned the potential of trying JI for war crimes (as this demand had been involved in the Bill) given that the JI during the Liberation War was not the same as the current party (20c).

21st February is Mother Language Day in Bangladesh, with traditional wreath laying at *Shoheed Minars* (monuments to the Liberation War) across the country. This was also the day before the threatened JI activities after Friday prayer. The reporting had shifted away from Shahbag to covering JI threats to create anarchy after Friday prayers, unless the Government punished the bloggers. JI are reported to have threatened to accuse the Government of atheism, and reports suggested that the BNP had denounced Shahbag youth for anti-Islamic activities (21a). A counter article highlighted the role of women at Shahbag, where in a traditional public sphere dominated by men, girls and women had found a safe space at Shahbag, which had emancipated the women involved (21b).

On 22nd February there were reports of new demands being made by *Gonojagaron Moncho* (Ordinary People's Platform – the new name of one of the main groups at Shahbag) that they would stop the 24hrs protests and from 7th March start a country wide program for a mass signature campaign. They gave the Government an ultimatum that by 26th March war crimes charges must be brought against JI (22a, c). There were online reports of attacks by JI on mosques, *Shoheed Minars* and vandalism after prayers (22c, d).

'Shahbag's fresh program countrywide from the 7th March and to wind up the non-stop movement at Shahbag and that they have issued an ultimatum to the Government to bring war crimes charges against JI and ban them. But that they will gather again at Shahbag before every verdict is announced to prevent Jammatt violence. Religion is personal, the state is for all, and they are starting a mass signature campaign around the country.' (22a)

Reports on 23rd February cover the terror attacks by JI, who burnt the national flag, attacked journalists, police and students at their halls of residence in Dhaka University, while chanting slogans against Shahbag (23a).

5.5 Other key factors mentioned

Social media coverage of Shahbag was initiated through the creation of a Facebook event by BOAN, and then subsequently through the use of twitter. Users were mainly young people, those in Dhaka, or Bengalis living in other parts of the world. Over a million tweets by 16,804 users were recorded regarding #Shahbag (Mangla et al, 2015).

There have been numerous articles written regarding the use of social media during Shahbag because of its predominance of new users, and its use as a centralised information source (Hussain et al, 2016). Over 89% of users had less than 10 connections and were new users who had joined twitter just for Shahbag: they mainly retweeted tweets through their networks or liked them (Zamir, 2017). There was a core group of about 25 activists and bloggers who were the source of the information regarding Shahbag, who generated the initial tweets, some of who already had an established following, some of whom who were organic opinion formers focusing on sharing news from Shahbag. However, there was no specific leadership or organisation identified from the online activity, see Appendix E for visual representations of social media networks.

February saw the highest number of tweets, with over 5000 people joining twitter on 7th February (ibid). After those in Bangladesh, there were social media users from 40 different countries involved in Shahbag tweets. There were over 5000 tweeters from the US, and 3,500 from the UK. Of the hyperlinks shared, 32% were news media, 28% twitter, 20% facebook, 10% blogs and 6% YouTube. There were 5 main roles performed by social media during Shahbag to coordinate 'connective action' through diffusion and brokering. Within diffusion social media was used to give updates on what was happening at Shahbag in real time, it also shared the messages of the demands for Shabag, the plans of actions and activities being organised by Shahbag such as the mass rally, candle event, balloon releasing etc.

Within the brokering role there was the need to promote different sources of information to validate the demands and the arguments of Shahbag and to counter the propaganda and cyber-war attacks by JI supporters. It is interesting to note that during February, false twitter accounts were also created, and that those in opposition to Shahbag also had automated systems which generated repetitive tweets from different locations of fake news (ibid). There was a core group of citizen journalists, and most protesters and supporters were information cascaders by retweeting, sharing and liking tweets. Social media played a key role in digital activism during Shahbag, and meant that those who were abroad could play an active virtual role in Shahbag, as was the case for other movements such as Tahrir Square in Egypt and Occupy Wall Street.

Online activism [17] and the youth [18] played a key role in the movement's success.

'The post Liberation War generation took up the responsibility in 2013 from the original movement in 1991' {Sh17cad}.

However, there were debates over the media, which played a significant role [24] in sharing stories from Shahbag across Bangladesh:

'... collective leadership was needed, but the media tries to personify everything and make it binary ... alternative media is much freer to express themselves' {Sh20ca};

'It was flared up by the media, they made it controversial, but they also played a key role in turning it into a mass movement' {Sh11c}.

After the first week

'... the media coverage made Shahbag turn into a 'show' rather than a passion, making a performance for coverage' {Sh36p}.

Shahbag was influenced by the wider context of social movements elsewhere, including the Arab Spring, in the way that social media was used and the involvement of the youth [10]. However, unlike those contexts, rather than being against the Government, it was the demand for justice for the families of the victims of the Liberation War in 1971 that was the main motivation for the movement.

'Politics, economics, education, everything is based on the Liberation War spirit and principles. If we don't base ourselves on what was fought for in the Liberation War then we have no identity, and nothing can be done' {Sh35co}.

'The four pillars of liberation² that we believe in were taken forward in the Shahbag. Shahbag was a threat because of its idealism' {Sh29ca}.

Shahbag was seen as emotional, and very different from usual protests in Bangladesh,

'... in Shahbag women felt secure, and spontaneously participated, women led slogans ... this was unique because of the leading role women played in the movement ... the spirit of Shahbag was through songs, music and slogans and not meetings and speeches' {Sh25ca}.

'The 'spirit' is in people's hearts, created by history and can't be destroyed' {Sh4cad}.

'There was a restlessness in the peoples' psyche, and the Shahbag was an outburst of their feelings and aspirations' {Sh1p}.

'If the cause is from the core of your heart and organic it can be successful' {Sh16scs}.

Limitations were suggested of the movement

'... because of the spontaneous nature of the movement there was no leadership. It was a blessing and a curse, because of the nature of it, it was fresh and credible, but didn't have the experience, the overview and awareness of how far to go' {Sh15c}.

'We were surprised that the online networks were so strong in Bangladesh...but they couldn't decide when to stop, they are not mature politicians, they are not experienced leaders, it's not their fault. The main basis of the movement was emotion, a love for the country and a hatred for the killers ... but they dragged it on with no real goal' {Sh40sp}.

5.6 Impact of the Shahbag Moment

Subsequent media coverage of Shahbag was minimal, as the protests at Shahbag had stopped, and reconvened, but not in such numbers, under the *Gonojagaron Moncho* (GM) banner. Media coverage focused instead on particular events, for example the sentence of the death penalty for the third case brought to trial against another collaborator on 28th February (28a), and the statement by GM on the 26th March based on the unfulfilled ultimatum by the Government. There was also coverage following the arrest of three of the Shahbag bloggers on 3rd April 2013; they were later released without charge. Subsequent reports covered statements made by the spokesperson of GM, but many of the original core groups of Shahbag supporters had split up and were not with GM so are not relevant for my research as the collective agency capability

² The four pillars are democracy, secularism, socialism and nationalism

had been lost. Ultimately the appeal against the guilty verdict and the lesser sentence of life imprisonment was successful, and the defendant was executed at the end of 2013. Subsequent cases by the ICT have been tried without the intimidation and violence that took place before the Shahbag Moment, and there have been no further moments on such a scale in Bangladesh.

'We hold onto what we want from Shahbag, it was passionate for a week, but it didn't take a lot to break it apart. We were not capable to get rid of Jamaat, even with everyone coming together' {Sh36p}.

'Many of the people who went there went for the slogans, and when they went home, they took the slogans and the spirit of Shahbag and 1971 with them. Everyone got involved including in the rural areas. They believed that Jamaat could be got rid of ... but they get huge funding from outside Bangladesh and this is why we can't remove them' {Sh22p}.

The Impact of the movement included raising awareness to limiting the activities of JI:

'... that the Jamaat couldn't do mass attacks anymore, they were diffused by Shahbag' {Sh38co}.

'Without Shahbag the violence wouldn't have stopped ... Bangladesh would have turned into ... their habitat of terrorism' {Sh35co}.

'If Shahbag hadn't happened the explosion of the fundamentalists/extremists, the alternatives would have advanced rather than the pro-liberation forces' {Sh29ca}.

'The message even reached small children, through the slogans using the Bengali alphabet for each collaborator, they have learnt lessons that razakkars hurt and harmed the country' {Sh25ca}.

'The main impact was the assurance to the people of the trials, confidence that those who did crimes would be tried fairly. People were united and strong to resist injustice, to stop the derailment of justice' {Sh17cad}.

In respect of the impact on young people and their identity, the data shows

'... that the facebook generation would have such patriotism is the biggest achievement of Shahbag' {Sh4cad}.

'Shahbag was like an acid test no middle ground, either support the trials or not' {Sh28p}.

'The impact on young people wouldn't have happened without Shahbag, but there was also a negative impact – identity politics developed, Muslim or Bengali identity, this politics is more risky ... this division developed after Shahbag ... before we were all friends' {Sh36p}.

It offered the potential for collective change

'Shahbag proved that it's the people who hold the power' {Sh30c}.

'It was "beautiful" lots of people were there, but they were disciplined, which is quite absent in our society normally' {Sh37sp}.

'In a very short time you can have a movement for positive change, and do politics without violence... Shahbag created an 'asha' hope which had been lost ... Shahbag inspired us' {Sh24scs}.

'Shahbag was much bigger than just the 'dabi' demand for 'fashi' hanging ... we didn't free Bangladesh to go backwards, we have achieved so much ... but that is now being frustrated and that is why we need another Shahbag' {Sh21sp}.

5.7 Different Actor Storylines of Shahbag Moment

The core activists and organisers' storyline started with their following the trial through the media and social media, over concerns on whether the Government and Judiciary had compromised because of JI threats. They argued that they had to take a stand, that it was now or never, so they gathered and others joined them at Shahbag and they decided to stay. Key personalities showed solidarity and support, and the media and social media shared their message to protest the judgement, so that then others also came.

There was an ongoing discussion and debate as to what could be done to resolve the issue, along with how to manage and take care of the growing crowds, and what actions could be taken that would be symbolic, cultural and peaceful but would have an impact. They agreed actions in consultation with advisors and other organisers of networks, coordinated support: but it was mainly self-organised, and within days Shahbag grew out of their control and took on a life of its own. There was a demand from the media for a spokesperson, so one was identified that no one objected to, but it was a continuous process of ensuring that the voice of Shahbag was not taken over by any particular group or political party. They even had to stop key political party members from speaking and banned any banners that were not part of the Shahbag demands.

Once the demands started to be met in Parliament, there was a discussion regarding slowing down the 24hr scene at Shahbag but that was not possible because so many people were still coming to participate in Shahbag: it had a life of its own. There was also a fear that if Shahbag stopped JI would take control of the streets again. When the Bill was finally passed it was agreed to announce the end of Shahbag: but then the blogger was killed and splits and tensions started to rise regarding what to do next and the unity and solidarity fell apart.

The core advisors' storyline narrative was to keep away from the front line and stay in the background letting the young people take the lead. They wanted to facilitate and support Shahbag through their networks and connections and advise the young people on what to do next, to plan and be strategic on how best Shahbag could have an impact. They negotiated resources and support for Shahbag when needed, problem-solved and linked those on the front line indirectly to those in power and influence. Once the demands had been achieved, the young people did not know when and how to stop, or how far they should go, they made mistakes and started to distance themselves from the will of the people. Although some of them tarnished Shahbag's legacy with their subsequent actions, the achievements of Shahbag was undeniable: it had been an historic event for Bangladesh and paved the way for justice to be finally served against the collaborators in the Liberation War.

Participants heard and saw what was happening on the media and through their social media networks. Many went initially because they felt they had a duty to do something to stand up for justice. Everyone was talking about it and the need to go, Shahbag was seen as a safe, positive and fun platform to demand justice, so they were curious to learn more and go and see for themselves. Once they went the vibe and atmosphere sucked them in and many chose to stay and get more involved, they kept on coming back for more: it was so stimulating and meaningful for them. At the beginning it was pure, but as everyone started going, many because it was the place to be, to be seen, it became more of a performance, especially with the media presence. Once the demand was achieved, there was a huge celebratory feeling of achievement, but the killing of the blogger led to a second wave of Shahbag as part of the grief, which then turned to a fear, and a re-evaluation of the need to keep going to Shahbag. As the main demands had been met, the urgency and priority to participate faded.

Supporters from the structural level (legal, government, education) believed that the outcome of Shahbag with the Amendment Bill would have happened at some point, but Shahbag demonstrated the demand of the people, and reduced the fear and intimidation of JI and the pressure of the negative consequences of making decisions against JI interests. They used their positions to support Shahbag but did not necessarily actively attend the scene or become involved directly in the actions. They mobilised resources to ensure the safety and welfare of the growing crowds. They believed in the initial demands, and felt they had a duty to move things forward for justice. They mobilised resources behind the scenes and used their networks and connections to further Shahbag's aims.

The storyline of supporters from political parties was that Shahbag was pro-liberation, so they supported it. They wanted to be on the platform but were not allowed because they were from political parties, so stayed away and supported the cause through their networks. They also had a public duty to keep the people there safe, and to stop Shahbag from being hijacked by other interested parties. They organised through Government agencies and their party members to ensure there was no panic or trouble, thus ensuring crowd safety. They organised provisions for the crowd with water, food, hygiene, waste collection and sanitation facilities. They felt those involved in organising Shahbag were very inexperienced, they had no control over it. They were worried that it could turn dangerous if the demands were to change, or if there was an incident with such big crowds. Once the demands were achieved, they disengaged from supporting it. When the blogger was killed, and the public sentiment hurt by some of the extreme views expressed, they distanced themselves from Shahbag and those involved.

Supporters from NGOs and Civil Society initially helped and had a presence at Shahbag, but had to stop being there in an official capacity and went there in their personal capacity. They supported Shahbag through their networks and resources informally, but because of funders and the international donors had to officially stay away. They stopped being publicly supportive and stayed neutral. After the blogger was killed and Shahbag split they distanced themselves from any involvement in Shahbag retrospectively, and minimised the achievements and impact of Shahbag.

Commentators such as the media saw Shahbag as a great news story, and many journalists went beyond their roles to report on and show support for Shahbag. At the beginning they wanted to know who the leader was, what the demands were, who was involved and organising Shahbag. During the ongoing coverage they tried to create new angles and new news stories to sustain the reporting, focusing on those who participated, the cyber-wars, the diaspora and the impact in the local area. They continued to cover Shahbag's spokesperson after Shahbag ended and those involved split.

Commentators from other backgrounds, key personalities, thought leaders, cultural activists, and academics offered ongoing commentary and opinion at a wide range of media shows, TV programs, journal articles and events. Many supported the demands of Shahbag and may have visited the scene at the beginning but subsequently stayed away and watched from a distance. Their view of Shahbag, even two years after it ended, was still that it was historical and had had an impact.

The oral histories differ from the media reports, as the main storylines do not revolve primarily around the political actors involved, but more on the emotions for justice by the ordinary people.

There is a storyline relating to how the truth had been suppressed, and how the feeling of injustice had grown over many years. A second storyline relates to the initial suspicion, that given the delays and difficulties of the ICT, and the fact that the JI was being allowed to have rallies and make threats regarding the verdict, that the AL Government would not deliver on their pledge and that justice once again would be denied. State institutions and political parties had failed to uphold the principles of the Liberation War, and had made compromises with JI in order to gain power in the past.

A third storyline revolves around non-political actors: the cultural activists, bloggers, civil society activists and ordinary people who had maintained activities to keep the memories, spirit and hope for justice from the Liberation War alive. So Shahbag was seen as the manifestation and culmination of these, ignited by the verdict.

A final storyline was that Shahbag was seen as the last opportunity for justice and could not be lost, social media had exposed the truth and the bloggers were seen as having the freedom to make a stand for justice without the usual political motives.

There are four main storylines portrayed in the on and offline media data sources of the triangulated data: (i) the actual reporting of the events at Shahbag and the people who supported and participated in it; (ii) the announcements being made by JI; (iii) the comment and statements by the BNP; (iv) the comments and actions of the AL Government and Parliament.

5.8 Reflections

As part of my reflections I sketched out a cause and effect tree to illustrate Shahbag at each stage.

At the being stage the main causes and conditions were the Liberation War of 1971 and the fact that the collaborators had not been tried for their crimes against victims and their families. Also, because of the AL election pledge, the ICT trials were underway, even though they were in an atmosphere of ongoing violence perpetrated by JI. The young people through social media offered a free independent voice regarding the trials.

At the 'doing' stage, the effect of the verdict and 'V' sign by the defendant was the spark for the Shahbag Moment. Shahbag developed collective agency capability as it offered a

platform of a cultural, non-violent protest, it was creative and *ad hoc*, where feelings of duty and emotions generated solidarity. Resources and logistics were mobilised from a diverse range of people from different backgrounds. Shahbag ignited the spirit of 1971, and the Liberation War principles for justice. It generated key personalities' endorsements and high media support. The youth played a lead role through social media with women and children being involved within a consultative and deliberative decision-making process.

At the 'impact' stage there was a paradigm shift in a number of areas. The parliamentary debate led to Government support with security and logistics and the Appeals Bill. JI's reaction was to counter Shahbag online and then with paper propaganda in the mosques and madrassas: there was also the killing of the blogger, and the abuse of those involved as 'spoiled'. It reasserted the Bengali identity, a re-imagining of their cultural heritage and solidarity across the diaspora and sites in Bangladesh, the youth learnt about the history of the war, about justice and were able to understand the impact of the war on the older generation. The media became more open and aware of the role of social media, journalists were able to express themselves and raise awareness, search for new stories and angles, they realised that there did not have to be a single leader and they offered 24hr coverage. Internationally, although there were campaigns against the use of capital punishment and concerns as to whether the ICT trials and process could be free and fair, the will of the people had to be acknowledged.

Reflecting on the different perceptions and portrayals of the Shahbag Moment there are a number of key points to note. Shahbag was not about leadership, but the courage, solidarity and strength of the people, and the commitment of young people for the cause. It offered a platform, a safe public space for people (including women) to express their emotions about the war, free from party political discourse. This created a paradigm shift in a 'moment', capturing the heart and soul of the ordinary people for justice. Media coverage and social media amplified the Shahbag message for justice and the original initiators of the movement could only manage the ongoing flow of people, who were self-motivated by their consciences to participate and support the movement. The core initiators were 'unknown faces', and groups who shifted their positions to align with the spirit of the cause for justice first. It was a messy decision-making process, but the never-ending circles of groups of people participating gave the movement strength. They participated in activities that they believed would contribute to the cause, no one could control the movement, it was self-evolving, they could only guide the flow. The Government was seen as having a responsibility to protect the public and respond to the demands given the number of people who supported it. There was no risk in participating in

the moment as it was a non-violent cultural protest, so women and children joined in as a learning empowering experience, adding to the credibility of the moment's cause. Some went to see the entertainment, to feel the energy and participate, or to 'be seen' at Shahbag, to demonstrate support for the popular cause. However, the atmosphere and dynamics of the moment, although about hanging war criminals, was positive, engaging, festive and safe.

Once the initial demand for justice was being met, with the passing of the Amendment Bill in Parliament, and after the killing of the blogger, this dynamic changed. Confusion, divisions and splits started to emerge: counter-propaganda took a hold. Controversial decisions were made by a fraction group not to stop the 24hr sit in as planned, but to continue the protests on the streets, thus creating splits in the unity; atheist bloggers took the freedom of expression too far against the religious sentiments of the majority. People demonstrated their unease, after the swell of sympathy for the killing, by gradually disengaging from the moment. Some initiators of Shahbag shifted their emphasis to a demand to ban JI, giving the Government an ultimatum, and Shahbag supporters became associated with anti-Islamic activities, as 'spoiled' youth, as inexperienced and unable to manage the counter-propaganda and changing dynamics as they unfolded.

Shahbag changed its shape and form, but it had been a powerful platform to revive and re-imagine the Bengali identity, spirit and ethos of the Liberation War ideals. The younger generation learnt about the truth of the Liberation War and gained insights into the cultural Bengali identity. The Shahbag Moment was a clear expression of the people's sentiment, which impacted on institutional practices with a change in the law, and on JI, their allies, tactics and acts of violence. As a result of the ongoing activities of some of the initiators under the *Gonojagaron Moncho* banner, some people's retrospective responses to the Shahbag Moment are much more reserved, but the sentiment and spirit generated by the moment remain. In order to understand the conditions and changing processes of collective agency and capability during the moment, a more detailed analysis of the discourse and the coding is outlined in the following chapter.

The media coverage of the moment featured the key political actors involved, as well the structural changes that occurred as a result of the Shahbag Moment. It also reflected the ethos and sentiment of the moment at the beginning, rekindling the spirit of 1971, celebrating Bengali identity, nationalism and their demand for justice. After the blogger was killed, there was a move away from the demand for justice, the clarity and unity of the Moment was weakened, and so did its popular support. The collective agency and capability that developed

and grew during the initial part of the Moment's growth started to fade and change. The collective agency and capability of the Shahbag Moment responded to, developed, and changed in relation to these storylines in a dynamic interactive way: this will be explored in more detail in Chapter Six along with the coding analysis.

6.) CHAPTER SIX: THE SHAHBAG MOMENT CODING AND ANALYSIS

The aim of this chapter's analysis is to explore the conditions and processes on the practice and structural dimensions that led to, changed and ended the collective agency and capabilities in the Shahbag Moment in 2013. Based on the method outlined in Chapter Four, the interviews were read and initially openly coded in three stages, on themes related directly to theoretical concepts outlined in Part I and on the data as Nvivo themes emerged. During the coding process, we noted that there were overlaps between and across some of the themes that emerged from the case histories. We proceeded by allocating a text a code in one stage, however it may also have made reference to other stages; this was expected as the text interacted within a theme as part of the social construction at different stages of the moment. For the purposes of analysis, the primary stage in which the theme presented itself was used for coding purposes, but references within the theme to other stages are included in this chapter's analysis. The themed codes were then reviewed as part of the second phase of the axial coding to look for patterns in and between the themes at each stage. The themes were then grouped together where there was a strong reference or correlation between them.

In Stage A (A), *prior to the Shahbag Moment*, the conceptual codes were grouped into: (i) historical; (ii) wider contexts, existing practices and structures in relation to capabilities and Instrumental Freedoms; and (iii) the frame of injustice which was prominent in the discourse. The dominant themed codes that emerged were the Liberation War within the historical code group (i) and anti-Jamaat-e-Islam/fundamentalism/extremism which were grouped under the practice and structural code group (ii).

In Stage B (B), *during the Shahbag Moment*, the conceptual codes were grouped into: (i) defining the problem, attributing meaning, identity and unity; (ii) political opportunity structures; (iii) resource mobilisation, agency and decision making. The dominant themed data codes that did not fit comfortably with the conceptual codes were grouped into: (iv) emotions, cultural non-violent protest, women and security; (v) youth groups, media and social media, NGO and civil society involvement.

In Stage C (C), *post the Shahbag Moment*, the conceptual grouped codes were: (i) causal mechanisms, (ii) impact on practice and structure, and (iii) unintended consequences. The dominant themed data codes were leadership splits and counterpropaganda which were grouped under unintended consequences, group (iii).

There are some significant patterns in the mentions by different actor groups of the codes. All core activists mentioned the Liberation War, JI the injustice, and that practice and structures needed to change in Stage A, however core organisers all mentioned JI and injustice only. In Stage B core activists all mentioned political opportunity structures, decision making, the role of the young people and social media, all core organisers also mentioned resource mobilisation and agency. In Stage C core activists all mentioned causal mechanisms, structure and unintended consequences, whereas core organisers all mentioned practice and structure.

In Stage A, core advisors all mentioned the Liberation War and wider context. In Stage B they all mentioned political opportunity structures, non-violence and the youth. In Stage C they all mentioned practice, structure and the unintended consequences.

Participants all mentioned in Stage B political opportunity structures, resource mobilisation and social media. Supporters from NGOs and civil society nearly all mentioned the liberation war in Stage A, all mentioned meaning, identity and unity and the role of young people in Stage B.

Commentators from the media in Stage A all mentioned the Liberation War and injustice, in Stage B all mentioned unity and identity, political opportunity structures, resource mobilisation, emotions and the role of NGOs. In Stage C all commentators mentioned media and the unintended consequences. However, in the real time media coverage the highest mentions were the Liberation War and injustice in Stage A, agency, non-violence and political opportunity structures in Stage B and structures in Stage C.

6.1 Stage A – Prior to The Shahbag Moment

In this stage we were initially looking at the capabilities within existing structures and contexts, what the ‘being’ norms were, the Instrumental Freedoms (social, economic, political, transparency and security), and existing historical and social practices. However, the ‘injustice’ emerged as a code theme within the historical context during the analysis in relation to the Liberation War.

Within this stage the highest number of different interviews source and reference (r) mentions were for the emerging Nvivo codes of group (iii) injustice (28, r75) and group (i) Liberation War (27, r77) followed by group (ii) anti-Jamaat/extremism (20, r50). Appendix D, as part of the Actor Analysis, outlines the different references made to each of the theoretical

and Nvivo coding themes in detail. In this chapter we focus on the patterns that emerged from the groups and reflections in relation to the theories outlined in Part I.

The historical code (Ai) sub-code of the Liberation War was cited by nearly all interviewees. This was also referenced as part of Biv as part of the ‘renaissance of Bengali identity’ by the youth, a nationalist non-violent cultural revival, and part of Bv relating to the role of youth groups. So historically there is a web of meaning relating to justice, Bengali identity and Liberation War ideals that cut across a wide spectrum of society, but that remained latent because of a lack of a safe and trustworthy platform from which to express them.

In relation to the wider context (Aii), although there had been an ongoing chain of events of peoples’ protests against fundamentalism and Governments, in the Arab Spring and India, the events in Bangladesh were distinct and different, as these were for legal demands against the judiciary and the verdict and not directly against the State. There was also reference to the limited formal role of civil society organisations and NGOs, and how they have been taken over by foreign interests, and also to the donor perspective.

In relation to structure and social practices (Aii) a number of points were raised. The first of these discussed the schooling system, and the impact on the younger generation as being ‘in the dark’ and ‘misinformed’ or ‘spoiled’ because they attend a ‘madrassa’ religious school where their religious identity is paramount, or an English medium school where they are preoccupied with the west and social media rather than their Bengali heritage and identity. This is also mentioned as part of Bv youth involvement and Ci causal mechanisms, in respect of the Government’s and private Bangla speaking schools’ re-introduction of the national anthem and prioritisation of the true teachings of the Liberation War history, as a result of Shahbag. Also, within Ci there is reference to ongoing undercurrents of cultural activities and campaigns which continued to keep the flame and memory of the Liberation War alive over the decades, and how these different currents came to converge, as a consequence of the public space and platform created by Shahbag. So, in this stage existing structures and practices suggest that, although there are political and social freedoms, these are restricted because of issues of trust and security.

Lastly, within the injustice code (Aiii) (also mentioned within Bii relating to political opportunity) there is an acknowledgement that the Government agenda offered a positive environment for the trials, and for developing a new understanding of the history of the Liberation War. This was, however, coupled with a suspicion of a compromise or hidden

alliances and a deal being done with JI, ascribed to the inconsistencies and delays in establishing the ICT, which led to frustrations with conventional politics. Also given the nature of politics in Bangladesh if another party gained power, they could again give amnesty to the war criminals. So, historically there had been political and judicial practices which have maintained an injustice for forty years, and there was an apprehension as to whether justice would finally be achieved. There were also issues of trust and security, because of a political Islamic group which had been accepted, tolerated and legitimised over the years.

The conditions that emerge from the Stage A – *prior to Shahbag* suggests that, even after 40 years, there were latent emotions of anger, frustration and resentment at the injustice that war criminals were free and able to hold positions of power. There were also suspicions regarding the sincerity of institutions and politicians to ensure justice, now that the ICT had been established. However social media and the youth were seen as able to express themselves freely, but in the dark about, or uninterested in, the true history of Bangladesh and their Bengali identity. The injustice, with the truth being hidden and suppressed, and the audacity of the war criminals combined to create a time bomb of the denial of justice. This, along with suspicions that those in power had compromised with JI, created a tension within individuals for the sentimental need to protest as a duty or obligation to the victims and families of the Liberation War. In the context of daily threats and violence by JI there was no safe space or platform to show how individuals felt publicly, with the exception from the young people who were speaking out through social media.

What emerges from the interviews is therefore a strong narrative of the Liberation War, and that a major injustice had been allowed to remain because of political, economic and social structures and practices. Although only one major attempt had been made in the past 40 years to address this (the Nirmul Committee Peoples Court), there was not deemed to be a trustworthy or secure space for the emergence of the latent networks of those who identified with the need for justice. There were ongoing examples of agency amongst cultural activists and young bloggers, who continued to raise the issues, but there was no positive public support or response to generate a mass moment. The ICT Trials offered a final window of opportunity, and many had hopes and aspirations that justice would finally be seen.

6.2 Stage B – During the Shahbag Moment

In this stage we are looking for the agency function of how the narrative describes the creation of a mass moment, how the situation and process was defined, how causes were attributed, and Instrumental Freedoms articulated. Our interest also lies in relation to the literature on

collective action, agency construction, frames involved, the political opportunities and their dimensions, resource mobilisation and the construction and role of emotion, culture and identity.

Within the Stage B (B) Doing code, there were a number of highly referenced Nvivo sub codes. In descending order, by number of references, were: references to group (v) youth (31, r104); then group (iii) political opportunity (29, r103) a theoretical code; followed by group (v) the role of social/media and communications (30, r92) an Nvivo code; and group (i) unity and identity a theoretical framing code (28, r 92). Agency, in group (iii), another framing code was the next highest (23, r78), along with decision making (21, r68) and in group (iv) emotions (20, r57) both Nvivo codes. For some of the codes, the number of sources mentioning them was high, although the number of references were not as high e.g. in group (iii) resource mobilisation (24, r53), group (i) meanings attributed (26, r 53), both theoretical codes, and in group (iv) non-violence and cultural activities (21, r51) an Nvivo code.

The first group (i) within this code Stage B includes the theoretical codes of defining the problem (18, r39), attributing meaning and unity and identity (a framing code). This group offers many crossovers with the Aiii code regarding injustice, as there was a growing historical injustice that framed the context for defining the problem and attributing meaning, especially when the verdict was announced, and it was felt that compromises had been made. So, in this stage and code, the collective action, frames of identity and justice are strongly influenced by emotions and trust. Also, the history of independence and Bengali cultural identity played a significant role that resonated and motivated ordinary people to action and participation.

In relation to group (ii), political opportunities, most of the references were to Stage B – apart from those to the positive environment created by the Government for the trials, following their election pledge and their pro liberation historical legacy, which were part of Ai. These issues are also referenced in Ci causal mechanisms, given the election pledge. Within the media coverage (Appendix C) political opportunity was a major reference point in relation to all the political parties and their responses to the Shahbag Moment, and how this changed during the course of the moment. JI were against the movement but were publicly silent for a while as they did not deliver on their threat of civil war after the verdict, until the blogger was killed. After the killing they went high profile with their campaign, stating that those involved with Shahbag were anti-Islamic, spoiled and atheists and that the bloggers had gone against Islam. The BNP reluctantly supported the movement, until the blogger was killed, and the counter-propaganda gained prominence, after which time they distanced themselves from JI

and pushed the notion that Shahbag was part of the Government agenda. The AL Government was at first seen to be involved in dealings with JI, but then as supporting Shahbag and most of their demands, making changes to the law. However, they then reduced support for Shahbag after the Bill had been passed and the blogger killed, to protecting religious sentiments, and subsequently arrested some of the Shahbag bloggers. There seems to have been a temporary sense of security and trust that Shahbag was a safe space to articulate people's expressions for justice irrespective of their political background.

Group (iii) covers resource mobilisation which occurred through the agency (frame) of individuals who decided to get involved, participate, give logistics and resources and volunteered to help, which impacted on the decision-making process. Sources suggest that they also used social media to mobilise resources, secure support and participation and coordinate activities at other sites which were organising protests in solidarity with Shahbag. The participation of women and children at Shahbag was unique to Bangladesh, and helped to gain coverage and support, donations and ensured that everyone felt an obligation to maintain an environment that was positive, respectful and safe. Some argued that the Government was giving food and water, and so was behind the movement, but many argued that Shahbag was too big just to be sustained by any one organisation or agency, it was the spontaneous gestures of hundreds and thousands of people who came and went, and mobilised their resources and networks in different ways, that all contributed to the sustainability and success of Shahbag.

References to the agency code (Biii) are predominantly indirect, no one thought that so many people would get involved, no one knew what would happen and if they could achieve their demands for justice. No one involved at the beginning knew how a change to the judgement from life imprisonment to capital punishment would be possible. They just knew that they had to do something, to show their support to the bloggers and young people who were making a stand. The bloggers had freedom of speech, were not formally aligned to any political party, and decided to use their agency to resist the sentence, given the guilty verdict; this was not targeted against the judiciary or Government but against the judgement, they wanted justice.

This is reflected in the Ci as a causal mechanism. Most of the people, who had never before participated in protests and demonstrations, decided for themselves to join in, bringing donations and asking others to get involved through their networks. Key personalities showed support in interviews and talk shows, and mentioned that they were surprised to find out that

their partners and children had gone to join in with Shahbag. Many stated that they never usually got involved in any protests or street social programmes until Shahbag.

Many references viewed Shahbag as a free and safe space to express support for the trials on a public platform, and show solidarity with pro-liberation forces. References suggest that the demand was seen as uncontroversial, as it was for a long-standing right to have justice delivered, and that this was a duty for all Bengali citizens, given the sacrifices that had been made during the Liberation War. Many groups and organisations stated that they shifted their positions to align temporarily with the spirit and demand of Shahbag and join forces.

References to agency suggest that the key motivation was the passion behind the demand, which was so great that even those outside Dhaka, and indeed abroad, felt the need to do something to show solidarity and support to the cause. References suggest that Shahbag's success was the free choice made by thousands of individuals to get involved, it grew so big, so fast, with an endless flow of people participating and showing support. Others suggest that people were curious, they wanted to experience this historic event, they wanted to learn and share their stories and memories of the war, show their face, that they had been there and been part of something so big and historic.

Agency also played a role in the decline of the movement, when the initial demand was met, controversy and confusion was created by the counter-propaganda after the blogger's death, and splits started to emerge in the core groups involved, people began to leave and disengage. Some suggest that this was exacerbated by the decision-making process that took over after 21st February, which was less inclusive and consultative than previously.

References predominantly by the core activists (Sh 29,20,25), organisers (Sh 26,38,35,3) and advisors (Sh 4,17) involved, suggest that at the beginning, the core group of bloggers, social and cultural activists (many of those senior people involved stated they played an advisory role) and representatives of different student groups used to meet on a daily basis, consult, propose, negotiate and agree, a messy but joint decision making process. The original activists and organisers were outsiders, unknown in the usual networks that organise demonstrations, they did not have an ordered and structured approach: the approaches used were more creative and ad hoc. Even when decisions were made, and boundaries set as to what they could all agree would be allowed and not allowed, implementation was much harder given the growing crowds. Everyone who was motivated by the cause gave what they could to support the moment: in kind, with funding, with resources, and through communications and

social media. People had agency to use their economic and social capabilities and functionings to do things differently and support Shahbag. There was security and trust in those involved and this formed the basis of the construction of a common, if fragile unity and identity until the demands had been met.

The next group (iv) of codes emerged from the data and relate to emotions, cultural and non-violent activities and the role of women and security during the Shahbag Moment. Emotions were a significant unifying factor, and were part of the historical legacy of the Liberation War. References regarding the non-violent cultural aspect of Shahbag suggest that the protest had started, as most protests do in Bangladesh, with a human chain, a march, slogans being chanted; but uniquely to Shahbag, ordinary people started to join in and participate, and it became clear that they would remain for some time, so there was something more going on here than just standing and shouting slogans.

Somewhat surprisingly, given the context of ongoing violence by JI, and the *hartal*, a peaceful cultural protest emerged. Cultural activists and students started to sit and bring instruments and sing, bring art paper and pens to draw and write, and celebrate their Bengali identity. References suggest that symbolisms from 1971 emerged along with those relating to *fashi*/hanging. As the crowds grew, others started showing films about 1971, theatre groups performed, and a festival atmosphere developed. Sources note that it was a different kind of protest and movement, it was not about speeches by personalities, but participation by ordinary people, there was a status attached to being there, it was a safe space to express freely the demand for justice and to share emotions and personal stories about the Liberation War.

All references suggest that the environment was positive, responsive and reaffirming, engaging everyone in slogans, chants, songs and activities. There was no danger or risk, it was entertaining, the ambience and vibe sucked people in so that once they came once, they could not leave, or wanted to return. This was the first time such an environment on such a large scale existed in a protest in Bangladesh: references regarding women and security (13, r27) suggest that this meant that women could play an active role without being disrespected. With women's participation, both young female students and young professionals, mothers felt they could bring their children, and school children also joined in as part of a learning experience, to hear about their history from the older generation. This was unique for Bangladesh, it made the space respectable, and safe to protest, with families joining in. The Government had introduced three rings of security, and references suggest that in contrast to the usual violence during *hartals* and demonstrations, there was an environment of trust and respect with an unwritten

code of conduct to ensure nothing went wrong and that women were safe and respected. So, although emotions ran high regarding the need for capital punishment and justice, this was channelled into co-constructing and re-imagining a Bengali cultural identity, creating a positive, secure and trusting environment that could engage all members of society.

In group (v), different communities played different roles during the movement. Young people were referenced as leading the movement, they surprised the older generation with their commitment to the spirit of the Liberation War to ensure justice was achieved. They rose above traditional divisions in group politics and showed support for the main aims of the movement, volunteered and used their networks to mobilise support and resources. They were curious to learn and be educated about the true history of the war, and used social media to wage war against JI and the counter-propaganda; this is also referenced by Aii code anti JI. As part of the counter-propaganda they were later labelled as ‘atheists’ with their anti-religious blogging, and ‘spoiled’ because of the mixing of girls and boys together all night at Shahbag. So, from a norm of young people being disinterested in the Liberation War from 40 years ago, before they were even born, the Shahbag Moment engaged them and mobilised them to actively participate and support the cause. The media played a major role in communicating the Shahbag message, although later they distorted and tried to extract ‘stories and headlines’, especially when the counter-propaganda became mainstream. As a result, the collective action and frame changed, and the common unity and identity of Shahbag, once the demand had been met, fell apart.

Within Stage B during Shahbag there were a number of conditions which facilitated the collective agency and capability of the Shahbag Moment. Fundamentally, the issue was one of injustice and a duty to ensure that justice would finally be delivered for the victims and survivors of war crimes in 1971. Ordinary people felt very emotional, and motivated to make a stand, given the ongoing intimidation and violence by JI and the suspicion that compromises had been made by public institutions. The core group behind Shahbag were unknown and seen as neutral, and not part of any party-political agenda. There was trust that their primary objective was for truth and justice and the ideals fought for during the Liberation War. The demand was seen as a greater cause, that had to be seized and achieved during this window of opportunity. It was easier to engage and participate because of the nature of Shahbag, non-violent and cultural: it was seen as a safe and respectable place for women and children to participate. So many people took the initiative and engaged for the first time to show solidarity for the cause both at Shahbag and sites across the country and abroad. The Government supported Shahbag, they had a public responsibility to do so, but Shahbag was also aligned

with their pledge to put the war criminals on trial. Shahbag would not have been possible without low-key Government agency support. Although later the dynamics changed, as the counter-propaganda narrative, that Shahbag was against Islamic sentiments, and that the movement was part of a Government agenda, gained strength. However, initially people, groups, businesses, key personalities and government agencies mobilised resources to support the movement and show their solidarity as the demand was for justice and the right to appeal on behalf of the victims, and something that could be met by a change in the appeals procedure. Initially the decision-making was consultative and engaging, creative and positive so that people wanted to be a part of it. A combination of two factors increased the numbers involved in the movement: the involvement of women and children which added to the Moment's credibility; along with free access to online information and live media coverage to make a choice to engage and participate.

From the literature review in Part I there are a number of points that resonate with Shahbag. There was organic solidarity, a latent collective consciousness which through the Shahbag Moment generated public power and a collective participation to peaceful, cultural action. Shahbag created a participatory free space for democracy, a sphere with never ending circles of participants where the ideals of the Liberation War were co-constructed and re-imagined. Shahbag created a safe positive trusting sphere and platform, to express the need for justice, where previously a climate of violence and intimidation had dominated. Shahbag was an example of collective defiance, where collective action led to a critical mass that could not be ignored. People engaged because Shahbag stood for justice and unity, and gave them meaning and purpose. The discourse patterns across the different perspectives offer a consistent narrative of Shahbag, how meaning and unity was formed, the conditions that led to people's need to respond and engage, even if they had not previously. The discourses differ in relation to the ending of Shahbag Moment and why that happened, depending on the position of the perspective in society and their role in Shahbag.

6.3 Stage C – Post the Shahbag Moment

In this stage we explore three thematic groups: the orders of discourse, the impact on wider social practices and structural changes that occurred as a result of the Shahbag Moment; the causal mechanisms, the dynamics of contention and the triggers of mobilisation; and the changes and impacts this had as a dialectic interaction between structure and practice as a result of the collective agency and capability generated.

There are three groups of codes on this stage, the highest code was in group (iii) unintended consequences (25, r64) an Nvivo code, followed by group (ii) impact on practice (25, r50) a theoretical code, leadership splits (18, r42) and counter-propaganda (15, r45) both Nvivo codes in group (iii), structural impact (22, r42) a theoretical code in group (ii) and group (i) causal mechanisms (14, r18) also a theoretical code.

For C(i), we identify three causal mechanisms.

Once the Government had responded, and made the Amendments, they wanted Shahbag to end. The Government was unsure where it would go next, and did not want it to turn into an anti-Government protest, or for security to be breached by JI and another incident to occur; this is also referenced within Bii political opportunity.

Another causal mechanism to have an impact, that converged during Shahbag, was the legacy of the Liberation War, and the intergenerational commitment to finally have justice. There had been ongoing sporadic campaigns, activities and events to raise the issues from the Liberation War, and raise awareness, but none had gained huge media coverage, or commitment and engagement from the masses, until Shahbag. The older generation saw Shahbag as an opportunity to pass on the legacy of the ideals of the Liberation War to the next generation. They had assumed that young people were in the dark, or spoiled, and had forgotten the sacrifices made for the Bengali nation and identity.

The final causal mechanism was the advancement of the internet, social media and communications. Social media meant that people were free to express their views and access the truth, to communicate, coordinate and mobilise resources through their networks. It also offered a virtual space to battle against counter-propaganda regarding the ICT trials and the explosion of fundamentalism and extremism.

So there were three main causal mechanisms: the historical legacy of the Liberation War and the injustice that collaborators had not been tried for their crimes; political opportunity as the Government had made an election pledge and was sympathetic to Shahbag's demands; and modern technology and communications offering a free online platform of communication between people.

These underlying causal mechanisms, along with the Shahbag Moment, led to impacts on structure and practice, group (ii). Government legislation amended the ICT Act and the right of appeal was given to the prosecution as well as the defendant. This, along with the subsequent changes in the legal process, had the biggest structural impact, and continues to ensure that

those who are convicted of crimes against humanity are given the maximum sentence. The references suggest that people's justice had been delivered, and that the system had regained its confidence to continue the trials. We also find from the references that Shahbag boosted the process, countered the JI and international pressure against the trials and made it easier to implement the appeals and judgements without the same level of intimidation and threats by JI. There are also references to the impact Shahbag had on the practices of JI, they changed their approach from threats of mass action and civil war to more localised sporadic attacks and reduced their recruitment base. This is also mentioned within Aii code anti JI that if Shahbag had not happened JI would not have been dissipated

However, Shahbag also resulted in a sharpening of tensions between Bengali and religious identity, and over which should be prioritised. There is a criticism that it was predominantly a middle-class movement, not engaging the grassroots and factory workers, because of its location, the nature of its activities and use of social media. However, it did reclaim the pro-liberation ideals, slogans and images as not just being party political e.g. the slogan 'joy bangla' which is usually associated with AL and the additional 'joy Banghabandhu'.

The final group (iii) relates to counter-propaganda, leadership splits and unintended consequences.

At first the references suggest that JI ignored Shahbag, and focused on criticising, primarily online, the legitimacy and process of the ICT trials, and the cases against their leaders. Once Shahbag gained momentum, they placed an advert in a leading pro-Islamic paper criticising those involved in Shahbag as atheists and non-believers. At the same time as the killing of the blogger, and the fabrication of blogs and images against those at Shahbag as anti-Islamic, blasphemous and crossing the line of decency, JI circulated leaflets and propaganda through the mosques, madrassas and media. References in Biv on women and security suggest that Shahbag was a double blow for JI, as it had a secular agenda, and had women taking a proactive and leading role. It is noted that JI posted abusive images online and portrayed those involved in Shahbag as bad/spoiled/atheists/non-believers. JI then attacked the Government for being 'anti-Islamic' for supporting Shahbag demands. After the main demands of Shahbag had been met, there was a general questioning of the validity of continuing the movement non-stop 24 hrs a day. Some wanted to maintain a presence, for fear that JI would come back onto the streets with their violence, but they were unable to have JI banned even when they gave an ultimatum to the Government with mass support. So, the counter-propaganda only reached the

mainstream discourses once the initial *raison d'être* for the Shahbag Moment had been met, and the media coverage started to turn in search of new news. The murder of the blogger shattered the sense of security and trust at Shahbag. After the initial outrage over the death, people stopped participating in Shahbag, the decisions and organisation of Shahbag started to crumble and the essence became lost. We can see that the ending of the Shahbag Moment became, retrospectively, tainted and people distanced themselves from those actively involved.

In relation to the conditions for collective agency capabilities, Stage C – *post the Shahbag Moment* – suggests that there were a number of reasons for the changing conditions that led to the end of the moment. The main demands that had brought people together collectively, to have justice in the trials and ensure equal opportunities for the appeals process, had been established by the Government Appeals Bill and legal process. There had also been a shift in structure and practice, to recognise and address the legacy of the Liberation War without fear and intimidation. In addition, the new generation had demonstrated their commitment to, and awareness of, the ideals and principles of Bengali nationalism. JI had changed their tactics, as a result of people power. The right to try an organisation and to deny the possibility of amnesty had been established by the Bill, so additional demands of Shahbag had been provisionally met. The counter-propaganda and dilemma over Bengali or Muslim identity which had developed in the public domain, along with the splits in Shahbag as they reacted differently to the new context, created challenges for the mass continuation of Shahbag in its previous form. This, along with the withdrawal of Government agency and political network support, and the decline in participants, suggested that the conditions for collective agency and capability had been weakened. There was confusion and conflict, and ordinary people stopped participating and engaging with the new phase of the movement, even though they still felt strongly about the issues.

The Shahbag Moment illustrates the possibility of singularities collectively having the agency capability to effect change on structure, systems and practice in a given context and time, which links to the theoretical arguments outlined in Part I. Social transformative networks were used to mobilise people and resources, because of the latent networks, emotional and cultural legacy of the Liberation War, and the injustices that had been endured for 40 years. People were empowered and given a safe, secure platform to express themselves in support of the demands, co-constructing a new sphere. Organic intellectuals (as detailed by Gramsci in Chapter Two) created hegemony within the civil society space, where people from all parts of society formed a critical mass. Like a swarm of the multitude, people came together for a

moment and once the demand had been achieved and changes had occurred in structure and practice, the swarm dissipated. There was no organisational hierarchy, but a rhizomatic network of resistance to the norm and status quo, questioning the verdict and judgement and demanding people's justice. Systems, structures and practices such as the Judiciary, Parliament, political parties, and educational institutions had to respond and appease the critical mass. Once this was achieved, the moment was no longer needed, and became unsustainable as its essence had been addressed. As a consequence, counter-propaganda entered the frame, but the impact and legacy of Shahbag, and the re-imagining of the ideals of the Liberation War, people power and justice all remain.

6.4 Reflections

Solidarity was co-constructed through a collective re-imagined memory of 1971, Bengali cultural identity and the need for justice for the victims and survivors of the Liberation War. Public power was generated through the collective capability of the entity formed in a safe and trusting space, which was accepted and legitimised by the media, politicians, businesses and ordinary people. People from different fields and networks within the habitus formed a critical mass because of the common emotions and identity they had to give them meaning and purpose: to seek justice. The public space was organic, spontaneous in a civil society sphere where students, cultural activists, journalists, intellectuals, opinion formers, ordinary people and politicians participated democratically and equally in circles of loose engagement and virtually through social media.

Resources were mobilised, not as rational actors, but based on what was needed to ensure the success of the moment; they were not primarily politically or economically motivated. Political opportunities were taken advantage of, but the main motivation was not power but justice. The perceptions of potential conspiracies or/and compromises to undermine the anticipated justice motivated individuals to have agency and act collectively. Collective action and frames were aligned and resonated with the will of the people, and the main demand for capital punishment for the crimes committed against humanity 40 years earlier. The frame evolved through the discourse, first from the initial demand and then to wider political and social issues that needed to be addressed, and the need for a change in structure and practice. Once the main demand had been met, factions tried to insist on other demands, but these did not resonate, so people started to withdraw their support and a counter-narrative and frame emerged. There was a use of a cultural toolbox to build on the emotional narrative of the

Liberation War, Bengali identity and reinforce solidarity and meaning with the public enactment of cultural activities.

In the final part of this research we use the insights gained from the analysis of the Shahbag Moment to develop and build on the framework of Instrumental Freedoms for collective agency capabilities.

PART III

CRITICAL SOCIAL MOMENTS, COLLECTIVE AGENCY AND CAPABILITY

This part of the PhD brings together relevant theories outlined in Part I and findings from the case history analysis in Part II. In particular I draw on, and expand upon, Sen's Instrumental Freedoms, using it as a lens to outline the conditions and processes of the Shahbag Moment and how collective agency and capability emerged and declined in a social moment. In Part III, I unpack the Shahbag case histories' analysis using Sen's capability lens and critical theoretical insights. I use critical theories to explain how agency and resistance emerged across a range of social networks to create a critical mass for a social moment to effect change. I also develop Sen's Instrumental Freedoms to outline and understand the conditions and process needed for change in practice and structure, during and after the Shahbag Moment, and how collective agency and capability emerged. I argue the need to incorporate emotional and cultural dimensions to understand how collective agency and capabilities can emerge in a social moment in the contemporary context. There are three areas to clarify regarding this particular case study: the role of NGO's, the religious dimension and the generational aspect.

Firstly, we clarify the role of civil society in this collective agency and capability moment. From the theory there is a suggestion that civil society has been crowded out by market capitalism and the state. It is evident from the research that although organisational civil society and NGOs are assumed to be leaders with agency, and torch bearers when it comes to justice, human rights, campaigns for social change, this is not the reality. Due to financial, political and administrative commitments, and constraints both nationally and internationally, many did not formally actively engage in the Shahbag Moment. However, individuals involved in the organisations did act in a personal capacity, using their civil society networks as a public sphere of collective action, a sphere where people from different backgrounds could come together collectively and safely forming the Shahbag Moment. This civil society sphere became a scene which initiated the impact of change in structure and practice for justice. By moving away from an assumed neo-liberal organisational understanding of civil society, which has turned the notion into an empty signifier, a spatial notion of civil society as suggested in Part I seems more appropriate for our research on collective agency and capability. Thus, civil society is a scene, where people from the state, social and market sectors came to find meaning, purpose and justice for themselves and their society.

Secondly, there is the need to assert the Shahbag Moment as a call for justice rather than in religious terms. Recent publications including the Rutledge Handbook of Contemporary Bangladesh (Riaz and Rahman, 2016) have acknowledged the significance of Shahbag but have framed it within a nationalism *versus* Islamisation context.

'Shahbag movement opened the floodgates and revealed once again, what the nation as a whole had repressed for four decades. While the Shahbag movement created a space for people whose voices had been shut out, its secular orientation also provoked radical Islamists who turned to violence to express their opposition. Shahbag exposed the dilemma of seeking justice for war crimes decades after the war ended, in a context where retributive justice became the primary demand because of decades of repressed trauma and denied justice.' (Riaz and Rahman, 2016, Ch.4).

However, as argued in Part II it was primarily the participants identifying with the injustice of the verdict that led to Shahbag: when the focus turned to secular Bengali *versus* Muslim Bengali identity, once the initial demands had been met, collective agency and capability were lost. Bengali culture and secular nationalism were used as a repertoire during Shahbag, but was not the core reason for people's participation, justice was. The Islamic backlash was due to the fact that senior Muslim political leaders were on trial. They were on trial not because they were Muslim or senior political leaders, but because there was a case that they had committed crimes against humanity while collaborating with the Pakistani army to try and stop the independence of Bangladesh. Shahbag, therefore, should be divorced from a frame that it is an example of Bengali secular nationalism, but conversely be understood as an example of the freedom of individuals to collectively demand the need for justice, even after 40 years.

The third element to be discussed will be the generational issue that was so fundamental to the moment. We examine how the younger generation, who were born after the Liberation War, re-imagined their Bengali identity through a cultural co-construction during the moment, and used social media as a free space to communicate, be transparent and spread the message of Shahbag. The 'lay history' in Bangladesh showed a story arc of politics, warfare, conflict and injustice generating a socially shared emotion (Moloney and Walker, 2007, p.92). Collective memories and identity related the past with the present, where 40 years is seen as a critical threshold for reminiscence (ibid., p.88). This research suggests that this 40-year threshold was a last opportunity for the older generation to pass on to the younger generation the shared memories of the Liberation War and the need for justice. What was surprising to the older generation was that their belief that the younger people were a 'lost generation' was

rectified by the active engagement and involvement of younger people, who mobilised and re-imagined the history and identity of Bengali nationalism.

In this final Part III, Chapter Seven reflects on the notion of freedom and the need for ongoing resistance and changing power relations as a way to have collective agency and capability. We reflect on the literature and offer a critique in relation to the findings and analysis of the Shahbag Moment case histories. In Chapter Eight we outline the profiles of Instrumental Freedoms at different stages of the moment, the conditions and processes involved and the impact and change that occurred. We conclude by suggesting areas for further research, the strengths and the limitations of the Instrumental Freedoms framework Being-Doing-Impact Model developed with critical theoretical insights, and the data from the case histories of the Shahbag Moment.

7.) CHAPTER SEVEN: WHAT IF WE LIVED IN A SOCIETY WITH FREEDOM?

Heaven of Freedom

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
into the dreary deserts and of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward into ever-widening thought and action;
Into that heaven of freedom, let my country awake.

Tagore, R (1913, p.20) Gitanjali

In an ideal world of freedom, would everything be acceptable to everyone, so that everyone was free to do as they choose, could we have a society free from conflict, or would that mean chaos? For Tagore, the first Nobel Laureate of Bengal, the idealistic 'heaven of freedom' was his vision of an India independent from the British Empire, where the mind was without fear, knowledge was free, where there was truth and reason, striving for perfection through thought and action. This ideal is echoed by other theorists. For Arendt, the essence of freedom is not representation but participation in action (Arendt, 1990). Sen would agree that freedom is not just being free, a capability, but doing what you value, your functioning. Sen believes that freedom is a social product, a two-way relationship between social arrangements that expand individual freedoms, and the use of individual freedoms in a given context to improve lives (Sen, 1999). However, he does not address the power dimension at play. For that we turn to Foucault. Freedom for Foucault is an ongoing ethical practice where relations are interrogated as producers of power with the possibility for resistance and agency as a collective. Resistance is only possible from places that have not been fully co-opted into the networks of power (Couzens Hoy, 1986, p.14). Foucault further argues that there is no power without resistance, without potential refusal or revolt (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983). 'The search for a form of morality acceptable to everyone in the sense that everyone would have to submit to it seems catastrophic to me ...' (citing Foucault in Flyvbjerg, 1998, pp.221).

However,

'Foucault's views of the concept of civil society as a prism through which freedom is produced, or practiced, is in contrast to notions of freedom as a metaphysical entity or intrinsic human attribute.' (Villadsen, 2015, p.12).

'Liberalism ... entails at its heart a productive/destructive relationship (with) freedom. Liberalism must produce freedom, but this very act entails the establishment of limitations, controls and forms of coercion and obligations relying on threats' (Foucault and Dreyfus, 2008, p.64).

So, for Foucault freedom is possible within civil society, but only if it can be liberated from the normalising powers of liberalism.

'For Foucault, the question in resistance is not about throwing away all liberal thoughts and practices of the free subject, but about how the present constellation of liberal governing practices and counter conducts can be employed ...' (Pyykkonen, 2015, p.29).

More recently, critical theorists have argued that the full realisation of freedom would be its death, as the possibility of dissent would be eliminated (Butler, Laclau and Žižek, 2000, p.208). Others believe that freedom is the power to construct social relationships as the motors of revolutionary reinvention of democracy (Hardt and Negri, 2004). Hence, we are only truly free when we adopt a permanent critic of the status quo, and be an ethical self, with the space to express this within a responsive system and structure.

If then, unlike Tagore's normative vision, we need to have power and resistance, difference and dissent to realise freedom, how best should it be articulated for the collective good. As outlined in Chapter Two, Foucault would argue that we need to have a permanent critique to resist the normalisation and reproduction of power. Laclau suggests that we need a collective will, a populous with a particular demand, crystallised and condensed around an identity to create a 'moment' of change. Hardt and Negri argue that we need a political project, in relation to which singularities can converge as a common, in order to form the multitude. Although there are many examples of resistance in the contemporary context, there are a few, increasingly significant, examples which generate a collective will or populous where a critical mass, a multitude is formed to effect change. Assuming that there will always be some kind of structure, power dynamic and norm, freedom, it is suggested in this research, will be the individual's capability to have agency and work collectively across a diverse range of habitus for change to improve structure and practice for the greater good. The research suggests that this freedom would not be a one-off paradigm-shifting event, but a continuous potentiality, when required, through moments of collective agency and capability.

This research therefore explores the emergence of an alternative type of collective entity in a contemporary context, as an organic and spontaneous collective with a common identity of injustice. It is possible for this collective, with agency capability, to initiate a change process in structures and practice through non-violent cultural protests. Shahbag as a spontaneous ‘moment’ resulted in structural and practice changes through the development of collective agency and capability. This case study is used to develop an understanding of the potential conditions and processes involved. Collective agency and capability, in the case of Shahbag, is where individuals, through their agency, generated a collective people power, through peaceful, positive protest, which had the capability to initiate changes in structure and practice. This type of moment, and the context and conditions within which it emerged, offers a different potential to the usual pathways of frustration and hostilities in social protests. The usual scenario in many countries, including Bangladesh, is that an event sparks a protest, but it does not gain a critical mass, is not responded to positively by authorities and becomes frustrated. Even when it does gain some momentum, it can turn hostile in the process of managing the crowds and so is broken up. Sometimes, as in the case of the Arab Spring, it can be successful in toppling existing regimes of power, only for a vacuum to be created where new challenges emerge. The research suggests that it is possible for people power to effect change by resisting and defying the status quo from within, in a non-violent, peaceful, constructive and positively affirming way, through cultural protests against a perceived injustice. Moreover, it is possible to resist the normalisation of the habitus and form a new field in civil society, a public scene for a critical mass of collective agency and capability. By exploring the conditions and processes involved in Shahbag we gain an understanding of how collective agency and capability can emerge in a given context for a given moment. This research argues that emotional critical agency collectively can bring together a wide range of singularities from different schemas with different perspectives and networks for change. Furthermore, because of an injustice, a critical mass, a multitude or populous, develops agency to mobilise resources and collective capabilities for structural and practice change using non-violent cultural protests.

Using Sen’s Instrumental Freedoms as a framework we can examine the conditions and processes involved to create structural and practice change. Overall, from the case histories analysed in Part II Chapter Six, there are a number of elements and conditions which supported this type of moment. In Stage A prior to the moment, as a result of the Liberation War in 1971 there was a latent highly networked society with elements of high social, cultural and symbolic

capital which cut across a diverse range of networks. From the media and interviews there are examples of agency capability, an organic ability to understand, question and resist the status quo. However, this had never before led to a collective entity forming a critical mass to effect change. What was significant in Shahbag was the spark, and window of opportunity, that came from the judicial system and the perceived injustice of the sentence. In Stage B, during the moment, there was an injustice which created an emotional bond, organic solidarity and agency that brought people from different backgrounds together to act, an affective dimension in public sentiment. This was supported by the use of cultural protests, generating a safe public scene for individuals to express themselves collectively, including women and children. Economically there was flexibility and agency, as there was a lack of highly regulated markets monopolised by capitalism. As a consequence, there was a crowd-sourcing capability, where mobilising for need was more important than profit making, and different groups, individuals and agencies worked collectively to ensure basic logistics and a secure safe environment were provided. Communications were transparent and trustworthy, with social media and mass media offering access to accurate and reliable information. Political and structural mechanisms were responsive and transparent and were used to find a resolution to the injustice. In Stage C, post the moment, once the demand had been met the moment had partial positive closure. Its successes were harnessed to rectify future injustices, but it was unable to minimise counter-propaganda and splits.

From the theories outlined in Part I there are a number of overriding aspects that resonate with the case histories analysed in Part II. Marx's theories of solidarity, founded on an economic base, can be re-considered using emotion and injustice in the current context. Unlike historical movements, organisational vehicles for collective action were not at the forefront. Instead, the agency of the singularities with organic solidarity emerged into a multitude, a commons to demand change. This collective agency, across different networks and communities, was the key. This contrasts with typical scenarios of oppressed actors *versus* elites. We therefore had a highly networked society, rather than one with high social atomisation (Crossley, 2002), where individuals from different networks joined together collectively with organic solidarity to form a critical mass. In addition, using Marx's dialectical interaction, we had a dialogical interaction between social agency, collective action and structure (Steingberg, 2004), where each was responsive and flexible for change and influenced by each other. There was also an established, although latent, permanent critique to resist the

pressures of normalisation to accept the ICT judgement, along with distributed agency, in a web of shifting networks (Dale and Sparkes, 2010). Hardt and Negri argue that

'(i)n our present imperial context we need to rethink the concepts of resistance, insurrection and constituent power, and rethink too their internal connections ...' (Negri, 2003, pp.91-2).

'The post-modern multitude is an ensemble of singularities whose life tool is the brain and whose productive force consists in cooperation.' (Browning, 2011, p.141).

They are right to argue that the multitude is a constant becoming, a cooperation that converge for a political project, but miss the agency dimension involved in this process. This multitude of individual singularities needs to have agency, the capability to resist and choose their values and functionings, and collectively come together for a common cause. As argued by Gramsci (2007) we need organic intellectuals, a leadership with morals and an emotional bond with the people, to mobilise different networks for change. However, for the Shahbag Moment organic intellectuals were not the elite, political parties, and established organisations. The bloggers and cultural activists were free thinkers: ordinary people, the youth and those active as opinion formers, using free communications such as social media. The decentring of agency is key, where the subject's construction of subjectivity in relation to existing regimes and networks of power is transformative (Caldwell, 2007). Anarchists argue that 'moments' of rupture invent new political spaces and construct alternatives with no centrality, where the formation of new dynamics in relationships is key (Newman, 2011). This echoes the idea of a movement without history in the vein of Badiou's 'event'. This notion of resisting, by changing relationship and practice patterns so as not to perpetuate existing norms and power dynamics, reflects the literature in Part I. With this overview, and drawing on the theoretical insights from Part I and analysis of the Shahbag Moment in Part II, we now explore each stage, before profiling the Being-Doing-Impact Model for understanding collective agency and capabilities during the Shahbag Moment. We concluded by reflecting on the literature and its applicability to the Shahbag Moment.

7.1 Stage A – Being: Conditions for collective agency capability

‘To understand the level of consciousness, we must understand cultural-historical reality, as a superstructure in relation to an infrastructure.’

‘Conscientization is viable only because men’s consciousness, although conditioned can recognise that it is conditioned. This ‘critical’ dimension of consciousness accounts for the goals men assign to their transforming acts upon the world.’

Freire, P (1977) *Cultural Action for Freedom*, pp.57 & 54

There are a number of conditions that were met in the first stage – *prior to the Shahbag Moment*. We will call this Stage A ‘being’ to reflect the status quo being adhered to in everyday life, an ongoing status of normalisation. In the structural and practice dimensions of the existing contexts there was scope to enable a consciousness to form, and collective agency and capability to have potential to emerge around the liberation war and justice. The Government was seen by the media, interviewees and written reviews as open to considering the people’s views and will. Structures were hence open to influence and change in response to the will of the people. The ICT trials were seen by different perspectives and media as a final structural window of opportunity for change, where the alternative to maintaining the status quo made it imperative to act. In relation to practices, there existed a highly networked society with social, symbolic and cultural capital (Bourdieu) between different sections of society, with a common emotional historical bond of organic solidarity because of the Liberation War. There were also social media and media communication networks which were open and transparent, giving information so that individuals could make informed choices and actions.

In the Shahbag Moment discourse analysis in Chapter Six, the key codes in the Stage A analysis of ‘being’ were injustice, the Liberation War and JI extremism. There was a resentment that criminals had prospered and that compromises had been made by the establishment and the ICT. There was an assertion that there was a need to make a stand, that young voices used social media to debate how the ICT opportunity could ensure justice. The discourse suggested that the youth were reimagining the spirit of the Liberation War and that the ideals that were fought for, coupled with the historical denial of justice meant that there was a duty to create a space for justice. There had been a rise in anti-liberation, JI and extremist forces, and ongoing intimidation and violence against the ICT trials. The AL agenda was not clear regarding JI and ensuring justice against collaborators, given that JI had strong networks and financial support internationally and were powerful within Bangladesh through the madrasas and mosques. In this case history, objective conditions include that Bangladesh has been defined as having a weak state and strong civil society, (White, 1999; Clarke 1998; Wood

and Sharif, 1997), and as with most developing countries has an economy that is not highly regulated, The weakness of the state can be conducive to accommodating the will of the people, and reflects the fragile democracy, and the limited reach of the Government into society and the economy, rather than necessarily Government failings. Bangladesh has been recently recognised as one of the fastest growing and developing countries with regard the Millennium Development Goals and GDP. Bengali society and culture is highly networked, through the importance of extended family networks and kinship ties, but there have been growing concerns over weak governance and violent politics that Bangladesh may be unable to withstand the threats posed by terrorism and violent religious radicalisation (Fink, 2010, p.1). Since the 1990s the media have been relatively free to communicate and since 2006 social media, and access to the internet has meant people are able to access information more directly and easily. In the case of Shahbag, the ICT had been established by a pro-liberation Government after 40 years of injustice, so this was perceived as the last chance to ensure justice was served for crimes against humanity during the Liberation War, even in the prevailing environment of violent intimidation.

On the structural level the Shahbag counters a number of theoretical claims. Buechler suggests that a capitalist society with legal procedures and dense networks of formal organisations are more conducive to collective entities forming (Buechler, 2011, p.122). However, Shahbag was not based in an atypical monopoly capitalist society and was not initiated by formal organisations. Giddens, who sees contexts as systems, and structures as rules and resources, argues that agents only have ‘... intentionality within layers of structure which condition agency and define the range of potential strategies deployed ...’ (Hay, 1995, p.99). Even so, Shahbag suggests agents have the capability to break free of these layers of structure, establishing a new field in the habitus, and deploying new innovative strategies that were not usually used or considered possible. These theories can be further criticised using Foucault, who argues that any definition of agency is contingent upon the system of thought in which it emerges, but that any system of thought is never permanent (Butler, 1992, p.181). So, although the systems of thought and structure shaped the context for the Shahbag, they did not determine Shahbag nor the impact it had. No one could have predicted that Shahbag was going to happen, it had never happened in such a way before, and has not happened since. We can gain further insights by revisiting capability and critical theorists understanding of the role of structures.

From Chapter Three, we need to assess structures that influence agency and the formation of objectives to differentiate valuable (good) and non-valuable (bad) structures and groups, rather than just seeing structures as instrumental (Stewart and Deneulin, 2002). However even if structures are ‘bad’, as in the case of Shahbag where there was suspicion of a conspiracy, the collective agency of the people resisted and changed them, stimulating the development of ‘good’ structures. This reflects Hardt and Negri’s idea of constitutive politics, where the multitude have a right to resist power (2000). Structures are moulded by history, where the past shapes the conditions for change in the present through the agency of social forces (Cox, 1987; Cox and Sinclair, 1996); but agency and structure are interrelated and influence each other on a continual basis (Wetherly, 2005, p.74). Hardt and Negri (2001), would term this ‘constitutive politics’ where political identities are not pre-given but constituted and reconstituted through debate in the public sphere. The formation of Shahbag and collective agency and capability was thus shaped and motivated as a reaction to resisting existing structures. The historical context was the denial of justice from the Liberation War, and the scope for justice through the establishment of the ICT. However not all structures were positive and supportive of change, given the historical legacy of injustice, and the initial judgement that sparked the movement. In effect, Shahbag was a reaction to potential limitations of the structures ability to deliver expected justice and change, even when political opportunities were available, and the need to push the boundaries of thought and possibilities in order to create change through resistance and agency.

Critical theorists doubt the positive role that the state can play in supporting collective agency and capability, and even negate the potential of civil society to create a space for this to occur. However, during Shahbag the Government, its institutions, and agencies played a crucial role in offering logistical support and initiating structural change in response to Shahbag. Some argue that they had a public duty to do so, others that this was a strategy to try and engineer and control Shahbag. Either way, people within these state structures responded positively to the moment to challenge the injustice, and made changes to their practices and structures to facilitate the demands of Shahbag through Parliamentary discussions and the resultant Amendment Bill, as reported by the Media and Parliamentary records. It is argued that civil society no longer has the capability to fulfil its hegemonic role, as it has lost its agency by vacating the space of possibilities between the state and the market (Yudice, 1995). This, it is suggested, is justified because the neoliberal agenda has led to the proliferation of civil society (Harvey, 2006, p.28). So, it is argued in the current context that organisational civil

society, with its networks, is no longer well placed between structure and society, nor independent enough of market and state forces to mediate change. This is reflected in the comments, objective claims made by interviewees, about the limitations of formal civil society organisations' and NGOs' involvement in the Shahbag. However, their informal support did add credibility, a moral boost, and coverage to those unknown individuals who started the process of the moment. Evidently it was in the sphere of civil society, not the state or the market, where Shahbag occurred and flourished, instigated by unknown faces, rather than political ones. As argued in Part I, by reconceptualising civil society spatially as a collective, rather than organisationally we can reclaim its potential for agency.

On a practice dimension, as detailed in Chapter Three, Tarrow argues that 'false consciousness' is the reason why we fail to act, as we are '... cloaked in a shroud of ignorance, woven by our class enemies' (Tarrow, 2011, p.17). Foucault would view this as normalisation rather than a 'false consciousness' where the individual unknowingly reproduces the systems of power as a norm. However, we can be free in so far as we adopt an ethos of being enlightened, through questioning the status quo and adopting a permanent critique through resisting the norm. Here, then, by resisting what they have become, the moral agent creates the possibility for redefining what they are, and what they can become, by rediscovering an 'embodied agency' (Caldwell, 2007). The individual has agency but negotiates this with a variety of subject identities and positionings in different social networks to effect change (Rotman, 2008). So, a person also has 'distributive agency', a web of shifting and evolving agencies in different network domains, suggesting the need to reconceptualise the interrelationship among network structures, culture and agency (Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994). In addition, there is a need to have 'critical agency' to scrutinise and deliberate about reason and values (Sen and Dreze, 2002, p.19). Capturing these different understandings of external reality offers us a post-modernist understanding of the Shahbag. Therefore, collective entities are more common in tightly networked groups with organic solidarity and symbolic, cultural and social capital, than in groups where there is high social atomisation and mechanical solidarity. The combined knowledge of habitus and fields from different perspectives through these networks means the ability to transpose and extend them. Thus, agency is the actor's capability to reinterpret and mobilise an array of resources in terms of systems and cultural schemas to a new context (Sewell, 1992, p.18-20) or field, as it would not be possible in an existing one. The issues of injustice that generated Shahbag created the potential to mobilise the agency of a wide range of networks and individuals. The injustice brought singularities

together from different parts of the political, economic and social spheres and was key in unifying collective capability to effect change in structure and practice.

In a collective form, social agency comprises the cultural systems that construct modern actors and their capacity for ‘responsible agency’ (Meyer and Jepperson, 2000). As detailed in Chapter Three, Gamson (1992) argues that collective action frames need agency, identity and injustice. Agency for Gamson is the belief in the possibility of altering the conditions through collective action; there is a definite root of the problem which can be solved collectively, along with an ability to define the antagonists and how the injustice can be corrected. Here, then, agency emerges on condition that collective action could solve the root of the problem, i.e. that there is the potential for a solution, rather than agency being a pre-condition or capability. From the data analysis in Part II, the collective agency was formed through individuals showing resistance to the judgement, motivated by a duty to stand up to the injustice. Shahbag made use of collective action and frames, but the frame was not pre-constructed in order to gain credibility. Individuals identified with the need to address the injustice which sparked the moment. For Bourdieu (1977) this existing agency capability would have been stimulated and supported by social, symbolic and cultural capital to form into a collective for change. Shahbag also offered an example of ‘material agency’ as a force that bursts apart, breaks, interrupts and unhinges pre-existing equilibrium and continuity (Negri, 1999, p.10), as Shahbag led to a change in legislation and the way in which the trials were subsequently conducted. All the types of agency capability outlined above (embodied, distributive, critical, responsible and material) were reflected in the conditions, practices and capital of Bengali society before the Shahbag Moment, and facilitated the development of collective agency and capability. However, this cannot explain why Shahbag happened when it did, in the way that it did, to which we now turn.

7.2 Stage B – Doing: Processes for collective agency capability

‘Only beings who can reflect upon the fact that they are determined are capable of freeing themselves. Their reflectiveness results not just in a vague and uncommitted awareness, but in the exercise of a profoundly transforming action upon the determining reality.’

Freire, P. (1977) *Cultural Action for Freedom*, p.52

During the Shahbag Moment, in Stage B, there is a shift from ‘being’ and normalisation, to ‘doing’ and agency. Change depends not only on the capability of agency and reflection, but also on action, and action has to be collective to have an impact on structure and practice. There

are a number of different processes that support the development of collective agency and capability at Shahbag, based on Sen's Instrumental Freedoms.

Economically, crowd sourcing was possible and coordinated through Government logistics (safety, cleaning, water and sanitation), business sponsorship and acts of ordinary people, all contributing resources. Collectively people, organisations and institutions pooled and coordinated their networks and resources to respond to the needs of Shahbag to support the success of the moment. *Politically*, structures, institutions and parties were responsive and supportive of the demands and willing to find a solution to the crisis. *Socially*, everyone felt able to express their solidarity for the Shahbag Moment in a myriad of ways, not just at its site but elsewhere. Shahbag was not based on individual leadership, but on circles of solidarity, people choosing to express themselves and contribute in their own way to working collectively for change. *Security freedoms* were generated at the public space created by Shahbag which was safe, non-violent, with protesters using a cultural repertoire of activities so that women and children could also engage freely in the moment. Lastly, *transparency* was created through social media, formal media organisations and ongoing instant communications so that people felt they could trust and believe that the motives of those involved in the moment, and their decisions, were made based on justice, without compromise, for the higher cause.

From the discourse analysis of Stage B – developing codes in Chapter Six – the main codes that emerged were the role of the youth, political opportunity, communications, unity, identity and agency. Young people initiated the moment: university students, bloggers, the post Liberation War generation; they were seen as fresh, neutral, and offering an alternative to the usual politics. They used social media, worked collaboratively and did not compromise or let party politics interfere with the initial demand for justice. The political opportunity, of an AL pro-liberation Government, allowed and enabled Shahbag to grow, offering security and logistical support, being open to their demands. Some saw this as engineering the moment, most that they had a public obligation to safeguard the space, as women and children were participating. Politicians gave a 'show' of support for Shahbag, because it supported their convictions, some because of its growing popularity, but they were denied a platform to speak at Shahbag. Bloggers were seen as free and independent, offering live up to date information, along with live media coverage which amplified the message of Shahbag. They were also active in combating the aggressive ongoing online propaganda war by JI and set up a social media hub at Shahbag. Unity and identity were constructed because the demand for justice came from the heart, there was integrity, a mass awareness and common feeling for justice and upholding

the Bengali identity. There was trust and respect, people shifted their positions to align for the cause as they felt they had a duty to the victims and survivors of the Liberation War. This culture of solidarity was strengthened with many, who traditionally stayed away from politics and protests, participating in social action for the first time. Singularities, individuals with agency, were a key component, no one had expected that so many would feel the need to do something, to make a stand. Bloggers used their agency and free speech to resist the judgement and initiate a non-violent cultural moment. Ordinary people from a diverse range of networks and positions decided of their own volition to get involved, people who were not usually politically engaged participated, changing the dynamics of the protest. Shahbag offered a free, open and safe space for anyone with a passion for justice to participate. There was an endless flow of people, it became an historic national event that everyone wanted to join.

From the analysis of the case histories of Shahbag, and adapting Sen's Instrumental Freedoms (Sen, 1999, pp. 38- 40), we can observe the following processes underway.

Economic facilities, 'to have and use economic resources and entitlements', was reflected through the ongoing supply of food, water, logistical support, funds, and support in kind that were sourced and coordinated by a wide range of people from different parts of society, private sector and state institutions.

Political freedom, 'to scrutinise and criticise authority and have a political choice', occurred through the Parliament debating the demands of the Shahbag, legal experts giving advice and the media and commentators exploring different solutions to the issue in the public domain. This led to a change in the law, as previously only the defendant had the right of appeal, and to the legal process of the ICT.

Social opportunities, 'to live in a society where others enjoy goods and have freedom to live better', was developed into where ordinary people, from all walks of life, many of whom had never been involved in any collective entity, participated in different ways for the common cause. These people were not just at Shahbag but all over the country and internationally across the diaspora, in solidarity with Shahbag's initial demands for justice.

In relation to protective *security*, 'to provide social safety and to prevent deprivation', where for the first time in a public protest there were a large number of women and children participating, because of the three rings of security around Shahbag and the atmosphere which was peaceful and cultural. The space offered a learning experience for old and young and public institutions such as schools, colleges and Universities also joined in.

Regarding *transparency guarantees*, ‘to be able to trust others and know information is clear and honest’, social media played a big role in giving up to date information and links to sources of information to support the cause. The mainstream media also gave 24-hour coverage, not just of key personalities, but of the people who were participating. During the early stages there was a concerted effort to ensure that party politics and other agendas did not take advantage of Shahbag, and this created an atmosphere of trust.

The assumption of the immaterial paradigm (discussed in Chapter Two), suggests that wealth created is taken for profit in a capitalist society, but the source and capacity of wealth creation is retained (Hardt and Negri, 2004). This immaterial paradigm combined, with antagonism, leads to the making of the revolutionary subject. However, in contemporary contexts people have to stop their employment, or fit their participation in a collective entity around their work obligations, so can never truly be economically emancipated, unless they have a sustained source of wealth. Or like the Malthusian farmer, have no need for additional material possessions and are self-sufficient. Shahbag allowed people to participate around their other daily activities in different ways, and also ensured that there was a just economy where resources were distributed based on need and availability rather than demand and supply (Sheehan, 2003, p.63). Contributing resources to Shahbag was also seen as a form of symbolic capital, which attracted sponsors and high-income earners, as well as those who were passionate about the injustice and gave in whatever way they could.

Politically, for Foucault, power is never fixed, nor closed, but ‘... an endless open strategic game ...’ (Burchell, 1991, p.5). For anarchists, the political space is not a vacuum waiting to be filled, but is filled with a set of relationships (May, 1994, p.53), a mode of behaviour and interaction, which we can change by contracting other types of relations and behaving differently (Newman, 2011, p.47). So, by resisting who we are expected to be, and what we are expected to do, and positioning ourselves and acting differently in our network relationships, using our agency we can change the dynamics in a given public space. We, therefore, through a change in our practices, can establish a set of power relations that allow greater equality, autonomy and reciprocity (ibid., p.141). This is reflected in the way in which Shahbag redefined the dynamics of interaction between itself and those in power, and between those involved in the Shahbag Moment from different walks of life.

As mentioned earlier, for social movement theorists like Tarrow there are five dimensions to political opportunity (access to participation, political realignment, influential allies, splits in the established elites, decline in states capacity or an act of repression). However

not all of these were as expected. In the case of Shahbag, there was no ‘access to participation’ in the judicial system of the ICT, there was no ‘political realignment’, although there was a suspicion that a compromise had been made. Shahbag did have ‘influential allies’, because they resonated with and supported their demands, but it was the active participation of ordinary people that led to Shahbag’s success. There were no ‘splits in the established elites’ i.e. between those in positions of power. Also, there was no ‘decline in state capacity or an act of repression’ (Tarrow, 1996), which would have created a political opportunity or closed political opportunities. There had been ongoing intimidation by JI against the ICT, which may well have implicitly or explicitly influenced the sentencing decision – a more lenient sentence might reduce the potential threat of civil unrest. However, the Shahbag Moment that developed was non-violent, with the active participation of women and children. The state had a public duty and responsibility to protect Shahbag, and the state appeared to indirectly support Shahbag and their right to free speech and demands for justice for a time, acknowledging and acting on their demands.

Shahbag redefined the political space and created a ‘field’ in a public sphere of civil society to assert their demands. They refused key political figures the right to address the crowds, and submitted their demands to the Parliament, with over a million signatures. They changed the dynamics of usual protests in Bangladesh, away from speeches to cultural activities, nationalist slogan chanting and singing. A political space was invented outside the system with a moment of rupture and separation. As argued by post-anarchists, political solidarity was actively constructed through a diverse array of networks, the construction of an alternative rather than destruction or reform (May, 1994, p.48). Even if only momentarily (for a few weeks), Shahbag generated a legacy of impacts in structure and practice.

Socially, structuralists limit the potential of networks by seeing them as physical structures instead of information, ideas and emotions that flow through them. Shahbag was a fluid network where, through an ongoing process of construction, a shared interpretation of the situation was developed based on shared past experiences, and a common cultural background (Johnston, 2009, p.137). In society, cultural conditions also play a role in the process of collective agency and capability. Culture is constructed, but this is a blind spot for many social theorists, who fail to recognise and incorporate insights from cultural constructionism (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004). Also, culture is not static, there is a public enactment of culture as interpretive and socially constructed (Williams 2007, p.100). At Shahbag the independent bloggers (outside the systems of control) were brave enough to openly express their resistance

to the judgement in the trial and had the freedom to act on it. Those who were part of an organisation or institution came in their personal capacity to participate in something that was instigated by the bloggers, other sympathetic groups and ordinary people joined in. It was spontaneous and unstructured and a response to perceived unjust institutional behaviours and the politics of religious intimidation and violence, using diverse social networks to spread ideas, information and emotions. This created a shared identity of injustice, a re-imagining of Bengali identity based on the history of 1971. Shahbag used cultural activities as part of its repertoire of actions, enacting culture and reconstructing a cultural understanding of being Bengali, not against the institutions but for justice. Shahbag drew on drama, films and shared storytelling depicting the Liberation war and its aftermath, as well as art, poetry and music sharing the stories and sentiments of the moment.

In addition to Sen's Instrumental Freedoms, theoretical insights suggest five other considerations: collective identity, emotions, leadership, the multitude and the role of civil society. As outlined in Chapter Three, social constructionists explore the way meaning and collective behaviours arise and are central to a movement's emergence, where collective identity is continually interpreted through mutual influences between individuals and the collective (Larana et al., 1994). As discussed earlier, Klandermans (1992) (cited in Chapter 10 1994) argues that there are three stages of constructionism. For Shahbag the collective identity was generated because of the issue of injustice, this was then strengthened by public discussion and communication. However, there is no suggestion of any type of campaign to persuade or raise consciousness, it was already there. Emotions may offer a stronger explanation as discussed next.

Secondly, as elaborated on in Chapter Three, Morris sees collective behaviour as having an emotional and irrational ideology at its core, resulting from a breakdown in cultural norms. This generates spontaneous, unorganised and unstructured action through diverse networks because of a discontent with institutional behaviour (Morris, 2004). This was the way emotional collectives were initially theorised, as the 'mad mob' or 'crowd' responding to the heat of the moment, fuelled with anger and rage. Emotions, however, can also be seen as not just the glue of solidarity but a social sentiment, and expression of a readiness for action (Steinberg 2004). Emotions are perceived as a virtual social movement resource which actors produce, orchestrate and strategically deploy, so are instrumental in the process of forming the collective (Benford, 1997, p.419). Other theorists view emotions as a component of all interpretive processes, and explain how external opportunities and threats are understood and

responded to, how resources are allocated and why a collective action frame succeeds or fails (Gould, 1989; 2004, p.162).

Shahbag was driven by emotion. Primarily for justice for the victims of the Liberation War, but also because of the injustices in the past 40 years where self-confessed criminals had been given positions of power and authority. The spark was the ICT sentence of life rather than capital punishment, which, through his gestures, the defendant presented as a victory. Emotional agency was a major motivation to act, but it was the safe space created through cultural protests that meant that people chose to act on their emotions, as there were limited risks involved. Social, cultural, networked and emotional agency played a key role in motivating and mobilising people, but we still need to understand the instigators behind the movement and why people responded to them, and joined in on mass, rather than in other or previous initiatives.

Traditionally the leadership model is seen as a key dimension of any collective, where insurgent identities are actively constructed and communicated, agency being mobilised through collective action and frames that resonate (Tarrow, 2004, p.40). Variations in agency and leadership can be seen as dependent on cultural, political and economic structures, but are always at the heart of any strategy for the success of a social movement (Bruner, 1990). However, in the case of Shahbag, there was no pre-event leadership, there was a core group of activist and organisers who came together, and nominated a spokesperson 'who no one would object to'. There was thought leadership through the discourses that developed around the Shahbag, they debated and agreed on activities and symbolic events daily, but did not strategically agree a plan; it was much more spontaneous and ad hoc. It was dependent on individuals and their actions, rather than an organised and controlled strategy. This was much more organic, as suggested by Gramsci (2007), where active revolution for expansive hegemony needs intellectual and moral 'organic leadership'. This organic leadership must have an emotional bond with the people. It created this through empowering, persuading and maintaining alliances, but not just within civil society networks, not just from political parties and not for state hegemony. As such, Shahbag was more reflective of an anarchist rather than a post-Marxist understanding of leaderless movement, as the latter still stresses the importance of the state and hegemony in a way that anarchism and post-anarchism does not. A more appropriate model may be found in notions of the multitude and populous.

Shahbag was a moment similar to that of a multitude in its formation and emergence. It was not a political body, as it had only temporary solid unity and will for a moment in time.

It was plural and incoherent, and unable to completely rule itself. Shahbag, like a multitude, was a constant becoming, with innumerable internal differences, a multiplicity of singularities, a critical mass all demanding equality and freedom through the united demand for justice (Hardt and Negri, 2004). It consisted of a network of heterogeneous elements oriented by a strategic purpose, with mechanisms active in the production of subjectivities allowing them to conceive of an alternative collective production of the commons, (Hardt and Negri, 2009, p.126). It demonstrated a shift in the 'dispositif' which normalises our being and doing. The commons is seen as the opening of a new space for relationships to form, and the key to collectivist and common being (Parment, 2012). Like Shahbag, the process of the formation of the multitude was generated when individuals/singularities had encounters at the Shahbag scene, and invented strategies, cultural activities through expansive circuits to mobilise (Hardt and Negri, 2009, pp.250-260). This occurred because of a diverse range of social networks where people come together and engaged for a common cause at the Shahbag scene, and virtually through social media, demonstrating Sen's Instrumental Freedoms as outlined above. It is argued that the multitude is latent and implicit in our social being, it just needs a political project so that singularities can converge (ibid., pp.112-3). Although for its duration Shahbag was an example of the creation of this alternative 'common' field, it was not sustainable, and could not have been, as anticipated for the multitude. Shahbag however, reflected a meaningful struggle which temporarily transcended sectorial identities, and articulated a collective will, such as a populous, albeit that the notion of the populous as an entity is less reflective of Shahbag, which was made up of singularities like the multitude. Shahbag was like a populous in that it was constructed through political action through a populist demand, crystallised with the condensation of a plurality of singularities (Laclau, 2007, pp.93-4) but only for a moment. In addition, and unlike 'populism', Shahbag was for a particular project in a 'moment' of time to achieve a particular demand and could not have been sustained beyond that. It was not therefore a condensation of pluralities, but more like a multitude in its temporality and structure. Anarchists and Marxists agree, however, that resistance is situational, in everyday life against roles and identities, where we resist the bounds of power (Newman, 2011, p.65), and for a moment this occurred with Shahbag. So, it was the political project at Shahbag for justice, with organic leadership which resonated with people, to resist the judgement by expressing their demand for justice in non-violent and cultural ways. Ordinary people from all walks of life spoke out publicly in their own way about the injustice, and participated in joint actions such as the candle lighting, three minutes of silence, releasing balloons, singing the anthem and hoisting the flag, but always on their own terms and in their own way. They did

this wherever they were, giving resources, as well as actually going to Shahbag and expressing resistance and solidarity with Shahbag, even from abroad. The fact that the instigators were not high-profile individuals, but were unknown to many and supported by different groups because of the cause, made them easier to trust. Shahbag turned the tide and reflected a suppressed, hidden desire, the need for justice by individuals, singularities which formed a collective will, for a moment, rather than a sustained multitude.

Shahbag did not happen because of an established organisation, if anything formal organisations officially stayed away, although employees came as individuals. Crossley (2002, p.92) argues that formality breeds accountability and deference towards political establishments, which has a conservative influence on movements. In the case of Shahbag it was suggested that established civil society organisations and NGOs did not engage formally because of financial commitments not political ones, particularly in relation to international donors. When interviewed, those from civil society organisations stated that they had played an advisory and supportive role behind the scenes, rather than being actively in front, although at the beginning some attended too with their families. They legitimised Shahbag by offering their solidarity to the cause but did not play their usual formal role, even though they are frequently the organisations planning and managing different types of campaigns and demonstrations focusing on justice, women rights and secularism. Political party groups, especially student ones, awaited instructions before engaging with, and later leaving Shahbag, but their support and coordinated activities were invaluable as a base to ensure Shahbag was successful. Shahbag created a shift in systems, through collective patterns generated by the aggregate of individual behaviours of agency and freedom (Johnson, 2001). This was aided by strong connections between a large number of diverse networks, with high levels of bridging capital, because of the liberation war, enabling dialogue and collective agency to emerge (Dale and Sparkes, 2010). So, for Shahbag, agency was the dynamic face of networks, as a way of upending regimes and initiating fresh action (White, 2008, p.292), but in the collective space of civil society rather than through or managed by civil society organisations. By next exploring the impact and changes in the Shahbag movement after its peak we can further strengthen our understanding of the factors that undermined its continued collective agency and capability.

7.3 Stage C – Impact: Outcomes from collective agency capability

‘Critical consciousness is brought about not through an intellectual effort alone, but through a praxis, through the authentic union of action and reflection’

‘The fundamental role of those committed to cultural action for conscientization ... (is) to invite the people to grasp with their minds the truth of their reality.’

Freire, P. (1977) *Cultural Action as Freedom*, pp.76 & 79

How do we maximise the impact of collective agency and capability on structure and practice, ensure that the capability is not weakened after the moment, and minimise the negative unintended consequences? From the case histories the unintended consequences included: a rise in counter-propaganda by fundamentalists and Islamists; splits in the original forces that established the moment and their fragmentation; and dilemmas of identity for the participants who started to disengage. The Shahbag Moment should have ended on a high of celebration and achievement, given the unique impact the moment had on legal and political structures, and the revival of the Bengali secular spirit. Instead it was interrupted by the killing of the blogger, and took on a new form, with new demands, in an effort to sustain itself. The original moment became tainted with negative sentiments, and many who originally supported the moment distanced themselves from it in the new form, as the main original demands had now been met. The collective opposed the new demands of the core group, and the moment started to shift away from the will of the masses. By going beyond the initial political project that generated the collective agency and capability, these were lost. There was also collective fatigue from the prolonged duration of Shahbag, given that the primary demand had been fulfilled, and the safe space had been lost.

As outlined in Chapter Three, the capability approach does not fully address capabilities that can only be achieved through group action (Panet and Duray-Soundron, 2008), but collective action helps to establish social and environmental conversion factors for Instrumental Freedoms. Collective agency cannot, however, be imposed, it must emerge through a learning process. Thus, individual freedoms are dependent on collective capabilities, and organised capabilities are fundamental to people’s capabilities (Evans, 2002, p.57). In the example of the Shahbag, it was the existing agency of people with network capital that generated the possibility of collective agency and developed capabilities to create conversion factors for Instrumental Freedoms. There was a decentring of agency where the subject’s construction of subjectivities collectively transformed to new patterns of behaviour and

practice. For Shahbag this meant that rather than having to accept the judgement as a given, collectively they were able to reopen the debate, reduce the impact of intimidation and fear by JI and find a solution to ensure justice for the case and in the future.

Based on the discourse analysis of Stage C – Impact codes in Chapter Six – the key issues were: the core group splits, the impact on practice and structure, and the unintended consequences. The core group split occurred, it was suggested, because the young people involved were inexperienced and overconfident. Some of the bloggers were insensitive to popular religious sentiments and crossed the line. Others suggest that as the unifying demand for justice had been met, the issue-based unity and identity no longer held diverse groups together. The core group had become politicised and unsustainable: there was a withdrawal of logistical support due to the demand having been met, and the rise in the counter-propaganda discourse of Muslim *versus* Bengali identity was gaining hold.

Shahbag did have an impact on structure: it pushed the Parliament to make legislative changes to the right of appeal. In practice, it showed popular public support to counter the negative JI and international coverage of the ICT trials. With the popular will defined, it became much easier to implement the judgements without inciting more organised violence by JI. Shahbag generated a new understanding and curiosity in the next generation, reigniting the Bengali spirit, with people realising and having regained confidence that justice was possible, even after so many years. There were however some unintended consequences, in particular the ethics of justice. If the only acceptable justice for the people was capital punishment, how could the trials really be seen as free and fair. There were suggestions that the Government played an enabling and engineering role to control Shahbag, firstly to support the ICT and then to stop the Shahbag going any further.

Although Shahbag celebrated freedom of speech, some argued that it went too far, this created confusion and conflict because of the counter-propaganda which gained momentum. What is undeniable, though, is that there was an uncontrolled flow of people coming and going and participating in their own way, of their own free will, which could only be managed, but not controlled, during the Shahbag Moment. When the initial demand had been met and things became confusing, people stopped their engagement. The principle of justice was bigger than the hanging of one man: Shahbag set in motion the possibility of ensuring a fair judgement in the trials for all those who were convicted of crimes against humanity during the Liberation War, without fear or favour of who they are now. The banning of religious political groups such as JI and their allies had been part of the initial 6-point demand by Shahbag and the

amendment in the law had included the right to try religious groups involved in the atrocities of 1971. However, when the discourse frame shifted from justice *versus* injustice to atheist *versus* Muslim, i.e. from a secular Bengali identity to a Muslim Bengali identity, the dynamics and engagement of the masses changed.

Shahbag could be seen as an example of anarchy, mass collective formation and consensual deliberation (Jun and Wahl, 2010). Those involved in Shahbag were free to question the coherence, unity and stability of existing discursive formats, to confront and work against existing normalising power for the purposes of structural and practice change (Hicks, 2004). Once these changes had occurred, and with the death of a blogger, and violent demonstrations by JI, counter-propaganda ensued. The achievements of Shahbag, coupled with a shift in the agenda and the lack of security, led to the disengagement of ordinary people. Shahbag did not control people, it succeeded because the people collectively engaged through their agency. It ended when people decided to disengage.

In Bangladesh, as there were no existing predominant cultural discourses, or hegemony, the discursive opportunity structures were fluid (Sajjad and Hardig, 2016). The public discourse on Shahbag changed almost overnight, with the killing of the blogger, and this change was sustained because the focus had changed from Bengali secularism and justice to personal attacks on those participating (as spoiled, non-believers and atheist) and the loss of safety and security around Shahbag. The shift in the discourse moved, from the demands of justice and promoting a progressive secular Bengali identity and the Liberation War ideals, to banning JI and protecting Muslim Bangladeshi national sentiment. It has been argued that there has been an ongoing contested issue regarding national identities in Bangladesh since 1971, between a secular Bengali identity and Muslim Bangladeshi identity (Hossain, 2015). However, Shahbag demonstrated shifting identities and networks which mobilised the ordinary people, including Muslims, to support the cause for justice in the ICT trials.

Political opportunities may well have created the legal framework through the ICT trials, but the political will to carry through on this was questioned when the judgement was felt to be compromised. Shahbag reasserted the political will, with the peoples' mandate to have justice. Resources that were mobilised to support the movement declined, once counter-propaganda took hold, and Shahbag was no longer seen as generating 'symbolic capital'. Collective agency and capability emerged during the Shahbag Moment but was weakened as people chose to disengage. For, once they had felt the injustice had been rectified, and their united demands had been met, the meaning and purpose of their participation had been fulfilled

and they could continue with their lives. Although agency capability was still strong, the collective will changed. The collective agency and capability of the Shahbag was weakened by this shift in the discourse, and the confusion that ensued: people used their agency to disengage and the social moment was lost. However, impacts on structure and practice were sustained, and capabilities were also increased from conversion factors generated by the Shahbag. The final chapter profiles the Being-Doing-Impact Model and Sen's Instrumental Freedoms to develop a process framework for collective agency and capability, based on the analysis of the Shahbag Moment.

8.) CHAPTER EIGHT: EXTENDING INSTRUMENTAL FREEDOMS AS A FRAMEWORK FOR THE BEING-DOING-IMPACT MODEL

'... the task of theoretical understanding is to provide the knowledge necessary to make emancipatory agency a possibility'

Bates (2007) *Marxism, Intellectuals and Politics* (p.8)

In Part I, I developed a conceptual framework based on theoretical understandings of civil society and argued that civil society needed to be reclaimed from its neo-liberal organisational form. I showed that civil society had become an empty signifier, and that there was a need for a more spatial, networked and relational understanding of civil society as a collective space for contemporary society; a space where collective agency and capability can emerge and produce changes in practice and structure. I reviewed and reflected on theories regarding collective entities, agency and capabilities to develop a framework to code and analyse a case history. The research argues for a more critical understanding and development of these theories. In detailing critical theoretical understandings of civil society, resistance and agency we have gained insights into the different way social transformation and change can occur. I have suggested a need for a more spatial understanding of civil society as having the potential to be a space where the multitude and populous can form.

In Part II I have used the theoretical insights from Part I to develop my methodological approach, to allow a deeper theoretical understanding of the conditions and process involved in the emergence of collective agency and capabilities using case histories from the Shahbag Moment in Bangladesh in 2013. I have detailed and triangulated the data sources on Shahbag, coded and analysed the subjective discourses of the case histories from a wide range of individuals with different roles during Shahbag. The findings from Part II and theoretical insights from Part I have been used to inform Part III, and the detailed examination of the conditions and process during which Shahbag instigated the emergence of collective agency and capabilities from the stages of being (prior to the moment), doing (during the moment) and impact (post the moment).

In this final chapter I detail a Being-Doing-Impact Model to deconstruct the conditions that led to Shahbag, and use, develop and extend Sen's Instrumental Freedoms as a lens to reconstruct the conditions and processes that led to collective agency and capabilities during the Shahbag Moment.

8.1 Conditions Matrix and Process Framework

Recently, capability theorists have been developing models to explore collective capabilities. As detailed in Chapter Three, Pelenc et al., (2015) focused on the link between the individual and the collective levels of capability, arguing that empowerment is needed by the individual to unlock the process (agency) aspect of freedom (Pelenc et al., 2015, p.227). However, I would argue that empowerment is needed by both the individuals in the collective and those responding in power, i.e. a more dynamic interactive model in constructing collective capabilities. The existing historical context, conditions and workings of power and normalisation need to be considered as part of the process of collective agency formation and the emergence of collective capabilities, which my approach addresses.

Agency as a process freedom is conditioned, but not determined, by the structures and contexts within which it is formed. Collective agency forms in response to a given project at a given moment, in a given space, it is therefore unstable and vulnerable. Through the formation of collective agency, collective capabilities emerge with Instrumental Freedoms which impact on structure and practice. The ultimate aim is to create an ongoing enabling environment for 'flourishing' to be the best that one can be and do. This is where resistance through moments of collective agency and capability are responded to in a constructive way in structure and practice. This is not a passive, normative model, it is possible that not all conditions are fulfilled before collective agency forms and collective capabilities start to emerge. However, through the process of interaction and construction of collective agency and capabilities, all the conditions and Instrumental Freedoms are realised, even if only for a moment.

Before exploring the process by which collective agency and capability emerged in the Shahbag Moment, we firstly need to cross reference the wider conditions within which it arose in a given moment in time. The Conditional Matrix (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) helps us understand the context within which a phenomenon takes place. It links the different dimensions of conditions and consequences and tracks the conditional path of the phenomenon through different concentric circles that represent international, national, community, organisational/institutions, subgroups, collective, interaction and individual action. I now apply the matrix to the Shahbag case histories.

On the *international level*, there are examples of social moments for change, such as the Arab Spring, and in India the anti-corruption movements, but these turned into violent protests against the state. International opinion was against the ICT trials because of the use of

capital punishment and because senior Muslim ‘clerics’³ were on trial. So internationally there have been examples of people power resisting structure and practice norms but there was a general international lobby that was against this form of justice, and therefore against the ambitions of Shahbag.

Nationally, the Government in power, the AL, had instigated the ICT process, based on their election pledge to deliver justice for the victims of crimes against humanity during the Liberation War of 1971. However, there was ongoing intimidation against the ICT and other institutions by JI and their allies, and a fear that a compromise had been made by the AL and judiciary. This was suggested, given the international and national pressure not to hand down a judgment of capital punishment, even if the verdict was guilty. For the purposes of this issue there were three main *communities* in Bangladesh: those who wanted to see collaborators tried; those who did not; and a few that wanted an alternative form of justice rather than a trial. It has also been suggested that this represented a divide between proponents of secular and Muslim Bengali identity. This, however, was a tactical divide, since as argued earlier the research suggests that those who were passionate about the duty to ensure justice for the victims of the war crimes included Muslims.

As Shahbag grew, those who were less passionate, in the dark, or previously unaware of the history of Bangladesh also joined in because of the issue of justice for the victims and survivors of the Liberation War. *Organisationally* there were a number of different players, NGO/civil society organisations, the media, political parties, cultural activist groups and student groups. They were in the majority supportive of the ICT trials, apart from the JI and pro-JI media, and allies whose leaders were being put on trial. Some were able to engage proactively in vocal activities supporting the ICT, in particular the cultural networks and student groups, while others played a more supportive, observational role. There were numerous *sub-groups* of communities who engaged in activities to support the ICT because of their commitment to justice, especially the bloggers who instigated Shahbag, student groups (political and non-political from private as well as public universities), campaigning and cultural activist groups. The *interaction* was *ad hoc*, spontaneous, positive and cultural within groups and between them and this led to Shahbag’s success, with a wide range of networks from all walks of life mobilising to be involved. From the research there were no formal

³ The term ‘clerics’ was used by the western media and Al Jazeera, but the actual individuals were political figures not religious clerics, and they were being tried for their crimes during the time of the Liberation War rather than who they are now.

mechanisms or structures in place that alone could have facilitated the creation of Shahbag on such a scale. During Shahbag there were *ad hoc* logistical and resource support arrangements provided by a wide range of sources. Social media played a crucial role in ensuring information was shared as it happened, the mainstream media and their live coverage helping promote Shahbag to reach a mass audience. Ultimately, however, it was the agency ‘free will to resist the status quo’ of the *individuals* who had felt that their values and principles of justice had been denied that led to resistance and protest through non-violent cultural means. People collectively came together, from all types of backgrounds, and this led to the Shahbag Moment and its collective agency and capability.

A limitation of the Conditions Matrix is that it does not capture the power dynamics at play between the different circles, or the capabilities of individuals involved within each circle, nor the historical and emotional dimensions involved in the conditions that led to the phenomenon. These are partially addressed in ‘Stage A – Being’ of my research. However, the Matrix does offer a solid contextual understanding of the different perspectives involved and the potential pressures and influences they had on the emergence of collective agency and capability during the Shahbag Moment.

8.2 Being-Doing-Impact Model to Achieving Instrumental Freedoms

The process framework outlined below is based on the interactive relationship between the elements of Sen’s Instrumental Freedoms and between these freedoms, structures and practice. It develops the Instrumental Freedoms through an analysis of the Shahbag Moment and relevant critical theories.

The figure below shows five key points to reflect the five Instrumental Freedoms, and how collective agency and capability emerged. This represents a fluid and complex process, which takes into account the development of collective agency and the emergence of collective capabilities, displaying this diagrammatically does, however, impose certain limitations. Visualising the process as a pentagon cone shaped network leading to a tip of collective agency and capabilities during a given moment in time may be useful when reading this chapter. The different Instrumental Freedoms are based on theoretical insights (Part I) and developed into the changes needed to shift from a normal state to one with collective agency and capability. So, for example, I have developed the political freedom to question and criticise as political empowerment, based on theoretical insights from Gramsci and Foucault (see Chapter Two), with bio power at the large end of the cone and biopolitics at the tip of the cone, i.e. from individual empowerment to the empowerment of the collective and all those involved. Below

I elaborate in more detail on each of the Instrumental Freedoms development and their interrelation based on the findings from the Shahbag Moment. My further elaborations below should aid a more dynamic representation of the levels of the Being–Doing–Impact Model.

The webgram developed in figure one is based on the three stages of being, doing and impact of the process to emerging collective agency and capabilities. It supports the representation of the interactive and constructionist nature of the process leading to a collective agency capability moment.

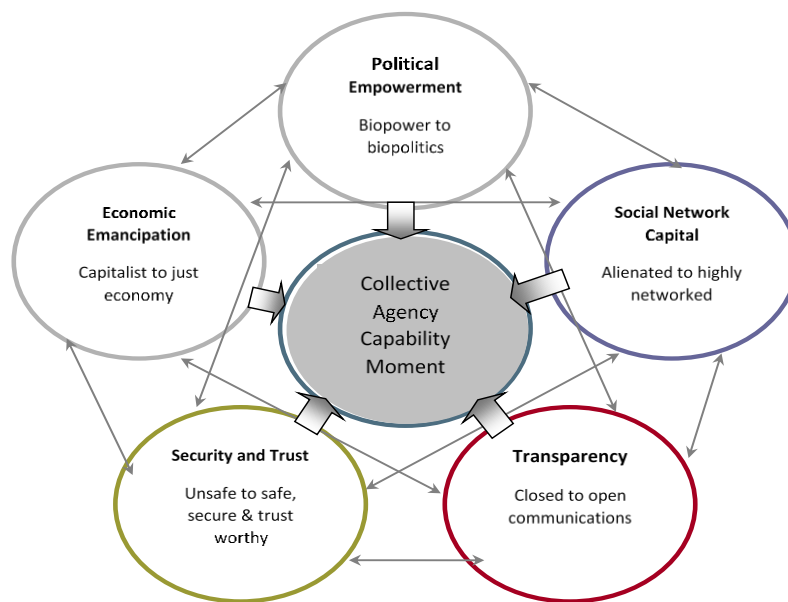


Figure 1: Instrumental Freedom changes needed for Collective Agency Capability to emerge

In Figure One each instrumental freedom contributes to collective agency and capability in different ways. For each freedom a shift from Being to Doing (from individuals acting alone to a collective of singularities) must occur to allow collective agency and capability to develop and have impact: political empowerment needs to occur with a shift from biopower to biopolitics; economic emancipation occurs through a shift from capitalism monopoly to a just economy; social network capital develops from having an alienated society to one that is highly networked with organic solidarity; for security there is a shift from an unsafe suspicious environment to one of feeling safe and secure and trusting others; and for transparency the shift is from a closed, uninformed public to one where communications are open and transparent and easy to access. Similarly, at the core of this figure is the dynamics that structures must shift

from being rigid to responsive, and practice must shift from being normalised to refusing the status quo and resisting. The process of change for each instrumental freedom, from Stage A-Being, to Stage B - Doing and Stage C – Impact, is facilitated as a result of solidarity within a collective entity for action due to emotions and culture. The framework is outlined in more detail below but firstly we address the shifts that occur across the different Instrumental Freedoms in the core of structure and practice.

8.2.1 *Structure*

These are the systems and structures that are in place in a given context: the political, economic, social, health, educational and legal institutions and infrastructure in a given location. As explained in Part I, structure is the established power relations that exist within and between institutions and systems in a given context and with other outside organisations. At the first Stage of Being, prior to the moment, these were fairly rigid and set with internal ways of working, and the relationship between those in the institutions and with those outside the structure. In the second Stage of Doing, during the moment when collective agency occurs, individuals within these structures and systems react to the situation that is emerging e.g. the Shahbag Moment, potentially changing the way they relate to and respond to the issue (either positively or negatively or by ignoring it) through their personal and public networks. In the third Stage of Impact, post the moment, if there is a critical mass the structure responds to the issue. So, in the case of Shahbag the ICT and Government were positive but hesitant about the issue in Stage A with their verdict and judgement, but because of Shahbag structures, responded with logistical support including security, a change in the law and legal process (Stage B and C). As a result of Shahbag individuals in the system became more confident to respond positively and ensure justice was delivered (Stage C).

8.2.2 *Practice*

This relates to the routine ways of everyday life, the discourses used, and the way relationships and interactions are managed. At the first Stage of Shahbag these were fairly normalised, i.e. people conformed to existing norms and practices: when the trials were underway, they did not take any action, although some individuals were resisting, being and doing things differently e.g. bloggers who were criticising what was happening. People did not protest against the JJ intimidation and violence *en masse*.

In the second stage, individual agency grew and developed in response to the issue, leading to action, engaging and participating in the protests in a myriad of ways. The

multiplicity of individuals with agency from a diverse range of fields in the given habitus led to collective agency and capabilities for change in different spheres, impacting on others, structures and practices.

In the third stage a new norm was established, practices were transformed as a result of the collective agency and capability and people continued daily life. So, in the case of Shahbag, the norm prior to Shahbag was to accept verdicts and judgements, even if people did not agree with them, and to tolerate the intimidation and violence by JI. But a public scene was created, a new field within the habitus, to resist and challenge the outcome of the trial and to insist that justice be served. The response by ordinary people, from all walks of life, was to agree with, and connect with this because of the emotional, moral and ethical duty to deal with injustice, rather than ignoring the new public scene created or labelling the challenge initially as deviant or 'bad'. The discourse changed, people witnessed what was underway and felt strongly enough to have agency and act, by changing their attitudes, behaviours, relations and actions. They proactively engaged in, and supported, Shahbag's cultural protests, either by joining the public scene, creating their own activities, contributing resources etc., or raising the issue and mobilising different networks. Many of the participants had never previously participated in such an activity or engaged with social media.

As a result of Shahbag there was a shift in practice, discussing the issues, regarding the trial, justice and war criminals, became more acceptable, as did the public debate regarding JI and their allies' role in the Liberation War. In the third and final stage, post the moment, the legacy of Shahbag has meant that the history and ideals of the Liberation War and the need to ensure justice is now the accepted norm, even after 40 years of crimes against humanity, which had seemed impossible, even with capital punishment.

Instrumental Freedoms

8.2.3 Social Network Capital

Based on the research reviewed in Chapter Two and Three and the findings in Part II, Sen's Instrumental Freedom of social opportunities to live in a society where others enjoy goods is expanded and developed. This freedom relates to the type of society and networks that exist, whether networks are alienated with mechanical solidarity, or highly networked with organic solidarity. Also, of salience is the extent that social, symbolic and cultural capital (Bourdieu) exists, and how strongly there is bridging capital or interconnections between different

networks. These preconditions create potentiality but without a spark and spontaneity of agency by a critical mass, would not have led to action, from being to doing. Thus, some form of social network capital between different spheres in society, and a spark of injustice, was a crucial aspect of generating collective agency and capability. The critical mass needed for collective agency and capability to emerge and have an impact would have been greatly reduced without these latent and active networks.

In the first stage of Shahbag, then, there was sufficient existing network capital to establish a public scene in a new field to raise the issue, and enough latent network capital for others from different spheres to be made aware of it and inform their networks.

In the second stage, the network capital was strong enough, and the issue emotional and significant enough, to warrant the reactivation of latent networks, bringing together a wide range of people to mobilise resources, participate and influence structures and practices for change. So, in the case of Shahbag the legacy of the Liberation War, and peoples' historical connection to it, cut across active networks to mobilise a diverse range of people for a common cause.

In the third stage, once the initial demands had been met, network identities shifted and changed, other identities become a priority and latent networks that had come to the fore dissipated. New networks and connections were formed, and latent networks strengthened from the interactions generated during the safe and secure cultural protests for the emergence of collective agency and capability. A multitude was formed in the second stage of 'doing', but not sustained, for the political project, a populous or collective that led to the creation of practice and structural shifts in the pursuit of justice. Singularities from a diverse range of fields in the habitus, with different networks, schemas and resources, mobilised collectively to resist the norm and effect change. People saw the outcome of collective agency and their capabilities were strengthened in relation to social Instrumental Freedoms.

8.2.4 Economic Emancipations

This builds on Sen's Instrumental Freedom of economic facilities, the opportunity to have and use economic resources/entitlements. This relates to the economic infrastructure's ability to respond based on need and a just economy (Sheehan, 2003) rather than profit and market mechanisms (capitalism). In the case of Shahbag, this was demonstrated through the act of individuals and businesses giving up their resources and time to engage in the moment, and the crowd sourcing and resource mobilisation to support the moment.

In the first stage the economic priorities were not monopolised by monetary profit (i.e. capitalistic): individuals felt that the opportunity cost of engaging in non-profit making initiatives for Shahbag was less than if they did not engage, i.e. that they were able to engage in the moment without it being to the detriment of their long term economic wellbeing, or was so significant that they were willing to forgo economic wellbeing in pursuit of justice, meaning and purpose. So, in Shahbag a broad spectrum of people felt the need to prioritise participating and supporting the moment in whatever way they could.

In the second stage, once the moment had become established, the economic infrastructure, private business and Government agencies responded and supported the moment logistically to make it sustainable. But there was difference in this unity: The former did so based on need not profit, the latter because they had a public duty to ensure the safety and security of those involved. Shahbag also flourished through crowd sourcing and resource mobilisation, but this would have been time limited without infrastructure support. So, in Shahbag, most gave in-kind resources because they supported the cause, some individuals and businesses also saw involvement as a marketing and sponsorship opportunity, a kind of symbolic capital to be associated with and supporting something that was gaining such wide positive media coverage and public attention.

However, in Stage C, once the initial demands had been met, and the discourse and narrative became more negative because of counter-propaganda, the opportunity/cost balance changed. The momentum in resource mobilisation and crowd sourcing slowed, and logistic and other forms of economic support were withdrawn, thereby weakening Shahbag's collective agency and capability. Based on the research, we can see how for a moment, for the cause of justice, people collectively were economically emancipated: they valued the need to support Shahbag and a just economy based on needs above their individual capitalist economic wants.

8.2.5 Political Empowerment

This section develops Sen's Instrumental Freedom to politically scrutinise and criticise authority, using critical theoretical insights from Foucault, Gramsci, and Hardt and Negri. Here we refer to political structures and parties, as well as an individual's political agency, and biopower. We explore how they conform to, or resist, power dynamics in their habitus. Structurally, political powers may be weak or strong, hollow or engaging in a given context, but it is the way that they respond to the moment, positively or negatively, that is a determining factor for collective agency and capability to occur. In the case of Shahbag the justice system and political powers were seen with suspicion (compromising the judgement), but when the

people of Shahbag resisted, they supported, facilitated and responded positively to the demands.

In the first stage, political structures and parties offered potential opportunities for change: they created the opportunity by establishing the ICT, but were perceived as having negated the possibility for justice. Although a window of opportunity had been opened through the trial, it was seen as being closed because, although the defendant was found guilty, he was not given the maximum penalty of capital punishment. This stimulated a response, the emergence of biopower from a collective of individuals who seized the opportunity and asserted the right to re-open the door of possibility. For collective agency and capability to be established, a critical mass needs to be formed to turn biopower into biopolitics, a political eruption for the political project to deliver change, which is what made Shahbag so significant.

In Stage B, political structures and parties reacted positively (AL), negatively (JI) and tried to ignore Shahbag (BNP). However, because Shahbag continued and grew, and gained a critical mass, all parties had to respond to it, and this co-constructed its development and changed its form. Because AL was in power, the political opportunities and structures responded positively, unlike in previous occasions in Bangladesh's history. The biopower of the individuals resisting the status quo and normalisation turned into biopolitics of the collective critical mass, ensuring the moment's voice was heard. The critical mass of singularities at Shahbag, acting with agency in a collective way, was non-violent and cultural and gained positive coverage. Shahbag engaged women and children and individuals from across different networks and fields and so had a much higher potential to succeed and not to be ignored and suppressed by political structures and parties. So, for Shahbag the non-violent, cultural protest against injustice, coupled with the unifying identity of Bengali culture, engaged women and children and young people born after the Liberation War, and demonstrated political empowerment. This was the hallmark of its success: securing collective agency and capability and being supported by political structures and parties. The process of engaging in the moment was empowering, and as the demands were for justice, a higher cause, it was much more meaningful and offered a purpose to the general public. Ongoing dialogue, and negotiations online and in the public domain, led to solutions being found that amicably fulfilled the demands of the protestors.

In Stage C, once demands had been met, the initial ethos and priorities of the moment changed. The momentum of the moment was seized for other causes of concern which did not resonate with the critical mass. As a consequence, collective agency and capability was

weakened, biopolitics fragmented and become divided, and individuals used their agency to disengage. From a critical theoretical lens, the political project for which the critical mass and multitude had been crystallised was achieved and like a swarm that meets a barrier and has fulfilled its purpose, the singularities dissipated.

8.2.6 Safety, Security and Trust

This instrumental freedom is developed beyond Sen's notion 'to prevent deprivation' as a protective security. For the purposes of this research is expanded to incorporate safety and trust, where collective agency and capabilities means a shift from an unsafe suspicious environment to one which is safe, enabling, secure and trustworthy, where people respect each other.

In Stage A, the environment of ongoing intimidation and violence by JI and their allies, did not offer security, safety and trust, the environment was one of daily threats and fear.

In Stage B, the new field of cultural protests, created by the collective in Shahbag, generated an implicit understanding between all those involved, of respect, non-violence and trust, building cultural capital. It is worthwhile noting that all those interviewed regarding Shahbag referred to the unique environment where everyone respected and supported each other. Even with such huge numbers gathered together there were no incidents, violence or abuse: women and children felt respected and safe, which was unique for a public open space in Bangladesh. Young people put their traditional politics aside to support each other and focus on the main demands. The Shahbag was non-violent and cultural, a celebratory atmosphere where people could participate, share and learn. In addition, the police offered three rings of security to ensure the moment was not attacked by JI and their allies. This aspect of the moment, as being a 'safe and positive scene', was key in engaging a wide range of audiences especially women and children, which further legitimised Shahbag and their demands. The active engagement and participation of women and children on such a large scale was a very unusual occurrence in the cultural and context of Bangladesh.

In Stage C, once the main demands had been achieved the necessity of unity and a common identity was reduced, counter-propaganda and the withdrawal of logistical security and support made the space less secure, and people disengaged. However, the ongoing insecurity because of JI intimidation and violence which was previously the norm stopped and JI lost its hold on disturbing daily life.

8.2.7 Transparency

This freedom is defined by Sen as transparency guarantees - to know that information is clear and honest, and also to trust others. This relates primarily to communications, media and social media, whether access to knowledge and information is open or closed, and how trustworthy the source is. If information is contradictory and confusing, people are less likely to engage *en masse*, but as in the case of Shahbag, if the issue is a fundamental injustice and the demands emotionally motivated, it is more likely to resonate with a diverse range of people. Social media played a key role in ensuring that there was a reliable source of information that was open and transparent.

Although in Stage A structural communications were closed, e.g. the judgement regarding the verdict at the ICT, the channels for public debate were open but restricted. Due to an environment of intimidation, the issues were only disseminated and discussed by some media channels, activists and bloggers.

In Stage B the necessity of communication to a wide audience was vital to ensuring a critical mass of engagement and mobilisation of resources, ensuring that the message and frame was positive and reflective of the moment's demands. There were ongoing online 'propaganda wars' but the individual was able to choose and select their information source and make an informed decision whether or not to engage, and shared the message of Shahbag through their networks.

In Stage C media interest began to wane, and distorted interpretations were developed to create 'new news', but communication channels remained open and transparent on social media. There was a backlash against opinions being too open and free, which instigated counter-propaganda, as was the case at Shahbag, and the narrative regarding secular, atheist and blasphemous blogging.

8.3 Reflections

Within the formation of Shahbag there was an ongoing interaction between the different Instrumental Freedoms which cumulatively led to the emergence of collective agency and capability in a given moment. Without these Instrumental Freedoms being enacted through the agency of individuals forming a critical mass, the capabilities needed to effect change in structure and practice would not have occurred in the way that they did.

Hypothetically, we can explore an alternative, 'what if', scenario to demonstrate this. If Bangladesh had been a capitalist monopoly economy, it is unlikely that the economic infrastructure would have responded so easily and positively to supporting the Shahbag

Moment by offering resources and logistics. If the society had been alienated with mechanical solidarity, limited cultural, social and symbolic capital, then the call from the bloggers would not have led to a chain reaction between a diverse range of networks and the mobilisation of the masses to engage in different ways, triggering economic and political support. If social media and communications had been restricted, or influenced by political elites against the moment, people would not have known that there were a group of people resisting the verdict and making a stand to change the judgement. If the protests had been violent, or the political response aggressive, then social networks would not have mobilised in the way that they did, as there would not have been a safe space for women and children to engage.

In addition to the Instrumental Freedoms, the research highlights three key issues to consider, that are not currently adequately addressed in the literature: the affective dimension; the triggers motivating the agency of individuals; and the interaction with Government.

The case histories highlight the affective dimension of the moment, the role of emotion and culture in developing and igniting the solidarity in the collective so that it could gain the critical mass needed to have collective agency and capability to impact on structure and practice. This dimension overcame many of the usual challenges to engagement, the motivation to change from being to doing. Based on the recounting of the Shahbag Moment by those interviewed it was the emotive ‘feeling’ of injustice, and the need to have a ‘purpose and meaning’, that led people to move from being and accepting, to doing and resisting in their own way and through their networks.

Although agency may well be latent in a given society, it can manifest itself in a crisis or for a political project of injustice, for a moment, given the right conditions and opportunities. However, the interpretation of an injustice is subjective, so it must resonate with a critical mass, who have a similar understanding of the injustice and feel strongly enough to have agency, and to move from being to doing. In an era of social media, with so many different channels of information, there can be confusion – unless the source is credible and the injustice clear cut. When the Shahbag bloggers stood up against the injustice and communicated their views, counter-propaganda also circulated, with ongoing cyber-wars during the Shahbag Moment between the bloggers and JJ. However, at the beginning the ordinary majority of people, who did not usually participate in political protests, responded to the bloggers’ and cultural activists’ call. They believed them to be trustworthy, and their message resonated with their own held beliefs and understandings. Although later on, after the killing of the blogger and the rise in the counter-propaganda narrative, they disengaged because the main injustice had been dealt with,

and it became more confusing and less clear cut. So once the initial demands had been met the counter-discourse went from anti-hanging and the ICT, to participants being atheists and non-believers which led to a change in the dynamics of Shahbag. Even the political structures and parties went from supporting Shahbag to arresting the bloggers of Shahbag for blasphemous posts. The Shahbag Moment had fulfilled its purpose, and there was no need for a further sustained ongoing movement.

The Government's interaction was pivotal for the Shahbag Moment. While there may be some debate as to their motives, the result is what is significant. The Government may have been responding out of expediency, to appease the masses, or to try and control and contain them to prevent a riot, or because they believed in the cause. Does it matter what the political motives were as long as they responded to the demands of the moment and offered a solution so that change happened? Ultimately the will of the people was allowed to be expressed, and a solution was found that led to a major impact on the policy and practice in relation to the ICT trials, and the acceptance of Bangladesh society in the wider narrative of the need to have justice for the victims and survivors of the Liberation War. It is, however, unlikely that the Government would have instigated these changes without the 'will of the people' having been expressed so clearly, and in such volume, in the way that it was during the Shahbag Moment.

8.4 CONCLUSION

The Being – Doing – Impact Model is based on the Instrumental Freedoms Framework (Social, Political, Economic, Transparency and Security), and developed with Critical Theoretical insights and the findings from the Shahbag Moment case histories. The model offers a new way to analyse future social moments. In the contemporary context this Model can be used to assess social phenomena where a collective entity forms a critical mass to effect change in structure and practice for a given moment in time.

The theoretical contribution of the research situates social change within the sphere of civil society at a given scene. It has as its starting point the agency and capability of the individual in the contemporary context to have an impact on practice and structure. By exploring the literature on agency and the relationship between structure and agency, I have used Foucault's understanding of power, resistance and the ethical self to show that agency must be prior to the articulation of capability. That agency concurs with Caldwell's (2007) understanding of decentered and embodied agency being a necessary component for an individual to effect change. The research has built on Sewel (1992) and Rotman's (2008) work on how agency is located and negotiated within and between different networked identities and

positionings through distributive agency to develop collective agency. It expands on Sen's Instrumental Freedoms using critical theoretical insights, and emphasises the significance of security and trust as key components for collective capabilities to form.

It also highlights the key elements of emotions and culture in generating organic solidarity and a critical mass in order to effect change in structure and practice. It demonstrates how these key elements generate 'anterior responsibility' 'to take on for a duty that constitutes him as the ethical subject...' (Comim et al, 2018, p.97) and challenge standardised agency. It also overcomes 'adaptive preferences' 'a lifelong habituation ... to accept ... the current negative situation with cheerful endurance' (Sen, 1984, p.204), so that collective agency capabilities can form in a social moment. The case histories illuminate how, akin to Hardt and Negri's multitude, a critical mass can form for a common cause and then dissipate having impacted on structure and practice. I have argued that this is possible with organic intellectuals and through organic solidarity generating a collective consciousness because on an injustice. Thus, a social moment is enough for a critical mass to form in a peaceful, cultural scene, to have an impact on structure and practice in the contemporary context. The possibility of this occurring can be assessed using the Instrumental Freedoms and capabilities within a given context based on the Being–Doing–Impact Model.

This research builds on, and bridges the gaps in, existing literature from different academic disciplines to offer a new model for understanding social moments and collective agency capabilities. I have used critical theoretical insights to build on Sen's Instrumental Freedoms which has not been undertaken before. I have contributed to knowledge by undertaking research on the Shahbag event in a new and different way as a social moment of collective agency capability. I have published a book Chapter, 'Collective Agency Capability: how capabilities can emerge in a social moment' in Comim et al. (2018) *New Frontiers of the Capability Approach*, on this topic. Moreover, my article 'Collective agency capabilities of the Shahbag Moment in Bangladesh' has been accepted by the Journal *Contention*. I have also presented my research findings at UK and international conferences including ISTR (International Society Third Sector Research) in Japan and HDCA (Human Development Capability Association) in South Africa (paper accepted for presentation but unable to attend).

This research has helped us to understand how and why a critical social moment of collective agency and capability emerges and declines. It has developed an understanding of the conditions and catalysts involved, the role of agency and resistance by individuals and collectively. Also, the research has identified how Instrumental Freedoms change during the

social moment and how the moment can have an impact on a responsive structure and a resisting practice.

There have been a number of challenges when undertaking this research, as part of the literature reviewed, undertaking the case histories and how to demonstrate the potential impact of my research. Firstly, the biggest challenge has been the need to review literature from a range of different academic disciplines and theoretical perspectives. This was in order to find ways to address the gaps in existing literature, exploring overlaps between different academic disciplines and bridging insights in order to understand modern social phenomena. Secondly, I was undertaking research in an environment, with daily violent *hartals* and strikes in Bangladesh. Also, the research on the case histories was carried out two years after the Shahbag Moment, and so was retrospective in nature which impacted on some of the responses. Thirdly, as the research only permitted one in-depth case study, in a particular context, there are also limitation regarding generalisability which have been outlined in Chapter Four. However, the theoretical model developed can be used to analyse other social phenomena and their collective agency capability.

From this research it is evident that new forms of social collective entities are emerging that affect change in structure and practice in the contemporary context, and which do not fit existing models. The case history of the Shahbag Moment shows that limited pre-organisation can lead to a rapid development of a critical mass of individuals from diverse positions, with different networks, in response to a social injustice. It also showed that the speed of social media and communications in the modern era and diverse social networks facilitated the creation of a critical mass. This, coupled with latent historical connections stemming from a major historical event and injustice, nurtured the emergence of organic solidarity. The critical mass was not formed as part of a larger or ongoing movement or campaign, but was a 'social moment'; a time limited scene where all could participate to support the cause. The Shahbag Moment generated solidarity through positive cultural protests, engaging women, children, young people and men from different social networks and fields which led to the critical mass. Individuals participated through their own agency and 'free will' which led to a critical mass which could not be ignored by the systems and structures.

Areas to consider for future research would be firstly in using the Being–Doing–Impact Model on other case study examples in different contexts. An example would be researching whether a physical 'scene' is needed for collective agency capability to emerge. The example in the UK of the Windrush scandal suggests that coverage of the injustice by social, and wider

media creating a 'virtual scene' was able to impact on systems and structures so that policy and practice was changed. However, the even more recent climate change protesters' 'Extinction Rebellion', led by school children and lawyers, did create a physical 'scene', leading to the UK's Government being the first to declare a climate emergency.

A second area to explore would be the impact that being involved in a social moment has on an individual and a community. For example once people have experienced collective agency and capability, would they be more prepared to engage again in a social moment; does the feeling of empowerment, people power, having a meaning or purpose, and being part of history make it worthwhile; what other impacts does participation have on the capabilities of the individual; how does having a social moment impact on future community agency and capabilities.

A final area of research to explore would be in relation to how a social moment would be different if the culture, social and historical context, or political and economic environment was different: for example in an atmosphere of on-going violence can collective agency and capability still emerge; or can it develop in people who are unaware because of communication channels being closed of the implications and injustices underway; or in a culture which sees submission and conformity as a sign of respect and resistance or agency as a moral and social taboo.

Sen's Instrumental Freedoms of capability offer a useful framework within which to assess the move from being to doing, from accepting the status quo and norm to having agency, resisting and acting for change. I have elaborated in detail above on the key freedoms: economic emancipation, social network capital, political empowerment, trust and security, and transparency. The research and case histories have shown how Instrumental Freedoms shifted during the course of the moment leading to the formation of collective agency capabilities: a just economy where resources were mobilised for the common good rather than capitalistic gain; where individuals became highly networked and used their networks and positions for a common cause; where individuals used their relationships to resist changing the way they were and acted for biopower; where communications became open and transparent; and where a scene was co-constructed that was safe and where there was trust and security between all those involved.

However, in this research I have identified a crucial aspect of the success in the formation of the moment, and underlying the trigger of individual agency: the affective

dimension. This was a product of the historical legacy of injustice, which fuelled the solidarity that bound diverse networks together for the social cause. The window of opportunity generated by a widely perceived unjust verdict, motivated individual agency to form the collective critical mass of Shahbag. However ultimately it was those in a diverse range of positions in society that through a change in practice led to a positive change: from Government (politicians and bureaucrats) to the media, and their interaction in co-constructing an impact on structure and practice in response to the free will of the people.

Freedom is only possible if individuals have the agency and capability to resist and if this can be done in a cultural, positive and safe way where structures are open to change in response to the will of the people, as was the case of the Shahbag Moment. In the contemporary context, with social media and communications being so immediate, people from a diverse range of networks can generate a critical mass against an injustice in a given social moment for positive change. This research suggests that this is possible when individuals have the freedom to engage in their own way and on their own terms. In addition, they need solidarity, of their emotional and cultural connection to the social injustice being challenged, and that this gives their lives meaning and purpose. The conditions needed include a just economy, bio-politics, a highly networked society, open communications and where the sphere is secure and those involved trustworthy. To have an impact on structure and practice there must be a critical mass of individuals from a diverse range of positions in society, structures must be responsive and there must be an ongoing practice of resistance. Sustainability of a protest is no longer essential to ensure impact, generating a critical mass virtually or at a scene however is. In the contemporary context social change is possible through a critical social moment where collective agency capabilities are formed, which is time limited and has a unifying aim against a social injustice.

“In a world divided into two halves, the oppressed and the oppressors. I am always with the oppressed”.

(Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Speech at the Non-Aligned Movement Conference, Algiers, 6 September 1973)

9.) APPENDICES

9.1 A: Participants list

SH... Reference	Role in Society	Involvement	Recording Number	Full/Half Interview	Fe/Male
1	Journalist/Writer	Participant	2	F	M
2	Media	Commentator	3	F	M
3	University Provost	Core organiser	4	F	M
3	IT professional	Core organiser	4	F	F
4	Academic	Core advisor	5	F	M
5	Business/Civil Society	Participant	6,7	H	M
6	Academic	commentator	0	H	M
7	MP	Supporter AL	0	H	F
8	MP	Supporter AL	0	H	M
9	Civil Society	Supporter	0	H	M
10	Legal/Govt	Supporter	0	H	M
11	Media	Commentator	8	F	M
12	Theatre/cultural	Supporter	21	H	M
13	Legal	Supporter	0	H	M
14	Civil Society	Supporter CS	0	F	M
15	Journalist	Commentator	16	F	M
16	Civil Society	Supporter NGO	20	F	F
17	Film/business/cultural grp	Core advisor	10	F	M
18	Academic	Commentator	0	F	M
19	Writer	Supporter Cultural	13	F	F
20	Blogger	Core activist	14	F	M
21	MP	Supporter JSD	0	H	F

22	Banker	Participant	16	F	M
22	Banker	Participant	16	F	M
22	Businessman	Participant	16	F	M
23	Politician	Supporter CPB	17	F	M
24	Film/documentary maker	Supporter cultural	18	F	M
24	Film/documentary maker	Supporter cultural	18	F	M
25	Student	Core activist	19	F	M
25	Student	Core activist	19	F	F
26	Blogger	Core organiser	22	F	M
27	Artist	Participant	0	H	M
27	Researcher	Commentator	0	H	F
28	Interpreter NGO	Participant	9	H	F
29	Blogger	Core activist	11,12	F	M
29	Blogger	Core activist	11,12	F	M
30	Journalist/TV	Commentator	23	H	M
31	NGO consultant	Participant	0	H	F
32	Academic	Supporter	25	H	M
33	MP	Supporter	0	H	M
34	Legal	Supporter	0	H	M
35	Young professional	Core organiser	26	F	M
35	Young professional	Core organiser	26	F	M
36	Young professional	Participant	27	F	M
36	Young professional	Participant	27	F	M
36	Young professional	Participant	27	F	M
36	Young professional	Participant	27	F	M
37	MP	Supporter	28	H	M
38	Student Union AL	Core organiser	20	F	M
39	Think tank	Participant	30	F	M
39	Think Tank	Participant	30	F	F
40	MP	Supporter	31	F	M

p1	Lawyer	Participant	1	H	M
p1	Teacher	Participant	1	H	F
P1	Business female	Participant	1	H	F
p1	Teacher	Participant	1	H	F
p1	Businessman	Participant	1	H	M
p1	Mother	Participant	1	H	F
p1	Lawyer	Participant	1	H	M
p1	Journalist/radio	Participant	1	H	F

9.2 B: Question outline

Collective Agency capability of civil society: discourse analysis of the Shahbag Movement in 2013

DRAFT

RESPONSE SHEET

No:

Date:

Open ended Questions

Types of involvement:

Type of participant:

Q1

Do you agree to the interview given the information provided in the participants information sheet?

Please sign and date and provide your email address for feedback on the Consent Form.

Q2

How did you hear about and get involved in the Shahbag movement?

Prompts:

- Before February 2013, during February 2013, after February 2013
- As an activist, participant, indirect supporter, commentator, observer
- Capacity as individual, as part of an organisation, in job role, in social network role
- Economic, political, social aspects of involvement

Q3

What do you consider to be the key processes of decision making and action in the Shahbag movement and how were you involved?

Prompts:

- Key actions staged – rally, 3 min silence, black badge protest, flag and anthem, hunger strike
- Six demands, 21st February
- ICA Amendment allowing the right of Appeal
- Retrial and subsequent trials, violence by Jamaat and police

Q4

Why was it important for you to be involved in the Shahbag movement?

Prompts:

- Involvement in previous movements eg Nirmul Committee mock trials
- How did their involvement change over the timespan of the movement?
- Why did their involvement change eg other commitments, changes in the movement?

- Why did they stop being involved in the movement?

Q5

Reflections on agency of the movement and what was gained by being involved

Approx 45 mins open ended interview.

9.3 C: Media coverage

Triangulation Sources Chronology of Shahbag Movement

Accessed between the 29th October and 10th November 2015 and 26th March 2018:

www.archive.thedailystar.net daily papers between the 5th and 25th February 2013 and January 2013

www.bdnews24.com 'shahbag' search criteria between 5th and 22nd February 2013 and January 2013

www.youtube.com 'shahbag' search and most viewed video's

www.twitter.com/shahbaginfo twitter feed #shahbagsquarelive and #shabag

23rd January – verdict of first trial announced

1a) Daily Star 'Justice at last': reports that the verdict of the first trial gave capital punishment for crimes against humanity and helping the enemy. 'Bangladesh has come out of the culture of silence and vindicated itself through carrying forward a much-needed trial process.'

1b) Daily Star 'Why should we celebrate this verdict?': report states that 'no other Government would have done it'. Freedom fighters during the liberation war were seen as Indian agents, or having strayed from the path of islam, or hinduised, so razakaars were ethic cleansers routing out anything that was of Bengali culture as this was seen as hindu in origin. 'We celebrate the verdict because it starts a process of accountability...it helps to restore our ownership of history... There is a tremendous pent up resentment among the public against those who were well known for their role against our independence.'

1c) Daily Star 'Verdict Report' comments: The first person on trial went into hiding before his arrest warrant was issued, however the maiden judgement was celebrated and raised expectations for future judgements. They stated that Justice was truth in action, but that he must have had people in administration on his side to have known in advance that he was going to be arrested so that he could run away.

1e) Daily Star 'International Media covered it widely': BBC reports on the tribunal as controversial as a Muslim cleric is sentenced to death. New York Times reports it as a fugitive sentenced to death by war crimes tribunal.

31st January – Jamaat demonstrations and threats

1d) Daily Star 'Jamaat flexes muscles': reports that although Jamaat threatens violence their hartal is still authorised by the Government. That Jamaat banks on aggression and is backed by the BNP. Their 'aim is to foil a much-awaited war crimes trial, JI plans massive violent demonstrations to demand the release of top party leaders facing trial' and that this will lead to a mega showdown. That there have been three days of violence across the country as there are 7 top leaders in jail awaiting war crimes trials.

5th February – day that the verdict was announced

5a) Daily Star 'Jammatt warns of civil war': reports that JI calls a hartal, torches buses and says 'don't provoke the country into civil war by delivering a one sided verdict against our leaders...if anything happens to Mulla every house will be on fire' Press release by Acting general Secretary of JI. With 30-40 thousand attending JI rallies and processions the leaders argue that the Government will be responsible for the consequences of the verdict, and that their activists are ready to sacrifice their lives. Also reports that Jammatt is trying to 'reach an understanding' with AL. Online comments to the article ask how dare they threaten the people of Bangladesh when most of them support the trial.

5b) Bdnews24.com '...and the people rise': reports that people believe that the punishment is too light, so are assembling at Shahbag intersection, message going out through social media, Chattro League (the AL party student wing) are reported to be swelling the ranks. 'The souls of the 3,000,000 are crying out for justice'.

6th February – first day of Shahbag protest

6a) DS 'Quader Mullah gets LIFE TERM': reports that 5 out of 6 charges were proved beyond doubt, and that the defence is to appeal the 6th charge of not guilty. Mullah was head of the Islami Chhatra Sbhga, the student wing of JI which played an active role to foil the freedom struggle of Bangladesh during the 9-month war. They report that soon after the verdict people started expressing frustration as they expected the death penalty. Online comments to the article ask if elite influences were the reason he was not given capital punishment, that most people's reactions suggest that they don't agree with the verdict, and that any opposition of AL who get into power would release him. They also comment that the ICT through this verdict is creating future anarchy as it is a mockery at the cost of the grieved and puts the ICT into question. Others comment that demanding capital punishment by the masses is a pure emotional state, asking why they want blood and death.

6b) DS 'Outrage': reports that people are taking to the streets to air anger at Shahbag intersection as a spontaneous reaction with torch processions initiated by the Bloggers Online Activists Network (BOAN). Various Ministers and senior politicians express solidarity with the protesters. It is suggested that political motives are suspected behind the verdict, showing the true colours of the party, asking is this a political game rather than justice, is the ICT a farce. Online comments on the article say that they are ashamed and disgusted at the verdict, that it is not fair justice, that it is a victory for Jammatt. That we must have respect and confidence in the judiciary, but that JI will be encouraged to have another spree of violence. That the ICT trial is not fair and that it betrays the honour of the nation.

6c) DS Different groups comments are reported: 'Verdict Not Acceptable' for witnesses in the trial, not a peoples verdict, as justice has not been done; 'AL allies unhappy' suggest that there is a scope for appeal so the verdict is not final as it still has to go to the Supreme Court; 'War hero's frustrated' and dissatisfied and find the verdict unacceptable; 'Life Term not enough' based on interviews with key personalities quoted as saying that 'the very birth of Bangladesh is being insulted by the verdict', that 'we didn't expect this verdict it is not satisfactory', they ask 'what will happen to the witnesses if the convicts come out of jail, the verdict does not reflect the aspirations of freedom fighters given the culture of impunity.

6d) DS 'Deal with Jammatt' report that inside Government sources suggest that non-negotiable issues are being negotiated, that they are playing with snakes and sensitive issues.

6e) DS Editorial: There is discontent over the lenient verdict, Mullah deserves a stiffer sentence, as the verdict has fallen far short of meeting public expectations.

6f) You Tube (YT) Channel I TV News video (26,436 views): ‘we shall overcome’ song being chanted in the background, as reporter explains that people have come from all over for one demand, justice, not politics, not religion, just justice. He outlines what they will be doing in the coming days and interviews some of the participants ‘...since the verdict, we had to come, the shame of the verdict, we want ‘fashi’ hanging to free us from this injustice to realise the dream of Bangladesh’ and from a blogger ‘..we want justice and hanging of razakaars, we will continue the movement until our demands are met.’

7th February – day before big Rally

7a) DS ‘Thousands join Shahbag sit in’: reports that the demand for capital punishment has the spirit of the movement has spread across the country with spontaneous agitations, with the sentiment of the liberation war rekindled, as they refuse to leave the streets. It began as a people’s movement and has now been joined by parties chanting and singing in unison, painting, hanging effigies, performing plays and dancing. It’s a festival atmosphere in the air with candle vigils in the evenings. The passion and dedication of the young people is impressive, with a collective that is driven to the demonstration by their consciousness. It was also reported that the AL high command had directed the party to stage demonstrations in favour of the trials. Online comments include we are proud to unite against the evil enemy of Bangladesh- joi bangle, we want to uphold the truth by the younger generation, people’s consciousness has awakened as a mass reflex of moral outrage and Shahbag has broken the silence of the good people. But some question why this hasn’t happened for other issues, what the political identity is of those involved, and where the workers are, leisure to have sleepless nights and sit ins is a luxury, the movement is blocking major roads and access to hospitals, they ask is the light sentence just a quid pro quo for an alliance with Jammatt in the next election.

7b) DS ‘Government to appeal against acquittal of Mollah’: reports that the Government is planning to appeal to the Supreme Court against the acquittal of one of the six charges.

7c) DS ‘Jamaat softens stance’: reports that JI have announced a 2-day protest rather than a civil war, which they had originally threatened as they have not been supported by BNP. They claim that they are not worried about Shahbag, that ‘they can handle them in a moment’.

7d) Bdnews24.com ‘Shahbag protest mutual’: reports that BNP students support the movement. That members of BOAN rejected the verdict and called the protest at Shahbag.

7e) Bdnews24.com ‘ Protesters attack Hanif’: reports that an AL leader who came to Shahbag to give a speech had bottles thrown at him and was unable to give a speech, other senior figures went to Shahbag to express solidarity but were not given a chance to give speeches.

7f) YT Washington Post (47,890 views) – same video posted by Guardian 13e – ‘Jubilant flash mob – Shahbag protestors verses the butcher of Mirpur’: shows different student groups wanting the hanging of war criminals, slogans, placards with liberation war slogans and ‘we will stay’, flags, burning effigies of hanging, signing posters and writing comments and pictures.

7g) #Shahbagsquarelive tweets: about petition signing, who is joining and participating in the protests and says that 10,000 are there.

8th February – mass rally

8a) DS ‘No politics please’: reports that the youth, activists, and bloggers will not allow political leaders to address the gathering and are asking ordinary people to speak instead. Demonstrators are showing innovation in portraying their outrage, turning Shahbag into a commune, sharing food. Civil Society and the Government are supporting Shahbag. Online comments agree not to politicise the spontaneous movement based on the national desire as war crimes are a national issue not party political.

8b) DS ‘BNP doubts spirit of youths’: reports that BNP suggest that the Government have staged the demonstration at Shahbag Square to divert attention from the ongoing political debate on a caretaker interim government for the next election. Online comments state that the movement is not staged, it is spontaneous, and that BNP should be casting doubts on the credibility of a movement for justice.

8c) DS Editorial ‘An auspicious event’: states that the liberation war ethos and spirit is not remote from the consciousness of our younger generation. That this has been brought to the fore by the public disdain for the war criminals and the need to repay the debts to the martyrs to whom we owe our independence, and to the women to make them feel that justice has been done, through the spirit of solidarity. Online comments are sceptical that Shahbag could change the verdict with cultural demonstrations and that although we must respect the rule of law, the ICT is not neutral.

8d) Bdnnews24.com ‘Masses rally for death sentence to all war criminals’: reports that the sea of humanity was the grand rally at Shahbag, where all banners of different organisations were removed unless they were relating to the demand for death, to give an apolitical look to the rally. The air was filled with slogans. Dhaka Water and Waste Authorities supplied drinking water, and Dhaka City Corporate mobile toilets. They report that the protest resonates with the masses, so they all turned out to the huge gathering, and no political leader was allowed to speak to the rally.

8e) Bdnnews24.com ‘Cry for Jammāt ban’: reports that that Shahbag movement want to outlaw JI, spread the agitation across the country and call on everyone to boycott all institutions with links to JI.

8f) YT Channel I news (7,267 views): covers the oath at the rally Shahbag Square, slogans made by key individuals, images of hand painted placards, dignitaries giving speeches, all non-political. Commentator states that at 9pm still there is a sea of people, even along the roads to Shahbag Square sitting and doing slogans nonstop, not slowing down. Across Bangladesh similar movements are underway.

8g) YT Desh TV News (14,824 views): covers interviews with many of the participants at the rally asking why they are at the movement, and what they want from the movement. All say they want ‘fashi’ hanging and justice.

8h) YT Kazi Sudipto personal video (47,911 views) ‘Protest at Shahbag Square Bangladesh: Day 4’: no commentary just footage of the different activities, speeches and slogans at the rally, including video of the square from above to show the extent of the movement crowds, as well as coverage of evening activities, with women and children, and cultural activities – capturing the atmosphere of Shahbag.

8i) #shahbagsquarelive: details the fact that children are participating, links to a video of the mass demonstration for capital punishment

9th February – Submission of 6-point demands to Speaker of the Parliament

9a) DS ‘Youth rekindle spirit of ‘71’: reports that tens of thousands of people raised their voice against religious based politics, and demanded capital punishment. They vowed to boycott JI and families flocked to the rally with flags, banners including young school children and college students. Although the movement was launched by BOAN it has transformed into a people movement, people took an oath to continue the movement until the demands were met including the banning of JI, boycotting of businesses. This is another 1971 with slogans against the foreign media’s negative portrayal of Shahbag. Online comments include that Shahbag is a renaissance against the dirty politics of compromise, that we need to keep the spirit of positive activism alive, and that this is an awakening. We need to use this window of opportunity to take Bangladesh forward, with this patriotic historical gathering which depicts the spirit and determination of the people. But others comment that mob justice is not justice and is not democratic and that we need justice to be free and fair.

9b) DS ‘Peace, colour, creativity’: reports on the unique style of protesting, where people from all walks of life, ordinary people are able to express solidarity through a colourful exhibition of artwork, music, peace and harmony with the use of 1971 slogans, songs, poems, drama, art, flowers and candles. Online comments elaborate on this new phenomenon as a platform for the spirit of national unity.

9c) DS ‘Demand for victims ‘right to appeal’’: reports that the victims (represented by the Government) only have a right to appeal if the defendant is acquitted, but that they should have equal rights to appeal the verdict. So Shahbag is demanding that the Government amends the act of the ICT to allow for the equal right of appeal and to try organisations (like in the Nuremberg Trials).

9d) DS ‘Shahbag rally unites nation’: reports that an AL representative stated that the Shahbag movement rally wants to finish the unfinished revolution of the liberation war. That the youth have given their message loud and clear.

9e) DS ‘Entire country in ‘71 mood’: reports on activities across the country in support of the Shahbag movement demands.

9f) DS ‘Spontaneous Support boosts rally organisers’: reports on how people are bringing food and water for the demonstrations and working with the authorities to ensure a safe environment for the protestors.

9g) DS Editorial ‘The demand for justice grows stronger’: argues that the voice of the youth should not be silenced. That the atmosphere at Shahbag was electric, spontaneous, and united

in the call for justice to celebrate and show solidarity for 1971, and to create the ‘sonar bangla’ (golden Bengal) of dreams.

9h) YT ATN Bangla (10,406 views) ‘Shahbag Mass Protest’: covers keynote speeches by key personalities and slogans. Commentary that this is a bloggers movement, that now is the time for justice, that we have waited too long and that the key personalities are very happy that the young people have come out on the street to protest.

9i) #shahbagsquarelive covered tweets on symbolic coffin march, effigy burning and video of the different events.

10th February - Parliamentary debate

10a) DS ‘Government mulls change in appeal scope’: reports that the nonstop movement appears to have forced the Government to consider an amendment to the ECT to protect the equal rights in the law.

10b) DS ‘Delectable different’: reports on an interview with a key organiser that the leadership of the Shahbag movement is not a political group, organisation or network but ordinary people. But that the guiding forces directing and managing the crowds are volunteers and organisers who never imagined that their call would result in something of such magnitude. People see it as their own movement and that is why it is so successful; the movement belongs to everyone. Compromise and patience are needed to reach a common ground between the different groups and networks for the sake of the movements sustainability they have to rise above individual and group identities.

10c) DS ‘100hrs and still counting’: reports on the continuation of the Shahbag movement, and that three papers have published news about the movement that are untrue, that activists have received death threats and have set up a cyber booth at the Shahbag Square.

Bdnews24.com 10a ‘Shahbag battle now on cyberspace’: reports on how cyber warriors are upholding the cause on the net space and facebook.

10d) YT BritBangla24 (23,521 views): Interview with key activist who states that we are not against the justice system, just the verdict, we are not a Government movement but a movement of ordinary people. We need an appeal as urgent, this needs to be addressed based on justice for 1971. This is not about anti-Islam or religion, or politics, just justice, with all types of people participating.

10e) #shahbagsquarelive: mentions the USA student demonstrations, a video of 1971 atrocities, Turkey students showing solidarity

11th February

11a) DS ‘Thank you’: reports that the Prime Minister, at a debate on the 10th in Parliament hails the Shahbag youth and vows to help keep their oath and translate it into action. She expresses solidarity with the 6-point demand that was submitted to the Speaker and agrees to close the loopholes in the current ICT. Online comments include corrupt MP’s also need to be shown equal justice, have to ban JI but also corruption in Government. Is Shahbag an imposition on justice and is it just an AL show.

11b) DS ‘Youth submit do-list for JS (Parliament)’: reports that a six point charter was submitted including the demand for the death penalty for war criminals, the right to appeal against inadequate punishment, to ban JI and all businesses associated with them, and the trial of all those undermining the ICT trials. This is the first formal move by Shahbag.

11c) DS ‘Change law to try Jamaat’: reports that the Government is set to amend the war crimes trial act and that a bill will be placed before the parliament within the week. If the cabinet approves the amendment it will be given retrospective effect.

11d) DS ‘Rally enters 6th day with more vigour’: reports that the Cricket Team and other prominent personalities join Shahbag to show support and that pro liberation is the dominant force in Bangladesh not Jamaat. Online comments include that Shahbag is history in the making, but that there was no permission given for Shahbag to take place where it did as a public protest.

11e) DS ‘Government behind shahabag’: reports that that JI have claimed that Shahbag is a Government plot to create anarchy and force the tribunal to give a verdict of death. Online comments suggest that the list of demands makes clear that Shahbag is a politically backed agenda, but that the voice of our people is being ignored by JI as rape and murder has not place in our religion of Islam.

11f) DS ‘Students flock to shahabag’: reports on how students and teachers and parents are all joining Shahbag to teach and instil the spirit of 71 and nationalism and honour the sacrifices of the martyrs.

11g) Bdnews24.com ‘Indomitable spirit of protesters intact on day 7’: reports that the parliament expressed solidarity with the undying spirit of the campaigners and that the crowds demands have shifted from the death sentence for Mulla to capital punishment for all war criminals, the banning of Jammatt and the boycotting of institutions linked to Jammatt. That the cyber cell has successfully reported and shut down 50 facebook pages and 20 blogs of JI.

11h) Bdnews24.com ‘Defiant crowds battle propaganda war’: reports that human emotions have braved the propaganda war launched by those against the spirit of liberation and have not been deterred from making a call for justice.

11i) Bdnews24.com: Interview with key organiser reports that there is no committee to run the movement, decisions are made after discussions with all the parties involved in the agitation, organisers want to avoid giving the movement a structure as they want to ensure its spontaneity. The tide like inflow of people has added to our courage, but we are tired. We work in turns and in groups while others rest, no one is experienced in organising a movement of this extent, so we are all learning. General people and volunteers are assisting. Our main demand is clear to hang the war criminals. The movement is not bound by a deadline but by a cause. Chattro League (AL student group) presence is at the centre of the protest, all pro liberations student organisations are with us. The movement is not fuelled by anyone, different organisations and individuals ensure arrangements, it is a coordinated effort.

11j) #shahbagsquarelive tweets: about the oath taking video of Bengali's in New York and similar gatherings around the world, the setting up of a 500ft long banner for people to write comments on Shahbag, photos of protests, and the mural of Jahanara Imam (Nirmul Committee), banners to boycott institutions run or owned by JI.

12th February – 3 minutes silence countrywide event

12a) DS 'Provision for appeal endorsed': reports that the cabinet has approved the amendment to be taken to parliament, and that this will allow time to file an appeal within 30 days of the verdict, after which time the law would not have an effect. Online comments ask what the criteria is for amending the law, public pressure?

12b) DS 'Stand up for 3 minutes': reports on the event to be held at 4pm where people can show solidarity for the Shahbag demands if they are unable to attend the movement, many eminent personalities are planning to participate.

12c) DS 'PM worries about the safety of youth': reports that the PM stated that the ensuring the security of the demonstrators at nighttime is very challenging and that they should limit their protests to certain timeframes to allow access to the hospitals nearby.

12e) DS Editorial 'The youth has done its job': argues that the public will has been demonstrated and calls for drawing the curtain over phase one of the process.

13th February

13a) DS 'Solidarity in silence': reports that cars and buses stopped, people came out onto the streets from their homes and offices and stood in silence along the road. It was a transformation, part of history, a countdown in unison.

13b) DS 'Crowds keep swelling at shahbag': reports that people are still participating in Shahbag and at events around the country. That there will be a candle vigil on the 14th across the country to counter Jamaat's planned violence.

13c) DS 'Rally losing neutrality': reports that BNP claims that given the slogans being used the AL are trying to control the movement.

13d) Bdnews24.com 'Spring of protests': reports that the collective memory of the nations has been refreshed; justice may have been delayed but not denied.

13e) YT Guardian video used in 7f

13f) YT Channel I (5,671 views): video of speeches, slogans and children with new rhymes. Slogans include we are Bengali, set fire to the razakaars, catch them, burn them, one demand, that we can be liberated.

13g) #shahbagsquarelive tweets: about solidarity protests in Dubai, pictures from the protests across the world, news coverage, and attack on students by JI youth.

14th February – candle event

14a) DS ‘Spring adds colour zeal’: reflects on the month of spring, Falgoan and the Shahbag movement

14b) DS ‘A place to learn history’: reports on the large number of children who are coming to Shahbag to learn about the history of Bangladesh.

14c) DS ‘Bill on appeal tabled for Sunday’: reports of the Government plans to approve the Bill in a few days to amend the ICT Act to allow for the equal right of appeal and other amendments.

14e) DS Editorial ‘Solidarity in Silence’: reflects on the candle and three-minute silence events and how these send an eloquent message from across the country that we are all united in the demand for justice. But warns that vested groups are taking advantage of Shahbag, including JI papers attack but also the need to allow the freedom of speech to all.

14f) #shahbagsquarelive tweets: coverage of the candle event, pictures of flowers, map of solidarity from around the world for Shahbag, protests in Canada, police security and incident at the bus stands with JI youth.

15th February – Blogger killed in the evening

15a) DS ‘candle lit country’: reports on how people across the country created a sea of floating lights in solidarity with Shahbag.

15b) DS ‘Active behind Shahbag’: reports on the cyber front battle with zero tolerance for propaganda by JI against Shahabg and ICT

15c) Bdnews24.com ‘Uprising Rally’: reports that millions observed the candle vigil in the evening across the country as a show of solidarity. Shahbag the people’s movement has struck a popular chord with almost everyone in the country and with the Bengali diaspora. It is reported that a senior AL member has stated that the Bill being placed before parliament is based on the demand of the protesters.

15d) DS ‘Punishment is less than the crime’: reports that the single verdict seems to have awakened people. Also, that JI and BNP continue to campaign against the trials calling them politically motivated.

16th February

16a) DS ‘Blogger brutally killed’: reports that last night hours after the organisers announced that they would discontinue the 24-hr blockade and hold 7hr daily protests instead, a key blogger was killed outside his home. It gives details of his funeral and that Shahbag will have a mass rally on the 26th March which is the 20th anniversary of the Nirmul Committee’s Peoples court.

16b) DS ‘War Hero’s Return’: reports on how the freedom fighters have joined Shahbag to finish the fight once and for all, and that this has reignited the spirit of the movement.

17th February – Parliament passing of Bill

17a) DS ‘Grief turns into strength’: reports on the reaction of the people at Shahbag to the bloggers killing.

17b) DS ‘Rajib targeted for his blog’: reports that he had been branded by JI online as an atheist, and that JI had stated that it was the duty for all Muslims to kill atheists.

17c) DS ‘JS may pass bill today’: reports that the amendment bill is tabled in parliament today and that the state may file an appeal against the Mullah verdict next week. It reports that the Government has moved to bring the changes in view of the ongoing mass movement of Shahbag in the capital and elsewhere in the country as the existing provision is discriminatory.

17d) DS Editorial ‘Rajib’s sacrifice will not go in vein’ reflects on the need to have justice

17e) DS ‘Ongoing Shahbag Movement’: reports that Shahbag has reverted back to the 24hrs program because of Rajib’s death, but that this should not be for a long time as there is a security issue, hospital access and traffic problems. That they need to go to the next phase and slow down and let the legal process take its due course.

18th February

18a) DS ‘Tribunal free to try JI’: reports that the parliament passed the amendment bill and included the trail of organisations, a key demand of campaigners, and empowered the Government, informants and complainants to appeal verdicts retrospectively with effect from 2009. It reports that JI have stated that the amendment will lead to civil war as it is wiping out Islamic idealism and putting the country into anarchy. The addition proposal to try organisations was added to the bill during the debate and was not in the original bill tabled. It also reports that BNP MP’s who usually try and delay the bills in parliament did not do it on this occasion.

18b) DS ‘Cheers from Shahbag’: reports that the Shahbag protesters have defied the JI hartal, and that the amendment has also revoked state powers to give clemency to anyone convicted of war crimes. The passing of the amendment bill has been hailed as the first achievement of the movement, but that they will continue until the six demands have been met. They have a plan for a national program of hoisting the flag and singing the national anthem. Online comments suggest that it is time for the Shahbag protest to end because of the inconvenience to common people. That the nation has shown and given full support and now it is time to move ahead with normal business. They don’t want to see any more killing of protestors, the Shahbag movements has fought for the cause and everyone has contributed.

18c) DS ‘Under threat yet resolute’: reports on JI death threats and the request by key protesters that law enforces increase security and protect front line activists. They will resist JI hartals and plan to change tactics.

18d) DS ‘Verdict rejected by people’: reports on a BNP rally that argues that the people rejected the verdict and so the Government has no moral right to be in power. But it also reports that the rally was organised with their alliance partner JI, given the present situation and that it might give a bad impression about BNP. It also reports that BNP stated that if they came to power, they would continue to try the war criminals. They criticise the Shahbag movement for being an AL movement as the PM supported it. Online comments suggest that

BNP are liars, that they haven't expressed solidarity with the Shahbag movement and that when they were last in power, they appointed JI leaders as ministers.

18e) DS 'It will lead the country to anarchy': reports that Jammata have stated that they will push the country to civil war, that the Shahbag movement organisers have created anarchy and defamed Islam and that the Government is trying to eliminate Islamic values. It also reports that Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch had urged the Government not to pass the amendment as this would raise questions about the trial.

18f) Bdnews24.com 'Shahbag mass rally February 21st': reports that Shahbag is continuing the nonstop sit in demonstrations and that they have requested that all media go to the media cell of Gonojagaran Moncho first, and that they are not collecting money just food.

18g) #shahbagsquarelive tweets: protests in Paris to support Shahbag, attack on JI paper and hypocrisy of ATN news and Islami Bank who are funded by JI.

19th February

19a) DS 'Hartal for war criminals fails': reports that all hoisted black flags for those killed and wore black badges. That there is a grand rally planned for the 21st and that everyone should write letters to the martyrs and tie them to balloons which will be released on the 20th.

19b) DS 'PM worried about security and health of protestors': reports that the PM has expressed concern as one protestor died of a heart attack and there is growing threats of violence. But groups are still joining Shahbag and showing solidarity.

19c) YT ATN Bangla (12,782 views): showing the Shahbag protest at night, with candles, singing and interviews of women participating

19d) YT Al Jazeera (39,149 views) 'The Stream – Bangladesh rising voices. Is Shahbag Bangladesh Tahrir Square?': the presenters explore the use of social media for the movement stating that it is the biggest mass demonstration in recent times in Bangladesh triggered by the war crimes verdict. It repeatedly shows videos of the Shahbag protestors and violent aggression by police elsewhere in Dhaka. Presenters ask if the Government is using Shahbag as a distraction to cover the inadequacies of its administration, and states that supporters of Mullah are striking with BNP against the Government. They state that not allowing political parties on stage is unprecedented and asks if Shahbag is significant. Respondents suggest that it shows the agency of the people, that the selection of Shahbag as an historical site to mobilise the common people has meant that the youth feel and have taken ownership of the movement, that it is empowering and intergenerational, with women participation in a public space taking ownership for the accountability of justice. The presenters ask about the death of the blogger and its impact as it was not expected. Respondents state that Shahbag was organised, spontaneous, non-violent and a unique response given that violent political scenarios was the norm. That it happened organically, with the beauty being that there was now leadership calling on people to attend but it was people acting on their own consciousness, with leadership emerging. Through blogs and tweets a sense of voice and strength to demand something and gain a positive reaction has built the confidence of the collective, it is changing the face of tired old politics. A video is shown criticising Shahbag and the flawed ICT process as not progressing liberal values as they are demanding hanging, and asking whether the retrospective law that has been passed is to appease popular demands,

questioning the rights of the defendant. The presenters state that academics believe that rape was first used as a form of torture in the 1971 war for Bangladesh and asks if that is why women are playing such a prominent role in Shahbag. Respondents state that women have always played a leading role in the politics and development of the country, but that the raw wound of shame is still there, and that the movement is civilized enough got women to participate. They conclude that the Shahbag is a call for justice with the message that by ceasing agency we can be the determinants of our country's future history.

20th February – day of symbolic balloon releasing with letters to martyrs

20a) DS 'Out with a new trick': reports on the smear campaign against Shahbag using religious sentiments to confuse people. The propaganda questions the motives of the young people, saying that the bloggers have been posting anti-Islamic writings and undertaking anti-social activities at Shahbag. It reports that the Government want to stop 'hate' and the hurting of religious sentiments, while BNP accuses the Government of anti-Islamic activities. It reports on leaflets that are being distributed which state 'Foil the conspiracy of the Awami atheists in the name of the Shahbag Movement, demanding death to the bloggers.

20b) DS 'Its propaganda': reports on the Shahbag plans to take the movement to the grassroots and ignore the propaganda. Online comments suggest that the blogs are full of anti-Islamic comments, that men and women are all together all night, that there are no prayers at Shahbag.

20c) DS Editorial: argues that because of Shahbag the ICT law came under public scrutiny and an amendment was passed. But that the JI of 1971 is not the same as the JI of 2013, so could the organisation be tried?

21st February – Language Movement Day rally

21a) DS 'Target Friday': reports on the plans by JI to use the Friday Jumma prayers to create anarchy against the Shahbag movement and that they are punished, or they will call a hartal using different mosques and groups. It also reports that BNP denounces Shahbag youth for anti-Islamic activities. It reports that the JI have stated that if the Government fails to punish the bloggers, they will say the Government is atheist.

21b) DS 'Women in forefront': reports on the fact that in a country where the public sphere is dominated by men, women and girls have found a safe space at Shahbag, staying all nights on the streets and that this has emancipated women.

22nd February- planned JI counter activities

22a) DS 'Act before March 26th': reports on Shahbag's fresh program countrywide from the 7th March and to wind up the nonstop movement at Shahbag and that they have issued an ultimatum to the Government to bring war crimes charges against JI and ban them. But that they will gather again at Shahbag before every verdict is announced to prevent Jammatt violence. Religion is personal, the state is for all, and they are starting a mass signature campaign around the country.

22b) DS 'Loss, gain in 17 days': reflects that Shahbag is a manifestation of the strength and unity for the war crimes trial and not just part of the AL agenda.

22c) Bdnews24.com ‘Call from Shahbag for nationwide protests’: reports that after JI attacks on mosques and Shoheed Minars (Monuments for the Liberation War and Language Movement), Shahbag organisers have called for a nationwide protest.

22d) #shahbagsquarelive tweets: that the Shoheed Minar in Sylhet was vandalised by Islamic fanatics.

23rd February

23a) DS ‘Jamaat allies strike terror’: reports that JI attacked Shoheed Minars, burnt national flags, took mikes from Imams at Friday prayer, attacked journalists and cars and Dhaka University student halls as Shahbag bloggers have insulted Islam. They attacked the police using handmade bombs, guns, sticks with 4 killed, 1000 injured chanting slogans against Shahbag. That the police arrested 174 protestors.

24th February

24a) DS ‘Terrorists’: reports that Shahbag activists call the JI terrorists, that people are still participating and that there has been criticism from journalists, MP’s, mosques, and newspaper at JI’s violence.

28th February

28a) YT Desh TV Daily Prothon Alo ‘Shahbag Ullash’: video report on the celebration at Shahbag when the 3rd case at the ICT announced and given the death sentence, saying that this is a victory for Shahbag. The video shows lots of young male students shouting and jumping around rather than the usual scene at Shahbag of circles of different people singing etc.

Additional coverage over subsequent months sporadic:

26th March 2013 – DS ‘Government Silence deplored’: reports that Shahbag youth remind Government of 6-point demand and ultimatum and Governments failure.

3rd April 2013 – DS ‘Three bloggers arrested’: reports that Shahbag bloggers have been arrested. (later released)

9.4 D: Actor analysis

Actor Analysis coding patterns

STAGE A – BEING

Actor Role	TOTAL	Core Activist /3	Core Advisor /2	Core Organiser /4	Participant /9	Supporter: NGO /6	Supporter: Political /8	*Supporter: Structural /4	Commentator: Media /4	Commentator: Other /3	Real Time Social/Media Coverage
Code Group											
i)Liberation War	27	3	2	2	5	5	4	0	4	2	13
ii)Wider context	6	1	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Practice & Structure	12	3	1	2	2	2	1	0	1	0	0
Jl	20	3	1	4	5	2	2	0	2	1	9
iii) Injustice	28	3	1	4	7	3	3	1	4	2	15

STAGE B – DOING

Actor Role	TOTAL	Core Activist /3	Core Advisor /2	Core Organiser /4	Participant /9	Supporter: NGO /6	Supporter: Political /8	*Supporter: Structural /4	Commentator: Media /4	Commentator: Other /3	Real Time Social/Media Coverage
Code Group											
i) Problem Solving	18	2	0	0	5	3	2	1	3	2	5
Meaning	26	3	0	3	6	5	3	1	3	2	2
Identity / Unity	28	2	1	2	7	5	4	1	4	2	13
ii) Political Opportunity Structures	29	3	2	4	8	2	4	0	4	2	28
iii) Resource Mobilization	24	2	1	4	8	0	4	0	4	1	3
Agency	23	2	1	4	5	3	3	0	3	2	23
Decision Making	21	3	0	4	3	3	5	0	3	0	9
iv) Emotions	20	1	1	0	6	3	3	0	4	2	9
Non violence	21	1	2	3	6	3	3	0	2	1	16
Security & Women	13	2	1	0	4	1	2	0	2	1	9
v) Youth	31	3	2	4	6	5	5	1	3	2	11
Social/media	30	3	1	4	8	4	4	1	3	2	12
CS/NGO role	18	2	1	3	3	3	2	0	4	0	0

STAGE C – Impact

Actor Role	TOTAL	Core Activist /3	Core Advisor /2	Core Organiser /4	Participant /9	Supporter: NGO /6	Supporter: Political /8	*Supporter: Structural /4	Commentator: Media /4	Commentator: Other /3	Real Time Social/Media Coverage
Code Group											
i) Causal mechanisms	14	3	1	1	5	2	1	0	1	0	0
ii) Practice	25	2	2	4	7	3	2	1	3	1	4
Structure	22	3	2	4	3	3	3	0	3	1	13
iii) Leadership	18	2	1	2	4	4	2	0	4	0	1
Unintended consequences	25	3	1	4	5	3	5	0	4	0	7

9.5 E: Images of the Shahbag Moment in February 2013:

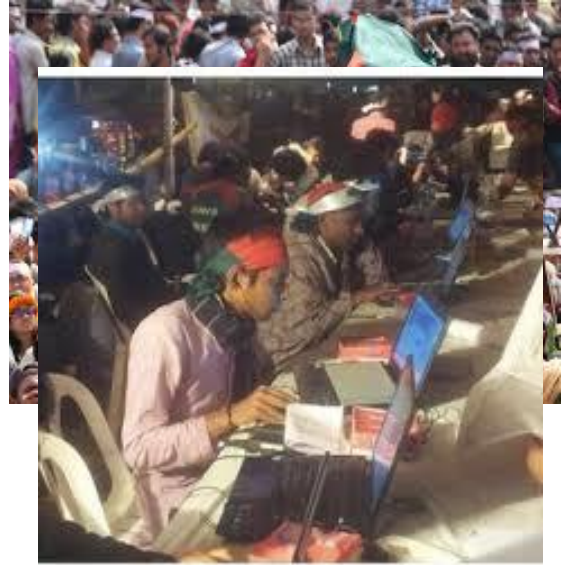


শাহবাগে পাতকাল পরিণত হয় জালসমুদ্র। শাহবাগে মানুষের ভোগদেবে ঘুরছিল যারা ভেঙে গেছিল একলাফ। অমানুষেরা থেকে রক্ষণা করা হয় আমরদেশী মানুষ কর্মসূচি

—সংবাদে রাসদে রিপোর্ট







Social Media Coverage analysis generated by [sna](#) participation:



Map of those using #shahbag tweet

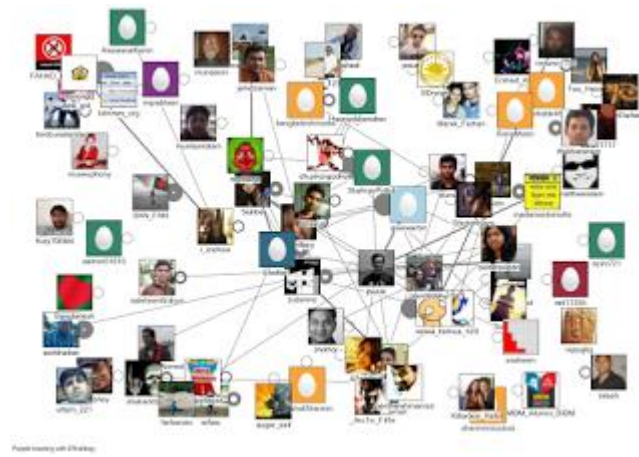


Analysis of #shahbag using NodeXL:

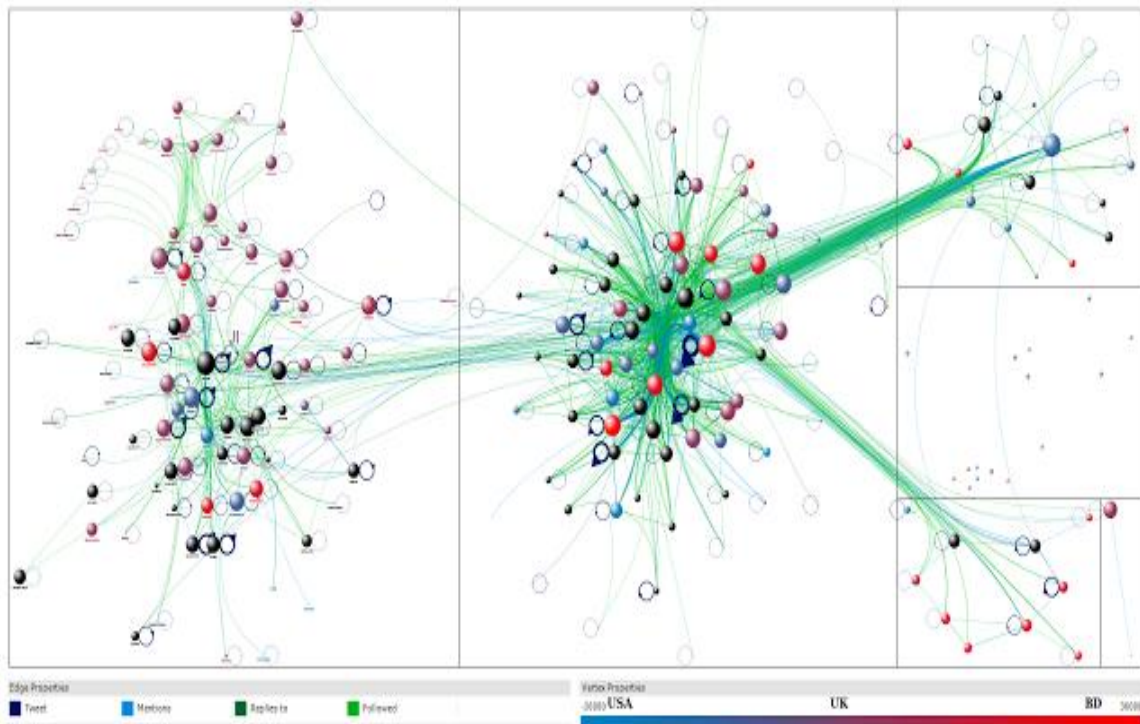
26 February 2013



13th February 2013 (left) and start of Shahbag 7th February (right)



Regional use of #shahbag: Red Bangladesh, Purple UK and Blue USA



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