



# **Confronting the Juggernaut of Extraction**

*Local, National and Transnational Mobilisation against the  
Phulbari Coal Mine in Bangladesh*

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# **Abstract**

## **Confronting the Juggernaut of Extraction: Local, National and Transnational**

### **Mobilisation against the Phulbari Coal Mine in Bangladesh**

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A massive open-cast coal mine was proposed for Phulbari in 1994, with the support of the government and international financial organisations. Threatened by displacement, the apparently powerless community mobilised against the mine. Allied with the national and the transnational activist organisations, they successfully stopped the mine. This remarkable success is the subject of the thesis.

This resistance is compared quantitatively with the incidence of protests in 397 other mines in the South Asia. Predictors of protest include density of population, proportion of area under forest cover, and ownership by a multinational company. These factors alone would predict a high probability of protest in Phulbari. To understand how the resistance unfolded and why it was successful, the thesis relies on ethnographic evidence. I conducted participant observation and interviewed sixty-four individuals in Phulbari and Dhaka in Bangladesh and in London.

Mobilisation against the mine can be explained in part by dialogic framing. Local challengers continuously opposed the dominant discourse of development. Crucially, they shifted their identity to legitimize their opposition to the mine by tagging it with nationalism. As a result, local resistance established links with national left-wing activists. Mobilisation culminated in a mass march of 70,000 in 2006, which was fired on by government forces, with several casualties. Repression failed to quail the resistance. Continued mobilisation was motivated by emotional responses like anger, and facilitated by cultural practices like the obligatory funeral procession.

Media reports of the repression catapulted the resistance on to the global stage. This alone is not sufficient to explain the formation of a transnational alliance against the mine. This was maintained by the presence of a large community of Bangladeshi living in Britain, and the mediating role of the left-wing activists in Bangladesh; both groups could translate between locals and western NGOs. This transnational coalition impeded the mining company by targeting international financial organisations, Western governments, the government of Bangladesh, and investors in London. As a result, the company's share price has collapsed and there seems little prospect of the project proceeding.

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Responsibility of the contents of this thesis lies with me – all mistakes are mine. This thesis is dedicated to those who continue to resist enormous projects of development that force displacement around the world.

Samina Luthfa  
Oxford 2012

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## List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEC	Asia Energy Corporation
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AIM	Alternative Investment Market
AL	Awami League
ASK	Ain o Salish Kendra
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BDR/BGD	Bangladesh Rifles/ Border Guards
BIC	Bank Information Centre
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalists Party
CS	Cultural Survival
DfID	Department for International Development
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GCM	Global Coal Management
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
IAP	International Accountability Project
JACSES	Japan Centre for Sustainable Environment and Society
JI	Jamaat-e Islami
KSU	Khasi Student Union
LMN	London Mining Network
LSE	London Stock Exchange
MAC	Mines and Communities
MAP	Mangrove Action Project
OGCP	Oil-Gas Committee, Phulbari
PCC	Phulbari Community Council
PCP	Phulbari Coal Project
PPC	Phulbari Protection Committee
RAB	Rapid Action Battelion
RBS	Royal Bank of Scotland
SHED	Society for Human and Environment
UCIL	Uranium Corporation of India Limited
UN	United Nations
WDM	World Development Movement

## Glossary of Non-English Words

<i>adivasi(s)</i>	–Indigenous communities
<i>ain</i>	– Law
<i>andolon</i>	– Movement
<i>assar</i>	– Afternoon prayer
<i>Bangla</i>	– Bengali
<i>Bhil</i>	– Tribal group
<i>biplobi</i>	– Revolutionary
<i>boti</i>	–Traditional Kitchen Knife
<i>Buno</i>	– Tribal group
<i>chhabbishe</i>	– 26 <sup>th</sup>
<i>chapaiya</i>	– People from Chapai Nawabganj (a district near Dinajpur)
<i>Choto Jamuna</i>	–Little Jamuna river
<i>dalal(s)</i>	–Brokers working for the company
<i>dol</i>	–Party
<i>Dorgria Kondh</i>	– Tribal group
<i>Faraizi</i>	– Name of an 18 <sup>th</sup> century rural movement in Bengal
<i>fard-e-kyfia</i>	– Community obligation
<i>fard</i>	– Obligation
<i>gayebana janazah</i>	– Funeral in absence of a dead body
<i>gherao</i>	– Blockade
<i>gono</i>	– People's
<i>gonotatric</i>	– Democratic
<i>haat</i>	– Rural weekly market
<i>hartal</i>	– Strict and disruptive form of Strike where everything remains closed in protest
<i>janazah</i>	– Funeral of Muslims
<i>khas</i>	– Government owned
<i>Kol</i>	– Tribal group
<i>kendra</i>	– Centre
<i>mouza(s)</i>	– Revenue collection unit of Mughal rulers that continues to be the smallest administrative

	unit of rural Bangladesh
<i>moncho</i>	-- Platform/ stage
<i>Oraon</i>	– Tribal group
<i>Pahan</i>	– Tribal group
<i>punorgothito</i>	– Reconstituted
<i>rakkha</i>	– Protection
<i>samajtantric</i>	– Socialist
<i>Santal</i>	– Tribal group
<i>shalish</i>	– Resolution
<i>shanghhati</i>	– Solidarity
<i>Tebhaga</i>	– Literally one third, but it is the name of the famous sharecroppers' movement
<i>Tonko</i>	– Name of another share –croppers movement
<i>upazila(s)/thana(s)</i>	– Sub-districts

# List of Place Names Used

## Bangladesh

### Districts

Dinajpur

Dhaka

Khulna

(Chapai) Nawabganj

Pabna

Rajshahi

Srimongal

Sylhet

### Sub-districts

Birampur

Parbotipur

Phulbari

Nawabganj

Other areas

Bibiana

Magurchora

Sunderbans

Tipaimukh

## India

### States

Andhra Pradesh

Chhattisgarh

Jharkhand

Madhya Pradesh

Meghalaya

Maharashtra

Orissa

Uttarakhand

West Bengal

### Districts

Bangalore

Dehradun

Hyderabad

Kalahandi

Surat

West Khasi Hills

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

In a small town called Phulbari in northern Bangladesh, a multinational extraction company proposed to develop an open-cast mine, the Phulbari Coal Project (Figure 1.1). The proposed mine threatened to displace more than one hundred thousand people (Hoshour 2010).<sup>1</sup> From 2005, local inhabitants of Phulbari and nearby districts started protesting against the development of the mine to resist threats of displacement, environmental loss and damage to national energy security. In 2006, state forces repressed a mass rally of seventy thousand people demonstrating against the mine. Three people were killed and more than one hundred injured. After the repression, protestors lashed back, took full control of the town and the vicinity, and forced the government to postpone development of the mine. The London-based mining company's share price plummeted and transnational human rights organisations were alerted. Later, the local protestors managed to initiate alliances at the transnational level. The development of the mine has so far been halted. Through national and transnational media, the protests had become widely known as the 'Phulbari Resistance' within the transnational activists' circle.

What needs to be understood is how these protestors have so far succeeded against such powerful forces, which include the Government of Bangladesh, the company, the Asia Energy Corporation<sup>2</sup>, its investors, commercial banks and the Asian Development Bank (AEC 2006, GCM 2007), all of which are conspicuously more powerful than the local challengers, who live in a remote corner of Bangladesh. This thesis investigates how this apparently powerless community succeeded in stopping the development of the mine despite strong pressure from the state, a multinational company and its powerful financial backers.

Since 2005, the resistance has achieved a great majority of support from local inhabitants of Phulbari, Parbatipur, Nawabganj and Birampur (four sub-districts that will

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<sup>1</sup> The numbers are disputed. The company says 40,000 and activists say 220,000 people would be displaced. The Government of Bangladesh's Expert Committee reported that more than 100,000 would be displaced. I use the last estimate as an official account.

<sup>2</sup> In January 2007, the company changed its name into Global Coal Management Ltd. Now it is known as GCM Resources PLC. More on the name change will be discussed later.

be affected by the mine). In the local field, protestors include people from across social and political divisions: men and women, indigenous communities and majority Bangalis, town-based landless labourers and farmers with large land holding, and members of all political parties such as the Awami League, BNP, Jamayate Islami, Jatio Party and most of the left parties. At the national level, allies of the resistance include the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Power, Port and Mineral Resources of Bangladesh (henceforth, National Committee), which is an alliance of far-left political parties and independent intellectuals of the country. Also included are Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bangladesh Environmental Movement), Society for Human and Environmental Development (SHED), Ain o Shalish Kendra (ASK), and Nijera Kori. At the transnational level, individuals and advocacy organisations such as the Bank Information Centre, Mines and Communities, World Development Movement, International Accountability Project and London Mining Network support the resistance through articulation of their grievances in the global arena. The National Committee and its volunteers also mediate between the local and the transnational protestors.

Since 2004, with the help of all of these organisations, the protestors – besides halting the mine – have achieved the following: they have elected one of the local leaders of the protests as the chairman of the Phulbari *upazila porishod* (sub-district council), and another as the chairman of the Phulbari municipality. They have compelled three consecutive governments to continue the suspension of the mine. Furthermore, they have also forced the Asian Development Bank and Barclays Capital to withdraw support from the mining venture. The mining project has been labelled as a ‘risky’ investment by industry professionals (Carr 2006) and the UN Experts (UN 2012). Lastly, the resistance has damaged the company’s reputation to such an extent that it has had to change its name twice. This name change will be discussed in greater detail later on in this chapter.

Scholars have identified a major shift of investment in the extractive industry from the North to the South over the last two decades (Bebbingdon et al. 2008: 12-20; Bridge 2004 : 407-409; Oliver-Smith 2010:25). The repercussions of this shift have been evident in the rise of local resistance to mining ventures from communities who do not want mines on their land. Nonetheless, it is to be noted that people facing the threat of dispossession by mining do not always resist. Around the world, many dams and thousands of open-cast mines have been developed with little or no resistance. The few exceptions have, however, attracted a lot of scholarly and activist attention (Baviskar 2004; Doyle 2002; Horton 2010; Kalafut and Moody 2008; Obi 2000; Oliver and

Rothman 1999; Taylor 2011; Widener 2007). The Phulbari mine is one of those exceptional mines that faced resistance. An analysis of how and why people in one of the poorest corners of the world were able to confront the mineral industry will provide valuable insight into contemporary resistance against mining.

Accordingly, studying this resistance is pertinent for following reasons: firstly, a debate exists about the impact of transnational coalitions on the local protestors' resistance against mining. Some scholars have identified risks and burdens associated in coalescing with transnational activists (Downing and 2002; Doyle 2002; Holden 2005; Kirsch 2007; Muradian, Martinez-Alliers and Correa 2003; Obi 2000; Widener 2007) while others have found that working as a transnational coalition has a positive impact on the outcome of anti-mining resistance (Anguelovski 2011; Khagram, Riker and Sikkink 2002; Taylor 2011; Tsing 2005). In light of this debate, this thesis will investigate how these particular protestors were able to succeed, overcoming the potential shortcomings of transnational coalitions.

Secondly, studies about transnationally linked protests do not always recognise or identify the important role of emigrant mediators in mobilising local and transnational resistance. I appreciate that the presence of emigrant mediators is not a pre-requisite for all transnational movements. For example, Irish immigrants to the US have played an important mediating role in Irish politics but transnational activists fighting against domestic violence on women might not need such mediation. This research investigates how national protestors and emigrants mediate between the local and the transnational. Thirdly, most studies of social movement focus on the opposition to government, for example, study of Polish workers' strike in Warsaw (Barker 2001) or Indian protests against the development of the Narmada Dam (Baviskar 2004) were against their respective governments. This thesis examines opposition against private companies and its financiers and provides an analysis of the mining industry by tracking the relationship between the company and its protestors through their actions against each other. Fourthly, studies of contemporary anti-mining resistance often have to tackle pre-existing mining-related conflict, identity-based turmoil and complex land tenure problems. Since Bangladesh has no history of open cast mining, the Phulbari resistance provides an opportunity to study the initiation and development of the local, the national and the transnational mobilisation in a less analytically complex context.

I recognise that studying only one case, that is the Phulbari Resistance, poses its limits to the strength of this analysis. Therefore, this study presents a larger comparative

context by providing an analysis of the geographical and aggregate factors that influenced protests against 398 mines in India and Bangladesh in order to identify the key predictors of protests against mines. This analysis is important also because it will demonstrate why open-pit mines have generated so much community resistance in this region during the last two decades. For example, search of protests against mine in Asia retrieved news of mining protests by communities against 27 mines of which 21 was in India and Bangladesh.<sup>3</sup> As such, this thesis makes a quantitative contribution to our understanding of popular protests against the extractive industry in South Asia.

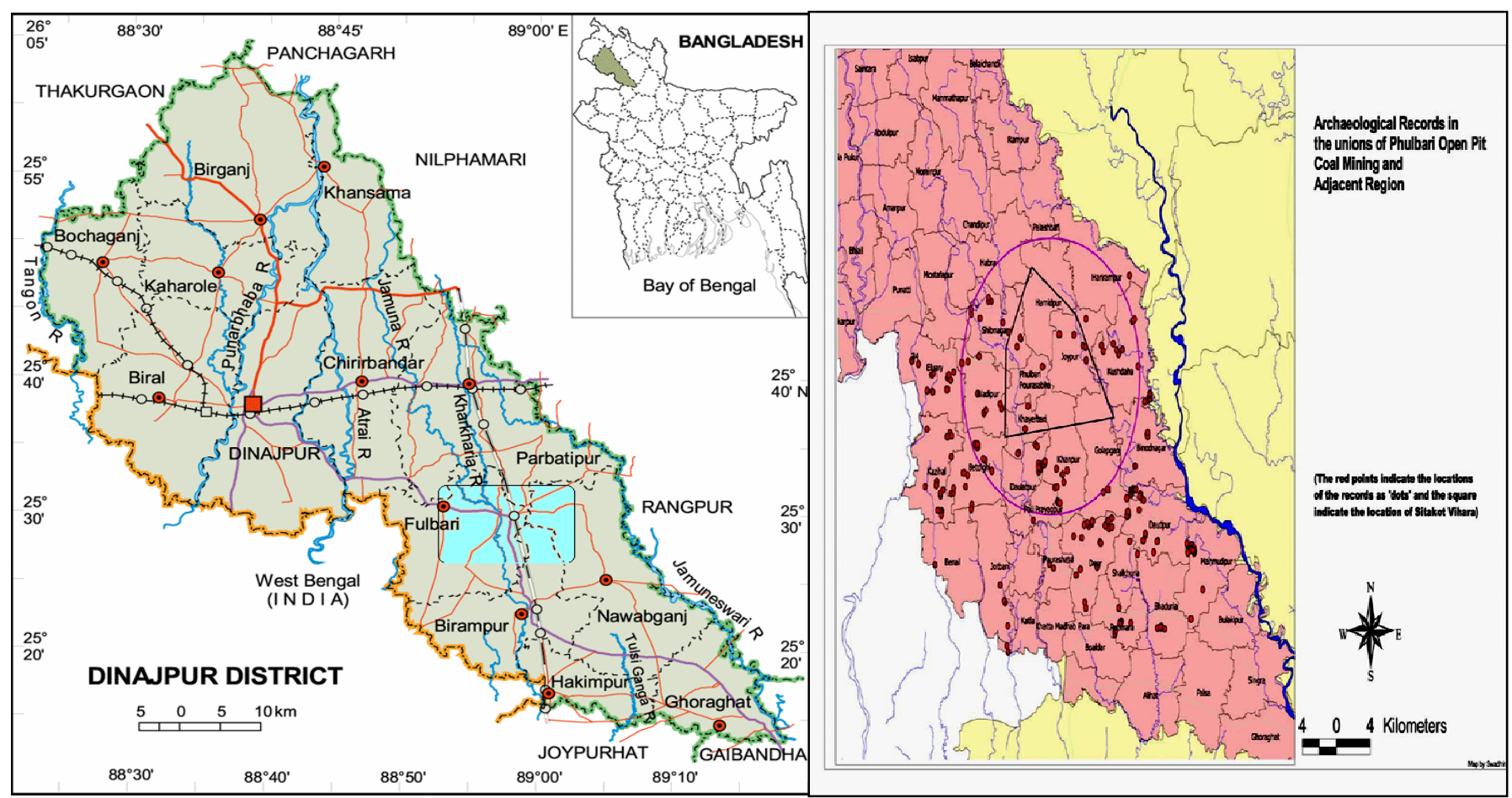
In light of the fact that the Phulbari Coal Project was supported by very powerful forces and proposed jobs, monetary compensation, electricity, how the protestors mobilise on a massive scale against this project, gain diverse supporters and manage to stop the mine remain a puzzle. In order to understand why this has been the case for the last seven years, the following questions are crucial: 1) why was there a large-scale mobilisation against the Phulbari Coal Project in this remote and impoverished region? 2) Why and how did the state-led violence lead to stronger mobilisation? 3) How were the national and transnational actors mobilised to join the movement? And, 4) how did these three levels of protestors halt the mining project?

The answers are presented as a case study that provides a rich and detail narrative of the mobilisation process, including the interplay of local, national, and transnational protests over a seven-year period. In the rest of the chapter, I will start off by examining the political context of Bangladesh. Thereafter, I provide a chronology of the protests against the Phulbari mine, and then discuss the conceptual background to situate the case. The chapter ends with an outline of the rest of the thesis.

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<sup>3</sup> NEXIS UK search for 'open cast' and 'protest' yielded these results. Retrieved on 14.12.11

Figure 1.1: Dinajpur District on the Left. On the right, red dots are archaeological sites and the polygon represents the mine project



## 1.1 Background of the Phulbari resistance

### 1.1.1 Political context

People of the Indian sub-continent have a long history as well as a vast repertoire of protests, particularly well-documented are those within the agrarian population during the British colonial period (1757-1947). Within Bengal, there are a few noted peasant movements. The *Fakir-Sannyasi* movement during 1770s, led by the mendicants and hermits coincided with the Great Famine of 1769-70. Hindu and Muslim masses participated together in this movement since they were disgruntled with the economic sufferings of the rural communities. Colonial forces repressed the protests. The *Wahabi* or *Faraizi* movements (1820s-1850s) were led against oppressing local *zaminders* (traditional land lords) for imposing illegal taxes, especially the humiliating Beard Tax on the Muslims. Religious ideology worked as a driving force of this movement and was soon crushed by state forces. Noted peasant leader of *Faraizi* movement, *Titumir* and his associates were killed by the British troops. The Pabna Rebellion (1872-73), was led by both Hindu and Muslim peasants, against the arbitrary enhancement of rent by the *zaminders*. Hashmi (2003) suggested that all these peasant movements were sporadic, short-lived and violently crushed. However, the movement against Indigo cultivation – was widespread, continuous and strong. Though often repressed by colonial forces, this movement succeeded to stop indigo cultivation in food crop fields of Bengal (Hashmi 2003).

In politically decolonised South Asia, such insurgency sharply declined in frequency and intensity (Guha 1999). After the partition of India into India and Pakistan in 1947, East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) faced an increase in communal division among the peasantry (Hashmi 2003: 20, van Schendel 2009: 89). Bengali Muslim peasants used Islam as a political weapon to fight their Hindu class enemies, which was manifested in numerous Hindu-Muslim riots (Hashmi 2003, Roy 1994). Among the few peasant uprisings of the Pakistan period (1947-1971) were the *Tebhaga* (literally three shares) rebellion in the north-western part of East Pakistan. This was mainly for the sharecroppers to be allowed to keep two-thirds of the crop rather than half or less, as was customary during that period (van Schendel 2009:89). From 1946-47, the movement peaked and then reached its climax in 1950. In parts of East Pakistan where the *Krishok Shova* (communist-led peasant organisation) was strong such as Mymensingh, Dinajpur,

Rangpur, and Jessore, the *Tebhaga* was also well established. In 1950, the movement was violently crushed; many communist leaders and activists were arrested and tortured in Rajshahi jail (Banglapedia 2006). The *Tanko* movement was a similar sharecroppers' movement mobilised by the indigenous *Hajong* communities in Mymensingh. A famous communist leader led the movement during 1960s (Hashmi 2003: 23).

In March 1971, following a brutal military crackdown by the West Pakistani (Pakistan) regime, East Pakistan (Bangladesh) declared independence. The country achieved freedom through a nine-month long war of independence, which ended with India's brief intervention in December 1971. In independent Bangladesh, peasant movements became rare (Dhanagare 1986; Guha 1999; Hashmi 1992). Before advancing with the agrarian unrest, I will set a brief context of the political system, which engendered the contemporary history of the country. Since its inception, the country has experienced massive political turmoil including the killing of the "Father of the Nation" Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family in 1975, numerous coups and counter-coups in the 1970s, two military regimes from 1975 to 1990, hundreds of political killings, protests, repression and mass uprisings (D'Costa 2012; Lifschultz 1979).

With regards to the economic policy regimes, during the 1970s and 1980s, the country strictly followed the macro-economic prescriptions of international financial institutions. These policies largely affected the rural and urban poor, especially women and children in terms of their access to public services. During this period, the military regimes also started. The country went through abrupt economic and social measures that were inconsistent across different regimes and hence unsustainable. Successive military governments forced policies that they perceived beneficial for the country, including stringent structural adjustment, privatisation and the opening up of the rural economy to the forces of the free market (Ahluwalia and Mahmud 2004: 4009-4011; Muhammad 2006).

Bangladesh's peasantry has been characterised as facing polarisation during the 1980s. The average size of the small and marginal land holdings was fast declining at a time when large farm holdings were increasing in size (BBS 1999; BBS 2007, Rahman, A 1986, Rahman, L 2012). Some scholars have, however, suggested that both big and small farmers were faced with declining land holding size, and hence were faced with what Westergaard labelled as pauperisation (Westergaard 1983). According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the percentage of small and marginal farmers have increased many folds from 1996 to 2005 while the percentage of big farm holdings

declined (2007), which supports Westergaard's (1983) findings. Rural Bengal, which was portrayed as having widespread famine and poverty, had not seen many major protests or conflicts until the early 1990s (Sen 1983).

In 1990, a mass political uprising ended 15 years of autocratic regimes and the country became a parliamentary democracy (D'Costa 2012; Maniruzzaman 1994). Owing to high levels of mistrust between two of the leading political parties: Bangladesh Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party, it was feared that elections might not be fair under partisan governments. Therefore, the constitution was amended in 1990 to create a provision for an interim caretaker government, which was to be headed by the last retired chief justice of the Supreme Court. This government was to be responsible for arranging a free and fair election within three months of taking office. The caretaker government was run by a group of non-partisan advisors.

The first parliamentary government was elected in 1991. Around this time, the peasantry was affected by catastrophic climate conditions (flood of 1988, cyclone in 1991), the direct and indirect effects of the Green Revolution, and neo-liberal prescriptions like structural adjustment (input liberalisation, privatisation of the agricultural services) (Sobhan 1991). Rural peasantry, small holders, and landless labourers cautiously started to express their discontent to the newly formed democratic parliamentary government. The new government faced their first rural rebellion from farmers demanding fertilizers in 1992. The government forces in Rajshahi killed one of these protestors. Successive democratic governments suffered from increasingly frequent confrontational politics, which created a state of governance with the potential to undermine 'the advancement of the country' (Sobhan 2004: 4101). Since 1990, Bangladesh has had four general elections and six caretaker governments. The last caretaker government, which took power in 2007, was fairly harsh towards the political leaders, arresting the heads of both of the major parties. Awami League won the 2008 election.

Scholars have suggested that the rural political arena had been inundated with village feuds, local-level party conflicts, violence against and expropriation of indigenous ethnic minorities and the growth of communal politics. They have also suggested that such communal politics received less participation from the masses and aroused more terror (Adnan 2007; Adnan and Dastidar 2011; ASK, BLAST and Odhikar 1997; Human Rights Watch (Organisation) 2000; Sengupta and Singh 2003). From the late 1990s, however, the opening up of the mineral extraction sector to multinational capital did not

experience much rural dissent. Blowouts in two of the gas fields operated by multinational companies destroyed miles of endangered forest area and rural landscapes, but these incidents were marked by an absence of rural mass mobilisation and almost no attention from the mainstream political parties. The only form of protest against such deals and ill-management of the extant gas wells came from an aforementioned alliance of far-left political activists that initiated in 1998 and crystallised into the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Power, Ports, and Mineral Resources. National Committee's role in the country's energy security is one of the major foci of this thesis and will be discussed in detail later. However, it started out by resisting against oil and gas extraction deals being made by the state with the multinational mineral industry and successfully stopped a few export-oriented deals.

### **1.1.2 Mining context**

In 1994, the Government of Bangladesh led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and BHP Billiton signed an agreement for coal exploration in the Phulbari area (AEC 2004; Das 2009). BHP is an Australian coal giant that merged with Billiton and became BHP Billiton. The Phulbari Coal Project (PCP), an open-cast mine, was proposed in 1994 to be situated in Phulbari *upazila*, in an area of 230 square kilometres in the northern district of Dinajpur in Bangladesh (Figure 1.1).<sup>4</sup> The total project area of the proposed mine included seven unions (administrative unit for non-urban areas), one municipality in four sub-districts: Phulbari, Birampur, Nawabganj and Parbatipur.

According to later official estimates, the mine would require 5,600 hectares of arable land over the 30 years of its estimated life, displacing over 100,000 people (including indigenous ethnic minorities such as the Santaals, Kol, Bhil, Buno, Oraon, and Pahan) (Expert Committee Report 2006). Estimates by independent scholars and researchers suggested that the mine would have an adverse impact on the water aquifers affecting usage of 100,000 people, threatening biodiversity, riverine ecosystems and the cultural and archaeological heritage of the most ancient part of the deltaic country (Islam 2010, Sen 2009). In compensation, the mine would provide Bangladesh with a royalty of only six per cent<sup>5</sup> of the sale value in US dollars of all coal produced and sold by the

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<sup>4</sup> The hierarchy of administrative units of Bangladesh is as follows: divisions (7), districts (64), *upazila/thana*/sub-districts (599), unions- rural (4498), municipalities (308)

<sup>5</sup> AEC 2004 states this as half-yearly royalty rate

company from its leased coal deposit in Phulbari (AEC 2004; Karmaker 2006; Moody 2008; Muhammad 2007a).

In 2004, BHP transferred the exploration and mining lease to a newly formed company called Asia Energy Corporation. It was widely believed among the protestors that BHP pulled out because of a fear that the mine would not be profitable. However, a few ex-employees of BHP formed the Asia Energy Corporation (Das 2009; Islam 2008) only to develop the Phulbari Coal Project (AEC 2004). Asia Energy Corporation, now based in London, is a resource exploration and development company. It would later change its name and be listed as GCM Resources PLC (GCM)<sup>6</sup> on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM) at the London Stock Exchange. Until 2008, the Asian Development Bank, Barclays Capital, and RBS had considerable financial commitments to the project. The UK Department for International Development and Asian Development Bank lobbied in favour of the mine. Recently, a leaked cable from the US Embassy in Dhaka showed that in 2009 the US Ambassador in Dhaka was trying to pressure a high official in the Bangladesh government (the Energy Advisor to the Prime Minister) to let the Phulbari project go ahead (Karim 2010).

### **1.1.3 Chronology of Protest**

The Phulbari Coal Project was the first of its kind (open-pit) proposed in Bangladesh. It is to be noted here that the only operating coal mine of Bangladesh is situated in Boropukuria less than 10 km from the Phulbari deposit. Phulbari sub-district is within the most impoverished regions (Rajshahi region) of the country where about fifty per cent of people lives under nutrition-based poverty line (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics or BBS 2007), and an average of eight hundred people live in each square kilometre. It is to be noted that although this region has higher proportion of poorer people, it also has the highest agricultural land use – more than two crops are produced every year, which indicates higher inequality within the region (BBS 1999; BBS 2007). Right after the first phase of social impact assessment surveys were completed in 2005, protests against the mine started in Phulbari and adjacent sub-districts. First, the protestors formed a Phulbari Rakkha Committee (Phulbari Protection Committee) and later they established networks

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<sup>6</sup> The changes to the company's name have led to confusion. Locals still refer to the company as Asia Energy though the name is now GCM resources. To avoid confusion, I shall henceforth refer to it as the 'company'

with the national mediator – the National Committee. Local and national protestors organised rallies, meetings, seminars, round tables, human chains and weekly processions in the Phulbari town, adjacent sub-districts and the nation's capital, Dhaka. On 26 August 2006, a massive rally of approximately seventy thousand people gathered to participate in a *gherao* (blockade) of the company's office on the outskirts of the Phulbari town. When the aggrieved but peaceful protestors started to disperse, government security forces opened fire, killing three people and injuring hundreds.

Following the massacre the town and the vicinity came to a complete standstill. Locals adopted a policy of stringent non-cooperation with the government law enforcers and initiated a general strike that continued until the government agreed to meet the protestors' demands four days later. Subsequently, the representatives of the government announced compensation for the families of the fallen and postponed all mining activities. The company's share price fell in the London-based stock market. It was forced to suspend its operations completely, but it returned again later. It changed its name in 2007 from Asia Energy Corporation to Global Coal Management PLC or GCM Resources, ostensibly to 'reflect their global investment portfolio' in China and Africa (GCM 2007). Protestors however, interpreted this as an attempt to distance itself from Asia Energy Corporation and the violent events of August 26<sup>th</sup>.<sup>7</sup>

## 1.2 Conceptual Framework

A range of social movement literature looks at who resists, why and how. Some scholars focus on individual factors while others emphasize the structural traits influencing protestors to start or join movements. Some other scholars seek the 'meaning' of actions and their outcomes in terms of the history of power and culture in which they are embedded, rather than only analysing protestors' actions and outcomes as discrete events. To shed light on why and how the Phulbari resistance flourished, this research looks at both the individual and the structural traits of the people who joined the movement, as well as the meanings they attach to their actions. In particular, I engage with four broad areas of literature on protests: mining-related movements, framing and identity, response to repression, and the impact of transnational coalitions.

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<sup>7</sup> Derived from interviews of several national level leaders

### 1.2.1 Context of Mobilisation: why communities resist mines

The number of studies about the justifications people give for resisting projects like open-cast mines has increased continuously over the last two decades. Such studies of popular resistance discuss how the increase in mining investment is stirring fresh protests around the world. Most of the studies showcase resistance against open-cast mines (Anguelovski 2011: 384-399; Bebbington et al. 2008; Das 2009; Das 1995; Doyle 2002:29-42; Holden 2005:223-249; Kalafut and Moody 2008; Kirsch 2007:303-321; Muradian, Martinez-Alliers and Correa 2003:775-792; Panda and Pattnaik 2009; Sarkar 2009). Much of the academic interest in protests against mining in the global South has been directed towards resistance in Latin America and Africa; there have been relatively few studies of Asian cases and even fewer on South Asia.

Research on mining resistance suggests that the following three are the major concerns of the protestors that incite protests: displacement of people, environmental degradation and resource nationalism in the host country (Bebbingdon et al 2008: 16-25; Cernea 1999; Doyle 2002; Guha 1997; Holden (2005); Kirsch 2007; McAdam et al 2010; Moody 2008; Muradian et al 2003; and Rootes 2004: 618-629). Each of these factors will be discussed in turn.

Some researchers demonstrated that open-cast mining displace and resettle large numbers of people than in any other mining methods, and therefore more likely to incite protests from the dispossessed part of the community (Bebbingdon et al 2008). These communities – in particular those with the least power in the formal arena of national politics – are more likely to protest against mines, thereby demonstrating their opposition to this neo-liberal expansion (Baviskar 2004; Bebbington et al. 2008:20; Hinojosa and Bebbington 2007: 3-15; Oliver-Smith 2010). These scholars have identified neo-liberalism as a regime that opened up the economy, encouraged market orientation, privatisation and deregulation in mineral extraction. This includes a neo-liberal state as well. This argument has crystallised into the study of development-induced displacement (Downing 2002) or development forced displacement and resettlement (Cernea 1999; Mahapatra 1999; Oliver-Smith 2010).

Oliver-Smith (2010) described resistance against 'development-forced-displacement and resettlement' (DFDR) as a discourse about rights: it pits the rights of the state and private capital to develop against the right of the people targeted for

displacement and resettlement. DFDR is articulated within the framework of development: so displacement is essential for the progress of a consciously and scientifically based development process. Depending on the nature of the project, whether publicly or privately funded, DFDR can have differential impacts on the people displaced. Most often the privately funded DFDR looks like voluntary migration but this often masks involuntary displacement and can prove to be very disruptive for the lives of people being displaced. And in recent decades, such attempts of voluntary or involuntary displacements are meeting with resistances that question the very nature of development that brings so much displacement (Oliver-Smith 2010: 33).

Although far from uniform, a significant percentage of people being displaced are from the disadvantaged sections. Elites rarely face eviction threat since their political power precludes the possibility of state claims and the market prices of the land the wealthy owns often deters private developers. Although not without exception, the communities that must confront DFDR are frequently from ethnic and racial minorities. Resistance often comes from that section of the population whose voices are usually the least heard in the national political arena.

Following from this tradition, Baviskar (2004) also expects to see adverse impact of such development projects among indigenous communities than the majority ethnic group. While discussing protests against a large dam in India, Baviskar (2004) predicted that *adivasis* (indigenous communities) would be more likely to get involved in organising action against the dam. This is because of the fact that their disadvantageous experience of development (in this case the dam) resulted in the alienation of their resource base and subsequent cultural impoverishment (for similar results refer to Scott 1998, Ferguson 1994, Cernea 1999). According to Baviskar's claim, they resist to collectively hinder the appropriation of their resources by the state and the market. Through such resistance, *adivasis* construct creative alternatives to dominant and destructive development based on their traditional relationship with nature. For example, the movement against the Narmada Valley dam was deemed as cultural resistance as it included the identity component and an alternative to development through resisting negative impacts of development. Although this account is rather vague, Narmada Bachao Andolon, one of the most highly profiled protests of the 1990s, has a profound impact on how South Asia responds to private capital for big projects.

For Oliver-Smith (2010), DFDR resistances essentially challenge the state and its hegemony over the territory and of the people within its borders, with implications for

policy at the local, national and international level. He showed that often the authorities or the state do not pay attention to protestors' objections against the DFDR projects. The objections, even when logical, have often been dismissed by the dominant force as irrational conservatism of the peasants and as the lack of entrepreneurial skills of the poor. In many cases, the dominant forces denigrated the protestors' voices as the selfish rants of the ungrateful, who were unwilling to sacrifice their self-interest for the benefit of the nation (Oliver-Smith 2010: 29).

The second potential cause of protest is environmental degradation. Being the most environment intensive sector, mining has generated conflicts all around the world. Mines are environmentally risky locations and belong to what Muradian et al. (2003) called a locally unwanted land use (LULU), which typically produced opposition between the national interests and that of the local populations. Environmental conflicts are the consequences of such disagreement between different groups within society about alternative resource uses or the allocation of environmental hazards or injustices (Muradian et al 2003; Pellow 2000). Pellow (2000: 582) identified that environmental injustice occurs when a particular social group – not necessarily racial or ethnic groups – is burdened with environmental hazards. When these groups start protesting against the injustice, they engage in environmental movements. Doyle and McEachern (2008: 84-122) argued that the experience of the environmental movements could be understood using three broad frameworks: post materialism; post-industrialism and post-colonialism. They defined post-materialism as follows:

Strongly premised on Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' (1954), the post-materialist argument is that having largely fulfilled the more basic needs of safety and security, parts of advanced industrial societies are able to pursue the higher, more luxuriant causes, such as love and a sense of belonging, beyond the old politics of material existence (Doyle and McEachern 2008:89).

Inglehart (1990: 66) stated that a shift from materialist to post-materialist value priorities has brought new political issues to the front stage. The top priority of the political agenda transfers from physical sustenance and safety towards belonging, self-expression and the quality of life. In case of environmental movements, post-materialism has been translated into emphasising the aesthetic value of the nature, non-human rights, the spirituality of the place, and on holism and ecology in the affluent world (Doyle and McEachern 2008: 89). Muradian et al (2003) argued that such substitution emerged from a culture shift in modern industrialised society towards a new value system that assigned greater emphasis on the quality-of-life issues and environmental risk avoidance than

economic growth. This post-materialist thesis assumed that poor people were too preoccupied with their sustenance issues to be able to worry about environmental issues. Environment is a luxury for them. Therefore, Doyle (2002) and Guha (1997) have labeled the environmentalism of the West as a middle class and minority phenomena, in contrast to the revolutionary environmentalism of the South.

Doyle (2002) suggested that the protestors against mining often use conflict-prone resistance strategies, which were more popular and appropriate. According to Pellow, in some cases, radical environmentalism is more successful. In addition, the paradigm of risk society that inform most of the environmental sociology in contemporary time is based on the idea that burgeoning concerns for the environmental risks were basically a phenomenon restricted to the late modernity that occurred after the genuine material needs were reduced (Muradian et al 2003).

Based on such positions, the second account for the origin of environmental movements was developed; post-industrialism. It argues that advanced industrialism, chaperoned by both market-based and Soviet-style socialism, has pushed the earth, its habitats and its species to the brink of extinction. This economic paradigm has supported growth at any cost depleting earth's resources and environment in an unaccountable way. At the end of the millennium, the post-material framework continued to advocate increased growth but revised its strategy to manage resources with improvement in environmental management, and promotion of global free market and pluralist democratic governance.

Both the post-materialist and post-industrial approaches encounter serious difficulties when used to explain the history and emergence of the local environmental movements in poor and peripheral areas, whether in industrialized countries or at a global scale. They fail to explain why poor people in the global South submitted to the so-called post-materialist values when they go through urgent material problems. For example, when Dongria Kond tribe resisted the mountaintop removal of the sacred grove of Nyamagiri hills for bauxite mining in India, they engaged against a multi-national mining company for their survival and security of livelihood. However, their discourse against the mine emphasised the spirituality of the mountain as a sacred place and the importance of its aesthetic beauty.

Using a similar argument, Cotgrove and Duff (1980), Guha (1992), Doyle (2002) and Doyle and McEachern (2008) suggested that in the post-colonial global South, subaltern environmental struggles or the 'environmentalism of the poor' were founded on

different values. Unlike the post-materialists' 'quality of life values' and the post-industrialists' 'industry versus nature' dichotomy, the post-colonial theory often supports structuralism. For example, Doyle and McEachern (2008: 91) pointed to the enormous support for the traditional Marxist model of power in many developing countries. Marxist environmental activists see the key cause of environmental degradation being that the resources and productions are concentrated in the hands of a group of elites. Solving the environmental problems to them is not possible by better management of the resources rather only by local people gaining the control over their own resources. For many marginal groups, the environment is a matter of livelihood, not of quality of life or aesthetics. For many, it is a matter of the both.

The opposition to the nonferrous metal mining in Philippines (Holden 2005) had involved protests, litigation, administrative proceedings and implementation of mining moratoriums by the local governments. The civil society resisted such mining because they feared accidental tailing spill, corruption within the government promoting anti-people (Indigenous) mining ventures in lieu of large personal financial gain. Holden (2005) regarded mining as a questionable development model. Mining does not create employment since contemporary mining methods are capital, technology and environment intensive rather than labour intensive. Mining is also not regarded by these groups to be economically beneficial for the country. Moreover, costs of mining are high: environment, society and economy become unsustainable. The disaster vulnerability of the country threatens such mining projects even more and increased violence around property rights and distribution issues in already conflict-prone areas of the country, threaten to displace large numbers of people from indigenous communities. Now, I present some examples of complex empirical cases of contemporary environmental movements that warrant a combination of these frameworks.

Tsing (2005) has shown how in Indonesia a frontier-like economy of extraction operates, where government, multinationals, local citizens and indigenous ethnic communities all deplete the tropical forest. In Tsing's (2005) example, environmentalists are a diverse set of people including middle class students from the nature lovers' club, local indigenous women, and Western environmental scientists. This indicates why one or the other of the frameworks is not sufficient to understand such globally connected extraction and resistance. Whether threats of displacement, environmental destruction or loss of ethnic identity and culture are the factors that can explain protests against mines is a crucial question. Although case studies with these factors allow us to consider their

impact on protests, not all mines excite protests. This indicates the need to investigate regional variation and structural factors.

In Piura of Peru (Hinojsa and Bebbington, Forthcoming), proposed mining required a huge resettlement of a town and nearby rural areas which was irrigated and agricultural. The community was agitated. The conflict against the company escalated quickly and became violent. However, they tried to arrive at a resolution through non-violent means as well. The most important of such was the public referendum where 90 % of the locals disapproved the mine in the region. The key feature behind the success of the public consultation against the mine was attributed to the success of building of bridges across rural-urban groups. Both small and large export-oriented farmers could bring the local government into the movement, and as importantly, the links with the activists in Lima and beyond, especially North America and Europe.

In another instance, Kirsch (2007) showed how a mine had polluted the downstream of the Ok Tedi and Fly rivers in Papua New Guinea since 1980s by discharging more than one billion metric tons of chemical tailings in the rivers. The pollution had adversely affected lives and livelihood downstream. Local mobilisation of the indigenous community gathered momentum and visibility through coalescing with the national and transnational allies. The protestors did not want the mine to be closed rather their claim was regarding building of a tailing dam to stop polluting the river. Both the instances present evidence suggesting that 'environmentalism of the poor' is not a romanticised type of environmental movement with homogenous claims and supporters. These experiences of anti-mining resistance also portray challenges that contemporary indigenous anti-mining movements face: the need for collaboration with transnational allies to succeed in exerting pressure on the mining company and on the state government. On the other hand, this incorporation into the transnational movements (which Kirsch termed a counter-globalisation) limited their ability to alter the outcomes of the case at hand. A significant impact of this stand reduces the outcome of the indigenous movement into a binary opposition of either-or dilemma of environment or development. However, local grievances are most likely to be more complicated.

Hence, there is no unifying teleological purpose that drives or explains all movements resisting environmental injustice. What needs to be uncovered is how the three frameworks described earlier can be utilised as tools of understanding the varied experiences of environmental movements, if we decide to label Phulbari resistance as one.

The third concern that incites protest is resource nationalism. This concept was mainly generated from the grey literature (company documents) that negatively refers to using nationalism against mining as ‘resource nationalism’. Perreault and Valdivia (2010: 689-90) termed it ‘hydrocarbon nationhood’. They showed how national policies for hydrocarbon extraction or export are resisted by communities on the basis of a populist idea of nationalism where the state was willing to sacrifice national interests (local lives) for foreign interests (for example, tourist comfort) and needed to be stopped. Using the examples of Bolivia and Ecuador, they have shown how historically the idea of nationhood in these countries has been developed around the oil and gas fields of the country. They have further argued that political economy and cultural politics are inseparable in the context of resource conflicts, which involve struggles over the meaning of development, citizenship and the nation itself. In the course of this thesis, I analyse whether such resource nationalism existed in Phulbari resistance and what implications it had.

### **1.2.2 What mobilised protestors to resist open mines: Framing**

My next emphasis is on the 'meaning work' (Snow and Benford 1992b) that justified why people joined the movement and how they had achieved support. I borrow from Steinberg (1999, 1998)<sup>8</sup> and Gamson (2005a; 1992) to illustrate how the actors of the resistance engaged in a frame game that comprises of talk and back-talk of frames and the strategic fitting of a shared sense of ‘we-ness’. I use the term ‘framing’ to denote a politics of signification in which people construe or assign meaning to events in a manner that allows them to organise potential constituents, accomplish bystanders’ support and demobilise antagonists (Snow 2004: 384). According to Snow and Benford (1992) frames are "interpretive schemata that signifies and condenses the `world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of action in one's present or past environment." Social movement literature on framing is divided into proponents of dialogic framing and those who favour strategic

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<sup>8</sup> Although I draw from Steinberg (1999) instead of using his term ‘discursive repertoire’ I refer to such meaning making as ‘collective action frames’ or simply ‘frames’. Although I agree with dialogic scholars that frames are not merely marketing products and are, rather, discursive tools of interaction between the dominant position and its critiques, I do not feel that using the term ‘frame’ will deter anyone from understanding that discursiveness.

framing, the latter tending to have more empirical work. In this thesis, I propose a bridge between the two camps.

Researchers in the strategic camp often depict collective actors and organisations as strategically creating frames that persuasively signal the injustice perpetrated against them or the people they represent (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996:6). These scholars focus on framing as the process of deliberate and focused persuasive communication, essential for attracting attention and support prior to collective action. This is also defined as a cognitive process necessary for orienting and sustaining collective action. Frames construct a compelling sense of injustice and collective identities for the protagonists and their targets, which provide a diagnosis and prognosis of a problem and a call to resolve it. The degree to which collective-action frames resonate with potential supporters and sympathisers depends on their conformity with prominent ideological visions. Snow and Benford (1992: 136) have also suggested that a master frame - a relatively stable configuration of ideational elements and symbols, operates as a kind of grammar for the articulation of more specific collective action framing within social movements. However, they and other scholars emphasise that the packaging of frames for specific actions is context dependent and interactive.

This occurs in a recursive relationship with the dynamics of collective action. McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald suggest that framing has five principal facets for analysis: (a) the ways in which they are used as cultural tool kits by activists, (b) its strategic dimensions for collective action, (c) contests between challengers and authorities over frame meanings, (d) the ways in which the media are implicated in these contests, and (e) the impact that framing has in modifying the cultural tool kits available in the more general culture (1996, p. 17).

In contrast, researchers who favour dialogic framing argue that frames should not be perceived as essentially mechanically strategic and marketing ‘products’ packaged to incite collective action. It is more fruitful to conceptualise frames as negotiated shared meanings or claim-making performances (dialogic interactions among a specified set of collective actors) that require three components: an emotively defined injustice, an analysis of agency, and an identity component defining both ‘we’ and ‘they’ (Gamson 1992). Steinberg (1999; 1998) suggests that “discursive repertoires” (frames), are the ones where activists constantly respond to the standpoint of their dominant opponents (1999: 737). Depicting a frame as a discrete and clearly bounded map of meanings abstracts disparate and discontinuous discourse processes that rise and fall over a cycle of

collective action, highlighting a frozen moment in the course of action or outcome rather than the processes themselves. It is more useful to think of framing as an internal process of contention / dialogue with different actors taking different positions. Activists, participants, and opponents are capable of reading different and potentially contradictory meanings from the same frames. A dialogic perspective advances our understanding of the discourse dynamics, particularly in terms of its underlying multi-vocal and semiotic processes.

Dialogism focuses on discourse as an on-going process of social communication. It emphasizes the situational embeddedness of discourse and its meaning as partly a product of social interaction and partly a product of how streams of language themselves interact. The analysis is social since meaning is understood as a function of the social interactions between people and the contexts in which these take place. This process is semiotic in the sense that the language that people use and that are available to them to express their sense of the world limit what can be expressed and understood (Bakhtin 1986, pp. 65-71, 122-27). In the latter sense, dialogists emphasise that talk and texts people use in any specific exchange in part derive their meanings in relation to the wider sphere of talk and texts in on-going communication (Steinberg 1999: 744).

In this sense, dialogic framing, which is borrowed from the idea of dialogism theorises meaning production as purposeful but restricted by the larger pool of relevant discourses in which meanings are produced. In addition, dialogism also emphasizes that discourse is essentially multi-vocal (Bakhtin 1981, pp. 291-92). In this thesis, I compare my data on Phulbari with these two theories on ‘framing’ to explore whether protestors in Phulbari use frames instrumentally to market their resistance and/or if the dominant discourse limits the protestors and shapes their protest repertoire.

Depending on how the protestors frame the threat posed by the mine, their perception of ‘us’ and ‘them’ can change. Collective identity entails subjective identification with a particular broader community, category, practice, or institution. According to Klandermans and Staggenborg (2002), Hunt and Benford (2004), such identification is a prerequisite for people to participate in a movement. This thesis investigates the definition and dynamics of such subjective identification with an identity. Similarly, Melucci (1988:343) asserts that collective identity involves making emotional investments that enable individuals to recognise themselves, to recognise others, and to be recognised as belonging to the same social unit. Hunt and Benford (2004: 433-457) advance the concept by adding the dimensions of solidarity and

commitment, which are intertwined and affect participation. Therefore, collective identity is a shared sense of ‘we-ness’ (embedded in the culture and history of the group). In order to empirically pinpoint to collective identity, it is important to know the boundaries or how a group of people define ‘us-versus-them’, how they become conscious about these ‘us-versus-them’ and if needed, how they negotiate. In this thesis, I explore how protestors justified voicing certain concerns over others depending on how they perceive the threat of the mine.

### **1.2.3 How and why state-run violence influenced more protests**

Building on the cultural and emotional traditions within social movement literature, I maintain that exploring people’s perceptions of violence is necessary to understand why protestors, despite repression, sometimes continue ‘costly’ high-risk protest behaviours (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2000; Goodwin, et al 2003; Emirbayer and Goldberg 2005: 469-518). Such an exploration into the people's perception offers an analysis also of the vast array of emotions that plays different roles during and after the violence happens. According to Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta (2000: 79-80),

“...emotions are the “stuff” through which humans are connected with one another and the world around them, colouring thoughts, actions and judgements. ...the emotions most connected to moral sensibilities, such as shame, guilt, and pride are especially pervasive as motivators of action. Other emotions help channel action because they offer familiar situations and narratives: we know what indignation is, or compassions, and act in certain ways once we know we have these emotions.”

One way they inspire activity is through moral shocks, which occur when an unexpected event or piece of information raises such a sense of outrage in a person that he or she become inclined toward political action, whether or not the person has acquaintances in the movement (Goodwin and Jasper 2006: 611). This idea of moral shock is important here.

If I propose to explain what happened in Phulbari after the violence in the rally on 26th August 2006 and how it affected the way later mobilisation took place, emotion and the obligation to protest needs elaboration. A pertinent question is why the state exerted force that they could not handle later. According to Boudreau (2000), regimes attempt to allocate their scarce repressive resources as efficiently as possible. When for example, challenger group has greater influence in the countryside than the regime or a deeper

influence on a specific sector of a population, regimes might allocate its scarce resources even against a very weak challenging group that often could be out of proportion and challenge the regime itself (Boudreau 2000: 49). This can explain the rationale of repressive policing against protestors who are perceived by the regime as weaker threat (Boudreau 2000:33-55 and Earl 2006: 49-55). Moreover, media presence and coverage (Koopmans 2005) might have determined the amount of repressive force to be used given that negative image of the government in the press has credibility.

Explaining the effects of protest control is difficult due to existence of different effects in different cases. One group of scholars suggest there will be increase in protest after violent repression. The opposing school expects repression to dampen further mobilisation by demonstrating the high cost of protest behaviour. Alternative propositions range from a curvilinear relationship (the U suggested by Lichbach and Gurr 1981 and the inverted U suggested by Hibbs 1973, DeNardo 1985 and Francisco 1996 in Earl 2006: 134), to relationships that switch from negative to positive over time, to null effects of coercive, state-based protest control because the cost of increasing protests balances out the radicalisation effect. According to Earl (2006: 134), empirical results are ultimately inconclusive. More recent research findings are equally heterogeneous. There are, however, two analytical points that are important: one, the impact of emotion, such as anger, outrage and fear; and two, the capacity of the movement to withstand the repression (Francisco 2004, Goodwin, Jasper and Polleta 2000, 2003, Hess and Martin 2006, Seigel 2011, Bob and Nepstad 2007).

Goodwin, Jasper and Polleta (2003) suggest that after protestors are repressed, affective bonds (emotions) spring out of reflexive bonds such as anger and fear. Such moral or public outrage might be regarded as one of the accelerators of further mobilisation (Goodwin, Jasper and Polleta 2003, Hess and Martin 2006, Reed 2004:653, Schrodt and Yilmaz 2007). Outrage refers to individual reactions to events perceived unjust, notably events that are repressive acts. Backlash is used to refer to the on-going adverse reaction and mobilisation generated by outrage and the dynamics of backlash refers to the techniques used that inhibit or promote this reaction. Anger can lead to backlash, creating widespread sympathy for a movement and resulting in substantial later mobilisation charged up by widespread media coverage of the 'unjust' repression of protest (Francisco 2004, Hess and Martin 2006). Such events may even become 'transformative events' (Hess and Martin: 2006) for the life of the mobilisation. In a study of demonstrations before and after massacres in thirty cases around the world,

Francisco (2004) showed that the mean level of post-massacre mobilisation accelerates and dwarfs the original-event mobilisation indicating a tremendous amount of backlash. He shows that easy urban information transmission, leadership tactics reducing the risks and re-invigorating the movement organisation for safe tactics, in addition to tremendous amount of mobilisation effort makes this result possible.

Furthermore, Hess and Martin (2006) emphasised that with a view to generating enormous public outrage against those seen as responsible for inciting backlash, repressive events have to be publicised and perceived as unjust. Examining three case studies, they developed that a public reaction of outrage also depends on the control mechanism by authorities to manage backlash, converting repression into a transformative event.

Schrodt and Yilmaz (2007), while looking for a temporal relationship between state repression and collective dissent in six Middle Eastern states, found that repression follows dissent and not the other way round (protest correlating with prior dissent). The only exception was in the Palestine case, which can be explained by the historical presence of conflict in the country.

Coupled with the ineptness of the government security forces, the micro-level emotional context provides important information on why and how state violence led to more protests. Emotion alone, however, did not push the community into action; cultural practices that initiate and maintain the sense of community obligation to resist also played a role. So, the question is, do we need a different analytical tool to study the relationship between protest and repression and its effect on further mobilisation in Asian countries, especially where the nation-state is less democratic? A thorough analysis of case in question is needed to reveal how the community transformed a collage of emotions and events into a revolutionary accelerator (Reed 2004) that enabled them to fight a victorious struggle, stopping the state, the company and their 'development'. If cultural differences between the West and the South do play a role, such analysis can shed new light on backlash protests in the contemporary times, e.g. the Arab spring. Literature suggests other potentially important factors like availability of influential allies (Gamson 1990), tolerance for protest among the allies (Jenkins 1985), degree of stability in political alignments, availability of potential allies, and political conflicts between and within allies (della Porta and Diani, 1999: 9-10). I examine the role of allies at the national level. I investigate how, after repression, emotions influence sparks of protest, what capacity and tactics of mobilisations generate more participation in post-massacre

days, and how the performance of the state and media influenced the events unfolding after the violence.

#### **1.2.4 How has the transnational level been mobilised?**

The increase of capital investment in mining in the global South has been mirrored by an increase in transnational linkages between the protests in response to these investments (Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar 1998:234-235; Bebbington et al. 2008:12-25; Conway 2004; Escobar 1997:40-64; Horton 2010; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Kirsch 2007; Smith 2004:311-336; Tsutsui 2004:63-87; Widener 2007:21-36). Smith (2004: 320) suggested that the movement dynamics we see in the transnational arena resemble their national and local predecessors. These transnational political actions often emphasize the continuities they share with national and localised social movements. Della Porta (2007; Della Porta et al. 2006) and her colleagues highlight global justice movements wherein loosely connected organisations or transnational networks come together in one place with tolerant identities<sup>9</sup> to resist a multilateral dominant organisation despite multiple belonging (della Porta 2007:1-27; della Porta et al. 2006: 18-19, 232-247). They have described it as a network of supra-national actors that define their causes as global and organise protest campaigns that involve more than one state. Tarrow defines transnational resistance to cover partners in at least two states engaged in sustained contentious interactions against an international institution, or a multinational economic actor (Tarrow 2001: 11).

Keck and Sikkink (1998: 12), in their boomerang effect discuss how domestic NGOs bypass their state and directly search out international allies to try to bring pressure on their states from outside. Tarrow (2005: 143-160) expands on the boomerang effect and offers two other pathways of externalisation of a domestic claim: the use of institutional access and direct action. The pathways vary depending on the nature of the domestic context – closed or open domestic structures, how the issue has been framed without major frame transformation that can still appeal to the international audience and the form of the of collective action. Collective action can work through three

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<sup>9</sup> It is a multifaceted collective identity that allows different fragments of diverse cultures to be fitted together into a broader discourse by partly combining them and partly leaving broad margins for separate development. The fitting together is done through continuous frame bridging. Although such identities emphasise pluralism and diversity, in the discourse of the movement the definition of the ‘self’ stresses global dimension. Dissonance is tolerated for the sake of resisting the global ‘enemy’: neoliberalism (della Porta et al 2006: 240-241)

mechanisms: information diffusion (Keck and Sikkink, 1998), institutional access and direct action (Tarrow 2005: 146-148).

Similar to the classic Boomerang model from Keck and Sikkink (1998), Pellow (2007: 228) explained transnational social movements as producing boomerang effect. This is as follows: when local governments refuse to heed calls for change, transnational activist network create pressure that curves around the local state indifference and repression to put foreign pressure on local policy elites. Thus international contacts amplify voices to which the domestic government are deaf (Pellow 2007: 228-229). In their work on neoliberal capital flow and the resistance against the Narmada Valley dams, Khagram, Riker and Sikkink (2002) argue that the campaigns of two overlapping transnational coalitions, constituted primarily of NGOs from across India and all over the world, were critical in altering the trajectory of the Narmada Projects in the early 1980s. Although part of the project went ahead despite the massive mobilisations against it, the concerted efforts of Indian and international NGOs forced strong financiers and supporters to withdraw from the project. These coalitions contributed to the spread of international norms on indigenous people, human rights and environmental preservation. The institutionalisation of such norms at the state and transnational level created political opportunities for the later campaigns. Scholars have argued that the success of the transnational alliances, however, was strongly conditioned by the existence of a sustained grassroots resistance (Khagram, Riker and Sikkink 2002).

Along with the relevance of such grassroots resistance, in order to understand the global environmental justice movement, Pellow (2007) argued that, the role of transnational corporations is crucial. To him, these corporations constrain the power of states and shape the political environment in which movements for environmental justice operate. He has also shown that activists in global South have often succeeded in achieving their goal defeating the nation state and the transnational corporations, a result quite unlikely to occur in the Northern disadvantaged neighbourhoods, for example. He also identified the merits of the Southern-initiated networks and transnational alliances that are partly the reasons for this success. Although we have seen only few cases of resistance, when such transnational environmental justice resistances are being mounted in the global South, it is more likely to succeed (Pellow: 2007)

In contrast, Kirsch (2007), Doyle (2002) and Widener (2007) identify the tensions in such collaborations. Kirsch (2007) predicts that when local political struggles depend solely on global initiatives, or when international campaigns piggyback on

specific struggles, local objectives may be ‘lost in translation’ and grassroots efforts may end up subsidising other political agendas. For example, if the transnational partner is an established conservation-based NGO in the Western world and the local resistances are radical environmentalists, due to the coalition one or the other might get lost. With reference to this proposed dichotomy of environmentalism, Doyle (2002) claims that the ‘environmentalism of the poor’ has more radical potential than post-materialist environmentalism. Environmentalism without a radical aspiration to overthrow the “enemies” only enhances the urge for a ‘global soul’ of the corporate capital, which cannot suffice as a goal for environmentalism. Therefore, Southern environmentalism should keep itself aware and distant from the contamination by the post-materialist values of western NGOs (often the transnational partners). Widener (2007) also expresses concern over the burdens imposed by transnational social movement organisations on small local SMOs.

Della Porta et al. (2006: 232-247) suggest that individual and organisational actors engaged in transnational movements do not want a return to the nation state, or in other words, transnational actors do not want to increase the power of the nation state. Prior research has neglected the role of emigrants (notable exceptions include Tarrow 2005) in resistances based in their country of origin, a subject addressed in this thesis. This thesis discusses the role of Bangladeshi community living outside of Bangladesh in mobilising the transnational activist network. In the thesis, I also address how and why the protestors continued to struggle and how they developed their relationships with transnational partners. The coalition tolerated contradictory values, diverse collective identities, and varied levels of trust across local, national and transnational fields.

### **1.3 Thesis Outline**

Four qualitative and one quantitative chapter address my research questions. In addition to this, a data and methods chapter and a conclusion are included.

**Chapter 2** examines the regional context of the mineral industry to emphasise the way people in South Asia have contested extractive capital. This chapter explores the contextual and quantitative factors that can help to predict protests against mining, including the density of population and the proportion of forest coverage and scheduled castes in a district. This analysis highlights the cases where unusually strong resistance

was organised and continues until today, and in so doing begins to explain why there was a large mobilisation against the Phulbari coal project.

**Chapter 3** discusses the qualitative data and the methods of collecting and analysing the data for this research. Primarily, I discuss my use of in-depth qualitative interviews, participant observation of protest activities, group interviews and archival research in the case study. I also describe the selection processes and the decisions I made during the collection and analysis of the data. The second part of the chapter justifies my involvement with my research subjects as a participant observer of the resistance.

**Chapter 4** investigates the ‘meaning work’ the protestors did to make the threat of the mine real to its constituents and to achieve wider support. This provides the second half of the answer to the first research question (why was there such a big resistance against Phulbari mine?). Contemporary resistances against the extractive industry employ divergent justifications and meanings in favour of their opposition against mines. This chapter illustrates two entangled processes that are crucial in understanding the genesis and change of such ‘meaning making’ by protestors in Phulbari: dialogic framing and strategic shifting of identity in order to incite community obligation to resist the mine.

**Chapter 5** investigates the emotional impacts of repression on further mobilisation. It also analyses the cultural practice of funeral processions as a scope for, and a symbol of community obligation to resist further. I argue that the backlash mobilisation was driven by repression. By exploring the aftermath of the violent repression of this community resistance, this chapter provides the following explanations: first, emotions overshadowed the cost of high-risk behaviour, leading protestors to ignite sparks of risky protests. Second, the community obligation to stay together and keep the protest alive after the violence was a crucial determinant of further mobilisation. Third, the media’s performance in portraying and highlighting the injustice of repression also contributed to further dissent.

The next chapter (**Chapter 6**) highlights the different types of connection in the transnational field of resistance. I offer a two-by-two typology of connections, highlighting the role of reciprocal tenacity in coalition building. In order to better understand why contradiction remains between these fields, I explore the role of the National Committee and the emigrant Bangladeshi activists. The National Committee works as a mediator between the transnational and the local and keeps the tension to a

minimum; the difference of values and identities remain, but they manage to sustain their ties.

Based on the concept of mutual tenacity, **Chapter 7** further explores the actions of the transnational. I developed a typology of the transnational partners based on their reciprocity and tenacity in the alliance. I argue that these partners continue activism for the local movement but only as long as it serves their mutual interdependence. I compare the share price of the company and archival evidence to show qualitatively how the concerted actions of the transnational coalition created obstacles in the path of the juggernaut of extraction. The mining company actually slowed down because it had to ‘burn’ resources to evade the obstructions.

The last chapter (**chapter 8**) brings together the results of all the individual chapters. In particular, I present my findings on the demographic, and environmental factors that explain protests against mining. The final chapter summarises, and explains how the protestors in Phulbari used framing, identity, emotion and cultural rites to stop the mine. It also sketches suggestions for further research.

## Chapter 2

### Protests against Mining in India and Bangladesh

Clashes over natural resources (forest products, minerals or water) have been widespread across human history typically as a result of rival property claims and economic interests. As noted by Gadgil and Guha (1994: 118), in contemporary times, these antagonisms have developed a sharp 'ecological edge', being played out against the backdrop of scarcity and commercialization of natural resources (Gadgil and Guha 1994). In particular, scholars have reported a major shift of investment in the extractive industry from the North to the South in the last two decades (Bebbingdon et al. 2008: 12-20; Oliver-Smith 2010:25). Between 1990 and 2001, mining investment in developing economies steadily increased in relative terms, while that in developed economies had declined (Bridge 2004: 407-409). In search of lower costs, transnational corporations in environmentally hazardous sectors located their facilities in peripheral areas of the world (Muradian, Martinez-Alliers and Correa 2003). Local people who did not want the mine on their land have often protested these investments.

Mining industry, in the last decade, ignited protests in many places around the world like the dams did in the 1990s (Baviskar 2004; Khagram, Riker and Sikkink 2002; Mehta 2009). Case studies and ethnographic accounts of popular resistance discuss how the increase in mining investment is stirring fresh protests around the world. Most of these case studies showcased resistance against open cast mines (Anguelovski 2011: 384-399; Bebbingdon et al. 2008; Das 2009; Das 1995; Doyle 2002:29-42; Holden 2005:223-249; Kalafut and Moody 2008; Kirsch 2007:303-321; Muradian, Martinez-Alliers and Correa 2003:775-792; Panda and Pattnaik 2009; Sarkar 2009). Although there has been a steady increase in academic interest in the protests against extractive industry by communities of the global South, the thrust has not been on Asia. Moreover, all this research is based on small sample case studies. In general, uncovering the basic features of open pit mines could lead to a better understanding of why open pit mines generate such high volume of community resistances. My data on mines show that the protests are uneven across different countries. Here, I examine aggregate socio-economic factors to investigate why only some open mines have protest against them and not all.

In this chapter, I present a context of protest against mining in India and Bangladesh based on data on mines and community resistances. In order to do so, I have gathered information on 398 open cast mines and enumerated all protests against these mines reported in the NEXIS UK, national news sources and several activists' websites. The reason for choosing India and Bangladesh is the following: search for open cast mines and protests in Asia through NEXIS UK delivered highest community protest news against mines in India and Bangladesh. Therefore to understand this specific strand of protest, I concentrate on mines in this region. Though I also use case study method later in this thesis; analysis of regional aggregate data on 398 open mines with a specific focus on the South Asia would contribute to the existing literature by exploring factors determining mining resistance. This in turn, will enable me to illustrate why, Phulbari resistance is an important case to analyse in depth.

## **2.1 Why Communities Resist Open Mining**

Protests against mining that I analyse in this chapter refer to, actions or behaviour of individuals who opposes setting up of a new open-pit mine or extension of an existing one in or near their designated communal area. The targets of such disruptive and extra-institutional protests include government or mining company or organizations that fund or support the mine. These protests do not include acts of defiance by miners working in the mines or protests against underground mines. Here I only include protests that are mounted by community people.

In answering what causes communities to protest against mining, literature suggest the following concerns: displacement, propensity to experience direct (pollution, deforestation, contamination of water bodies) and indirect environmental hazards (loss of bio-diversity), loss of natural beauty and wilderness, and lack of stake of the host country (Almeida and Lichbach 2003; Bebbington et al 2008: 16-25; Guha 1997; Kirsch 2007; McAdam et al 2010; Moody 2008; Muradian et al 2003; Rootes 2004: 618-629). Some scholars claim that communities, threatened by the possible dispossession of resources and governance use protest to manifest their resistance against neo-liberalism (Bebbington et al. 2008:20; Hinojosa and Bebbington 2007: 3-15). It has also been suggested that this form of resistance often comes from groups which are least heard in the arena of national politics (Oliver-Smith 2010, Baviskar 2002). Next, I discuss each of these factors based on empirical literature on protests against mines.

Displacement resulting from large-scale man-made infrastructure such as dams, roads, eco-parks or mines inflicts massive costs on communities (Cernea 1999: 2-20; Mahapatra 1999: 145; Oliver-Smith 2010). Mahapatra (1999:189-220) showed that 'involuntary resettlement' in India was followed by dire social problems such as landlessness, homelessness, joblessness, impoverishment, social disarticulation and loss of food and water resources among communities. Due to its nature, open mining requires the complete removal of the top-soil from large areas which often results in displacement of communities from their habitat and livelihood. Especially for communities that are used to land-based livelihood, such expropriation has manifold implications on their impoverishment and vulnerability (Downing 2002; Oliver and Rothman 1999; Widener 2007).

Both India and Bangladesh have massive population and are very densely populated (364 and 1099 per sq. km respectively). Mining-induced displacement in these countries might mean that there will be not enough land to resettle the displaced population. Valuable croplands will be destroyed putting more pressure on already vulnerable food security (Hoshour 2010). It is very likely that communities will resist this threat of displacement. Yet even though expropriation from land occurs in all of the mines, not all faced protests. I hypothesize that displacement will only lead to protests if human costs are high. Hence, areas with high density of population would be more likely to have higher number of people displaced by each unit of land stripped by the mine.

***Hypothesis 1:*** Districts with high density of population are more likely to have protests.

Most scholarly work investigating protests against mines, identify environmental degradation as the major cause for communities around the world to reject open pit mines (Bebbingdon et al. 2008; Bury 2004; Doyle 2002; Holden 2005; Horton 2010: 63-80; Hoshour 2010; McAdam et al. 2010; Moody 2008). These mines visibly alter terrain; create pollution (dust, slurry, noise, and increased traffic), cause deforestation, and de-watering (operational open mines need to pump out water to reach the deposit). Some mines might lead to tailing dam accidents that discharge unprecedented amount of pollutant in water bodies (Kirsch 2007: 305). Doyle's (2002) study on the South East Asian protests against mines highlights high risk of environmental pollution by the mineral industry, especially in the Asia-pacific region. He argued that this is because

environmental devastation of open mining is fairly high given the laxity of the governments to control this industry.

In India, there are many instances of protests against mining due to deforestation at the hill top, erosion and pollution of the water resources, and threat to losing heritage (Bhengra 1996; Dash and Samal 2008; Gadgil and Guha 1994; Sarangi 2004). For example, in Doon valley Limestone quarry at Dehradun in Uttarakhand, upper middle class retirees and hotel owners protested against the mine to protect their valley's scenic beauty and privileged landscape from overcrowding. Villagers directly to be affected by the mine, were protesting to stop pollution of their farmland (Gadgil and Guha 1994).

Gadgil and Guha (1994) also reported that in BALCO Bauxite mines in the Gandhamadan area of Orissa, India; tribal community resisted mining to resist the deforestation at the hill-top and depletion and pollution of the water resources. Similar justification of protest against mining for depleting forest resources or rivers was reported in case of Kashipur Bauxite mine, Niyamgiri Bauxite Mine, Kudrumukh Iron Mine (Sarangi 2004); Lanjigarh and Paradeep mines (Das and Samal (2008), Ok Tedi Mine in Papua New Guinea (Kirsch 2007) and mining in the Andes (Bebbingdon et al. Forthcoming). Presence of a visible environmental resource – forests or water bodies or nature reserves – within the area under imminent threat of mining would increase the likelihood of protest since it will open up the mine as an easy target. For example, if an open-cast is going to be set up in a forest, it will not only destroy the land but also the forest (seat of bio-diversity), and forest dwellers' livelihood. Unfortunately, there is no data available on water bodies or nature reserves or forests around the mines that I am studying. Instead, I have data on forest cover as per cent of geographical area of each district. According to the Forest Survey of India (2003), 'all lands, more than one hectare in area, with a tree canopy density more than 10 per cent' is regarded to be under forest cover.

***Hypothesis 2.a:*** Higher the percentage of forest cover in an area, more likely will be protests against mining

Among activists' narratives about open mining, certain minerals are perceived as dirty (coal) or hazardous for public health (uranium). This can be treated as an indicator of threat: environmental factor influencing protests. Coal, for example, produces coal dust, and slurry in contrast to other minerals such as calcite or iron ore. While uranium is

a public health hazard, some open pit gold mines use cyanide and can be highly pollutant and more likely to incite protests. Examples of such cases include Bergama mine in Turkey (Coban 2004; Ozen 2009) or Cajamarca gold mines in Peru (Bury 2004). In both countries, the gold mines faced protests based on the health and environmental hazards to be imposed on the communities by the mine and its cyanide leaching technology. In Domiasat Uranium deposit, Kudrumukh Iron Mine, and Jadugada Uranium Mine communities resist developing the deposit to stop health hazard posed by uranium extraction (Sarangi 2004). I expect uranium; gold and coal mines will face higher protests. Since there are very few uranium and gold mines in India and Bangladesh, I would expect coal mines to face more protest.

***Hypothesis 2.b:*** Coal mines are more likely to face protest than others

Studies that analysed mining induced environmental degradation and resultant protests also identified that indigenous people were important drivers of protest since displacement and environmental degradation affect them disproportionately (Holden 2005; Horton 2010; Kalafut and Moody 2008; Kirsch 2007; Muradian, Martinez-Alliers and Correa 2003; Oliver-Smith 2002). Since 2005 mining and land policies in India require that any mine development application go through a public consultation process. If claims are not addressed in negotiation with the company, indigenous communities can take refuge of the SAMATHA<sup>10</sup> judgement. This judgement prevents the state from leasing out Schedule Tribe owned lands for mining without proper consultation.

However, contrary findings were evident too. Studies on Indian cases of protest against mining show the following: there are enough laws that can protect tribal villagers from the extraction by the state though the villagers are less likely to be aware of these laws, or the media about this incident until the trial gets over (George 2005). Or, the tightly knit tribal culture of Orissa prevented different tribal groups from coming together for a common cause. The ties not only restricted associational life, but also curbed mobilisation. In off shore areas less heavily represented by the scheduled tribes and their tightly knit communities were more likely to witness protest (Swain 2000). As such, in India, political opportunities for indigenous groups coexist with barriers that the same

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<sup>10</sup> SAMATHA, an NGO working with the Scheduled Tribal people in Andhra Pradesh filed a case against the government for leasing out tribal lands to private mining companies in the scheduled areas. The case filed in the Supreme Court of India led to a historic judgement in 1997 that nullified all the leases with private mining companies in the scheduled areas. The judgement also prohibits transfer of tribal lands by way of lease to non-tribal.

identity imposes on some groups by isolating them from others. I presume that tribal people are more likely to have a voice against mines. Crucial to these protests will be the sense of identity politics.

***Hypothesis 3:*** The higher the proportion of Scheduled Tribes in a district, the higher the likelihood of protest

An involuntarily resettled community experiences social disarticulation, loss of heritage, education, health facilities, and social networks (Bury 2004; Cernea 1999). This is very difficult to measure and will not be addressed due to lack of available data on social networks. But as part of the social costs of open mining, I have identified two possible indicators: poverty and illiteracy. I propose that proportion of people below poverty line as well as proportion of literates can determine protests against open mines (Downing and 2002; Oliver-Smith 2010). People who are already hard pressed with poverty will be more vulnerable to displacement and therefore they will be resisting – further trap of deepening poverty. Their protests will be evolving from increasing grievances. On the other hand, literate people will have more capacity to engage in collective action as they are more likely to know about their rights and stand up for these. Proportion of literates in any district will be a measure of people capable of protest. Although proportion of poor and proportion of literates are often inversely related, in this case, I expect them both to be positively affecting protests against mining.

***Hypothesis 4.a:*** If the district has higher percentage of people that are poor, mines are more likely to face protests.

***Hypothesis 4.b:*** If the district has a higher percentage of population that are literate, mines are more likely to face protests.

Financing and ownership of projects by Western or multinational corporations serve as a political opportunity encouraging mobilisation (Holden 2005: 244; McAdam et al. 2010:401-427). In addition, not compensating the host country for involvement in the project and unfavourable terms for the host country can both be linked to mobilisation (Holden 2005; McAdam et al. 2010). In Bangladesh, national interest against foreign capital is a major driver of the resistance against the Phulbari Coal Project.

In India, there are examples where even state run mines face criticism. Scholars claim that involvement of the state in mining negatively affected local community lives since state forces often brutally exploits and represses people when state overtly supports

the mines and circumvents the legal barriers against mining in tribal areas (Sarangi 2004, Sarangi, Pradhan and Mohanty 2005, Balagopal 2007).

***Hypothesis 5.a:*** Mines owned by multinational corporations will incite protests.

***Hypothesis 5.b:*** Mines owned by the government corporations will incite protests.

Some scholars have also pointed out that presence of left-wing extremism would influence people to resist against a new mine. Sundar (2006: 3187-3192) criticised the state-sponsored group called Salwa Judum in Chhattisgarh mining belt for creating sustained violence against tribal population. Consequently, this has triggered protests around other issues, like mines. Salwa Judum was created to fight against the Maoist insurgents. The central Indian states (Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra) have a long history of Left-Wing insurgencies. These areas are also mostly forested, scheduled tribal and poor especially in Orissa, Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh. Majority of the mines as well as protests against these mines occur in Jharkhand, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. Based on this, I conjecture that Left-wing insurgency might have an indirect impact on protests against mines in the affected areas.

***Hypothesis 6:*** Areas exposed to radical left-wing insurgency, will be more likely to face protests

## **2.2. Data and Method**

It was not easy to find one source that would provide information on all mines that were at risk of protests – whether or not protests actually occurred. First, there is no list or dataset of all the open cast mines in India and Bangladesh. Industrial analysts managed the only available list and even a temporary access was extremely expensive. Therefore, I had to search for other sources of information. The Bangladesh case was straight forward as there is only one deposit that is planned to be developed as an open-cast<sup>11</sup>. In case of India, I compiled original data to create my dataset of open mines. Initially, this dataset included information about 357 open cast mines in India – their locations, ownership

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<sup>11</sup> Bangladesh, in fact, does not have any operational open cast mine. The only mine that has generated massive contestation is a coal deposit. Whether or not it is a viable open cast is also strongly debated. However, since the coal deposit in Phulbari is the seat of one of the strongest and sustained popular protests against mineral extraction, I would refer it as an open cast mine (deposit) for this chapter. Later chapters detail qualitative perception about this specific deposit and I refer to Phulbari as a ‘proposed open cast’ mine.

type, mineral type and mine type (operating or deposit). I collected this data from the free online database of the industry providers: InfoMine.com and Raw Materials Data. Later I have searched Google and activists' websites and added 45 more mines to this data. My sample consisted of 403 mines. I have dropped 5 mines due to the lack of information and ended with 398 mines in my final sample. This list of mines is not exhaustive and the coverage might not be comprehensive but since I have triangulated the list with other sources, I am confident that my sample captures the major open cast mines in the region.

Secondly, I had to find out which of these mines faced community-based protests and not miners' protest, because I am only interested to analyse the former. First, I searched NEXIS UK to find protest news about Indian open cast coal mines. I used keywords: 'open cast' and 'protest', restricted within Asia from 1 January 1970 to 31 December 2010. The search delivered 227 news articles.<sup>12</sup> Careful reading of these news reports revealed that 80 mines in Asia had protests during the period under consideration among which only 27 mines faced community protest. Rest were miners' protests. Within these 27 mines 21 were based in South Asia (India and Bangladesh). Therefore, I only considered South Asian mines for my analysis. I appreciate that the number of mines facing protests was low and majority of the news agencies or newspapers reporting these protests were based in Western countries. However, I contend that these must be very strong cases of protests to be able to capture international attention. Nonetheless, I moved to more open source of information to capture less widely publicized protests in South Asia. I have searched Google with the names of each mine from my dataset and 'protest' to find more information regarding possible protests against them. In addition, following Almeida and Lichbach's (2003) suggestion that research on transnational movements should combine conventional media sources with activists' information – several activists' websites had been consulted. I found 20 more protest news and added them to my dataset. My final sample has 398 mines and 41 cases of protests.

**Table 2.1: Percentage of Protests by Region**

<b>State / District</b>	<b>Per cent of Total Mines</b>	<b>Proportion of Category with Protest</b>
Orissa	19.84	12.66
Jharkhand	18.84	16.00

<sup>12</sup> Download date: 14.1.2011

Andhra Pradesh	5.78	21.74
Tamil Nadu	3.02	33.33
West Bengal	5.78	17.39
Hazaribag (Jharkhand)	2.51	80.00
Cuddalore (Tamil Nadu)	1.76	42.86

Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 present geographical and chronological spread of the mines and protests respectively. Most socio-economic and demographic information is available only at the district level. Therefore, 398 mines are clustered into 98 districts. Geographically, mines are mostly concentrated in the states of Orissa and Jharkhand. Mines of Hazaribag district in Jharkhand and Cuddalore district in Tamil Nadu experienced relatively higher protests. Figure 2.1 shows that number of mines facing protests increased after 2000 and was highest in 2006.

41 mines out of the 398 faced protests (10%). Although some mines faced more than one protest, overall the counts are very low with most of the observations having no protest at all. I have, therefore, constructed a binary dependent variable from this count data, with 1 for cases with protests and 0 for no-protests. I have used logistic regression (standard error adjusted for 98 districts) to test my hypotheses. Next, I shall detail the socio economic variables and the sources of the data.

**Figure 2.1: Number of Open Mines facing protest over time**



In order to determine if threat of displacement influenced protests, I have used population density per square km at the district levels. There was not enough information

available on the mine size so I had to measure this density at the district level. This was calculated from the total population and geographic area of the districts. Data was collected from Census of India (2001)<sup>13</sup> and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics Census Reports (BBS 2001).<sup>14</sup> In case of new Indian districts, district websites were consulted. Information on proximity of nature reserve, eco-parks or forests from the mine was not available. Therefore I have used data on forest cover as per cent of geographical area of each district. I use this as a proxy for environmental degradation.<sup>15</sup>

I have identified thirteen major minerals in my data. However, due to small cell frequencies of some of these minerals, I have clubbed them together into seven, taking into account the closeness of the mineral properties. For example, coal and lignite are clubbed together because these are quite closely related minerals. Manganese is extracted from Iron ore mines and therefore is in the same category. Since I expect coal to have positive impact on protest, I created a binary variable with a 1 for coal and lignite mines and 0 for others.

Data on percentage of Scheduled Tribes are collected from Census of India (2001) and Dinajpur district website.<sup>16</sup> Percentage of people below poverty line is collected from Debroy and Bhandari (2003). They have measured the incidence of poverty by a head-count ratio. The poverty line is measured in terms of commodity bundle prices. On the other hand, the percent of people who are literate is collected from the Census of India which enumerates literates as population above 7 years of age who can read, write and enumerate.

Radical left-wing insurgency has impact on protest. I have created a binary variable to measure this. If according to the SATP portal ([www.satp.org](http://www.satp.org)) the district has reported incidences of LWE, it was coded 1 and if not, it was coded 0. This variable does not take into account how strong/weak the LWE activities were.

I would argue that difference in mine type (operating or deposit) has impacts on community protest against open mines. I propose that deposits are more likely to face protests than operating mines. However, I use it as a control since a mine can remain deposit as a result of protests than causing it. For example, mines that are operating since

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Tables\\_Published/Basic\\_Data\\_Sheet.aspx](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Tables_Published/Basic_Data_Sheet.aspx) download dates: 1.09.2011-30.09.2011

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.bbs.gov.bd/Reports/PDFFiles/RptPopCen.pdf> download date 6.6.2010

<sup>15</sup> I have also used a binary variable of decline of forest cover from 2001 to 2003 as an estimate of areas under threat of deforestation. The result was not significant.

<sup>16</sup> <http://dcdinajpur.gov.bd> download date: 11.11.2010

1970s may not have protests since these mines probably have displaced all people who could have protested.

### **2.2.1 Methods**

Hypothesis 1 was tested by the density of population and squared density of population in the districts. I expect district with higher density of population per square km to have more protests against mines. Hypothesis 2 is tested by percentage of forest cover and whether or not it is a coal mine. Districts with higher forest coverage are expected to face more protests. Moreover, forest cover is not static and in areas where it is already receding people might be more likely to protest against a mine that threatens to destroy forests even more. Therefore, I created a binary variable with declining forest cover as one (1) and non-declining as zero. So protest is particularly expected in areas where forest cover is declining.

Hypothesis 3 is tested by the proportion of population of the district who were Scheduled Tribes. However since all the mines are in India and the Scheduled Castes are politically very organised there I have included the percentage of Scheduled Castes per district to see if there is any relationship. I expect districts with higher proportion of ST or SC population to have more protests.

Hypothesis 4a is tested by the proportion of population that is below poverty line. Hypothesis 4b is tested by the proportion of population that is literate. I expect to see more protests in areas where higher percentages of people below poverty line and people who are literate live. Hypotheses 5a and 5b will be tested by the type of ownership of the mine. If ownership is multi-national, I would expect protests there. Hypothesis 6 is tested using a binary variable whether the district was affected by Left-Wing Extremism. I expect a positive link to protest and presence of LWE.

### **2.3. Results**

Table 2.2 presents mine level features. Only 9% of the operating mines ever faced protest compared to the deposits (23%). Similarly, mines that are owned by the union or state government do not face much protest. Instead, it can be seen that in relative terms, mixed ownership mines had more protests. In addition, I expected to see coal and uranium mines to be linked to protests because these are producing dirty and hazardous minerals. Among all the coal and lignite mines, only 12% faced protests. Although two out of the

three uranium mines experienced protests, due to this very small numbers no further analysis will be meaningful. Table 2.3 presents the descriptive statistics for the socio-economic variables. Table 2.4 shows the results of the logistic regression presented in terms of odds ratio (standard error adjusted for 98 districts).

**Table 2.2: Percentage of protest by several indicators**

	Per cent of Total Mines N= 398	Proportion of Category with Protest, N= 41
<b>Minerals</b>		
Coal and Lignite	57.54	11.79
Heavy Minerals-Diamond	7.54	10.00
Iron Ore and Manganese	23.87	3.16
Bauxite	7.29	13.79
Calcite and Limestone	0.75	66.67
Uranium	0.75	66.67
Others	2.26	0.00
<b>Ownership</b>		
Owned by Union Gov.	59.30	9.32
Owned by State Gov.	10.80	4.65
Owned by Private Capital	22.11	10.23
Owned by Multinational	6.03	20.83
Owned by Mixed Capital	1.76	42.86
<b>Mine Type</b>		
Closed/ Suspended mine	1.51	0.00
Deposit	19.60	23.08
Operating	78.89	7.32

This model show that as predicted in Hypothesis 1, protests increased with increase in the density of population (Table 2.4). The higher the density of population in the area, the more likely it is that a mine will face a protest. The median is 244 people per square kilometre. I have used a squared term for the population density. The effect of density of population is non-monotonic (tested jointly both terms are statistically significant with  $p=.02$ ) (Figure 2.2). In rural districts probability of protest increased with the population density. The relationship reverses at the highest levels of population

density, in urban areas. There are only three districts beyond the peak of the curve which are important urban centres with massive population.

### 2.3: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N= 398		
	Minimum	Mean	Maximum
Number of Protests	0	0.24	17
Total district population	119307	2,037,977	6,919,698
Total geographical area	190.82	8006.40	45,652
Density of Population per sq. km	8.50	454.67	17648.63
Forest land as % of Area	0.19	28.95	73.51
Scheduled Tribe as % of population	.04	22.13	98.02
Scheduled Caste as % of population	.01	13.33	31.94
% of population below poverty line	3.1	32.49	80.1
Literates as % of population	30.17	64.31	91.18

**Table 2.4: Protest against Open cast Mines in India and Bangladesh, 1980-2011 (N =398/ 98 districts)**

Logistic Regression			
	Odds	rse	P
District level Density of population	1.01	.00	.04 *
District level Density of population, squared	1.00	.00	.13
District level Forested Area as % of total area	1.04	.02	.01 *
Coal and Lignite Mine	.73	.37	.53
Scheduled Tribes as % of population	.99	.02	.78
Scheduled Castes as % of population	1.08	.05	.09
District Level Literates as % of population	.96	.02	.08
Left-Wing Extremism Affected Area	1.06	.46	.89
Mine Owned by Multinational	3.58	2.01	.02 *
Deposit	3.88	2.03	.01 *

odds: odds ratio; rse: robust standard error; p: p-value (two- tailed), \*\*\* p < .001, \*\* p < .01, \* p < .05 Standards Error adjusted by 98 districts

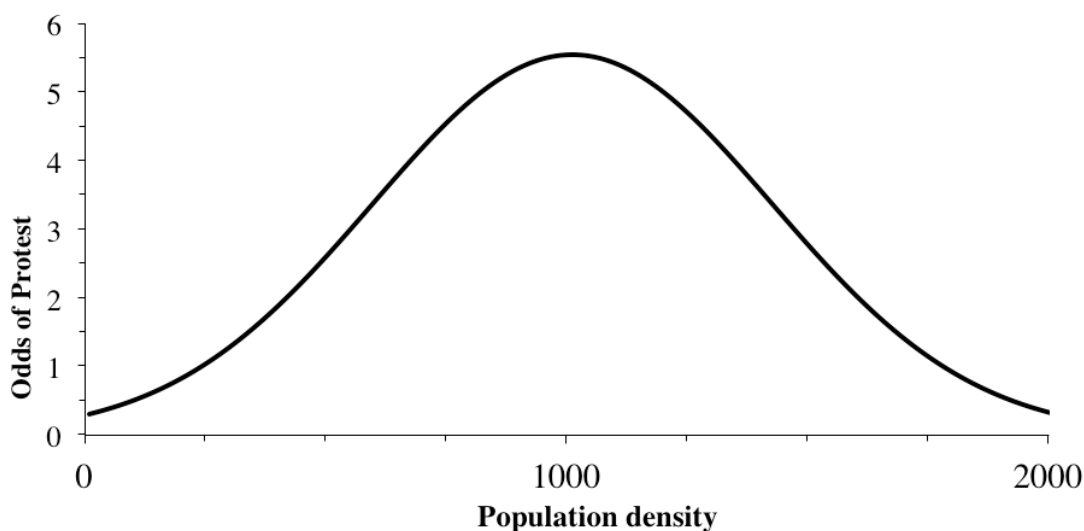
Hypothesis 4 is contradicted as proportion of literate population in the area actually decreases the chance to protest though this relationship is not statistically

significant. Protests increased with the increase in percentage of population living below poverty; however the results were not statistically significant (at .05 level).

Percentage of forested area increases the chance of protest. Coal mine does not show having a significant impact. Hypothesis about Scheduled Tribes is contradicted.

Contrary to expectation, it reduces the odds of having a protest (not significant). The proportion of Scheduled Caste significantly ( $p < .05$ ) increases the chance of protest until the model is clustered by 98 districts (not significant). Odds of having a protest against mines owned by multinationals are significantly higher than their domestic counterparts. Mine type, that is whether the mine is operational or deposit, had significant impact on protests. Overall, I found that occurrences of protests against open mines depended on the density of population, forest coverage, and ownership by multinational company. One concern was that since predicted probability of protest was highest for the Phulbari mine (.96), Phulbari might have too much influence on the results. Dropping Phulbari did not alter the results.

**Figure 2.2: Association between Population Density and Protests<sup>17</sup>**



### 2.3 Discussion

Given I use district level data, the limits of this aggregate data remain. Moreover, numbers of protests occurrences are very low too. What I attempt in this chapter is an

<sup>17</sup> There are only three districts beyond the peak of the curve: Bangalore, Surat, and Hyderabad— all big and populous cities.

initial exploration about the mining-related community protests to develop some basic predictors that can be used in further research. But the qualitative case study of Phulbari resistance that follows will expand on some of the factors raised here.

Some of my findings are unexpected. Confounding all expectations the proportion of Scheduled Tribes did not increase the chance of protest against mine but decreased the odds of protests. On the contrary, Scheduled Castes significantly increased the chance of protests. This might be because when Scheduled Tribes are higher in proportion, they represent tightly knit heterogeneous communities that struggle to come together even for a common cause (Swain 2000: 39). Weak ethnic ties are better suited for associating with varied coalition partners that is a crucial component to organise protest combining heterogeneous communities. Tightly knit tribal culture has strong ties that not only restricted associational life, but also limited mobilisation. Additionally, the effect of Scheduled Castes on protest, points to the strongly organised caste-based politics of India that often has prior experience of resistance to authorities on other issues.

Another important finding is that, contradictory to my hypothesis, proportion of literates reduces chance of protests. I have used proportion of literates as a measure of capacity to collective action since literates would have more chance of knowing the adverse effect of mines. It also would help to be connected to social movement networks. But the result exposed opposite effect. This can happen for the following reasons: one, with higher proportions of literates in the area, communities would be more likely to form networks for claim making through formal channels than through protests. Two, the definition of literate reflects very basic minimum: a person above age 7 who can read, write her name and a simple sentence. This might not allow people to know more about the adverse affects of mine, or to have effective connections with social movement networks.

To conclude, open cast mines are ill reputed for their effect on population displacement, environmental degradation, erosion of social networks, indigenous rights, and threat to national interests from foreign capital and export of minerals. But my data on 398 mines of India and Bangladesh showed that not all mines face protest. I have investigated the variation with social and demographic factors. Results are not extremely unexpected. My findings emphasize the impact of displacement, environmental degradation, identity politics, and foreign capital in igniting protests against mines across states of India.

Further research should include more refined socio-economic indicators. Employment and age statistics of the population should also be included in the analysis. Controlling for urban areas and age of mine would be beneficial. Civil society participation and social network related data, if available can contribute in understanding much of the variation. Moreover, more protest cases should be incorporated and the analysis should be extended to the mine level for more nuanced understanding of the socio-economic factors. Although, data presented in this chapter is not without limitations, the results presented here are more replicable than case studies.

More importantly, this chapter has laid down the context of protests against mines in the region to broadly show major factors contributing to protests. Next, I shall look at two other very widely publicized resistances in India to briefly compare them with the Phulbari case.

## **2.4 Extreme Cases of Mining Resistance**

I observed that three mines (deposits) had high number of protests. These were also the ones with highest period of media attention and all started to flare up in 2006 (Table 2.5).

### **2.4.1 Niyamgiri Bauxite Mine, Orissa, India**

In 2004, Sterlite Industry Ltd, a subsidiary of the Vedanta Resources and Orissa Mining Corporation signed an agreement to mine bauxite at the foot of the Niyamgiri hills, near Lanjigarh, in Kalahandi district of Orissa. The proposed Bauxite mine plans to extract over a million tonnes of bauxite a year from the reserve. Official studies have indicated that this is likely to lead to massive deforestation on the slopes, the destruction of protected local ecosystems rich in biodiversity, and the disruption of key water sources that supply springs and streams on the surrounding hillsides and feed two rivers which irrigate large areas of farmland in southeast Orissa. Niyamgiri houses Dongria Kondh and other Scheduled Tribes who are dependent on the hills for their livelihood and vulnerable to eviction by the mine.

**Table 2.5: Descriptive Statistics for Three Cases**

<b>Socio– demographic factors</b>	<b>Domiasat Mine</b>	<b>Niyamgiri Mine</b>	<b>Phulbari Mine</b>	<b>Mean (N=398)</b>
Number of Protests	17	11	15	0.24
Number of Protest News	33	18	14	0.34
Total district population	296,049	1,335,494	2,747,500	2,037,977
Total geographical area	5,247	7,920	3,438	8006.40
Density of Population per sq. km	56.42	168.62	799.16	454.67
Forest land as % of Area	73.51	28.54	46.28	28.95
Scheduled Tribe as % of population	98.02	28.65	4.42	22.13
Scheduled Caste as % of population	.01	17.67	23.34*	13.33
Below poverty line % of population	4.8	74.9	36.2	32.49
Literates as % of population	65.1	45.94	47.0	64.31
Ownership	State/Union	Multinational	Multinational	
LWE Affected District?	No	No	No	
Mineral	Uranium	Bauxite	Coal	

\*Bangladesh does not have data on castes. This is the per cent of Hindus in the district

Local communities and civil society groups have raised concerns about the impacts of the mine on the environment and the indigenous communities. Dongria Kondh tribe has mobilised protest at the foot of Nyamagiri hills, in the district town of Kalahandi, capital city of Orissa, the national capital and even in London. They contended that if the deal went ahead, the mine will wipe them off destroying their language and culture. The mine will threaten their sacred grove on Niyamgiri hill, their way of life, right to water, food, livelihood and cultural identity. The protests started in 2006 when over 10,000 tribal women gathered to protest the plan to mine Niyamgiri. There has been violence by security forces during people’s protest against Vedanta’s aluminium refinery project in the same town. The refinery and the mine are very close by and affect the same indigenous communities. Therefore, it is often difficult to disentangle the concerted resistance against the mine and the refinery. There had been several law suits against the approval and expansion of the refinery by environmental lawyers who are active in the resistance against the mine too. State government is in favour of the mine and is pushing for it to go ahead. Ministry of Environment and Forest found flaws in environmental management plan of the mine and took position against it. The judiciary

took differing positions sometimes favouring the tribal people and sometimes the company.

In November 2007, provincial court ruled against Vedanta's right to mine the Nyamgiri Bauxite deposit. In August 2008, Supreme Court of India approved Vedanta's mining deal in Niyamgiri. The tribal people said that they would not let the mine destroy their "sacred hills for as long as they are alive". In 2009, 3,000 tribal people, including women and children formed a human chain at the Vedanta's open cast mine site. The next day 5,000 tribesmen trekked to the hill and then put up a totem pole in Niyamgiri hills in their homeland. In New Delhi, protestors held a candle light vigil to stop the mine. Transnational campaign against the mining company was launched in 2008. Survival International has launched a global campaign against the mine. According to the NGO, Vedanta's investors "should be appalled that their money is backing the desecration of a sacred Indian site and the destruction of forests on which people rely for food, clean water and a living." Action Aid along with Kondh activists demonstrated in front of the Vedanta AGM in London. It also applied to demolish London's St Paul's Cathedral, a major landmark, in protest against the British firm's plans to begin mining the sacred mountain in Orissa. Bank Track, Urgewald, London Mining Network, Amnesty International closely follows the mine.

Vedanta denied that the project will cause massive damage or the mine will be against the cultural and ecological rights of Kondh people. The company promised that jobs and energy security will be enhanced and since Indian Supreme Court ruled in favour of the company all concerned should respect the decision of world's largest democracy. However, shareholders based in UK like Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Church of England, BP pension fund, Norway Government's fund sold their shares. After August 2010, the Dongria Kondh people won a historic victory after the Central government of India refused to give final clearance to Vedanta's proposed open- cast mine.

Orissa is a resource rich state of India, torn by violent extremism, tribal protests and inter caste and religious conflicts. At one hand there are politics of natural resource at the other abject poverty, tensions between closely knit tribal communities and radical left-wing insurgency. Some scholars suggest that natural resource based politics is at the core of all these problem (Sundar 2006), others claim that poverty and LWE is to blame for the situation in Orissa, others argue that state forces are complacent.

### **2.4.2 Domiasat Uranium Mine, Meghalaya, India**

Uranium Corporation of India Ltd (UCIL) has proposed to acquire 10 sq km of land to extract uranium at Domiasat in West Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya. Meghalaya a north eastern state of India shares border with the north eastern Bangladesh. The deposit was explored in 1972 but yet to be developed in the face of long standing public refusal. The ores are spread over the area in deposits varying from 8 to 47 meters from the surface and the UCIL will go for open-cast mining. It proposed to have two large open pit mines in this area with a total ore production capacity of 3, 75,000 tons per year. The mines will work for a period of 22 years. An ore processing plant will be constructed near the mine with a capacity to treat about 1,375 ton of ore per day.

Communities of the Khasi hill tribes started protesting against this uranium mine on the ground of impending health hazard. Communities convinced a government probe agency to probe into alleged graft charges against the provincial government to approve the mine. The resistance got support from many political parties. But the state government as well as the central government had been in favour of it.

The Khasi Student Union (KSU) – a hill students' organization, started to protest to annul the lease. They had been protesting against the mining development plan since 2006. The government leased out 422 hectares of land to the UCIL for pre-development. KSU staged sit-ins, road blockades, rallies to stop the pilot project. Police arrested seven activists and the rest of the activists went striking in October 2006.

Government spokespersons said that there was no health threat of uranium mining that is substantiated by scientific findings. They also held that uranium can bring jobs, power, security, and development. A pilot project is approved by the state government. Even, in the face of protest the government said that they would not terminate the lease to UCIL. A stalemate over the fate of the deposit continues.

McDui-Ra (2007) claimed that the struggle against the uranium mine in Meghalaya is not solely for environmental and health hazards but that it is driven by ethnic politics. Locals fear that if the mine went ahead, an influx of outsiders (Bangladeshi and Nepalese) would constitute an ethnic threat, which is much worse than the environmental hazard to the local population. With majority protestors being urban middleclass, a process of 'ethnicization of the environment' is taking place. The West

Khasi hill district has more than 98% of its population regarded as Scheduled Tribe. It is to be noted that my analysis of protests against mines did not show any positive relationship between scheduled tribes and protest against mining.

### **2.4.3 Phulbari Coal Project, Bangladesh**

The story of anti-mine resistance in Phulbari is not so different from the other two cases presented here. In some aspects Phulbari is similar to the Niyamgiri in others to Domiasat. All three mines are deposits, all are set in remote locations threatening the lives of people who has land-based livelihood. Phulbari and Niyamgiri's strongest similarities are in their transnational partnerships. But Domiasat and Phulbari is similar with regard to strong local opposition and state support for the mine. While in both Indian narratives the role of Scheduled Tribes was very clear and visible; Bangladeshi case did not have much tribal presence. Still the Phulbari resistance utilized the smaller indigenous communities to attract transnational partners like Cultural Survival to deliver actions to save them. However, Domiasat case due to its disproportionately large ST population and middle-class based politics is the most different one among the three. Also this did not percolate beyond the boundary of the country.

Phulbari resistance is my qualitative case study. Table 2.5 shows that Niyamgiri is the closest to the mean of all mines and Phulbari is the least close. Phulbari is unique not only because it is in a different country or it has the highest probability of protest under the regression model I have presented in this chapter, but because this particular protest arose in a country with no open-mining history. In Indian cases, the varied interests and concerns of the diverse communities challenging mines are historically pitted against each other in support of or opposition to mines. As such, it is difficult to disentangle all the processes at work in order to analyse the initiation of the protests themselves. In that respect, Phulbari presents a unique opportunity to study the initiation and development of resistance against open mining amidst less analytical clutter. However, this should not imply that I am proposing to study the case in a political vacuum.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

Protests against open cast mines in South Asia can broadly be determined by the social and demographic factors like density of population, and forest coverage. Deposits and

mines owned by multinationals are more prone to protests than the other categories. In this context, I explore the case of protest against Phulbari coal mine in Bangladesh to show its connections, tactics and achievements. This will highlight the qualitative granularity of the contemporary protest against open mines. I focus attention on the 'local' as the core to understand contemporary globalized resistance, acknowledging the contribution of the national and the transnational context. In so doing, I seek to answer the question of why people living in one of the poorest corners of the world joined a long-term struggle against powerful opponents as this issue seems pivotal in explaining how resistance against mineral industry can succeed.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Data and Methods: *Whose side are you on?***

People here do not welcome those who are in favour of the mine. We do not want the mine. We do not accept people who do. There are people here who will beat you first and then ask questions if they suspect that you may have anything to do with the mine. There are examples where people from Dhaka were trying to probe about the mine posing as researchers. If they could not provide references from the National Committee they would be in big trouble...I am not joking – me and my friends rescued two (Kishore, member of the local protest organization, Phulbari, 2010)

The quote identifies much of the thorny terrain of field research that uses participatory techniques. This research uses a combination of qualitative interviews, observation with active participation, group discussions and archival research. The sub-heading of this chapter only hints at the level of involvement required by me to become an active member of the protestors to conduct this research. Although I initially did not foresee using active participation I decided to adopt this research technique as the need for it emerged during the process of data collection. Being an active participant in the process is a topic that I engage later in this chapter. I also provide a justification of the various methodological choices made throughout the research process.

Throughout the duration of this research—the initiation, the planning and the collection and analysis of data—I reflected and revisited choices so that I could collect as much information and insight as possible (Lofland et al. 2006: 5-6). In so doing, I gathered both quantifiable data and qualitative narratives. If we are to understand the rapidly changing social world, we need to include information that cannot be easily quantified as well as that which can (King, Keohane and Verba 1994: 5-15). Lofland and his colleagues (2006: 32) caution that decisions made before entering the field might prove controversial, and that other unforeseen problems and issues might arise that a researcher would have to tend to as part of an emergent process of qualitative and grounded research (Lofland et al. 2006: 27-32). Following this tradition, during the data collection phase I proactively revised my techniques to suit the emergent situation and needs. Goodwin and Horowitz (2002:40-44) refer to the risks associated with the participation of a researcher as an observer or as an active member of the group under

study. They show how researchers can avoid these risks by describing the process of conducting research in detail. They described this practice as “telling the reader where he [the researcher] stood” (Goodwin and Horowitz 2002: 41). Therefore, this chapter details all the steps taken as well as all the choices and revisions made with regards to the data collection and analysis that I present in this thesis.

### **3.1 Case Selection**

Chapter 2 detailed the overall regional mining-related protest scenario in South Asia (specifically in India and Bangladesh) to explain the variation in the community-based protests against the wave of extractive investment in the region. This discussion of geographical context also highlighted several cases of unusually strong and sustained resistance, of which the Phulbari resistance was one. I showed in chapter 2 that even when considering only ecological factors, the Phulbari Coal Project had the highest probability of having a community protest staged against it. This makes it a unique study case on its own right (Appendix C. 1).

Protests against the mining project had been long and sustained without a tangible grievance on the ground. Most contemporary resistances against large-scale population displacement through mining projects share the same features; for example, the cases of resistance in India like protests against Niyamgiri or Domiasat mines, described in the last chapter also had similar features. So, why choose Phulbari resistance as a case to study? Unlike the two Indian cases (due to India’s long history of mining and related indigenous conflicts), Phulbari resistance provides a rare opportunity to study the initiation and development of a protest against an open-pit mine in a country with no history of open-pit mining. It is a valuable case in helping to expand our understanding of why some people, in some places, confront the mineral industry. More importantly, exploring the Phulbari case sheds light on how people in one of the poorest corners of the world who joined a long struggle against very powerful opponents managed to achieve their objectives. There were also practical reasons for choosing the Phulbari case: I come from Bangladesh and I know the language and culture of Bangladesh better than I know those of India.

### 3. 2. Research Sites

Given the context of the research, any qualitative account of the initiation and development of the resistance required wide geographical coverage: local, national and transnational (Table 3.1). The first research site (Figure 3.1) is Phulbari and the three adjacent sub-districts of Dinajpur district in Northern Bangladesh. The mine plan showed that eight unions of the four sub-districts (known as *upazila*) of Dinajpur—namely Birampur, Nawabganj, Parbatipur and Phulbari—would fall under the mine footprint. Figure 3.1 shows the *mouza*<sup>18</sup> in the mine footprint (the inner circle in the map denotes a five-mile radius). Among the 54 *mouzas* within the five-mile radius from the centre of the proposed mine, 51 qualitative interviews and 13 group discussions were conducted (Table 3.2). The resistance is named after Phulbari although people from all four *upazilas* participated in it. According to my key informant, Opu<sup>19</sup> (Male, 30 years old, member of Gono Shanghati Andolon<sup>20</sup>), the reason for this is as follows:

Other upazila headquarters are out of the mine area and the local representatives in those three upazilas are mostly in favour of the mine since the mine will not directly affect them or their main commercial centres, unlike Phulbari. In Phulbari, the whole town will go inside the mine. The first organization in 2005 was named Phulbari Town Protection Committee. Later due to opposition from people from rest of the three upazilas, we decided to shed the word 'town' from our name. Then we became Phulbari Protection Committee (Phulbari 2010<sup>21</sup>)

**Table 3.1: Research Sites - Local, National and Transnational**

	Phulbari Mine area	Dhaka	London
<b><i>Included sites</i></b>	Birampur, Nawabganj, Parbatipur, & Phulbari Sub-districts	Mohammadpur, Khilgaon, Motijhil, Tejgaon areas	Tower Hamlet, Newham, Hackney Boroughs
<b><i>District name</i></b>	Dinajpur	Dhaka	Greater London
<b><i>Area in sq.km.</i></b>	3437.98	1463.60	1623.3
<b><i>Population</i></b>	2,640,940	8,618,700	8,505,000

Source: BBS 2001, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater\\_London\\_Urban\\_Area#cite\\_note-0](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_London_Urban_Area#cite_note-0)<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *mouza* are small administrative units used as a revenue collection unit in a revenue district since Mughal Bengal. They are usually a congregation of several villages.

<sup>19</sup> Most of the respondents have been randomly assigned a pseudonym taken from Bangla and English novels and dramas.

<sup>20</sup> Gano Shanghati Andolon or Peoples Solidarity Movement is a far-left political party.

<sup>21</sup> I have translated all the Bangla (Bengali) interviews

<sup>22</sup> Retrieved on 1 March 2012

The second research site is Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. Most of the national level drivers of the movement are based here. The National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas-Minerals-Power and Port of Bangladesh, which had been the major driver of the resistance, held most of its protest events in Dhaka. I conducted seven interviews here. These two research sites cover the local to the national spread of the movement from 2005 through 2010.

In spatial terms, the most difficult to cover were the core actors of transnational mobilisation, who were spread from San Francisco to London, Germany, Switzerland, India, Japan, Australia and the Philippines. I interviewed six of the core actors of the coalition in London, two of whom were visiting from San Francisco. London is an important centre of mining-related resistance. London Mining Network describes why:

Most of the world's biggest mining companies, and many smaller mining companies, are listed on the London Stock Exchange, including its Alternative Investment Market (AIM). London is the world's biggest centre for investment in the minerals industry: British high street and investment banks (like Barclays, HSBC, RBS, Citibank and Standard Chartered), pension funds, hedge funds and insurance companies invest hundreds of millions of pounds a year in scores of dubious mining projects across the globe, connecting working people's earnings in Britain with the fate of mining-affected communities around the world. The mining industry's key lobbying organisation, the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), is based in London... UK-listed mining companies together enjoy around half the market capital available to the world's ten biggest miners. The mining industry's single biggest source of finance is the London Stock Exchange (LSE) (London Mining Network 2011).<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, most of the global justice and environmental organizations fighting against the mineral industry are based in London. Because of London's importance as a hub, I focused on London-based events and activists that were part of the protests resisting the coal industry in London.

### 3.3 Timeline

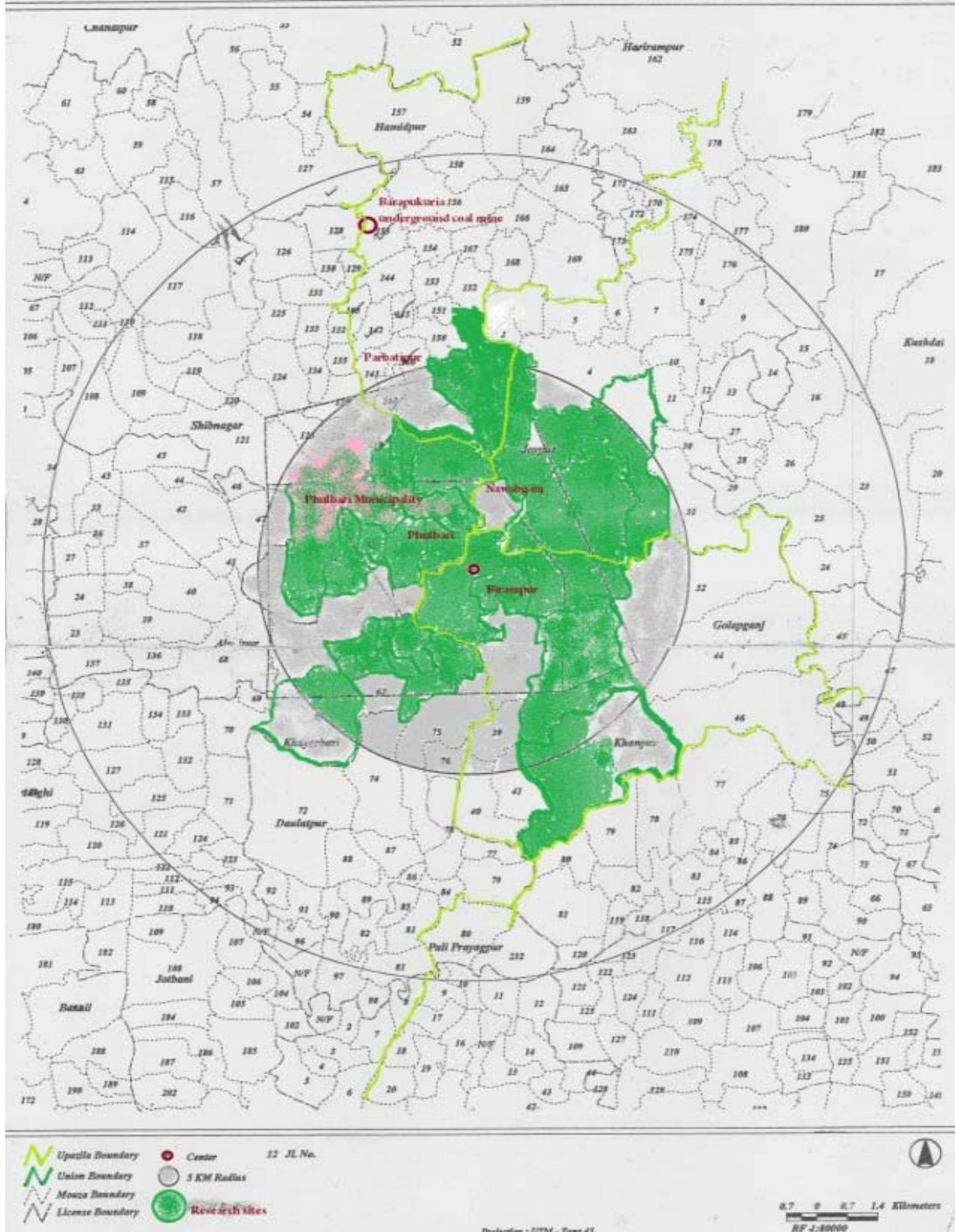
I spent seven months in Phulbari and Dhaka from December 2009 to July 2010 collecting data. From September 2010 to December 2011, I was an active member of the transnational e-mail list (98 members). My participation included managing the group

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<sup>23</sup> <http://londonminingnetwork.org/mining-and-london/> retrieved on 12.07.2011

list serv. During this period I collected many e-mail correspondences that will be analysed in **chapters 6** and **7**. Figure 3.2 illustrates the schedule of the research.

**Figure 3.1: Map of Mine Footprint and Local Research Sites**



Source: Personal Communication

### 3.4 Data Gathering Techniques

I used three primary sources of information including interviews, participant observation, and group discussions. Initially the research plan consisted of only semi-structured interviews, later for data triangulation to validate claims made in the interviews and also to extend further knowledge about the topic (Flick 2000: 178), I engaged in participant observation and Group discussion. Table 3.2 summarizes different sources of primary data. In addition to these three sources, I informally interacted with over one hundred people about the mine. In both Phulbari and Dhaka I also attended many informal political ‘chats’.

**Table 3.2: Sources of the Primary Data**

	<b>Local N (%)</b>	<b>National N (%)</b>	<b>Transnational N (%)</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Interviews</i>	51 (80)	7 (11)	6 (9)	64 (100)
<i>Group Interviews</i>	13 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	13 (100)
<i>Active Participant Observation of Events</i>	13 (59)	3 (13)	7 (32)	23 (100)
<i>Total</i>	77 (77)	10 (10)	13 (13)	100 (100)

Table 3.3 shows that most of the interviewees in Bangladesh are from the four sub districts of Dinajpur and mostly from Phulbari (40%). All group discussions were also conducted within the three *upazilas*: 46% in Phulbari, 31% in Birampur and 23% in Parbatipur. I have actively participated in (Appendix C.2: List of Active Participation) and observed the highest number of events in Phulbari (43%), followed by London (31%).

Published data came from three sources, the first being leaflets, pamphlets, reports, petitions and books published by the protesting organizations and e-mails between different levels of protestors through the list-serv. The second source is published regional, national and international press. The third source comprises all electronic and published communication materials from the company. In this thesis, I account for about 90 documents (local and national) published by both challengers and supporters of the mine. These include thirty-four leaflets, eight pamphlets, thirteen news reports in local press, fifteen open letters, six memoranda, twelve reports and ten other types of publications (maps, photos, signature campaign form). I have also analysed

237 newspaper clippings published from January 2005 to December 2011 covering the positions of the opposing camps. Moreover, I collected about 1000 e-mails.

### 3.4.1 The Interview Sample

I have used two methods for selecting all the local interviewees for my research. First, I generated a list (Appendix C.3: Sample page of the *mouza* list) of the 54 *mouza* that were initially supposed to be affected by the mine and asked local leaders in Phulbari to provide me the contacts of the village- or ward-level activists in those 54 *mouza*. I went directly to their houses or called them to set up appointments. I did not interview them

**Table 3.3: Data Collection by geographical regions (N= 100)**

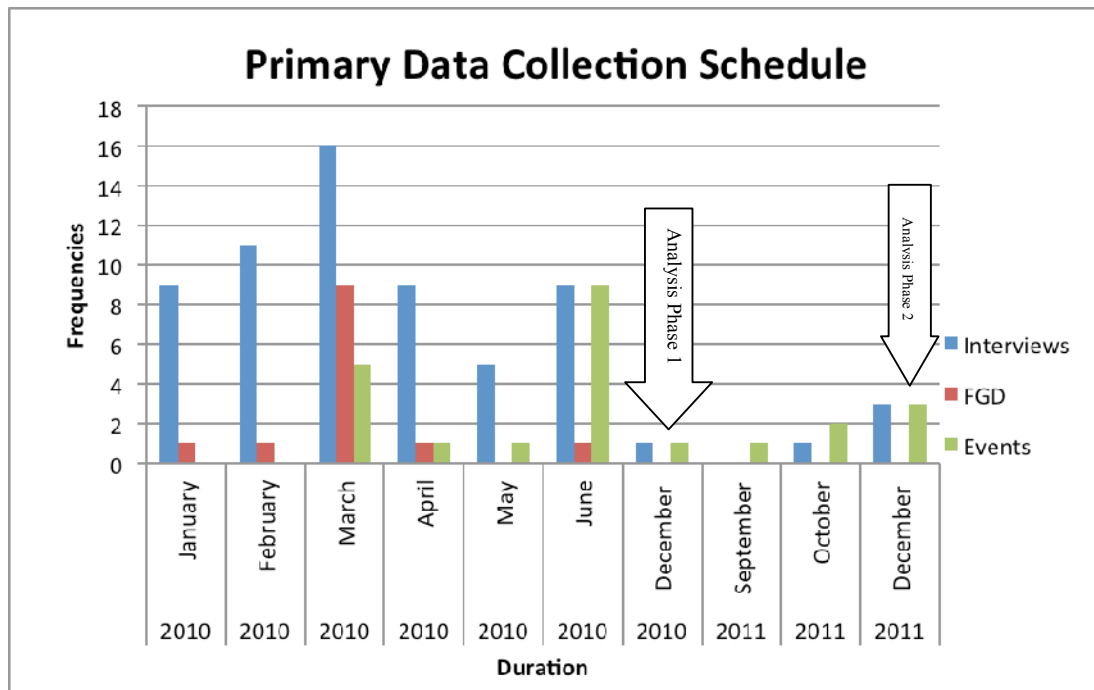
<i>Sub-district/ Geographical Location</i>	<b>Interviews N (%)</b>	<b>Focus Group Discussion N(%)</b>	<b>Active participation in Events N(%)</b>
<i>Birampur</i>	12 (19)	4 (31)	0
<i>Nawabganj</i>	7 (11)	0 (0)	0
<i>Parbatipur</i>	6 (9)	3 (23)	3 (13)
<i>Phulbari</i>	26 (40)	6 (46)	10 (43)
<i>Dhaka North</i>	5 (8)	0	2 (9)
<i>Dhaka South</i>	2 (3)	0	1 (4)
<i>East London</i>	3 (5)	0	5 (22)
<i>North-West London</i>	3 (5)	0	2 (9)
<b>Total</b>	64 (100)	13 (100)	23 (100)

right away. I did ten preliminary interviews in four sub-districts where major pockets of protestors were congregated according to the Phulbari-based leaders of the movement. In the second phase, I interviewed these protestors—but only after I confirmed the veracity of their involvement with the resistance by cross-checking their narratives about the history of the unfolding events with several leaders in Phulbari. Then, I asked them to provide me with the names and addresses of others from the same village or area who might offer more insight or a different side of the story.

In this way, I selected my sample using a snowball technique in several phases. In areas where no names were suggested by the Phulbari leaders, or where I was unable to find the people suggested, I visited repeatedly, talked to people in any of the central market places and asked them to tell me the local story of how they came to know about

the mine and what their initial reaction was. Then, I would probe about the local leaders of the protest or supporters of the mine and trace those people to interview them later. I have also interviewed five people who had supported the mine at the time of the protests, a few of whom still did. The locals who wanted the mine shared strong views against the resistance. Their interviews form a very important part of the data because they are among the very small minority in the local field who expressed completely contrary views about the resistance. These self-identified proponents of the mine were not difficult to locate and contact, but there were two respondents who were remarkably skilful in hiding their initial support for the mine and they posed very well as being against the mine. After the violence in 2006, overtly taking the company's side was not suitable for their self interest. Similarly, identifying as pro-mine with a researcher who had come with the National Committee's reference might have seemed imprudent. It took two interviews and probing in their villages to unearth the true allegiance of these two interviewees. Among the three leading *dalals*,<sup>24</sup> the most influential one did not allow me to tape the interview.

**Figure 3.2: Data Collection Schedule**



<sup>24</sup> *dalal* means collaborator or broker in Bangla (Bengali). I use this word in this thesis to denote people who supported the mine and helped, worked or received benefits from the company in return for any assistance or passing of information to the company. It is a derogatory label now that the resistance has succeeded to stop the mine.

According to Hermans (2000: 209), every interview (besides being a data collection exercise) is an interpersonal drama with a developing plot. Both the participants actively produce this unrehearsed drama, though the interviewer has to shape it. With respect to the procedures of interviewing in general, I did as follows: after I was certain about the person's position about the mine (whichever was it), I invited them to read (or I read to them, in cases where the interviewee did not know how to read) the consent form written in Bangla in front of at least one family member. In many instances they agreed to do the interview, even to have it taped, but did not agree to sign the consent form. This identifies an overall mistrust against signing any form of paper, since signing papers denotes and is symbolic of giving away land. Among the 64 interviews I conducted, only 51 interviewees signed consent forms (Appendix C.4 and C.5). After the consent, I usually started the interviews. In the opening few minutes, I had to 'set the stage'. My opening question of how did the respondent come to know about the mine often helped them to start off well (Appendix C.6: Short Profile Questions and C.7: Interview Checklist).

At the national level, I interviewed the convener and the member secretary of the National Committee and five other eyewitnesses of the killings on 26 August 2006. Since most of these interviewees are very well-known political leaders, with their permission I do not use pseudonyms for them.

The transnational level was the hardest to penetrate and the most difficult from which to select interviewees. I discuss the access issues in a later section of this chapter. In this case, leaders of the National Committee gave me the name of their spokesperson in London. Before I had a chance to contact her (Sultana apa<sup>25</sup>), however, I was introduced to her through Richard Solly<sup>26</sup> from London Mining Network. She allowed me to enter the network of transnational activists through an e-mail list: [phulbari\\_action@googlegroups.com](mailto:phulbari_action@googlegroups.com). Through this network I came to work closely with many of the core transnational actors. After a year or so I managed to interview two

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<sup>25</sup> It is a customary practice in Bangladesh not to call or address people by their first names alone. The customary person reference practice (Zeitlyn 2005) includes a suffix at the end of someone's name. One of the following kinship naming words has to be used depending on the age, gender and marital status of the person and his or her relationship to the person referring: brother(*bhai*)/brother-in-law (*dula-Bhai*), sister (*apa/didi/di/bubu/bu*)/sister-in-law (*bhabi/boudi/bhauj*), aunt (*khala* - maternal aunt, *phupu* - paternal aunt, *mami* - maternal aunt-in-law, *chachi* - paternal aunt-in-law), uncle (*khalu* - maternal uncle-in-law, *phupa* - paternal uncle-in-law, *mama* - maternal uncle, *chacha/kaka/jatha* - paternal uncle), grand-ma (*nani*-maternal/*dadi*-paternal) or grand-dad (*nana* - maternal/ *dada* -paternal). The most frequently used suffixes are *bhai*, *apa*, *bhabi*, *khala*, *chacha*, and *mama*.

<sup>26</sup> He self-identified as white English Christian male and preferred his real name.

activists from one of the partner organizations, the International Accountability Project, and two non-resident Bangladeshi who are based in the UK. I also interviewed my key informant in London, Sultana apa. Later I worked quite closely with Richard Solly, who provided me information and insights through e-mails. Some people were interviewed more than once with the objective of eliciting further responses or information from them. Table 3.4 details the profile of individual interviewees with information on whether they were interviewed more than once.

**Table 3.4: Profile of Individual Interviewees and Repeats**

Pseudonym	Age	Political affiliation	Education	Occupation	Repeat Interview
<b>Birampur</b>					
Misir	78	BNP supporter	Class 8	Agriculture	
Leela	50	None	Nil	Agriculture	
Lalon	28		<SSC	Service	X
Yusuf	51	AL	HSC	Agriculture	
Nuroldin	26	Gono Front	Class 8	Agriculture	
Shajahan	40		Signature	Agriculture	
Kopila	50		Signature	Agriculture	
Ansar	46	BNP	Class 7	Transport Worker	
Ejid	29		HSC	MLAF Village	
Shonai	38			Doctor	
Tarapod	65			Unemployed	
Debdas	60			Agriculture	
<b>Nawabganj</b>					
Mozid	49	BNP	SSC fail	Agriculture	X
Alfred	70		Signature	Agriculture	
Kodom Ali	25		SSC	Agriculture	
Rashed	56		SSC	Agriculture	
Muntasir		Unknown	HSC	Business	
Gofur	50	Jamate Islami	HSC	Business	X
Mondol			Agriculture		
<b>Parbatipur</b>					
Raju	49		<SSC	Agriculture	
Keramot	28		Class 5	Rickshaw-puller	
Himu	24		<SSC	Service	X
Ibrahim	57	Unknown	DK	Business	
Hashem	30	Unknown	MBA	Service	
Jomila			Nil	Housewife	
<b>Phulbari</b>					
Rahmot	44		BSc & Diploma	Business	
Rabeya	45	Gono Front	Class 6	Agriculture	X
Ranjan	45	Gono Front	Nil	Agriculture	X
Kuber	28	Gono Front	SSC	Agriculture	X
Siraz	50	Jamate Islami	SSC	Agriculture	X
Emil	50	Unknown	Class 10	Agriculture	

Muntasir	58	Gono front	Signature	Agriculture	
Sukani	49		Nil	Agriculture	
Ratan	60		SSC	Agriculture	
Yousuf	70	Gono Shonghoti Andolon	B. A.	Politics	X
Halim	40	CPB	B. A.	Agriculture	X
Rohima	34	Unknown	Class 4	Housewife	
Jahed	58	Gono Front	Class 5	Agriculture	
Romjan	46	AL	SSC	Business	
Tamij	38	Gono Front	Graduate	Business	
Osman	47		Graduate	Agriculture	
Kamal	29	Gono Front	BSc Engineering	Politics	
Kishor	40	Gono Front	Unknown	None	X
Khijir	44	Gono front	HSC	Business	X
Khokon	51	Gono front	HSC	Business	
Opu†	30	Gono Shonghoti	BA (NU)	Politics	X
Jatin	77			Agriculture	
Robin	20	Left		Student	X
Onukul	80	Left		Politics	
Johra	65		Nil	Agriculture	
Hurmoti	65		Nil	Agriculture Worker	
<b>Dhaka</b>					
Prof A. Hussain*	61	Left	PhD	Teaching	X
Asad	39	Left Progressive	Graduate+ CA	Business	X
Prof A.	53	Left Progressive	Masters	Teaching	X
Muhammad*†					
S. M.	80	Left Progressive	BSc	Engineer	
Shahidullah*			Engineering		
Musa	63	Centre-Left	BA (DU)	Writer	
M Ahsan Khan*	65	CPB	BSC	Politics	
J Saki*	39	Gono Shonghoti	BSC	Politics	X
<b>London</b>					
Sultana†	36	Left	PhD	Service	X
Nora	32		Masters	NGO	
Abdul Majid	65	Bangladesh Workers' Party	BA	Politics	
Safdar	42	CPB	Masters	Politics	
Anna	50		PhD	NGO	X
Richard Solly*	55				X

\* Real names used with permission

† Key informants

I interviewed about five times more men than women (Table 3.5). The average age of the respondents was 48 years, with 47 percent of all respondents within the 46-55 age group. While 48 percent of all respondents were Muslims, the second highest affiliation was the 'no-religion'/ atheist category. The respondents were mostly Bengali (81.25 %) or from the indigenous community (14%). The three white people I interviewed were at the transnational level. About 22 percent of the respondents had a secondary degree and same percentage of people had higher education. Over 40 percent

of the respondents worked in agriculture and 42 percent identified as 'leftist' in terms of political affiliation. About 55 percent had a family size smaller than five.

### 3.4.2 Group Discussions

From Table 3.5 it is evident that I did not interview many women or people below the age of 25. This trend emerged while I was collecting data in Bangladesh because the Phulbari-based leaders of the resistance referred me to very few women activists at village level. I felt the need to address the issue, and so I conducted group discussions focused on women and a younger group of activists (Table 3.6) to circumvent producing an elderly, male-dominated narrative of the local protests.

Moreover, there were specific events that required extra attention. I also did three focus group discussions on a labour dispute in the BoroPukuria coal mine<sup>27</sup>. Many of the BoroPukuria mine workers lived within a ten kilometre radius of the Phulbari deposit. Due to the proximity of the two places, I deemed it important to investigate why the mine workers in BoroPukuria were protesting in order to understand the extent to which this might have an impact on the people living in the Phulbari mine area.

In addition, I focused the group discussions on specific phenomena that became significant during the process (Appendix C.8: FGD Questions). For example, I wanted to know about how the singers' groups<sup>28</sup> worked during the days of heightened emotions, and therefore I did two focus groups on the singer's group. I kept the groups homogenous (women, youth, singers) to evade the probable power conflicts of a mixed group. I had a feeling that young protestors and women were not talking candidly in front of older men. I also observed that women saw the threat of the mine differently than men. Similarly, focus group discussions with the young protestors revealed different stories of the protest days before and after the 26 August. One focus group with local Hindu families revealed coping mechanisms adopted by a minority group which is always under various threats of oppression by the majority Muslim population.

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<sup>27</sup> The only operational mine (underground) in Bangladesh, which is about 7 km away from the town of Phulbari and in the sub-district of Parbatipur

<sup>28</sup> These were groups of people who would either create parodies of popular songs against the company or new songs to gather the audience before rallies or public meetings in villages.

**Table 3.5: Summary Statistics of Interviewee Profiles**

Features (Observed or self- reported)	Total (N=64) N (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	11 (18)
Male	53 (82)
<b>Age</b>	
Less than 25	1 (2)
25-45	25 (39)
45-65	30 (47)
65 and older	8 (12)
<b>Religion</b>	
Muslim	31 (48)
Hindu	7 (11)
Indigenous - sanatan	4 (6)
Christian	6 (9)
Atheist/ Humanism	12 (19)
No Information	4 (6)
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Bengali/Bangali	52 (81)
Indigenous Community	9 (14)
White	3 (5)
<b>Education</b>	
Illiterate	11 (17)
Up to primary	9 (14)
Secondary	14 (22)
Higher Secondary	5 (8)
Higher Education	14 (22)
Other	8 (12)
No Information	3 (5)
<b>Occupation</b>	
Agriculture	26 (41)
Agri/Factory/ Transport Workers	3 (5)
Housewife	3 (5)
Small Business	10 (16)
Politics	9 (14)
NGO	3 (5)
Service GO	7 (11)
Student/ Unemployed	3 (5)

### 3.5 Gaining Access

Party Affiliation		
Awami League	4 (6)	<i>Chapter 3</i>
Bangladesh Nationalist Party	5 (8)	
Leftist	27 (42)	
Non-partisan	6 (9)	
No Information	22 (34)	
Family Size		
Less than 5	35 (55)	
More than 5	25 (39)	
No Information	4 (6)	

In the beginning, from October 2008 to November 2009, I read the project documents, the criticisms against it, and did archival research on the resistance to the Phulbari project and other open-cast mines in South Asia. I had contact with the national level leaders of the National Committee and received archival support from them. In December 2009 I was ready to start talking to people about their experiences and opinions about the resistance and its main drivers.

**Table 3.6: Local Group Interviews 2010**

Group	Sub-district	Month	Male	Female	Total
Singers in group: Interview	Phulbari	January	6	0	6
Singers in group: Interview 2	Phulbari	February	8	2	10
Hindu Family Interviewed	Birampur	March	3	0	3
Tea Stall group interview 1	Birampur	March	3	0	3
Tea Stall group interview 2	Birampur	March	5	0	5
Boropukuria Labourer-Police encounter	Parbatipur	March	10	0	10
Boropukuria Labourer Strike1	Parbatipur	March	3	0	3
Boropukuria Labourer Strike2	Parbatipur	March	2	0	2
Women Group Interview1	Phulbari	March	0	10	10
Elderly versus Younger Leftist leader	Phulbari	March	3	0	3
Women Group Interview2	Birampur	March	1	9	10
Women Group Interview3	Phulbari	April	1	4	5
Youth Interview	Phulbari	June	5	0	5

### 3.5.1 The Local

I knew from my earlier experience and personal correspondence with many of the leaders that, without the referral of the National Committee, I would not be allowed to conduct interviews in Phulbari. In December 2009, I contacted the Dhaka-based National

Committee leaders to discuss my project and get their permission. I visited Phulbari in early January 2010. I went there with an anthropologist friend (researcher<sup>29</sup>) and a leader of Gono Shnaghati Andolon (Peoples' Solidarity Movement). We met the local leaders and stayed in Phulbari the whole day, searching for a place to stay. It was not an easy task. Both of us were women on our own. Local leaders were hesitant and anxious about our security, mainly because they feared physical violence from the supporters of the mine. Moreover, fears that a woman living in a small town without a male guardian would be sexually abused were prevalent. My anthropologist friend decided to stay in the house of a local leader. Leaders of the National Committee often stayed in this house when they visited Phulbari. I decided not to stay with a local elite's family and chose a government guesthouse (Department of Roads and Highways) instead. Locals were not very pleased with the decision because they thought it was too distant from the town centre and that my security would be at risk if I stayed there alone. I chose the place after visiting it and judging its security, facilities, distance from town, and impersonal status to be satisfactory.

On the positive side, the guesthouse provided me the distance from the locals if I needed it to reflect, introspect and focus back to my research questions and strategies. The caretaker of the guesthouse cooked for me, a service for which I paid him. I preferred this arrangement because it allowed me not to be a burden to anyone. On the negative side, the distance from the centre of the town meant that I had to walk farther or take a rickshaw to reach the town, resulting in high transportation expenses. Secondly, high government executives often threatened me with displacement due to official visits to the guesthouse<sup>30</sup>. The extent to which the rooms in the guesthouse were in high demand is illustrated by a confrontation I had one day with the local Member of Parliament, Mr. Mustafizur Rahman.

One day when I returned to the guest house after two interviews to recharge my camera and recorder I found that I was only one minute early to avoid being displaced by the associates of Mr. Mustafizur Rahman, who is also the state minister for Land for the government of Bangladesh. Mr. Rahman, who is a local resident, was on his way to Dinajpur and his train was delayed for several hours. He had decided to wait at the government guest house, which was very close to the only railway station of Phulbari. I was occupying the smaller of the guesthouse's two bedrooms and a male anthropologist

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<sup>29</sup> She was researching the Phulbari resistance for her graduate degree

<sup>30</sup> The guesthouse only had two bedrooms and a dining room.

who was also researching the Phulbari resistance was in the larger and designated VIP room. He was out in the field doing interviews in a nearby village when the minister arrived. Within a minute after I reached my room, all his belongings were dumped into my room to make room for the State Minister and I was asked to leave my room to make space for his supporters. I refused to leave. I stayed put, guarding all my and the fellow researcher's data and valuables. The State Minister is notoriously infamous for his collusion with the company and covert support for the mine. Therefore, when news of my refusal to vacate the room spread across town it was regarded as a form of resistance to his position. Although after this incident my female anthropologist colleague felt she did the right thing by deciding not to stay in the guesthouse, I felt that this actually helped me to gather more support from the younger group of local protestors.

### **3.5.2 The National**

Access to the Phulbari resistance started from the national field. As mentioned earlier, I had prior contact with the leaders of the National Committee. I sought their permission and support before entry into the local field. I interviewed the convener and the member secretary of the national committee and national level leaders of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, Gono (People's) Front and Gono Shanghati Andolon. I also interviewed eyewitnesses. Professor Muhammad (referred to by most people as Anu bhai) and Professor Hussain were the key informants at the national level. While Asad bhai provided me the details about what he saw before and after the 26<sup>th</sup>, Musa bhai gave an intricately detailed description of what he saw and what he expected of a Phulbari uprising.

### **3.5.3 The Transnational**

When I started to plan my research back in 2008, I planned to study the Phulbari resistance covering all its fields: local, national and transnational. I was very excited to study the transnational connections and coalitions. I also thought that it would be easier to collect information from the transnational activists because I would have ethical permission from a UK institution reputed for rigorous research. I guessed that they would be more willing to talk to me and share their experiences. After about one year of searching, probing and e-mailing, however, I realized I was wrong about the ease of data

collection in the UK: not one UK-based activist had replied that they would give me an interview. Meanwhile, I had been in constant contact with National Committee and its leaders in Bangladesh.

In 2009, I came to know about an event at the Amnesty International's auditorium in London where four women from Latin American countries were going to speak about mining in their countries. The public meeting was organised by the London Mining Network, one of the most important transnational collaborators of the Phulbari resistance. I wanted to know more about their connection to the Phulbari resistance and had already written to them and was waiting for a reply. This time, however, I did not want to waste my opportunity; I attended the meeting. Before the meeting started I had a chance to chat with Richard, who later became my point of entry to the whole coalition. The entry, however, was not straightforward.

Richard was very welcoming, but the moment he heard my real intention he became sceptical. He said very clearly: "your research is of no value to us if it is not part of your overall activism. Why would we tell you our methods so that you can tell the world how we operate? You would also have to convince me that you are not one of the company's recruits who came to infiltrate us!" He later explained his position: firstly, he needed to be sure whether or not I was an informer (which is not an uncommon fear for people resisting the mining industry) and, secondly, with the increasing numbers of research students working on the resistance, he felt it was impossible to give time to everyone. He wanted to be sure that giving me the time was worthwhile for the movement.

The public meeting was eye-opening. Women from Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador were telling their stories of struggles against the extractive industries as well as the state apparatus that has overtly supported the industry over its own citizens. The stories were from countries very far from Bangladesh; nonetheless, their similarities with the Phulbari resistance were striking. I expressed my solidarity with them. Afterwards, I had about fifteen minutes to convince Richard that I was not sent by the company. He asked me many questions and gave me one name. It was the name of a Bangladeshi researcher based in the UK (Sultana apa). He identified her as the key transnational contact point, juggling national and transnational roles at the same time. He said that without her permission nothing could be done. He also asked me whether Anu bhai knew me personally. My affirmative answer softened him a bit. Then he said he was still only 20% convinced. He would decide after he saw my questions. After this conversation, I

corresponded by e-mail with Richard for a while. He introduced me to Sultana apa (the UK-based Bangladeshi academic), with whom I also exchanged e-mail messages until I gained my entry into the field of the transnational coalition.

I found that it was not sufficient to prove oneself not to be a corporate spy—anyone looking to gain access needed to prove themselves to be beneficial to the movement as an active supporter of the cause (being instrumentally beneficial was not enough). Being an academic did not help with gaining access. Richard's note to Sultana apa while introducing me is illustrative of the process of recruitment in the gated transnational activists coalition:

...She is researching the struggle against Phulbari and she seems well motivated to me. But I think her academic study on its own would be sterile unless she is actively engaged in resistance herself, as she apparently used to be (E-mail to Sultana Apa 2009).

As such, my encounter with Richard and Sultana apa illustrates that access to transnational activism was not granted automatically. Some combinations of doing errands and practical work for the group could only achieve this. Furthermore, being an activist-researcher whose academic, research-based knowledge the challengers could use would work too.

### **3.6 Activist Researcher: I got involved**

Participating actively in protest events was part and parcel of an emergent research process. It was also closely related to gaining access. Gaining access to local people through the leaders of the national and local resistance was superficially easy. Access was assured if I mentioned the name of the National Committee or local leaders of the movement. I appreciated that this meant I might actually be hearing only one side of the story, but at the initial phase using the reference of National Committee was critical for gaining access. Subsequently, I needed to devise a way to ensure that I could hear the other views or versions of the protest (if there were any). After the treaty with the government and the protestors' initial success in stopping the mine, such a one-sided story might have become one of the major versions of the resistance in the local field. This meant minority views might be suppressed if I used only the National Committee as a key to accessing the pockets of resistance in and around Phulbari, Parbatipur, Birampur and Nawabganj. Therefore, I hypothesized that entering into the villages with the

National Committee's reference led people to answer what they perceived a National Committee representative would want to hear. This meant they would tell me that they did not want the mine even if they did. I needed to cross-check against such possibilities. I decided that to find out if there were stories or voices about the resistance that differed from the National Committee's version of events, I would be able to get hints of their existence by playing the role of a 'devil's advocate' against the resistance and by not using the reference of the National Committee.

With the help of my local key respondent, Opu<sup>31</sup>, I carefully selected a not-so-radical village, located at the farther limits of the mine footprint. The justification for selecting that village is as follows: first, it was less affected by National Committee politics and, second, would also be less affected by the mine. Therefore, there was a greater chance that these villagers would support the mine and have an anti-National Committee voice. This was also important in checking the company's and media's characterisation of the National Committee and protestors against the Phulbari mine project as a 'vocal minority'.

We went to this village with only a vague contact supplied by one of the Phulbari-based leaders. We could not find our contact, so decided to venture out on our own. We started to walk through the narrow, muddy corridors of a very congested and large village. Within less than a minute we were standing in a quad which was partly someone's front yard, partly someone else's barn, partly someone's backyard—so dense was the population in the village. Four women were busy doing their chores on the Friday afternoon. I asked if we could talk, and they gave us stools to sit on. A young girl (13) asked us directly what we wanted to talk about. I answered, 'about the mine, whether you want it or not, etc.' She retorted, 'why should we tell you? Who are you?' An elderly lady, who was busy sewing, asked me which side I supported.

Within a minute or so I was trying to enact my plan of creating a meaningful discussion by asking them, 'what is wrong with having the mine? Do you not want the electricity, the money, the brick-built house in the settlement villages?' A crowd of men and women gathered. We were very lucky to have escaped the wrath of the people of the least radical villages in Parbatipur. We quickly had to reveal our identity, give our references and call a leader of the Phulbari branch of the National Committee so that the protestors could cross-check and be assured that we were not from the company. What

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<sup>31</sup> He is younger than me and can be called by his first name

we learnt there was a policy the villagers were proud to uphold: first beat and then ask questions. Thankfully we were saved by using the name of National Committee. It worked like magic. Similar incidents happened in other villages too. My assumption that not using the reference of National Committee would elicit positive attitudes about the mine proved wrong. Local residents were against the mine.

After the crowd was pacified they asked the most pertinent and common question I had to answer throughout my local, national and transnational field work and data collection: ‘whose side are you on?’ During most of the interviews the respondents asked me this question. They never asked for compensation for their time, they never asked what they would get in return, but they always wanted to know which side I was supporting. They needed to know my position about the mine and told me on several occasions that they would only talk to me if I was against the mine. Why they did so is a question I want to answer in following chapters, but what I *did* is within the scope of this chapter. I clearly stated that I was against the mine. This may seem like an instrumental usage of a position to manipulate information from the unsuspecting respondent by a conniving researcher, but this was not the case.

The reason that it was not a merely instrumental decision to take a side can only be understood in the context of my personal history of engagement with National Committee. I had been a sympathizer and volunteer with the National Committee since 1999 when I was a student of the University of Dhaka and the Committee has only just started its activities around the national resources framework. Due to the sporadic nature of my presence in Dhaka after 2000 I was not involved in Phulbari resistance, though I was following it closely from early 2006. In 2008, I decided to bind my activist and academic life and initiated this research project to study the Phulbari resistance. I had to face ethical and emotional dilemmas before deciding to take on this project. The first dilemma that was tormenting me was the fear that I would not be able to produce an unbiased account of the resistance due to my earlier involvement with the committee. I reckoned later that as long as I clearly engaged with this in the analysis, it should not be a problem. The other dilemma, relating to emotional issues, was stronger and more difficult to deal with. This dilemma emanated from the first: could I be sufficiently critical of the people I knew and with whom I was a friend and volunteer? If I was, would I lose their trust as a volunteer and their friendship too?

Without denying the obvious self-interest as a researcher trying to get the consent of the interviewees, my rationale for taking a position against the mine can be

summarized as follows: I supported the resistance because I felt that it was a threat worth fighting against. Moreover, after my involvement with people in the local field I was even more convinced that the mine could not be good when so many people's lives would be destroyed by it. Therefore, I positioned myself against the mine but tried throughout the research process to actively remind myself of the critical context and clearly report it to my audience.

According to Goodwin and Horowitz (2002:41-42), if I as a researcher had maintained a distanced, impersonal, or neutral relationship with my respondents, the insights that I have achieved about the respondent's cultural and psychological realm would have been completely not possible to gather. Therefore, I decided to go deeper into the participant's world beyond mere non-obtrusive observation.

As such, taking sides was not, however, the only issue in this research. I also participated actively in various events and processes. I think this is important to mention here since to me providing help to the activists was important for the sake of continuing my research as much as for the sake of sustaining my support for their cause. I do not think that my taking of sides or working for the protesters is a limitation of my research. Instead, due to the fact that I was so deeply involved in the process, I was able to uncover and walk through the most sensitive and tricky parts of transnational alliance building.

In the local resistance, I participated but remained mostly at the margins of the decision-making tree as a rank and file protestor. At the transnational level, however, my participation took a more serious turn. It would have been completely impossible to enter this terrain if I took a stance as an objective observer-researcher instead of as a participatory action researcher. To me, the position I took was crucial in shaping how my data and results were going to be interpreted. Therefore, taking a stand against the mine and proving it through active participation in the protest events enabled me to gain in-depth insight into the processes at work. (Appendix C.2 describes the protest events in which I participated).

Following Cole's (1991:163) suggestion, I made it clear from the start that I was a researcher interested in studying their participation in the protests and I also kept my activism at bay by not taking side of the factions fearing that it might put off one faction of the protestors or the other. In order to check against the possible bias emanating from my fear of embarrassing my subject or blowing my image to the other possible respondents, I maintained the following:

I have played the role of a deliberate naïve (Hermanns 2000:211) or an acceptable incompetent (Lofland et al 2006: 69) so that I could extract more information without intimidating my respondents. However, heeding to Lofland and his colleagues' suggestion I also drew an appropriate line as to what I will say and do in exchange for information. In the local field, I kept my involvement at a low level. I had participated and observed the actions of the National Committee at both the local and the national level. Nonetheless, I have only observed but not participated or got involved in any activity of the political parties within the coalition of the National Committee.

I stayed in a neutral location than in any of the participant's houses. In my room at the guesthouse, I reflected on my interviews and observation data every night. I kept notes of my feelings and emotions that were present during the interviews or observations or simple participation in events every night. This helped me to pre-emptively recognise potential bias in my analysis and to get rid of that (Appendix C.9: Sample page of field notebook)

I have reported in the thesis whenever I have participated in the protests and took a position. I have taken a six months break from the activists' life before I wrote the chapters that discusses transnational mobilisation against the resistance to distance myself and strengthen my objectivity. Atkinson and Hammersely (1994: 248) suggested that if an ethnographic text allows for multiplicity of voices, it can replace the privileged gaze of the ethnographer or participant observer and thereby ensure better objectivity. Following this suggestion, I have incorporated the idea of 'Transversal politics' as a methodological tool that helped me sketch the collage of the protest activities in a nuanced and inclusive way. I also reveal inconsistency and tensions within the protestors at different levels. This indicates the level of objectivity. If I were obligated to favour them I would not have exposed the internal inconsistencies of the coalition. As a participant observer, my only obligation has been to understand and illustrate the mobilisation process. Phulbari resistance is a successful resistance. Analysing this case is very likely to show what the protestors have done right to make it successful and continue its success. Therefore, acknowledging their tactics and leadership is likely; because of the nature of the case.

In the transnational field, I have not contacted the company employees to participate in their events, partly because my participant identity was already exposed to them and I could not have posed as one of them. When analysing the e-mails and other archival data about the transnational mobilisation, I have deleted all names from the texts

and then analysed them using a computer-assisted program. This definitely put a check into my personal attachment with the people I know. Disengagement was not easy. Since I planned and informed my respondents ahead of time, they understood and kept me out of decision-making or any participant activities while I was writing up.

### **3.7 Analysis and Presentation of Data**

While analysing varied kinds of data I maintained one coding scheme (Appendix C10: Codes). This consistency allowed me to identify the changes in the interaction of these frames over time within the documents and interviews analysed.

#### **3.7.1 Analysing Data: Primary**

Twenty-four of the interviews were transcribed word for word and then translated into English. I have transcribed and translated the rest of the interviews simultaneously but selectively. For example, chapter 5 uses narratives of the blockade on the 26<sup>th</sup> and its aftermath. Among the forty interviews that were not transcribed wholly, I selected the sections of the interviews that described the period of 26 August – 30 August 2006 and translated these directly from the taped interviews. The qualitative data gathered was coded and analysed using MAXQDA.

In the first phase I manually coded line-by-line most of the secondary resources. Later, after focusing on the research questions, these primary codes moved into higher codes (Appendix C.10). Later, however, these higher codes generated by the analysis of the leaflets and pamphlets were used to analyse the interview transcripts. Analytically major findings are grounded in empirical material. This approach is evident throughout all four chapters. The secondary data indicated to me to the story of a dialogue of frames between two opposing teams in a metaphorical game about economic progress. The interview data filled in the shifts in identity in the local field. These two things put together make the story about framing that I tell in **Chapter 4**.

I refer to a conceptual tool of ‘transversal’ positioning to explore the patchwork of emotion, obligation and other ethical and political turmoil the protestors experienced during the days of the protest. By examining the perception of the activists and company supporters (and their synthesis through the media performance) I propose to draw the

context and variegated positioning of what happened, how it happened and why it happened.

The idea of transversal politics is developed from feminist paradigms. I am, however, using this as a methodological kaleidoscope rather than a theoretical one. The basic analytic spine of **chapter 5** is not feminist; rather, it merely uses a tool developed by feminists. Mulholland proposed the concept of transversal politics as follows:

... is about people being able to come together across differences, understanding where each other is coming from, understanding the different power relationships that exist, but at the same time being able to overcome those differences, however painful and difficult they are, in order, first, to sustain an alliance. It's also so that the alliance can work to bring about some kind of wider transformation. Envisaging that wider transformation means subscribing to some kind of common agenda for change, from wherever you're positioned. (Mulholland, 1999 cited in Assouline, 2004).

Therefore, people who identify themselves as belonging to the same collective can be positioned very differently in relation to a whole range of social divisions such as class, gender, ability, sexuality, stage in the life cycle and so on (Yuval-Davis 1999, Yuval-Davis 2010:261-280). Boundaries of transversal dialogue are those of common values which can effectively assemble the different standpoints within the activists as well among activists and their opponents to present us with a more encompassing collage of the aftermath of repression on 26 August 2006 in Phulbari.

With the help of the collage of the different standpoints of the protestors divided by their political, social and economic positions in **Chapter 5**, I present a patchwork of the four days of protest to reveal the emotional rollercoaster and initiation of the sense of community obligation to resist after the repression.

### **3.7.2 Analysing Data: Secondary**

From the published data we can trace the trajectory of differing voices between the challengers and dominant powers as well as within the challengers. The major archival data from the dominant powers were smaller in number but no less impactful. The reports prepared by the company and the draft coal policy document of Government of Bangladesh were data from the dominant side. On the other side, the challengers' documents were from the Community Council of Phulbari, Phulbari Protection Committee, Phulbari Oil-Gas Committee, National Committee or left political parties and their allies.

**Table 3.7: Data Analysis**

<b>Data Type</b>	<b>Coding</b>
News paper (Bangla)	Manually coded
News Paper (English)	Coded by MAXQDA
Local and national leaflets	Manually coded
E-mails	Coded by MAXQDA
Face to face interview	Coded by MAXQDA

In **chapters 6 and 7**, I present a narrative of the participant observer based on one thousand e-mails within the [phulbari\\_action@googlemail.com](mailto:phulbari_action@googlemail.com) mailing list. I trace new connections and actions within networks of core and general actors. Gaps were filled by the archival texts these connections produced and by the face-to face interviews and e-mail correspondence with core actors. E-mails were copied and recorded as a Microsoft Word document. I then anonymised, coded, and analysed them using MAXQDA.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

To conclude, the research mixed primary and secondary sources of information with active participation to reflect on the processes put in action to resist the mine. It was a challenging task to cover the huge geographic space. This chapter explained the rationale for all the decisions taken to collect and analyse data on mobilisation against the mine. Although I have tried my best, some issues bring potential limitations to the data that I use. First, I used mostly recall and reporting of past events and thereby I am exposed to either under-reporting or over-reporting of the facts and protest events. To overcome this, I corroborated the data provided by protestors with that of the other participants, preferably from the same villages, to check against the potential limitations. Secondly, being an educated, middleclass female and conducting research alone is culturally not very common in Bangladesh. Therefore, data limitations arising from social division might also be a factor. Finally, my overt position with the protestors in Phulbari and London might have negatively impacted my access to the company and its *dalals*.

## Chapter 4

### Dialogue of Frames, Shifting Identity and Obligation

I remember perfectly what happened when we became refugees. We were in the camp we bathed in the same pond. We all had skin disease. I do not want skin disease at this age. As if this mine is going to bring fortune for the country. It will rob us all, us here and the whole nation. The earlier the government understands this, the better it is for them. They should not forget, we have brought them to power we can remove them as well. (Hurmoti khala<sup>32</sup>, Phulbari 2010).

In this chapter, I shall demonstrate how the local and the national challengers of the Phulbari coal project rationalised their opposition to the mine from February 2005 to August 2006. Challengers started by using simple injustice frames (Gamson 2005b; Gamson 1992: 112-113) and progressed to engaging in a complex game of framing and strategic shifting of identity. These engagements incited moral indignation among the wider public and led local communities to challenge the mine.

Around the world, many dams and thousands of open-cast mines that caused large-scale population displacements have not faced protest. The Phulbari resistance is one of the exceptional cases (Baviskar 2004; Doyle 2002; Widener 2007) of a community that did protest. Analysing the resistance against this mine contributes by answering the following questions in order to shed light on contemporary resistance against the mineral industry: how did the challengers justify their protest against the mine? Why they chose the particular justifications over others? Who played what roles in the mobilisation, which were sustained over two years and drew in supporters from across the country?

Using a game metaphor, this chapter proposes two interconnected processes of generating and reshaping collective action frames. One process is the continuous dialogue of frames between the dominant team (company and state) and the challenger team (protestors and their organisations) across local and national fields. The other is the challengers' strategy of emphasising the shared concerns about the injustice or threat posed by the mine to create a wider support base with an obligation to resist. While the role of transnational partners in spreading resistance goals worldwide was

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<sup>32</sup> khala means aunt

very significant, the movement core was dependent on local content in framing and creating collective identity until August 2006.

I emphasise the 'meaning work' (Snow and Benford 1992 ) that people take on to justify why they joined the movement and how they achieved support. I borrow from Steinberg (1999; 1998) and Gamson (2005 ; 1992) to illustrate how the actors of the resistance engaged in a frame game that comprises talk and back-talk of frames. I also show strategic fitting of a shared sense of 'we-ness'. Social movement literature on framing is divided into two major camps: the dialogic framing camp (Coy, Woehrle and Maney 2008:161-189; MacCammon et al. 2007:725-749; Steinberg 1999; Steinberg 1998) and the strategic framing camp (Benford and Snow 2000:611-639; Gamson and Meyer 1996:275-290; McAdam 1996:23-37; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996:1-22; Snow and Benford 1992a; Zald 1996:261-274), which does more empirical work. In this chapter I propose a bridge between the two camps. I will engage with this literature later in this section after discussing protestors' justification of their engagement with the protests.

Rabeya bhabi<sup>33</sup> (41) is a peasant in Phulbari sub-district and an active member of the local Marxist Peasants' Union. I would call her Rabeya 'bhabi' (literally 'sister-in-law') which is the polite form customary in Bangladesh. Rabeya bhabi firmly stated:

We shall give our lives here. We will not give our lands. Where do you think we'll be going with our little ones, our cattle? Who will give us land? What would we do with your [company's] money? (Interview, Phulbari 2010)

Rahmat bhai (45), who is an educated local small businessman, clarified why he refused to sell his land to the company:

Who would want to leave his own homestead? If someone gives you money and tells you to sell off your grandparents' grave, would you? I cannot. My mother died recently and even if you give me *lakhs* [tenth of a million in Bangladeshi currency], I won't give up her grave. I will never. (Interview, Phulbari, 2010)

These personal and quality of life-related critiques of the mine are similar to most anti-coal mine frames in Western democracies (Scotland, Wales, Germany). For the Phulbari challengers, however, these were not enough. No matter how compelling these reasons may have been for Rabeya bhabi or Rahmat bhai, many regarded these as backward 'romanticism':

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<sup>33</sup> For details about this customary practice used in this thesis, refer to **Chapter 3**.

Now, some people ... have a romantic vision of Bangladesh as a rural paradise of contented farmers plowing their fields and potters and weavers tenderly fashioning their handicrafts by the light of a hurricane lamp, and view the entire concept of industrial development as some kind of neo-colonialist imposition (Sobhan 2006).

Or,

There is a heap of coal in Bangladesh – and by most counts it is worth mining. It will kick-start a new mining industry, produce a new source of power, create thousands of new jobs, upgrade rail and port infrastructure, provide royalty, tax and other payments to the state, and bring on stream a valuable new export commodity to help the balance of payments. Overall it will contribute significantly to national growth, and to poverty alleviation and sustainable development (Moony 2006).

Therefore, the challengers against the mine needed to frame their opposition in a way that refuted all these benefits. Asad bhai (36), a Marxist and an activist against the mine, maintained:

If this resource [coal deposit] is of Bangladesh, our people must have hundred per cent ownership of it. This is our constitutional right. That is why we resist export of any resources especially coal. We will have to use this resource for our own development not for exporting abroad to give all the profits to Asia Energy (Interview, Dhaka: 2010).

Furthermore, a government-appointed Expert Committee investigated people's dissent and reported:

Because of the density of the population, there is no way that one can buy the same amount of land locally or in other parts of Bangladesh with the compensation money... The majority of the local community with whom the Committee exchanged views was against the Phulbari coal project (Expert Committee Report 2006:7-10).

These quotations exemplify how the challengers identified the same source of injustice (the threat of the mine) but supplied manifold justifications for their opposition (explanations of why the mine was a threat). Based on whether they support or oppose the mine I have divided them into two teams: the dominant team and the challenger team. Each team justifies its positions through framing and counter-framing. 'Framing' is used to conceptualise the politics of allocating meaning in a bid to organise potential constituents, attract bystanders' support and demobilise antagonists (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow 2004).

Scholars from strategic camp of framing, define collective actors and organisations as strategic producers of frames that effectively signal the injustice

against the aggrieved people (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996:6). From within its own camp, strategic framing had been critiqued. This insiders' critique of framing suggests that meanings do not automatically or naturally attach themselves to the objects or events we encounter; rather, they often arise through interactive, interpretive processes that draw on a pool of cultural signs and the history of the specific group in contention (Snow et al. 1986:464-481; Zald 1996).

In contrast, another group of researchers suggest that frames need not be perceived as mechanically strategic and as marketing a 'product'. They conceptualise frames as negotiated shared meanings or claim-making performances embedded in a 'repertoire of action'<sup>34</sup> (Ryan and Gamson 2009:167-174; Tilly 2006; Zald 1996). The repertoire requires three components: an emotively defined injustice; an analysis of agency; and an identity component defining both 'we' and 'they' (Gamson 1992). Steinberg (1999; 1998) suggests that the discursive repertoires are only analysable within the process of dialogic framing whereby activists are constantly responding to the standpoint of the dominant opponents (1999: 737).

In answering the question how and why challengers frame the injustice the way they do, I propose two processes. First, there is a game of dialogic framing against the Phulbari mine wherein protestors are constantly responding within the limits of the dominant idea of progress provided by the dominant team (Moony 2006; Sobhan 2006) and upheld by the newspapers, which support the ruling alliance of political parties. Counter themes/positions are limited by the boundaries of the dominant themes or positions (e.g. the mine equals progress). Steinberg's idea of dialogism prevails, though in a more competitive form. In this setting, as long as one team can debunk the frame of the other in the public domain, it can remain in the game. Scoring points, however, depends on creating new rules and new game space (e.g. having a good standing in the media or creating political opportunities or ties). In the case of Phulbari, challengers and dominant teams were unequal in strength; their knowledge about 'pay-offs' and tactics and their ability to judge and calculate the opponent's moves were not the same. Challengers, in this case, were forced to start the game against a mine that was

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<sup>34</sup> Tilly (2006) described the repertoire of contention as follows: "all performance that characterised the interaction among a specified set of collective actors constitutes that set's repertoire of contention. Repertoires draw on identities, social ties and organisational forms making up every day social life"... the regime itself sorts performances into "prescribed, tolerated and forbidden ground". Therefore, the changing interaction of these three elements produced incremental alterations in contentious performances. At any given time, that interaction promotes the clustering of claim-making in a limited number of recognisable performances – a repertoire.

proposing jobs, electricity and compensation. Most moves by the challenger team were limited by the moves and spaces defined by the dominant team.

The second process described in this chapter is how the challengers strategically reshaped their idea of who they were to draw in supporters to challenge the dominant position on mining. I argue that the strategic evolution of the collective identity of the protestors developed from that of self-interested citizens trying to save their land towards a collective force protecting the resources of the country. They promoted the idea of ‘why all should join’ as a collective obligation to protect the national interest, rather than out of mere self-interest to save one’s own land and livelihood. Shifting the idea of what “‘we’ stand for” helped the challengers to arouse supporters' moral obligation to resist.

Therefore, in analysing the Phulbari resistance I expand Steinberg’s work on dialogic framing, amalgamating the idea of a dialogic frame game with the idea of the strategic creation of a ‘we’. This resonated with a wider audience’s sense of injustice and compelled them to resist. This chapter demonstrates how the frames were identified and defined. It also describes the multi-vocal nature of the perception of threat and the initiation of the framing, details the dialogue of the frames and the identity shift and the inception of obligation to resist the mine.

## **4.1 Data**

This chapter analyses documentary and interview data to understand the local and national processes of the initiation and development of the Phulbari resistance. Secondary data comes from three sources: the first is the movement organisations’ leaflets, pamphlets, reports, and books. The second source is reports and pamphlets generated by the company. The third source is news reports published from January 2005 to August 2006 that discuss coal mining in Bangladesh. From these publications we can trace the trajectory of the ‘talk and back-talk’ between challengers and dominant powers (Steinberg 1999).

The first two sources of data predominantly target supporters. Therefore, usage of frames in this type of data is straightforward. I analyse qualitative interviews with local and national activists and company beneficiaries to understand how they shifted their definitions of ‘who we are’. While analysing these various data I maintained one

coding scheme (Table 4.1) ,which allowed me to identify the changes in the interaction of these frames over time.

In fact, this chapter grew out of the coding process. When first analysing the archival data, I preliminarily coded the 'justifications' for resisting or supporting the mine. I laid out all the coded data sources on a desk and divided the supporters of the mine from the opponents. I realised that arranging the data in chronological order might illuminate what had happened and when. After doing so, it became evident that the communication materials were engaged in a dialogue. I argue that a dialogue happens only when one team responds or reacts to the oppositions' claims in the public domain. Therefore, evidence that the challengers of the mine responded to the claims of the supporters (and vice versa) would bolster my argument that the frames were in dialogue (Appendix D.1: A stylised dialogue). This evidence will follow in the next sections.

## **4.2 Background of the Phulbari Resistance**

Until the newly-formed company had started the surveys in 2004, there was little debate about the mine in Phulbari. Local residents were initially enthusiastic about the mine, perceiving it as an important driver of the overall progress of the country. Evidence suggests that such development projects convert farmland, fishing grounds, forests and homes into massive operations and favours national and global commercial interests over the interests of local people (Oliver-Smith 2010: 4). This version of transformation, defined as 'progress', is dominant. In many countries, such 'progress' is believed to bring about social change at the global and national level (Scott 1998). The discourse of progress assumes that remaining outside or at the thresholds of change is unacceptable.

The Bangladesh government holds a similar position about progress (Adnan 2011: 2). Adnan claimed that since the 1980s, the major social changes in Bangladesh have been shaped predominantly by 'neo-liberal' policy regimes promoting globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation. One of the major mechanisms to operate these policies is tagged with conditions imposed by the donor agencies and the international financial institutions (Adnan 2011; Sobhan 2006). The major ruling political parties are divided in terms of trivial political matters, but neither party has any opposition to the discourse of progress. Therefore, it was not surprising that the company was applauded for the development, energy security and Foreign Direct

Investment (FDI) that they were allegedly bringing to Bangladesh by developing the Phulbari coal deposit: “Bangladesh can get 7 billion dollar benefits from Phulbari Coal mine: an international survey report says” (The Daily Star 2005). The government extended support to the company without investigating the cost to Phulbari locals. The state authority also endorsed this project of progress wholeheartedly.

Adnan (2011) shows that in similar cases of development-induced displacement elsewhere in the country, the state and domestic interest groups are much more occupied with “land grabs” than with taking care of people’s interest. Against such a backdrop the company launched its project and widely distributed its major communication material in 2004 and 2005. This is when the local inhabitants within the mine footprint were dragged into the game by the dominant team. The first move came from the dominant team:

A major new coal mine is planned around Phulbari in North-West Bangladesh. ...about the benefits it will bring to Bangladesh and to the region where it is located...also addresses the impacts the mine will have and explains how they will be mitigated by sustained improvements for both the local community and the development (Asia Energy Corporation 2005a:1)<sup>35</sup>

The benefits promised to Phulbari and the country included significant economic development, export earnings, industrialisation, and sustainable social and economic benefits. The company touted benefits including secondary and support industries, increased income and employment, community facilities, and the highest national and international standards of sustainable mining (AEC 2009, AEC 2006a). They also claimed that the mine would encourage other international companies to develop large scale projects in Bangladesh.

### **4.3 Local Players: Multi-vocal Threat Perception**

All these promises, at least theoretically, appeared to be beneficial for the country and the people who were to be affected by the mine. Still a good number of affected people did not want the mine. In this sub-section, I shall elaborate how challengers came to perceive the mine with so many proposed benefits as a threat and how this perception

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<sup>35</sup> The first published material on the proposed mine accessible (physically and in terms of language of the content) to the local community of Phulbari. It is a bilingual brochure titled ‘Phulbari Coal Project’ published by the company.

largely determined their justification of oppositional framing against the mine. In a game setting, the game boundaries were unknown to the challenger team at this point.

Before 2005, local activists had not recognised the mine as a threat. On the contrary, many supported it because they did not perceive any threat of displacement. No one had warned them about displacement and the only example of mining most people knew, the Boropukuria underground coal mine (only miles away from Phulbari), had led to very little displacement. According to my key informant, Opu,

No one can understand Phulbari without Boropukuria. Boropukuria taught us what we knew about mines. The only mine in Bangladesh did not displace many. So we thought mines are all like that. We had no idea what an open-pit mine was and that we need to be worried about it (Interview, Phulbari: 2010).

Therefore, when the company-hired contractors conducted initial geological and social surveys, there was no opposition. Some members of the community gradually became suspicious after encounters with excessively enthusiastic surveyors. According to Khijir bhai (43, small-business owner and local government leader from Gono [People's] Front, a Marxist political organisation):

they came to my house in ... 2005... a group of surveyors. They wanted to know the price of my house. I told them 'about BDTK 500,000', they wrote two million. I asked them who will give the money, they said 'the company'. I asked 'why?' They were astonished. They said, 'Why? Don't you know that there will be a huge coal mine in this area and you have to be resettled and get compensation?' They also said that the whole top soil will have to be removed and people will be resettled. They wrote two million for the house using pencil and said the land will be compensated by the government. They even took a photo of me and my mother. At the end, they asked me to sign the document, then I told them that I want to know more about the mine and then sign this. I cannot sign before I know what this is all about. They threatened me that if I had not signed, I would not get compensation (Interview, Phulbari: 2010).

Many others became alarmed about resettlement after the surveyors visited them. They grew suspicious when the surveyors unexpectedly inflated the value of their assets; as it had for Khijir bhai, this seemed 'too good to be true'. Moreover, the surveyors recorded everything in pencil, which could be easily erased. All local respondents identified 'use of pencils'<sup>36</sup> as a signal alerting them to the possibility of dishonesty from the company. There were also consultation meetings. According to the

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<sup>36</sup> Similar answers were given by all respondents when asked, "when did you decide to resist the mine and why?"

company (Asia Energy Corporation 2006b), “21 ward-wise village consultation meetings” were held in four unions in four sub-districts of the mine area. My interviews disclosed that in most cases, however, such consultation meetings were thwarted by local defiance or not held at all. Local people’s suspicions grew stronger with the rumour that signatures in the participation register were being used as a form of consent to the mine<sup>37</sup>.

Within the local communities, social divisions generated multiple voices against the mine. These voices, though not contradictory, were weak for delegitimizing the company. One of the most militant groups of local challengers was the first generation settlers in the region who came from a nearby district called (Chapai) Nawabganj. These internally-displaced migrants were victims of river erosion. They perceived the mine as a threat to their lives for two reasons. First, they had at least one prior experience of displacement and therefore knew the pain and hardship of resettlement. Johra bhabi (housewife, agriculture-based, late 50s) stated:

don’t you think it’s a bit unfair when we have just settled down and are waiting to be taken care of by our children and to able to see our grandchildren that now you tell us to start life anew somewhere else?” (Interview, Phulbari: 2010)

Secondly, most *chapaiya* would lack a legal right to land since they cultivate forest (*khas*)<sup>38</sup> land. Ansar bhai (45, Truck Driver, local leader) reported:

you know, some of us [with legal documents of land] could have gone for the compensation but we did not, because of a lot of us [without such papers]...we are in it together (Interview, Birampur: 2010).

In general, women associated the threat posed by the mine with their immediate socio-cultural settings and collective memory. They referred to chickens, plants, leaves, and graveyards and argued against losing these with the development of the mine. They also referred to cow dung, fodder, fuel collection and farming. They contended that if they were to be displaced they would lose everything culturally meaningful to them. Himu's Mother (landless, housewife, widow, late 50s) in Chak Mohanbhog of Parbatipur sub-district said:

The coal mine will destroy my father’s grave here. What if there is a diamond mine under our prime minister’s father’s (father of the nation) grave? Will she

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<sup>37</sup> Field note 2010 and Interview with Rahmat bhai 2010

<sup>38</sup> Government-owned land that cannot be leased or sold to any individual

let the mine go ahead? She should think before she lets them in (Interview, Parbatipur: 2010)

Women also referred to the memories of displacement in 1947 and 1971<sup>39</sup>. In 1947, when India was partitioned into India and Pakistan at the end of British rule, Bengal was divided into two: West Bengal, a state of India, and East Pakistan, a province of Pakistan. Dinajpur was one of the districts along the fault line. The western part is called West Dinajpur, and is a district in West Bengal, India. The eastern part became Dinajpur in East Pakistan. Living in a border district, the people of Dinajpur were especially affected by partition. Older women often referred back to the refugee camps to compare them with the proposed resettlement camps.

Elderly people believed that they would not be able to survive if they had to relocate, adjust to new places and build new relationships. The *Santals*, one of the major indigenous groups in Bangladesh, even perceived the mine as a threat that would completely wipe them out as a community.

At this juncture, a game move from the people to be affected was imminent. In January 2005, local leaders formally met the company officials in Phulbari. They were given the opportunity to express their disquiet and to view pictures of open-pit mines. Despite company officials' assurances, the leaders began to voice their dissent. As described by Halim bhai (male leader of OGCP and member of the Communist Party):

I asked them: 'where could the government get so much land to fruitfully resettle us?' They could not give me a proper answer. At first, we could not understand what they meant by open-pit. Then we saw the pictures in their office. That is a huge amount of area, I thought. Where are these people, where are 'we' going to go? (Interview, Phulbari: 2010)

At the local level, the dominant team comprised local government officials, employees of the company and a few local businessmen and politicians (AEC 2004). Local protests within the mine footprint started in 2005. The challengers were initially mobilised under the Phulbari Community Council. Later, a broader coalition of all local branches of the major political parties and individuals created the Phulbari Rakkha (protection) Committee under the leadership of the Mayor of the Phulbari municipality. Both of these community-based organisations were interested in compensation and resettlement. Local protestors first initiated their opposition with counter-frames within

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<sup>39</sup> war of liberation when East Pakistan fought against Pakistan and became Bangladesh

the broader aegis of the dominant idea of progress<sup>40</sup>. They initiated their dialogic interaction against the dominant position of 'the mine is progress' with the dialogic framing 'the mine brings injustice' through displacement, inefficiency of compensation and resettlement processes, environmental damage, and loss of identity and culture. The first two local movement organisations were attentive to compensation and resettlement issues without critiquing the dominant idea of progress through extraction-based high modernism<sup>41</sup>.

The meaning of the threat of the Phulbari mine was constructed to question its alleged benefits and to bring the costs of mining into the discussion. This threat construction did not, however, happen overnight. This 'meaning contest' evolved as the people who decided to protest looked for ways to resist the mine. They learned the game by playing it. In the next section, I discuss the dialogic frame game.

## **4.4 Dialogue of Frames**

### **4.4.1 Local Protestors: Debunking Benefits of the Mine**

In the last section, I showed how, after the mine was perceived as a threat, local inhabitants of Phulbari started to raise their concerns against it from within the context of progress. The first written statement of this was read in a press conference arranged by the Association of Peasants and Agricultural Labourers (a branch of Gono Front) in Phulbari on 17 April 2005. The arguments against the dominant position of 'the mine is progress' included environmental damage, dependence or poverty, identity, culture and displacement (Table 4.1). This document suggested that the provisions being offered by the company were not good enough. This is an example of the piecemeal dialogue detailed by Steinberg (1999: 747). According to him, rather than engaging in the 'wholesale' process of pitting one position against a completely different alternative, challengers generally engage in a 'piecemeal' process to 'problematise' the internal inconsistencies of the dominant position to delegitimise it. He described it as a 'war of position keyed to struggle'. This position is often provisional, at least in the first phase. It is adopted because challengers often lack the institutional or social standing to legitimise their oppositional meanings (Steinberg 1999:751). This scenario was evident in the first phase of the game in Phulbari.

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<sup>40</sup> Field note 2010, Interview with Anu bhai, Khijir bhai and Halim bhai 2010

<sup>41</sup> Press release 2005

The challengers started the game within the discursive space of the dominant position of 'progress'. If the mine proposed compensation and resettlement, the best defence was to criticise the compensation as inadequate and the resettlement procedures as unacceptable. In the Phulbari case, the challengers did not willingly decide to participate in the game. The game was started by the dominant team and the challengers were dragged into it unaware of where it would lead them. The pay-off was not equal for each team. For the challengers, the only pay-off was stopping the displacement and its consequences. For the dominant team profit was the pay-off. The game involved what Lofland (2009:15) calls 'unequal parties of conflict'. The challengers had so much at stake that for them the conflict was more like the fight of a gladiator slave in ancient Rome. While a part of the dominant team (investors) could leave the game if profit was low, the challengers could not leave the game, just as a gladiator slave could not leave the arena. In Phulbari, if the challengers left the game they would leave the land – thereby giving the dominant team an easy win and losing their livelihood and all that was meaningful for them.

The dialogic camp of framing scholars defines such framing as an ideological process driven by specific socio-cultural contexts and patterns of interactions with dominant discourses (Coy, Woehrle and Maney 2008:165). Discourse should be treated as a process of joint ideological labour, one that is often fraught with underlying ambiguities and contradictions that can become manifest in public contention. As an ideological process, therefore, discourse is a terrain of conflict and not simply the medium or messenger through which it is expressed (Steinberg 1998: 848-853). It is a purposeful meaning production process, providing both agency and limiting structure (Steinberg 1999: 743-744). Once challengers have drawn on a dominant discourse, they often find themselves limited in terms of their rhetorical options. An example of reactive framing by initial local activism is as follows:

Open Pit Mining will forcefully displace us from our homes. Schools, colleges, businesses, roads, mills and factories will be uprooted. We will suffer from lack of water and environmental hazards (Das 2009: 51-53).

The Phulbari Community Council's press statement (22.4.2005) maintained: "our traditional way of life will be threatened. People will lose jobs and the mine will be displacing more than it can replace". As such, all this framing was addressed within the discourse of 'progress' (Asia Energy Corporation 2005a: 1-5). The challengers

using the documents quoted above started forming a sense of collectiveness, driven by their self-interest to save their lands.

**Table 4.1: Thematic Frames**

Higher level thematic Frames	Definition
Progress	Positive references to development of mine as a cause of job security increased GDP, income and increase in Foreign Direct Investment.
Displacement	Negative reference to moving out of challengers' abode or cultivable land for the mine
Energy Security	Positive reference to how the mine will produce energy to end the energy crisis of Bangladesh.
Environmental Loss	References to natural environment and the mines negative impact on such environment
Environment Management	References to managing the environmental costs while mining
Health and Safety	References to the threats of health and safety issues of the people residing in the mine footprint
Identity and Culture	References to the threats to traditional ways of life, to graveyards and other places of religious and cultural significance
National Interest	Reference to the national capacity building and using the resources for the nation's own use

Interviews with most of the local activists illustrate that the compensation package proposed by the company was demystified in the first phase. The compensation package was irrelevant for the landless agricultural wage labourers, semi-urban unskilled informal sector employees, and indigenous communities with no legal land title because they would not be eligible for it. The landed protestors contested the package because it lacked a land-for-land policy and because the provision of cash compensation would be either negligible or disbursed so slowly that some might never receive it (Muhammad 2007a; SEHD 2007)<sup>42</sup>. Others worried they would lose social and environmental networks if they were forced to reside in a resettlement village.

...if we are displaced and go to the settlements, we will have cash compensation which will be spent soon and my children will starve if I cannot earn a day's food. Do I know anyone there, whom I can ask for help? No. (Interview, Ejid, 29, village doctor, Birampur: 2010)

Or,

<sup>42</sup> Prior research on development-induced displacement shows that people who have land-based livelihood are the worst sufferers from cash (instead of land-for-land) compensation for displacement Oliver-Smith, A. 2002.

...even chickens take at least three months to know their way home...how can we live in settlement villages. Life is devastating in those camps...my chickens, my plants all will die. Plant a tree yourself, then you will know how it feels to rip a leaf from that plant... and you want to rip us all from our roots? How would we survive? Yes ... I am being emotional... because it is emotional now that you [the company] want us all out of our own lands (Interview, Jomila apa, 55, peasant, Parbatipur: 2010)

Or,

why don't you [the government] just give us an alms pot in our hand and watch how we die. That is better [to beg and die] than going to those settlement villages (Interview, Sukani boudi, 56, peasant, ex-member of union council, Phulbari: 2010)

These are the examples of what protestors said was driving their dissent against the mine, at least when they started opposing it<sup>43</sup>. The protestors opposed the mine with very radical justifications: cash cannot compensate for things like family members' graves, land, trees, or social bonds. These villagers were not claiming more compensation or better re-settlement; they completely dismissed the idea of resettlement and compensation that the company offered or Phulbari Protection Committee or Phulbari Community Council was advocating for. Their emphasis on environmental and cultural contexts was not constrained by the dominant position, but it failed to appeal to a wider audience. To summarise, locals realised that the mine was going to affect them by taking away their livelihoods, lands and homes, and these costs were so high that they got together to resist the mine. Local protestors and organisations mobilised through street meetings, weekly market rallies, processions and informal chats in spite of a lack of economic and political resources.

Debunking the benefits and emphasising the costs to the local people did not suffice. The local challengers were able only to check the moves of the dominant team; they were not able to put a proper dent in their defence. They were perceived as self-interested peasants hindering the development the whole country. At the same time, from 2004 to 2005, the mining company initiated an aggressive and intimidating public relations campaign that involved setting up local company branches and making employee's cars and houses prominently visible in the town. They also gave out TV sets and blankets, which aggrieved many locals who saw it as an effort to initiate a culture of greed within the younger generation. At the same time, the company was

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<sup>43</sup> 'Why did you start to protest against the mine?' –used to be the question. It was usually asked as a complementary question to what the respondent had been telling me so far about her involvement in the movement.

drilling in several places. The local resistance had not yet received any support from the wider audience. They were stuck with limited scope when they perceived that their costs were too high. They were radical and not constrained by the dominant ideas of progress, but they were constrained by the lack of resonance in the wider society.

The dominant narrative suggested that the whole country would benefit from the electricity produced from the Phulbari coal. This narrative created a division between the nation as a whole and the people of the eight unions who would be affected by the mine. Realising that their piecemeal protests were in a precarious condition, the challengers felt cornered by the dominant power.

The challengers had to find a way to reach a wider audience<sup>44</sup>. They needed to find a threat that resonated countrywide. While searching for a way to frame the mine in a way that had implications beyond Phulbari, a few leaders of the movement discovered certain discrepancies in the profit-share, GDP contribution and royalty distribution of the mining lease to the company. Within the next few months of 2005, they revealed that the mine was harmful not only for the locals, but also for the country<sup>45</sup>. This is how they opened up a new game-space opportunity. Challengers scored a point.

#### **4.4.2. Dialogue continues: Challenging the ‘Benefit’**

The challengers needed to disseminate their findings to a national audience. If we were to perceive this conflict as a game of resistance between dominant forces and their challengers in the field of ‘progress’, the boundary of the fields would be constrained by the rules of the game, in this case the idea of progress. Such dialogic action, however, would employ continuous conscious and strategic tactics to counter the discourse. In such a game setting, teams do not lose points as long as they counter opponents’ frames. Scoring, however, depends on achieving the striking position and providing new ideas that the opponents need to counter to continue the game.

Next I would turn to the local actors’ innovations and how they initiated the second phase of the dialogue of frames – countering the proposed benefits of mining. Along with information from the company and the web, local leaders collected data from local government offices to draft the first local publication against the proposed mine. This pamphlet titled ‘Step-up to Protect Phulbari’s Resources’ (2005) opened

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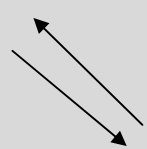
<sup>44</sup> Field note 2010

<sup>45</sup> Interview, Khijir Bhai 2010

with information gathered from company documents: “...the Australian company that got the mine lease is going to take away 94% of our coal and even though the country is the owner of the resource our country gets only 6% of the royalty”.<sup>46</sup> The pamphlet maintained that the mine would have a destructive impact on the environment and that people in the region would be displaced. The pamphlet clearly showed the profit and royalty distribution and included information collected and analysed locally. It stated:

...only a part of what we as citizens contribute to the national economy is greater than the amount the company proposed to provide our government. We urge you to reconsider if we should risk destroying these local sources of income and our environment in lieu of only 9000 crore taka and 2100 jobs? The answer is ‘No’ and we have no other way left but to resist this” (Translated, Step up to Protect Phulbari’s Resources 2005)

**Table 4.2: Dialogue of Frames**

	<b>Benefits Frames</b>	<b>Debunking Benefits</b>	<b>Cost Frames</b>	<b>Debunking Costs</b>
Dominant Team	Compensation Resettlement Job Creation Energy Security Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) Industrialisation			Environment-Mitigation Displacement-Mitigation Town Saved Less Land/ Less Agri Cost Energy Security FDI International Standard
Challenger Team		Compensation - Inefficient Resettlement - Unreliable Jobs- Insufficient Agriculture	Displacement Cost Environment Cost Local agriculture GDP Cost Energy Scarcity National Interest Cost Cultural Cost Heritage Loss: Town	

In response to the discourse of progress, local challengers were pitching displacement, environmental pollution and a hint of national interest. All these were aspects of the ‘cost’ of mining in response to the ‘benefits’ of mining. This document also shows the emergence of an alternative way to oppose the benefits proposed by the mine from within the boundaries of the dominant position. The document presented data on the local GDP contribution and showed that this was larger than the royalty promised by the company, thus debunking the economic benefit of the mine. Though not yet fully developed as a counter-point in the frame game, this document can be

<sup>46</sup> (AEC 2004) supports this

regarded as a core source of the National Committee's Sovereign Self-Sufficiency argument.

#### 4.4.3 Match Turning Point: National Committee

In the national field, the most vocal and staunch critic of the Phulbari mine as 'progress' has been the National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas-Minerals-Power-Ports (henceforth, National Committee). The National Committee is a platform comprising most of the leftist (Marxist, Leninist and Maoist) political parties in Bangladesh<sup>47</sup> (e-mail correspondence 2012). It also includes a large number of academics, ex-public servants and engineers. The Committee was formed in 1998 in order to resist unequal and often exploitative license and production-sharing contracts signed with big multinational oil and gas companies. According to their Declaration in the first convention in 2000:

...alarmingly we have witnessed that successive governments had divided the country into 23 blocks and are leasing them out to multinationals under very exploitative conditions that threaten the national interest of the country. Therefore, we are declaring our opposition to any such production sharing contracts with the multinationals and expansion of such deals through export of our resources (National Committee 14.10.2000:1)

Since 1998, the committee has been active in grassroots mobilising and has succeeded in stopping several deals that they deemed to be detrimental to national interest. They were able to stop the production-sharing contract of the Bibiana Gas field and the export of natural gas. They halted an attempt to privatise the biggest port of the country by an US company. They also forced the government to file a complaint to claim compensation for the blowout in the Magurchhora gas field. Their argument against these deals was initially based on their position against imperialism and 'neo-liberal' world order (Shahidullah 2002: 219-238).

This citizens' pressure group has a good track record of stopping the deals it opposes, even though it is poorly funded. Moreover, although the member organisations

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<sup>47</sup> The following parties have been members of the National Committee, since its inception in 1998: Communist party of Bangladesh; Bangladesher Shomajtantrik Dol [Bangladesh Socialist Party] or BaShoD (and its splinter groups: BaShoD -Khaleq and BaShoD-Mahub); Bangladesh Workers Party and later its splinter groups (Biplobi [Revolutionary] Workers Party and Workers Party-Punorgothito [Reconstructed]); Samyabadi Dol [Communist Party]; Gonotantrik Biplobi Party [Democratic Revolutionary Party], Gonosonghati Andolon [People's Solidarity Movement], Gonotantrik Gonomoncho [Democratic People's Platform], National Awami Party, Gontontri Party [Democratic Party], Gono Front [People's Front].

of the committee (the leftist parties) are very trivial in national electoral politics (winning less than 0.5 per cent of votes in the national election in 2001)<sup>48</sup>, they always have remained a potent political force in Bangladesh politics (Heitzman 1989). Why these parties have such a disproportionate influence remains a puzzle, but Maniruzzaman's (1994) narrative about how the radical leftist<sup>49</sup> politics of East Pakistan gave rise to the secular independent Bangladesh does shed light on the role of these leftists in progressive politics. According to his account, leftist ideas have always been an important driver of progressive and secular politics, despite their lack of electoral representation since the Pakistan period (Maniruzzaman 1994: 5-10). In independent Bangladesh the left was weak until the late 1990s (Maniruzzaman 1994).

It is possible that the undercurrent of progressive ideology still lingers in remote pockets of Bangladesh. Marxists led the share-cropping movement and conflicts in 1960s had impacts on Dinajpur and a leftist base still exists there. Thus, one explanation for the importance of the leftist parties in the politics of mining is that leftist parties have long had something of a base in the region. Or, more generally, the National Committee's reputation of honesty and the relevance of its agenda were significant in shaping public opinion in favour of their frames as opposed to those of formal political parties. In a broad sense, the Committee was proposing a sort of socialist nationalism as opposed to the 'neo-liberalism' of the government. Furthermore, people's trust in the leftist political forces might have been due to their safe distance from the domains of formal political and administrative power. This distance inoculated them from political draft and corruption. The local challengers preferred less powerful and less corrupt partners over more powerful and more corrupt partners.

Resisting the extraction of coal or other mineral resources was not on National Committee's agenda until 2005. As discussed in the last section, the Phulbari Protection Committee, which was leading the resistance at the local level before the National Committee joined in, was mainly concerned with saving lands. 'Staying at our home' was the basic discursive frame pitched against the discourse of 'mine as progress'. Through their affiliation with leftist parties, however, some of the local activists in the Phulbari Protection Committee had been exposed to the National Committee's

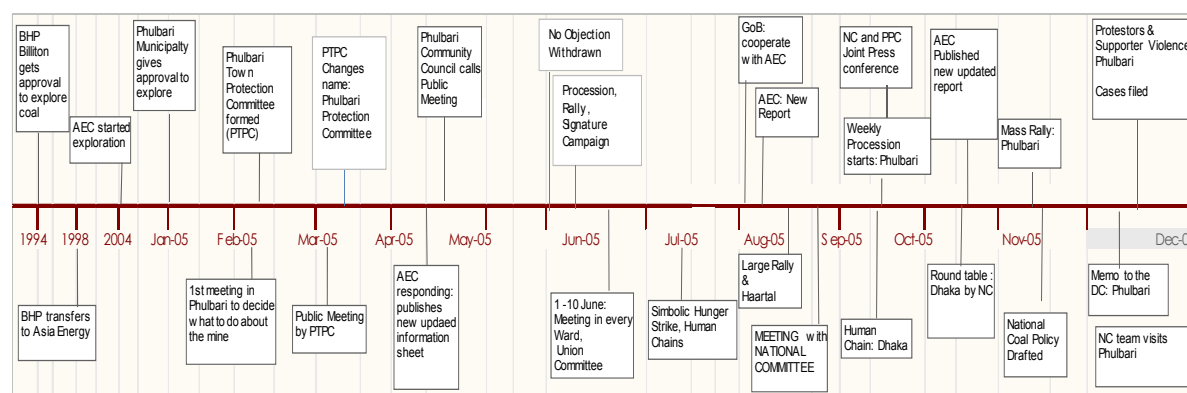
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<sup>48</sup><http://www.ecs.gov.bd/Bangla/ShareVote.php?&electionid=8&electionName=Parliament%20Election%202001>

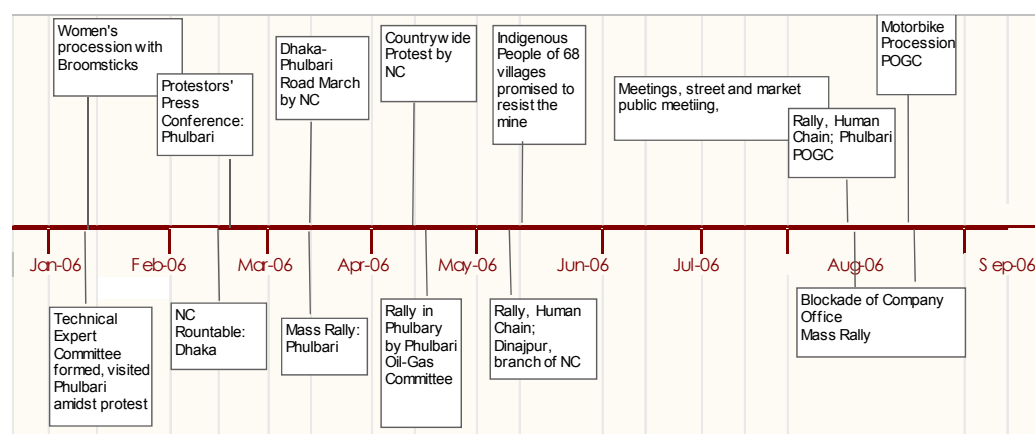
<sup>49</sup> I use the term 'leftist' loosely because historically left has been so divided and fractured that even during their golden days in 1950s it was difficult to ascertain all the shades of left in East Bengal (Maniruzzaman, 1995.)

repertoire of ‘national interest’ already. This section of Phulbari activists was sceptical about the ‘rhetorical’<sup>50</sup> (in Steinberg’s term ‘piecemeal’) resistance put forward by the Phulbari Protection Committee (PPC). They felt that the PPC was focusing too narrowly on compensation, resettlement and environment. They feared that this might ultimately help the company and not the people. They were against piecemeal opposition to the mine and offered a radical path of completely opposing the mine. By that time they had also identified the flaws in the royalty arrangements. This group of leaders contacted the National Committee to steer the resistance ahead.

**Figure 4.1: Protest Timeline till January 2006**



**Figure 4.2: Protest timeline 2006 (January to September)**



One might suggest that the deal with the company was so detrimental for Bangladesh that resistance against the mine could not have been surprising. I am in agreement that such a destructive mine was bound to face resistance. Yet, the extent of

<sup>50</sup> A number of local respondents that had leading roles in the movement used this term when discussing how the National Committee got involved.

the negative effects was not apparent until some locals started to feel suspicious about the mine. The problems with the proposed mine were actually revealed and identified through the process of resisting it – the process of responding to the dominant position.

As the resistance gained momentum, peasants with very little formal education became able to discuss and argue against the mine eloquently using statistics and concepts unheard of by many educated Bangladeshis outside the mine footprint<sup>51</sup>. They were not simply a more attentive segment of the population; they became more aware to resist the mine in order to protect their lives.

Based on the first two documents produced at the local level (the press statement by local Gono Front dated 22 April 2005 and ‘Step up to Protect Phulbari’ from 2005), which identified the flaws in the royalty distribution and the gaps of the deal, National Committee experts carried out further research on open mining and its environmental impacts and devised their discursive repertoire. The National Committee experts acknowledge their debt to the local activists for their frame of comparing the local contribution to the GDP against the royalties proposed by the company. The national challengers adopted and expanded these local frames into the broader repertoire of cost and benefit analysis of the mine.

The challengers debunked the dominant team’s energy security frame by identifying the futility of the agreement where over 80 per cent of the coal was earmarked for export. The challengers argued that if most of the coal was exported, the promised electricity could never be generated and this would actually destroy the country’s energy security. Open-pit mining being one of the most environmentally destructive extractive practices, gave enough scope to the National Committee and its allies to debunk the mine based on the environmental loss it will bring. They showed that while the company promised to pay Bangladesh about Taka 1500 crore, the mine would lead the country to lose Taka 1800 crore (not even taking into account the environmental loss). When the company and the government representative referred to successful practices in Germany, Australia and other countries, the Committee discredited their statements by comparing the population density of those countries with that of Bangladesh, arguing that comparison to thinly-populated Germany or Australia was not meaningful. These contestations and dialogues took place in both the alternative and national media.

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<sup>51</sup> Field notes, interview with several respondents 2010

National frames countered the dominant claims for development, energy security and jobs as premature, lacking accountability, and a project of plunder by neoliberal imperialists (Ahmed 2008; Muhammad 2007b). The National Committee deconstructed the company's frames by proposing an elaborate plan of creating national self-reliance on mineral resources and supporting the national bourgeoisie by saving it from 'transnational' capital. They were able to link the resistance to a wider discourse of sovereign self-sufficiency of national interest that encompassed other interests. Their slogan was 'No Open-pit, No Export, No Foreigners'. Therefore, at this juncture, the resistance to the mine moved away from radical local frames where they did not at all want the mine and co-opted the dominant position of progress and generated its own counter position of sovereign self-sufficiency. Since Steinberg (1998, 1999) proposed a general theory on the semiotics of the discursive repertoire, his account was limited by essentialism where he expected all framing to be constrained by the dominant discourse of the time. Hence, my case illustrates a departure from Steinberg's dialogic analysis where his challengers failed due to being essentially limited by the repertoire of the dominant powers but Phulbari resistance succeeded.

#### **4.4.4 Company Responses: Debunking Costs**

In October 2005, the company released an 'information sheet' responding to the challengers' counter framing. It outlined how they were scaling down their project.

...our mine design team realigned the mine footprint and modified it in such a way that it now avoids most of Phulbari township. This means that many homes and businesses that would have been relocated will now remain, and that most of the eastern part of Phulbari township including its main markets and offices, will not be taken by the mine. As a result of this modification, the number of people who will need to be relocated in the area has been reduced from earlier estimate of 50000 to 40000. There will also be less land needed for the mine and its related infrastructure: 5900 hectares, instead of the 6,500 hectares we had earlier envisaged. Further studies have provided reassurance that there will be plenty of water for both irrigation and households in the mine impact area. The area will not in any way become dry. It will remain green with a lot of agricultural activity (Special News Update of October 2005b: 1-6).

In a newspaper article by the Chief Officer of the company, this retreat became evidently piecemeal:

The first is the royalty level, set in accordance with the then and current Mines and Minerals Rules, at 6 per cent for open pit mining. This has led to misunderstanding; it does not mean that Asia Energy walks away with the other 94 per cent, as some have misleadingly suggested. In fact, far from it. Mining in Bangladesh is expensive; the coal is not on the surface, and it will be costly and a huge undertaking to extract it at Phulbari.... Overall, Asia Energy will be paying directly and indirectly some \$7 billion to the state of Bangladesh during the life of the mine and contributing some \$600 million annually to the balance of payments.... This amounts to a temporary loss of rich, fertile land in exchange for coal. That is a sovereign decision for Bangladesh – rice worth just millions of dollars or billions of dollars worth of coal (Moony 2006).

The dominant powers were not yet able to address the question of national interest (AEC 2004, AEC 2005, AEC 2006). I argue that after the National Committee joined the resistance, protestors stayed within the dominant position of progress and formed their counter-position of self-sufficiency based on the cost-benefit analysis of the mine. Now, however, the company also was confined within its own idea of progress and so struggled to counter the National Committee's position. The Phulbari dialogic frame game reverted to the challengers' counter-theme. Unlike Steinberg's (1999) mill-workers, the Phulbari resistance achieved success even though they were limited by the dominant discourse. The challengers in the Phulbari case did not go beyond the idea of progress, but they showed how the mine would not bring progress to Bangladesh.

The inclusion of the National Committee was a major turning point in the framing of the resistance. Halim bhai described the first turning point as follows:

...at the very beginning we all thought that we have to resist because we needed to save ourselves from displacement, loss of environment, identity and culture, and poverty. However, in-depth information on national interest, environmental and social impact of mining, led us to believe that we needed to address issues about the mine more than our displacement. We needed to bring national interest in our discourse (Interview, Phulbari; 2010).

Or, according to Opu,

Things changed after the National Committee came with us. Things changed for the better

Following Steinberg's theory of dialogic framing, I have illustrated how the continuous interaction between the challengers of the mine and the company (each justifying their position) was inherently dialogical, but historically and contextually dependent (Coy et al 2008, MacCammon et al 2007 and Steinberg 1998). The dominant

powers set out a discourse of ‘progress’ to justify the development of the mine. Therefore, the protestors, in opposition to the mines were inadvertently attempting a critique of ‘progress’ though the schema provided by the dominant position limited such a critique.

The second process marks my point of departure from Steinberg’s (1999) theory. In the last section, I showed that his analysis of piecemeal dialogism does not allow us to explain what was happening in Phulbari. Therefore, I illustrated how the Phulbari resistance, with the National Committee as an ally, broke out of the piecemeal interaction of frames and produced its own discursive position of ‘national interest’ under the wider counter-theme of sovereign self-sufficiency.

Now I shall compare another case – similar narrative but different outcome with Phulbari case. The Bergama gold mine case is largely similar to the Phulbari case though did not necessarily have a similarly successful outcome. In Bargama (Ozen 2009), protest discourse was defeated by the development discourse. Ozen (2009) drawing from Laclau argued that the Bargama case has become an empty signifier for different groups to continue their politics around the mine. What I would argue here is that Phulbari case was more similar to Steinberg’s (1999) case. Steinberg sees it as a dialogic process as is evidenced in case of Phulbari. Moreover, Phulbari has not yet become an empty signifier like Bargama protests. Phulbari case showed that coalition making is important but not with everyone, only with the relevant and interested ones. To have a local core and a strong national mediator is very important (for similar case, see Ignatow 2008).

#### **4.5 Strategic Identity Shifts: Fitting Obligation**

According to Hunt and Benford (2004: 440), at the most basic level collective identity is a shared sense of ‘we-ness’ and collective agency. It is a perception about shared status or relation, imagined than experienced. Collective identity, according to Polletta and Jasper (2001: 284), is expressed in cultural material. For Hunt and Benford (2004: 439 - 440), collective identity is intertwined with the sense of solidarity and it arouses commitment. Following these scholars, I argue that the interaction of commitment and moral obligation followed as a consequence of the Phulbari resistance’s strategic shifting of collective identity. I suggest that, in this process, challengers of the mine

strategically shifted their identities to fit the expected level of moral obligation towards the wider society.

In the Phulbari resistance, the challengers moved beyond small, incremental challenges to the dominant powers and attacked the ideological base of the dominant forces. In order to achieve this, the resistance went through a process of strategically shaping the challengers' identity to legitimise their opposition against the dominant position. I argue that, although dialogic interaction is dependent on context, history and the limits of the discursive field, the challengers' conceptualisation of 'who they are' was strategic. This deliberate process of defining the collective self occurred simultaneously with dialogic interaction between the challengers and the dominant powers with a view to legitimizing why this 'collective self' feels obligated to challenge the dominant position.

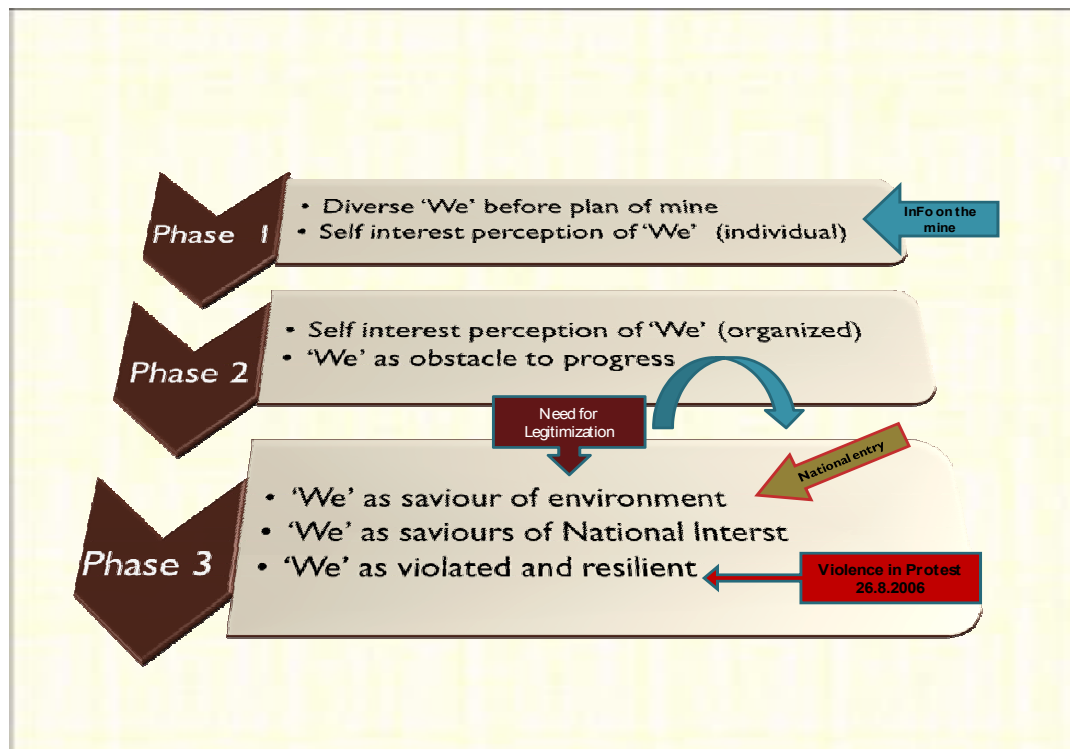
A mainstream view of the mine and its opponents was expressed in a national Bangla daily as follows:

A vested group has taken position against the mine. They have launched a reign of terror against the mine which promises to bring jobs to the local unemployed youths. This mine will also bring life to the national economy and highlight the reputation of our country. The vocal minority, by resisting the mine are actually conspiring not only against the interests of the people of Phulbari but also of Bangladesh (Daily Shangram 9.1.2006:1)

Himu (24, semi-skilled worker) described how the local challengers were responding to this criticism with a strategic focus on their idea of 'who they are' and how cultural factors (identity) were dominated by the cost-benefit analysis:

They say why not people of these four *thana(s)* [sub-districts] just go away for the good of the whole country. We should ...they say. They also say...to us: oh you are going to get rich...why can't you give your lands for us. Now, you tell me, if I tell you that I will give you loads of money... so much that you would not have to do anything for the rest of your life but in return, I would chop off your arms. Would you let me? We are part of the nation... You can't just chop us off... They say that this is for every one's good... for electricity for the whole country... but we say, with all the coal to be exported and only 6% of royalty going to Bangladesh, what great goods are going to happen? It's lucky for the whole country that we stopped such a plunder. If they can't see that then they are not very clever. Neither are they any more patriot than us (Interview, Parbatipur: 2010).

**Figure 4.3: Strategic Identity Shifts and Legitimation**



Therefore, the sense of belonging to a group that is threatened by an overarching dominant force can be used strategically. The group shifts its sense of belonging with a view to justify its position against the dominant power. To legitimise their claim with a wider audience, it was crucial for the challengers of the mine not to be perceived as selfish, land-greedy peasants who are obstacles to the path of 'development'. Therefore, they strategically devised their identity as that of protestors trying to save not their own lands and livelihoods, but rather the natural resources of the country. Although there is nothing wrong with trying to save any of the above, challengers of the Phulbari mine felt their individual, local concerns were insufficient to make their case<sup>52</sup>. They had to frame a wider commitment.

The challengers' definitions of their obligations and goals are mediated by their conceptualisation of 'who they are' and to what they are opposed. Such conceptualisation is not a snapshot, but rather a continuous and deliberate process of focusing and refocusing to find the point of legitimate opposition. I stress how this resistance continues this deliberate process of focusing on its collective obligation and goals.

After initially defining the nature of the threat, players needed to connect with people who were similarly threatened. This entailed creation of a collective identity

<sup>52</sup> interviews with several local and national protestors

which developed into ‘we/us’ versus ‘they/them’. At the local level this collective identity paved the way for the genesis of a local social movement organisation and its ties with national organisations. In the very beginning, challengers were a loose coalition of people trying to resist displacement and related threats to their livelihood and culture. These people created a sense of violation and injustice that brought them together as a group of disparate villagers who wanted to save their land. A Santal activist (agricultural labourer, 70) of Nawabganj described it as follows:

...‘we’ means everyone; Bengali, Santal, other indigenous. Everyone – we all are living here and all will be displaced. People, who would not be displaced, will also be affected indirectly by the mine through lack of water, food and livelihood (Interview, Nawabganj: 2011)

The villagers often used bodily metaphors with ease when describing their relationship with the whole society. The metaphor of Phulbari being part of the society as a hand is part of the body points to the way the protestors perceived themselves as a group within the broader national identity. This also provided them the tool to gain legitimacy as a claimant of the idea of national progress. According to Siraj bhai (50, singer and small peasant),

My relatives from outside our area told me back then: ‘why are you not giving up your land for the electricity for the whole nation? You are going to get money for your land!’ I told them, ‘listen, if I tell you that I’ll give you a lot of money, so much that you would never have to work again. You can have ten servants to help you. They will even feed you. But in return I want to chop one of your vital organs. Would you agree?’ [laughs] I know none would. They forget we are not from outside. We are the same; we are their countrymen. (Interview, Phulbari: 2010)

Or,

They must not forget we saved the country from the plunderers of Asia Energy. Now it is time to take over and get rid of the capitalist system starting from wider North Bengal and then gradually from the total country. We can do it. It is possible only by us (Kamal, Interview, Phulbari 2010)

Rohima apa (34, housewife) said that she would have made a sacrifice for the country – but only if it were worthwhile:

I could have given away everything we had. For what reason? If it really have had helped the nation! It would not! Even a 4 year old in Phulbari knows that the mine will not bring the electricity everyone dreams of. It will destroy our rice bowl. Why would I let them have the mine? It is of no good to anyone but the company. (Interview, Phulbari 2010)

Individual villagers across their social divisions (class, religion, ethnicity, gender and occupation) congregated to resist a mine that would displace them, their heritage, culture and environment. This was not a particularly winning image compared to that of a mine, which promised benefits for the whole country and its government. After a few months of mobilisation they recognised that they were being portrayed as a group of ‘selfish’ people who were only concerned with their own land and livelihood and, therefore, were seen as obstructing the path of progress. They were seen as the conspirators against the greater common good.

Since in those initial days the dialogic interaction was within the limits of the dominant discourse of progress, these emotional ties to the land were perceived by others as romantic and provincial, that is, not legitimate and something about which to be ashamed (Daily Inqilab, 24 June 2005). Therefore, the legitimacy of the challengers against that of the wider society was at risk. During those desperate times, the challengers began to identify the flaws within the dominant discourse. Those flaws gave them the opportunity to define themselves as opposed not to the society but to the company. They portrayed themselves as the patriots and saviours of the national interest. They changed their definition of collective ‘self’ from land-loving farmers to morally committed patriots. They resorted to strategy setting meetings to decide what to be done when they changed their 'self image'<sup>53</sup>. However, this change happened dialogically by being faced with opposition rather than instrumentally planning from earlier.

Kuber is a peasant and member of the group that used to sing to attract people before rallies during 2005-2006. He said:

People from the south need to recognise that we are not the enemies. It's the company and their collaborators who are the conspirators against the country's interest. It's not us. Without us, all coal would have been gone by now and we would have been floating on electricity as we were supposed to with the natural gas. Where is the sea of gas now? All gone, right? Same would have happened to coal if we did not stop them. (Interview, Nawabganj: 2010)

This strategic identity formation involved the shift of a local community from a passive mass to a group of active citizens empowered through exposure to information and perception of threat to learn about and participate in collective action. The protestors strategically reframed their ‘we-ness’ from that of self-interested individuals

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<sup>53</sup> Meeting reported by Halim bhai, Opu, Yousuf bhai, and Khijir bhai where agenda included discussing strategy to change 'self image' of the movement

trying to save their land to that of saviours of the national interest. This extension of ‘we’, achieved by fusing collective obligation with community identity, helped the resistance achieve a longer life and greater resonance.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In order to better understand why the Phulbari resistance has been so successful in attracting participation, in this chapter I have investigated how the local and national challengers rationalised their opposition to the mine. This chapter demonstrates the following: first, the challengers recognised that the perception of the threat was expressed in multiple voices, and they identified the plurality of voices as their strength. The second way that the challengers rationalised their opposition to the mine relates to two interconnected processes of generating and reshaping discursive frames that better resonate with the target audience. One process involves the dominant powers and challengers engaging in a constant dialogue of frames. In this process, challengers are often limited by the provision of dominant position: the challengers’ engage in dialogue only by critically responding – talking back – to the dominant powers. The second process entails a continuous shaping and reshaping of an active ‘we’. For the Phulbari resistance, this ‘we’ included people who perceived the mine as a threat for multiple reasons but decided to resist the mine out of a sense of the community’s obligation to protect the country’s wider interest.

My analysis of the Phulbari resistance suggests that dialogic framing and strategic identity shifts are intertwined rather than in opposition. Dialogic framing, essentialist as it sounds, by limiting frames within the boundaries of dominant positions was not evident in the Phulbari case. Instead, I have observed an active fitting of ‘we’ to a broader moral obligation to society that enabled them to extract their discursive repertoire from the confines of the dominant discourse.

## Chapter: 5

### "Everything Changed after the 26th": Emotion, Obligation and Ritual

“Because we have given our blood—the movement became big... If we haven't given blood, the movement would have never achieved such momentum. This was our liberation war! In all respects—we were bound to keep on the streets...for the sake of my friends who died... it was our duty (Robin, local youth protestor, Phulbari 2010)

It was 2006. In Phulbari, local protestors announced a *gherao* (blockade) of the mining company's office. On 26 August 2006, around 70,000<sup>54</sup> people gathered to blockade the company's office in Phulbari. Government security forces opened fire with live ammunition that killed three and injured hundreds. This harsh repression by a democratically-elected government was followed by a curfew and other coercive measures. Scholars (Rasler 1996) suggested that such repression would have an immediate negative impact on subsequent protest events (1996: 149)<sup>55</sup> or would cause future participation to be limited to reduced-risk tactics of dissent (Francisco 2004). In the case of the Phulbari resistance, however, the opposite transpired.

While this outcome might seem unexceptional given the numerous incidences of backlash protests, examples of common backlash protests becoming successful as quickly as the Phulbari resistance did are rare. After the repression, protest escalated to the highest degree, protestors gained control of the town and, after only four days of protest, they defeated the government's initial plan of mining. Additionally, they not only forced the government to suspend the mine, but also made it agree never to allow open-pit mining anywhere in the country. Furthermore, negative press coverage in national and transnational media tarnished the UK based company's image permanently. Hence, this resistance warrants further investigation on how an apparently powerless community continued resistance against the backdrop of violent repression by state forces.

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<sup>54</sup> This number is disputed. I use the most conservative estimate based on my interviews.

<sup>55</sup> For a detailed discussion on how protest policing affects further mobilisation, refer to Earl, J. 2006:129-43.) and Rasler, K. 1996:132-52.

Rashed bhai<sup>56</sup> (56, farmer, ex-member of the extreme-left East Bengal Communist Party) described what he saw after the atrocity:

People were not talking much. They looked saddened and terrorized. I looked for my sons, looked for people from the neighbourhood and the village. The whole community was on the street. People were sad but they were angry too. They chanted slogans: 'You have to answer why our brothers are dead' (Nawabganj 2010)

Another farmer, Muntasir bhai (58, member of Gono Front) argued how emotion drove what happened:

I did not know what to think. Why am I here? There were so many different things going inside my head...why did they have to open fire! Was it only panic? No it was a lot more than just panic. I was angry and sad and I do not know what I was feeling at that moment. Whatever it was it was massive and changing every moment (Phulbari 2010)

Kodom Ali (25, male), also a farmer, commented:

I think the reason why people instead of being afraid became angry is they thought they were violated unjustly. They [government] by taking away lives, gave our lives back to us (Birampur 2010)

Similar data collected through my ethnographic fieldwork drove me towards two major concepts: emotions and *fard* (obligation in Arabic). Drawing from the reported memories of people who participated in the protest event, I argue that protestors participated in these apparently high-risk events because of the emotional and cultural factors at play. Drawing on the scholarly work of the cultural and emotional tradition of the social movement literature (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2000: 65-83; Goodwin et. al 2003:1-24; Emirbayer and Goldberg. 2005 :469-518; Melucci, 1980: 199-226), I maintain that exploring people's perceptions of violence is necessary to understand why protestors, despite being repressed, continue 'costly', high-risk protest behaviours.

In this chapter, I will investigate: how, after repression, do emotions influence sparks of protest? What capacity and tactics of mobilisations can generate more participation in post-massacre days? And, how did the performance of the state and media influenced the events unfolding after the violence? My answers are as follows: First, after state forces killed rather than protected citizens, massive emotional commotion over-shadowed the costs of high-risk behaviours. At this juncture, protestors perceived protests as the most obvious response to state-led violence, regardless of the

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<sup>56</sup> *bhai* means brother.

fact that all follow-up protests had a high risk of being crushed. Second, protesters viewed violent repression, including the killing of innocent protestors, as a violation of the community and transformed this violation into the community's sense of duty to dissent. In this chapter, I conceptualize this sense of duty as a kind of *fard - e - kyfia* (a community obligation to the deceased). In this case, the obligation to the dead was to stay together and to keep the protest alive. As such, in the aftermath of the 26<sup>th</sup>, the protestors' obligation to dissent metaphorically resembled participating in a *janazah* (a funeral procession where community participation is a *fard* or obligation). Both emotional upheaval and a collective sense of obligation were influenced by the media's ritualized performance. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

## 5.1 Data and Methods

This chapter is based on qualitative data that includes 64 semi-structured interviews taken in Phulbari, Dhaka and London. This chapter uses narratives of the blockade on the 26<sup>th</sup> and its aftermath. Therefore, I have selected the sections of the interviews that described the period of the 26-30 August 2006 and coded and analysed these using MAXQDA.

While reviewing the protestors'/ non-protestors' perceptions of what happened on and after '*chhabbishe*' (Bengali for the 26<sup>th</sup>), I realized that protestors had quite heterogeneous perceptions about what happened and why such unprecedented events unfolded. This led me to search for a suitable conceptual tool. 'Transversal'<sup>57</sup> positioning is the tool I use in this chapter because it exposes the patchwork of emotion and obligation that protestors experienced during those days. By examining the perceptions of the activists and company supporters, I propose to sketch the context and differing viewpoints (henceforth positioning) of what happened, how it happened, and why it happened. This concept can effectively assemble the different standpoints within the activists as well among activists and their opponents to present us with a more encompassing collage of the aftermath of the repression on 26 August 2006 in Phulbari.

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<sup>57</sup> For detail discussion on transversal politics refer to **Chapter 3**, p. 73

## 5.2 Phulbari Resistance: Confronting Development

The Phulbari resistance was one of the most widely publicized local resistances against the extractive industry in Asia in the last decade<sup>58</sup>. This coverage served as a negative blow to the reputation of the company. Furthermore, in the six years following the violence in Phulbari, successive governments failed to open the mine because of follow-up resistance. This shows how successfully protestors utilized the atrocity of ‘the 26<sup>th</sup> of August’ to delegitimize the state’s use of force to push ‘development at gun-point’. Thereby, it presents a critique to development (Sarkar 2009: 202-209) in the repertoire of resistance against extractive capital.

National Committee and its coalition with the local protestors announced a blockade of the local office of the company to be held on the 26<sup>th</sup> August. The Phulbari branch of the National Committee known as the Oil-Gas Committee of Phulbari (OGCP) planned the event. As mentioned earlier, government forces opened fire on the rally. Minutes after the violence, leaders of the protest declared indefinite *hartal*<sup>59</sup> in the four sub-districts opposing the brutality. Following that declaration, protestors kept Phulbari under a four-day-long, dawn-to-dusk *hartal* supported by follow-up protests nationwide. The resistance reached its apex after three days of protest when Phulbari was under the control of thousands of protestors<sup>60</sup>. On the fourth day, 30 August 2006, protestors managed to achieve a remarkable victory against the company: the government of Bangladesh suspended all its activities and accepted all the demands of the National Committee (Das 2009). The government signed an agreement based on the following six-point demands from the protestors of Phulbari: 1) declaring compensation for injury and 2) compensation for the loss of lives; 3) suspension of all activities of the company until further notice; 4) expulsion of the company from the country; 5) promise of never permitting open cast mines anywhere in the country; and 6) establishing a martyrs’ memorial in memory of the three protestors killed.

This chapter focuses on the events following the repression until the government retreat from the project in order to illustrate two things: one, the overall impact of the

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<sup>58</sup> A search delivered 25 news reports about the Phulbari resistance. Retrieved on the 14.12.2010 through NEXIS UK

<sup>59</sup> *hartal* is a complete shut-down of an area where no transport, offices, or market places can operate as usual; everything is closed in protest. It is graver than a strike because it is more encompassing in its influence. Furthermore, protestors are usually disruptive. They picket and vandalizes if any one disobeys a shut-down. They also try to stop the government from attempting to normalize the situation

<sup>60</sup> Field note of a rally 2010

violence on further resistance success and two, the micro-politics of the local dissent, which were full of sparks of resistance against powerful entities. This presents a (perhaps unintended) people's critique of 'development'.

### 5.3 Repression, Backlash and Passionate Politics

Local and national leaders of the Phulbari resistance suggested that although the media was apparently free from government intervention, they had been attached to corporate interests and undermined the people's resistance to the company's interest. Furthermore, the level of corruption in the government, reflected by Bangladesh's ranking as the most corrupt country in the world (Transparency International 2006), was detrimental to whatever trust people had in the state. Moreover, three security forces that played important policing roles in the Phulbari protests (the police, the Bangladesh Rifles<sup>61</sup> and the Rapid Action Battalion) are ill-reputed for numerous human rights violation while trying to safeguard the interests of ruling elite or multinational capital. If we look at the different types of protest policing detailed by scholars (della Porta and Fillieule 2004: 217-241; della Porta 1996: 62-92; Earl 2006: 131), we see that this was a non-democratically repressed protest. The intensity of brutality varied over time. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, the frequency and intensity of repression was the highest. It declined on the next day and diminished over the next two days, forcing government to lose all control over this territory (Das 2009; Muhammad 2007a).

There are two important points where I intend to contribute through this chapter: one is the impact of emotion. I draw on the works of Francisco 2004, Goodwin, Jasper and Polleta 2001, 2003, Hess and Martin 2006, Seigel 2011, Reed 2004:653, Schrodtt and Yilmaz 2007. Secondly, I demonstrate the cultural capacity of the movement to withstand the repression drawing on Bob and Nepstad 2007, Cottle 2006:411, Mathew and Cottle 2011, Seigel 2011.

Goodwin and Pfaff (2001:283) described emotions as constitutive of social relations and actions -- and not simply as individual, psychological reactions but as inter-subjective, collective experiences. Hence the potential causal significance should never be underestimated. Even key factors highlighted by the social movement scholars as causal -- including social network, grievances, collective identities, frames, and ideologies, and changing political opportunity structure derive much of their causal

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<sup>61</sup> This group has been renamed the Border Guards, Bangladesh

power from the strong emotions that they embody or evoke among actors. They have advocated for the emotion as potential causal mechanism or part of that mechanism. This emotion is not opposed to ‘reason’. Some emotions incite action while others channel motivation. In this chapter I present the reflexive emotional mechanism of anger and fear and describe how these were managed and channeled action. However, I do not say that this was the cause of further mobilisation rather the management of these emotions by the community protesting has provided the force to act. The killing by the state forces was incited by several factors that created outrage and panic. These were later channeled to create an impetus for action. So emotion in this case, sitting the middle mediates action under high-risk circumstances. Later this was complemented by the more structural practices of obligation to the dead and made the movement successful.

This emotion is dependent on the nature of state-protestor relationship in Bangladesh. Certain groups of people showed certain emotion in certain order compared to other combinations due to their relation to the prevalent political environment. Due to the nature of this relation after the repression, confusion and perplexity prevailed in the region. Anger led to backlash, creating widespread sympathy for the movement and resulting in substantial later mobilisation charged up by widespread media coverage of the ‘unjust’ repression of protest (Fransisco 2004, Hess and Martin 2006). Coupled with the ineptness of the government security forces, the micro-level emotional context provides important information on why and how state violence led to more protests.

Earl (2006:131) devised a typology of protest control depending on whether or not state forces were closely related to the national elite or control was done by private agents by two techniques of control; coercion versus channelling (observable versus unobserved) that delivered twelve types of control mechanisms. In the case of Phulbari resistance, if deduced from this typology, coercive control by local policing of protest where state agents are loosely connected to national elites was complemented by the paramilitary policing that killed 3 and injured hundred. Local police departments’ counter-intelligence and denial to permit the protest by issuing a section 144 around the protest venue was topped by alleged threats made by company assailants.

Della Porta (1996) and della Porta and Fillieule (2004) showed that protest control can be analysed with regards to characteristics that distinguish five pairs of forms of protest policing regimes: repressive versus tolerant, selective versus diffuse, preventive versus reactive, soft versus hard, dirty versus lawful. Judged against this

schema, Phulbari resistance experienced repressive, diffused, preventive, hard and dirty policing on the first day of violence which then reduced sharply from the next day.

The question is now: why did the dominant entity, the state—which was so coercive in the beginning—bow down after only four days of resistance? Boudreau (2000: 33-55) suggests that precarious regimes attempt to allocate their scarce repressive resources as efficiently as possible with consideration to the breadth and depth of their regimes' power versus their challengers' power. Therefore, the weaker the state is, the more likely it is to crush dissent (Earl 2006: 49-55). A weak regime perceived the local and national movement against the Phulbari mine as a weak threat and was confident that it could easily crush the protest to show its power. The regime's perception was completely misjudged. Instead of being crushed the protest fumed further.

During this unplanned violence, most of the policing tactics went wrong for the following reasons: they were ill-chosen—too harsh for a democratic regime; the strength of the movement was misjudged; instead of planned removal of key nodes of the resistance, the random repression had no lasting effect on the dissent; because of the state's overt support of the company, it became impossible to disentangle the state from the company and people's wrath against the company extended to the state and its forces. Thus, mobilisation after August 26<sup>th</sup> brought a massive defeat for the government. First, their reputation in front of the multinational investors was tarnished badly by their failure to contain the protest quietly. Second, the power of state over the constituent population was threatened by the temporary success of the protestors in Phulbari. Third, state-led 'development at gun-point' was proven useless in the face of the popular protest. These defeats were detrimental to the ruling party's reputation, which was especially devastating for the party given that the national election was looming in few months.

#### **5.4 *chhabbishe* (the 26<sup>th</sup>): Protestors' Positioning**

As noted earlier, explaining the effects of repressive protest control is difficult in view of contradictory evidences (Earl 2006: 134; Rasler 1996). I intend to contribute two important points through this chapter: firstly, the impact of emotion and secondly, the cultural capacity of the movement to withstand the repression. Before moving on to the effect of emotions, however, I would like to describe the confusion and the perplexity that prevailed before and immediately after the atrocity to explicate the complex context of the emotional turmoil.

In April 2006, local leaders proposed an ‘aggressive’ program to the central National Committee<sup>62</sup>. Following months of planning, weeks of small localized yard meetings, *haat* (weekly market) meetings, public gatherings, and *miking*<sup>63</sup>, the people of the four sub-districts were ready and the OGCP declared the blockade. In Phulbari, protest policing started before the 26<sup>th</sup> of August. Local police, paramilitary forces and elite police force, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) executed repression (AEC 2006). Before the 26<sup>th</sup>, local police department used counter-intelligence tactics and denied a permit for the protest event by issuing a ‘section 144’ (a ban on congregation of more than 4-5 people at a time) around the protest venue. These actions were topped by private threats to leaders made by hired assailants. Large numbers of paramilitary forces and police were deployed. Moreover, the local police were allegedly engaged in manufacturing rumours and spreading informers to get information about the protestors’ plans. The police also tried to stop national supporters joining the event by stopping buses carrying these activists from the capital on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of August. According to police reports, a faction of the resistance withdrew their support at the last moment and filed a complaint to the police denying any responsibility for the event. This faction—the Phulbari Protection Committee—acted as a counter-movement and distributed copies of their complaint contesting the event.

#### **5.4.1 Protestors’ Positioning Exemplified**

The event was planned and publicised to be held at Sujapur School ground inside Phulbari town (Figure 5.1). This venue was close to the company office to be blockaded. The day before the event, Phulbari was a town of rumours about possibility of violence. According to Opu and Anu bhai, curfew was declared at the venue, precluding the possibility of violence. There were other versions of the story about the venue that I gathered through my interviews that amply exemplify different positions. These included but were not limited to the following: the company had planted a bomb; the venue was too close to the company offices and therefore more prone to violence; the venue was inside a residential area and could not accommodate so many protestors; it was very close to the house of one of the *dalals*’ (collaborators); or, police ordered protestors to change the venue. For any of the above reasons, it was regarded unwise to hold the event

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<sup>62</sup> Informal discussion with Khijir bhai in Phulbari, 2010.

<sup>63</sup> Activists with a microphone [mike] on a rickshaw or flat van sang or chanted slogans and read information about the adversity of the proposed mine.

at Sujapur School ground. The venue was shifted from Sujapur School to GM Pilot School (Figure 5.1).

This means: first, the national committee or their local counterparts did not want any violence. Their official declaration read, “Blockade on the 26<sup>th</sup> was a non-violent program”. In addition, several eyewitness accounts suggested that two hundred volunteers were repeatedly briefed to being vigilant against any instigation to violence by the *dalals*. Secondly, resistance had to be strongly organised to smoothly execute this change in such a short notice.

The next day, turnout exceeded the most optimists’ projections. The procession held at least 70,000 people. Mondol kaka<sup>64</sup> (70, Santal, agriculture-based livelihood) described it as follows:

...we cannot go to Phulbari every day. Give us one day ...we will show you and the government what we can do. That day will be the decisive one. Either we or they. No retreat. No peace deal. We want them out, we will ...wipe them out of Phulbari forever (Interview, Nawabganj 2010)

More than half of the rally joined from the outskirts of Phulbari town and were from the villages of Nawabganj, Parbatipur and Birampur. There were people from Dhaka, Rajshahi and other districts too. Santals, Pahans and Mundas (indigenous communities) came with their traditional bows and arrows and drums. Bangalis (majority ethnic group) also came. Women came with brooms<sup>65</sup> and sticks, men came with bamboo sticks and poles. Leaders were on a makeshift mobile stage on a truck. The procession was jovial but tense. From the onset, the organisers were vocal about the non-violent nature of the event. They said their bows and arrows were symbolic, not for real use. A section of the villagers, however, were not in favour of this non-violence<sup>66</sup>. Local activist Romjan bhai (46, local businessman, leader of Awami League) suggested: People did not come here for this farce of non-violence. They came and they wanted to finish it for once and for all. They were revolutionary. They did not listen to the leaders no more ... they did not even want to return home (Interview, Phulbari 2010)

Some were not even hesitant to start violence. While perhaps not typical, this violent group was a part of the mass and played a role in the rally. According to some

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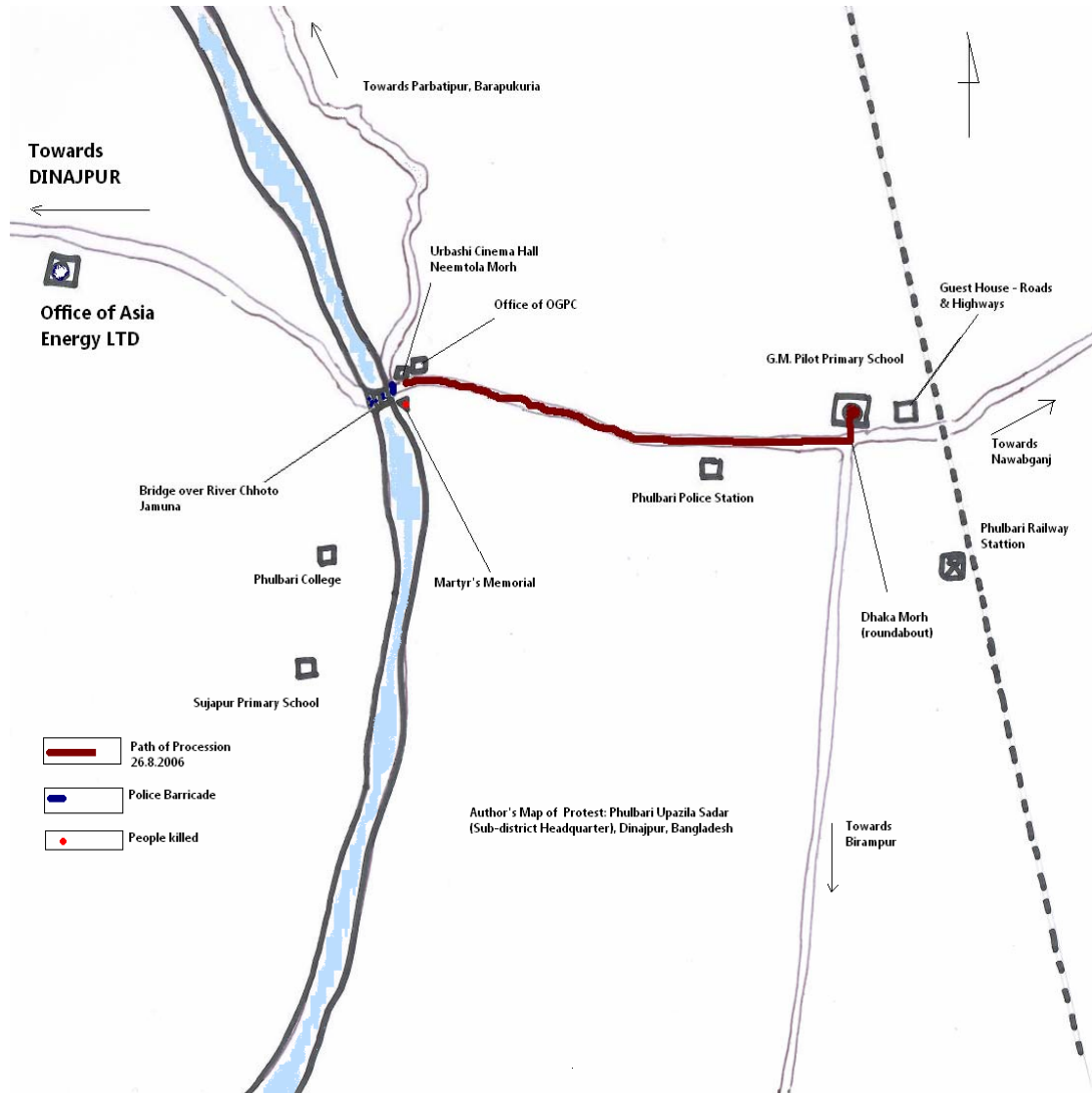
<sup>64</sup> kaka means uncle.

<sup>65</sup> Broom- sticks connote they will sweep the ‘dirt’ (the company and *dalals*) out of Phulbari. One of the most popular songs of the day was as follows: “Sweep them all, O’ mothers and sisters of Phulbari; sweep them all, sweep them off our land quickly” (collected from one of the local singers, Siraz bhai).

<sup>66</sup> Interview with several local and national protestors

local leaders, these non-typical, violent protestors were *dalals* or working for the company.

**Figure 5.1: Phulbari 26th August 2006: what, where?**



### 5.4.2 Unpacking the violence

At 3pm the rally started from the GM Pilot School grounds and headed towards the river *Chhoto* (Little) *Jamuna*—the destination was the office of the company on the other side of the river. Figure 5.1 shows GM Pilot School where the rally started. It also shows the

path of the rally and where it was stopped in front of the bridge. Security forces heavily barricaded the bridge over Jamuna and the leaders guessed that they would be stopped before the bridge in front of the Urbashi Cinema Hall.

As the procession approached the bridge, near Neemtola Morh, police threw tear gas. Part of the procession dispersed and then reassembled. When they reached the first barricade on the east side of the bridge, a magistrate came and told them to stop and disperse. Leaders went to negotiate and asked him to contact higher authorities to inform them about the massive resistance against government's decision to mine the area. They also demanded that the company be removed immediately. The magistrate did not have the authority and, therefore, he talked to the district commissioner overphone. After being authorized by the district commissioner, the magistrate assured the leaders that the company would leave Phulbari within forty-eight hours. The national leaders returned to the truck and declared that the government had accepted the people's demands and that the company would leave Phulbari in forty-eight hours. Then they declared future programs and announced the end of the blockade.

Das (2009) reported that, after this, the convenor and member secretary of the National Committee and some local leaders got off the truck and began returning to the local office of the OGCP<sup>67</sup>. The blockade was peacefully dismantling when shots were fired. Within minutes, local and national leaders gathered at the Neemtola Morh and declared indefinite *hartal* in Phulbari against the retaliation to the peaceful demonstration. Then, local protestors led national leaders to OGPC's office and, from there, to hideouts on their way to the national capital. A lot of protestors were still on the streets, trying to fight back.

### **5.4.3. What (actually) might have had happened?**

As discussed earlier, some people did not like the outcome. They thought they had come to blockade the office and they were not even close (See Figure 5.1). The protest organisers were already happy with the success of mobilising such a huge number of people. Given the history of lack of supporters in many left-led movements in independent Bangladesh, this mobilisation was a great achievement. The leaders' aim for the mobilisation had been fulfilled: they had attracted a massive number of people, did their procession peacefully, and made their claim to the magistrate, who was the symbol

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<sup>67</sup> Opu, Khijir bhai, Kamal, Romjan bhai and several others reported this event quite clearly

of authority. Therefore, they followed the ‘script’ of ‘contentious performance’ of claim making, if I may borrow the term from Tilly (2008:19). For the magistrate, such a huge gathering must have been a fearful experience since he was responsible for protest control<sup>68</sup>. He finished his part of the performance by calling higher authority and assuring the protestors, which must have been the end of a very tense performance. The assurance was an empty one and that was clear to the commissioner, the magistrate and probably some of the top leaders as well. It probably was not at all clear to most of the local peasants and villagers who might never before have seen—let alone participated in—a scripted contentious performance like this.

According to several respondents, the microphone being used on the make-shift stage was very weak and no match for the 70,000 people it was addressing. Therefore, the leader’s speech about victory and the completion of the blockade might have not reached all the protestors. Many of them might have decided to go for the blockade by crossing the river regardless of what the leaders said or did. According to Romjan bhai, protestors who lived on the west side of the river thought it was okay to cross the river since the event had ended. They started to cross the river on foot (the river is very shallow in that spot) and it may have been at that point that security forces fired. Some leaders believe that BDR guards were bribed to kill protestors and therefore one of these guards forced the magistrate at gun point to sign the consent to open fire on the mass<sup>69</sup>.

It is probably impossible to know what had actually triggered the security forces to initiate such violence. I argue that, first, this moment was filled with confusion and a lack of communication on both sides. Villagers who were completely unaware of repressive tactics<sup>70</sup> were angry and afraid even before the shooting. Second, the state authority was completely unprepared for such a huge mobilisation and that aggravated the situation with tension and misjudgement. Third, the chance of company’s involvement in the instigation cannot be completely ruled out since several of the eye-witnesses reported seeing company officials on the bridge with the BDR though the company denied all such charges (AEC 2006, GCM 2007).

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<sup>68</sup> Without his signature, live ammunition could not be fired

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Sultana apa and Romjan bhai

<sup>70</sup> Many protestors experienced tear gas for the first time and thought that the government was throwing gas to kill them.

#### 5.4.4 Aftermath of *chhabishe*: Cost of Protest after Massacre

The aftermath of the 26<sup>th</sup> was one of the most dangerous times during the repression. Even after the shooting some people continued to resist law enforcement. According to most eye-witness accounts, some of the protestors still holding ground were brutally beaten. Three people were shot from close distance on the east side of the bridge. People trying to hide in the hospital were beaten and arrested. Some hid in the mosque. Most people who came from outside of town fled or were hiding. People were suffering from small wounds and cuts and some were sick with tear gas.

Top local leaders met in an emergency meeting and decided to remain in Phulbari, though undercover<sup>71</sup>. Some were sent away for the fear of their lives because it was widely believed that they might face retaliation from state forces or company assailants. At that juncture, hiding the leaders was a strategically important decision; otherwise the leaders might have been killed or arrested and then ‘cross-fired’<sup>72</sup>. Nonetheless, some people held a different position, that is, only innocent people were beaten by the BDR while others (the leaders) were safe. According to one eye witness, ‘they [the leaders] ran hearing the first shots’ or ‘this was not planned, why shots were fired’. Some of the victims wanted to blame all the violence on the leaders of the protest, saying: “Why did you not die, instead of the innocent villagers?” Nonetheless, the majority of my respondents supported the decision for the leaders to go into hiding during interviews from hindsight. According to Siraz bhai (45, singer Jaamayyat - e Islami<sup>73</sup>),

a man all of a sudden came up and slapped [local activists writer] and said that people are killed because of you and you are having fun here now?” I thought, but it is not [local activist writer’s] fault, is it?

Similarly, Anu bhai suggested:

Local leaders were all constantly keeping in touch with each other as well as with us. You can say that we did not imagine that there will be violence and, that they will shoot at a peaceful demonstration... So we were a bit startled in the beginning. But soon we recovered from the initial shock and started to reach out to the national and international media.

According to similar accounts of local leader Halim (40, CPB, agriculture):

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<sup>71</sup> Interview with Khijir bhai and Kamal

<sup>72</sup> A popular term to denote extra-judicial killing by the Rapid Action Battalion

<sup>73</sup> Conservative political party engaged in religion-based politics.

We did not leave or decided to leave. How can we? We were on the streets fighting until they declared curfew. We were announcing the call for hartal from the mosques, urging people of Phulbari not to cooperate with the BDR at all...they had our brothers' bloods on their hands. But in the evening we decided to turn our cells off and sleep somewhere else than our own homes. Just as a precaution. But we were here at Phulbari and did not run away. Why would we?

My interpretation based on all these interviews is that the night was full of emotional confusion and perplexity. Leaders not being visible might have had an immediate negative impact on the protestors, but it actually had a delayed positive effect for the next days of mobilisation.

### **5.5 Blood, Sweat and Tears: Emotional Perplexity**

A harsh variant of repression can create widespread sympathy for a movement and result in substantial later mobilisation charged up by widespread media coverage of an ‘unjust’ control of protest. Siegel (2011) answers part of it. According to Siegel (2011) the extent and direction to which repression effects further mobilisation depends crucially on the structure of social network in place. This dependence can be complicated with the introduction of emotions such as the Anger or Fear. In his recent article, he described four kinds of networks: village type, small, opinion-leader and hierarchy. According to the type of network structure of the protestors, state or authority will try to dismantle the network by removing some of its nodes (Individuals/leaders). So, depending on the structure of the network, different removal strategies (through repressive means: either random or targeted) will be leading to vastly different outcomes. For example, while targeted removal of the network leaders in an Opinion-leader network might have a very detrimental impact on the mobilisation due to the structure of the network as well as the impact of the leader (also exemplified by Bob and Nepstad 2007: 1389). On the other hand, random removal might not hurt the same group at all. Therefore, networks that depend on a handful of individuals to achieve significant levels of participation are more vulnerable to targeted repression but less vulnerable to random repression (Siegel 2011: 22).

Thus far, he assumed that people responded only indirectly to the removal of their fellows but they might as well have emotional response to such a situation. Then, he illustrated, using anger and fear - how this work. Impact of emotional responses is supported by Goodwin, Jasper and Polleta (2003) as they suggested affective bonds

(emotions) sprung out as reflexive bonds such as anger and fear after protestors are repressed. And this anger can lead to backlash. Weak ties multiply effect of anger in a village network, in an opinion-leader network non-unified leaders greatly multiply the effect of anger and unified leaders in a hierarchy can overcome anger and fear. But fear almost in all other cases decreases participation with the effect of faster removal rates (Siegel 2011).

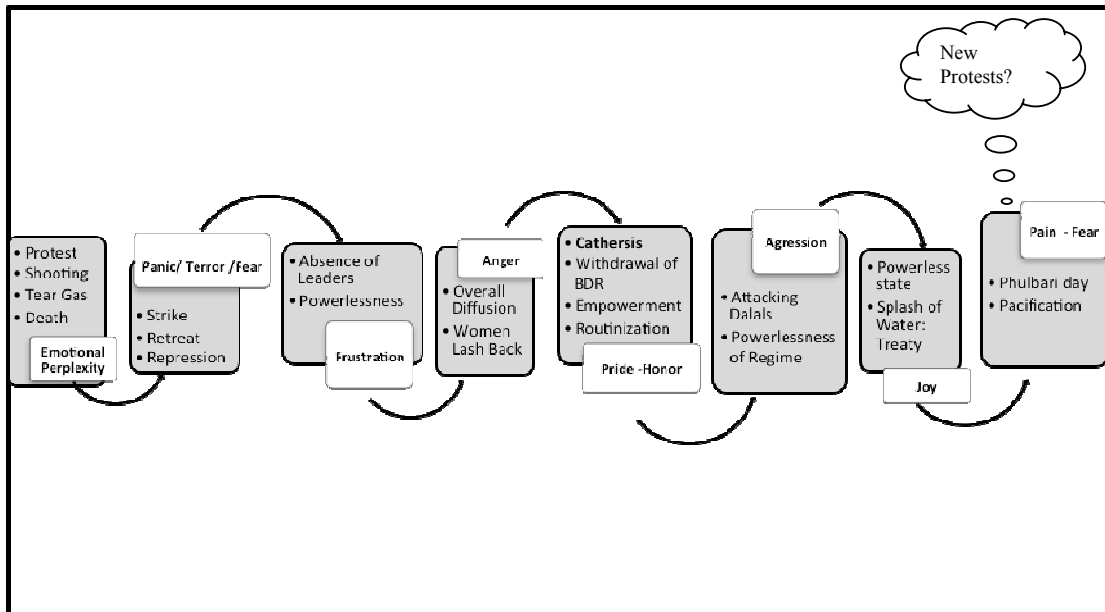
A thorough analysis of the case is needed to unveil the collage of emotions and events that led this apparently powerless community to transform (Barker 2001) these varied emotions towards a victorious struggle which stopped the powerful state, company and their ‘development’. Concurrently, the capacity of the protest to arouse a sense of obligation among the aggrieved people of the four sub-districts has to be analysed in context of the ritualized media performance during those days of protests. Given how the events were unfolding very quickly, I want to focus on what emotions were present and how they were being channelled to dampen or motivate further mobilisation. I propose that these four days were like emotional roller coaster (Figure 5.2), which ended up with normalization through pacification of collective emotion. This section elaborates how this process happened.

When the shots were fired, an unidentified but overwhelming emotion took grip over the protestors—emotional confusion prevailed for a while. Every one of my respondents reported a massive shock and awe—disbelief. This can be exemplified by the following responses: ‘did not know what to feel’, ‘I was running to and from the bridge mouth’, ‘I did not know where from did I get the anger or was it panic!’, ‘I did not know what happened there’, ‘I still could not figure out’, ‘how could they have shot us’. Then, a wave of panic, terror and fear of being killed, injured, arrested, beaten or losing family or friends washed away all the valour from the massive demonstration. These emotions led to the retreat of most people, and the completely shocked leadership announced an indefinite strike. Contrary to Francisco (2004), who maintained that strikes are a low-risk activity after a massacre, I contend that anything but running away was high risk at that juncture—when protestors still trying to stay at the street were shot from close range. Three such protestors were fatally wounded, and even people who took refuge in the hospital were beaten indiscriminately.

In the town and the vicinity, people were dispersed, confused, terrorized and frustrated about the situation since nothing was in their control. Anxiety and powerlessness prevailed. The national leaders, while retreating, reached out to the

national media. Within hours not only the whole country, but also the world came to know about the atrocity (this media activity will be detailed in the last section of this chapter). Local leaders kept a low profile, as illustrated by Halim bhai’s statement. After curfew was declared, the town was covered with the blanket of fear and frustration.

**Figure 5.2: Path of Emotion after Repression**



Some of the protesters, being unable to reach the local leaders and seeing on television that the national leaders had left for the capital, became disappointed and angry. The feeling that there was no one left to lead resulted in a feeling of powerlessness and had an immediate negative effect on participation. This frustration helps to explain why some protesters ignited apparently unrelated, spontaneous sparks of protests the next morning. I do not contend that such sparks were lit solely by unleashed emotions of heroic individuals or that leaders’ hiding for the night was a negative thing. Leaders, hiding had a delayed positive effect on follow-up protests. On one hand, hiding the leaders (inside Phulbari) saved their lives; on the other, the leaders’ apparent absence and the media’s continuous presentation of the injustice created the essential conditions for the most powerless part of the community to lash back the next morning.

Furthermore, the management of the protest by the regime was equally to be blamed. Right after the killings, state forces were indiscriminately beating up everyone, regardless of whether or not they were protesting (GCM 2007). Thus, abstaining from the protest did not seem to be advantageous. The fact that there was no way to escape the

chance of being repressed made people feel even more cornered and frustrated. This blanket violence had liberated them from being afraid—they were agitated to be active.

The media, especially electronic media outlets, was very significant on that night. National activists, scattered after the killings, strategically kept contact with each other through cell phones. They also contacted and updated the national media houses about everything that was happening that night, hour by hour. According to Anu Bhai:

I started getting phones from media, print and electronic, from 5 pm on 26 August, was talking with one after another till 11.30pm. It was without break, also talked live with TV channels. My description included narration of events, as well as our declared programmes for 4 thana, Dhaka and whole country. These communications seemed to be very effective not only to build public opinion nationally but also to reach Phulbari people to give them sense of presence of National Committee with specific follow up programmes. Local leaders and people of Phulbari - adjacent areas were never disconnected from centre except initial few hours. No doubt media, especially TV channels, were very useful during those days (E-mail to me, 2011).

### 5.5.1 Dawn of Anger and Resilience

The next morning, frustrated locals vented the anger aroused by their apparent powerlessness. For them, the reign of terror and continuous injustice to innocent people had to be stopped. They were no longer afraid. Led by two women from Jolapara (one housewife and one sex worker), a seemingly powerless community lashed back. In Rohima apa's (34, female, housewife) testimony:

The next morning I was outside in the alley ... I was not feeling well. Then, I saw seven BDR [guards] were unnecessarily beating up a young boy. All of a sudden anger took grip over me. I was not even thinking I guess. ...at that moment [local female activists] came back from her night trip... she and I started to shout at the BDR. What do you think you are doing? You come in our neighbourhood and beat innocent people! You kill our boys and we would let you go? She brought a *boti* [traditional kitchen knife] and I took a bamboo pole ...then we cursed them like anything [laughs] and chased them away like criminals. We also gave them good deal of beating. They were very scared, they never saw women like this, I guess (Jolapara, Phulbari: 2010)

This might appear unusual. However, even the ‘ruthless’ BDR would not dare harming women due to the fear of the retaliation that would be provoked from a community where women were violated. I argue here in favour of the effect of emotional overshadowing that shrouded the cost of dissent from the protestors’ minds, and the

cultural norm that dissuaded the BDR guards while also empowering the women and leading them to risky protest behaviours.

A couple of hours later, through other local leaders, the protest diffused in the town (Figure 5.3). Anger pushed forward the overpowering push that diffused the protest to stand against the injustice. At this point, the women of Jolapara were at the forefront of the processions trying to break the curfew and to proceed to the main road. They carried red chilli powder, traditional kitchen knives and brooms to scare off the BDR and police. Local leaders were behind them trying to gather more people to join the procession to break the curfew. The noted leaders of the OGCP tried to mobilise the north side. The local leader of Gono Front (Khijir Bhai) and the Communist Party (Halim Bhai) pushed the BDR barricade and reached the main road. Participation, however, was still dwindling. At the same time, the leader of the merchants’ association (Romjan bhai) was trying to get out and organise processions at the south side of the main road. He also utilized women as a buffer at the forefront of the group so that men would be safe from the wrath of the BDR (Figure 5.3).

I derive two themes from this analysis: one, the way things unfolded had a transverse angle since the north and the south sides of the town were completely detached from each other (due to BDR patrol on the main road, Figure 5.3). This made it difficult for protesters to know the effect of repression from either of the two sides of the town. And, secondly, women were agents of ignition in both sides<sup>74</sup>. At one point, both the processions in Phulbari managed to enter and overcome the main road, taking possession of it away from law enforcement. The retreat of the powerful opposition, at least symbolically from the streets to the police station established the moment of catharsis. Around noon, the BDR withdrew and feelings of pride, power and joy overtook feelings of frustration and anger.

### **5.5.2 Pride and Aggression**

The event of *gayebana janazah* (funeral prayer in absence of the dead bodies) took place that afternoon. I shall discuss this in a later section on the collective sense of duty. For now, I shall continue to describe the effect of emotion on the resistance. The absorption of this sense of renewed control over their lives and their partial win against powerful

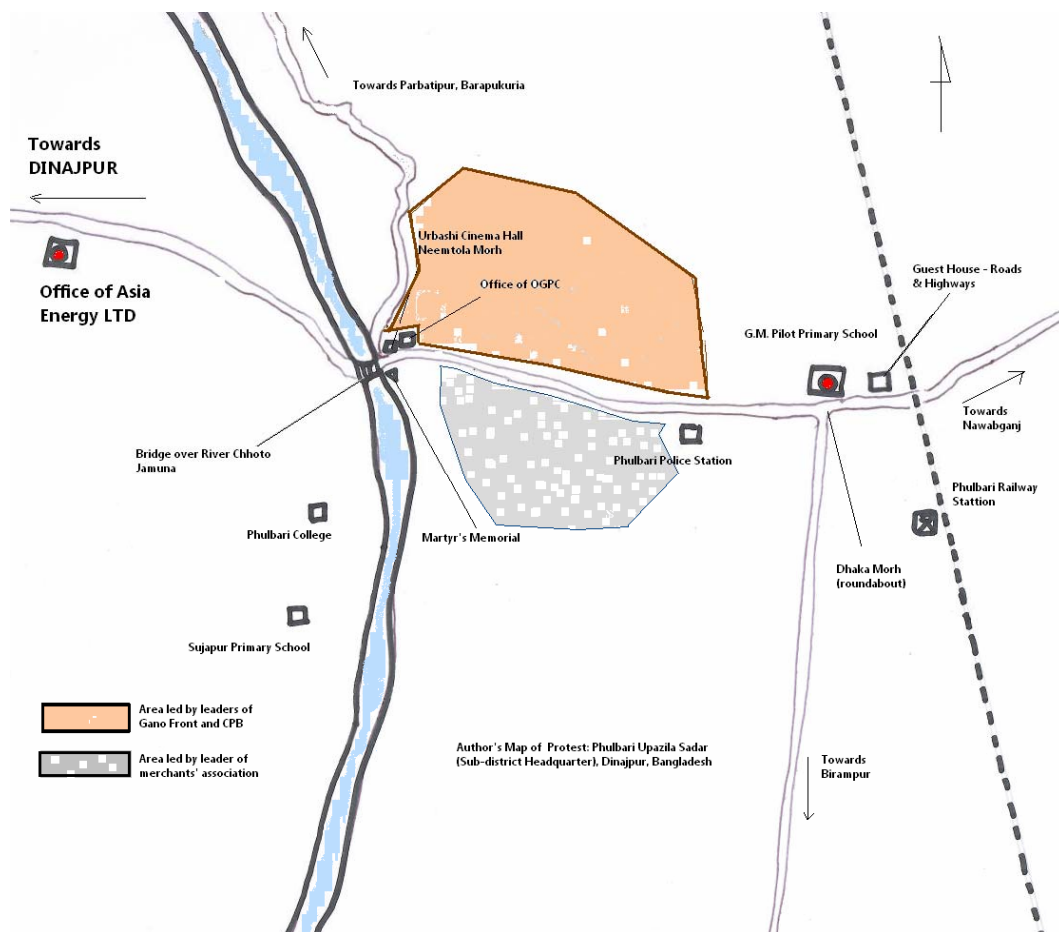
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<sup>74</sup> Such strategic uses of women’s agency to protect men from state coercion have historic precedent: similar examples were reported in Russia during soviet collectivization (Viola 1986:23-42) and in England during 18<sup>th</sup> century food riots (Thompson 1993).

enemies was crucial in redirecting the emotional turmoil onto a separate path. On 28 August 2006, pride of empowerment versus routinisation of the protest by the leaders in most areas led to small scale aggressions against the *dalals*. These aggressions quickly got diffused in the vicinity. In the beginning, aggression was entwined with pride and community honour, which led to arson but no plunder of the houses of *dalals*. Rahmat bhai (44, local business-owner) described one such event:

Young people were bringing out all the furniture and setting fire on these. I have never seen something like this in my life. I saw two young men brought bundles of cash from their [dalal's house]. I first thought they were looting. No. They were not. These two young men opened the bundle and put all the cash into the flame. You know in a poor country like ours, it is not really expected. I was so proud of them (Interview, Phulbari 2010)

**Figure 5.3: Phulbari 27 – who where?**



Himu (24, wage labourer) had a similar account:

People broke the fences of his [a collaborator's] poultry farm. He raised ducklings. No one took anything. The birds were set free (Interview, Parbatipur, 2010)

Later on, complicated by the uninterrupted power of community in the absence of visible law enforcement, aggression took a different turn. There was massive turnout on these days, giving the aggressors the benefit of relative anonymity<sup>75</sup>. There were reports of looting at the houses of some of the employees of the company (Field note 2010).

The only way for the state to come back and regain its control over its constituent region was quick pacification of the dissent. To re-establish rule of law and to protect the elite, the state needed to calm this ‘fire’ down by a sudden and timely ‘splash of water’. This was perceived to be possible by a temporary transfer of power to the people: the treaty on 30 August 2006. This was welcomed with joy and pride and was labelled as the preliminary victory of Phulbari against the company. As a result, pacification was achieved days after the government had taken full responsibility for its deeds and had promised to throw the company out of the country. Then, the routine business of investigations, compensations, and martyrs’ memorials normalized the whole situation to a level where people were no longer angry. They were back to their emotional status prior to the repression. Ultimate catharsis was reached.

### **5.6 *Janazah* and *fard-e- kyfia*: Mobilising Obligation**

Yousuf bhai (71, veteran local left leader, Gono Shnghoti Andolon) said:

I thought I was in Palestine, young boys pelting stones at the authorities and the law enforcers answering with bullets. Three young lives were sacrificed for the sake of our whole community’s right to live on our lands. How can we not be resilient!

Several other protestors drew similar analogies. In Muslim communities, funeral prayer or *janazah* is one of the rights the deceased has over other Muslims. It is a *fard kifaya*, an obligation that at least some Muslims in a community must discharge on behalf of the community as a whole. Participation in a funeral procession is thus a necessary act for those Muslims who would stand for the rest (Zaman 2001: 28-29). Questions of dissent and conflict follow from this religious scripture. As has been seen in the aftermaths of most conflicts and massacres in Palestine, the *janazah* becomes one of the major events for protesting against the injustice<sup>76</sup>.

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<sup>75</sup> Meanwhile, the national committee held a nation-wide half-day *hartal*. The then-opposition party (Awami League) also observed nation-wide *hartal* protesting the use of force in Phulbari

<sup>76</sup> Rasler (1996), while explaining the Iranian revolution, reported similar effects of mourning processions six weeks after the political deaths.

By noon of 27 August 2006, when the processions from the North and the South of the town could push to the main street, they were joined by a few more people from the outskirts and villages. The protests, however, were marked with high risk tactics of dissent since mourning had yet to influence greater turn-out. Therefore, a community resistance led mostly by non-religious, left-wing activists came up with one of the most culturally-resonant events of the four day long protest: a *gayebana janazah*<sup>77</sup> after the *assar* (afternoon) prayer on 27 August 2006. The leaders were back into action and by that time the press was very attentive to the protests. Therefore, the organisers needed to showcase participation from the local people in enormous capacity. The closest and the most relevant strategy for the leaders was to try to mobilise town people who were already angry through a common and more innocuous event that was also able to circumvent the wrath of the state forces.

As such, the *janazah* was both a camouflage and a symbol of community duty. According to one local leader, “the *gayebana janazah* was crucial. Only through this event people could have dodged the curfew or police or BDR”. For another: “How could the BDR stop us from the *janazah* in an Islamic country?”<sup>78</sup> Another account suggested that this was their only chance after the shooting to gather all the activists together at the same time. State forces might just have to allow this for religious reasons. It was not only a religious event; it was an emblem of protest—of breaking the curfew *en masse*. The *fard kyfia* that the community of Phulbari had done for their martyrs included breaking the curfew and protesting against the deaths by being present at the funeral and by promising to dissent until justice was served. In order to respect them truly, the community could not stop at praying for their redemption to *Allah*, rather, they would have to continue their protest and resistance to pay tribute to those who gave away lives for a greater common cause. Therefore, although not all protestors were Muslims, the *fard* resonated well in the community. Hurmoti mashi (non-muslim, 60s, agriculture-based) reported,

we wanted to stop RAB and police from entering Phulbari. So we cooked, ate and slept on the highway. They have fired at a peaceful demonstration. Now we will show them how to protest. It was our duty to lend a hand to the protestors at Phulbari. We fell trees on the highway and lived there until justice was served. Yes, we cooked on the road. We said to ourselves, we would not go home until justice is served. We stayed on the highway, yes, we slept there too. It became a *fard* to do so!

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<sup>77</sup>Funeral procession and prayer in absence of the dead bodies.

<sup>78</sup>Bangladesh is not an Islamic country. This was, however, the respondent's view.

In a similar way, using mosques’ microphones to call people for protest (such as declaring *hartal*) and mobilising rallies after Friday noon prayers are both common tactics that have cultural resonance for the protestors.

Besides the instrumental usage of *janazah* to gather protestors during days of harsh repression, the idea of *fard*—illustrated through the above quotation—played a crucial role even after the *janazah* was over. In the aftermath of the atrocity, if one decided not to protest, s/he would have been violating the *fard* and would have to incur the punishment. The punishment would be being labelled as a *dalal*. There was also the possibility of this labelling being public and including the full rituals of shaming. Ejid (29, male, village physician) reported one such public shaming of a probable *dalal*.

There was this guy - he used to say things that were in favour of the mine. So after the 27<sup>th</sup> people in the area decided to make him say sorry to the people. There was a van rickshaw<sup>79</sup>. He was forced to stand up on the van. Then he was presented with a necklace of shoes from the whole village. Everyone was there. He had to join his hands together and say sorry to everyone. He promised he would never side with the company again (Interview, Birampur, 2010).

Therefore, just as a good Muslim will not break his or her promise to *Allah* and so will always perform the *fard*, so will protestors actively protest. Not every individual needs to perform this duty, but someone from each family should usually be active. I interviewed eleven protestors who were representing their families by attending follow-up protests. Families do not strategically coordinate this turn-taking to save themselves from negative labelling or the resultant wrath of the public; rather, this is how the society works. Similar to the *janezah*, attendance is not mandatory for all, but it is mandatory for at least some. Therefore, community-based cultural norms determined who joined the post-massacre protests and how aggressive those protests were.

## 5.7 Media and its ‘Rites’: Finishing the Patchwork

In this section I show that positioning media is crucial for two reasons: one, through news reports of the atrocity during the night of the *chhabbishe* (26<sup>th</sup>) the people of Phulbari came to know about the death toll, the position of the leaders, and the night raids. Satellite networks presented footage of innocent people being brutally beaten by

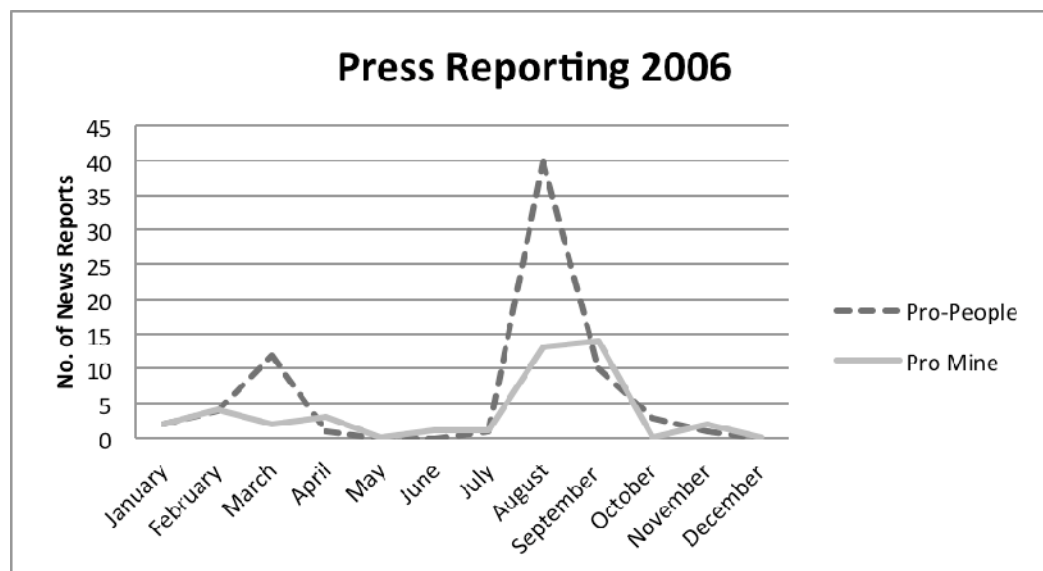
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<sup>79</sup> Van rickshaws are three wheelers with a flat top and are a very common mode of transportation in the region.

the police, RAB and Border guards. Airing this footage was a ‘mediatized ritual’ (Cottle 2006: 411-432) of the violent repression. This ritual had successfully infused emotion against the injustice. Secondly, the Phulbari resistance diffused beyond local and national boundaries because it was communicated through the local, national and transnational press; this proved to be very fatal for the regime and the company. For these two reasons, the role of the media in the aftermath of the violence is fundamental to this analysis.

Figure 5.4 presents a general picture of the nature of print media reporting (118 news in local, regional, national and international sources were collected from the OGCP archive and the NEXIS UK) from early 2006 to August 2006. Unfortunately, looking at the general trend of news reporting in favour of the mine or in favour of its opponents does not provide us with new information on the role of media in shaping the mobilisation in the aftermath of violence on the *chhabbishe*. If we concentrate on the news headline framing (Appendix E.1), however, we observe a journey by the local and the national media. The journey of the media’s position about the Phulbari coal project was an inconsistent one. We can conceptualise this journey as an inverted ‘U’. It started from a position favoring the mine and the company, then, after the massacre, turned against the company. A few weeks after the massacre, it went back to its original pro-mine project position. From the newspaper headlines about Phulbari resistance it is evident that most local and national newspapers were pro-mine during 2005. After June 2006 the scenario started to shift. This peaked during the violent days of August 2006.

**Figure 5.4: Newspaper Reports on Phulbari Mine before and after the Violence**



Violence always has a potential ‘news-value’ or ‘sensationalism’ and even more so when state violence killed citizens. Cottle (2006) differentiated between six types of mediated rituals; in the aftermath of repression in Phulbari we witnessed what he called a ‘media disaster.’ Disasters that are publicly signaled by different media as major, often traumatic and in some occasions even historically- momentous happenings. Media disasters are also frequently accompanied by high media performativity, circulation of potent symbols, and invocation of solidarities. To qualify, a disaster needs victims or the collapse of certain technological advancements or government policy (Cottle 2006).

After *chhabbishe*, the media’s broadcast reached a point of ‘ritual’ where, through showing the injustice to the people, emotions and solidarity were aroused and sustained for days. Television and newspapers presented the country with a marathon of events unfolding that was disastrous for the company and the government (AEC 2006). It enacted a performance wherein tragedy was the emotional motor that sizzled with conflict, augmenting anxiety, and resilience.

This ritual is not, however, intentionally supporting either protestors or miners. Instead, it was for media’s eternal hunger for sensationalism and its own repertoire of ‘performative’ rituals. Such hunger comes from a rite of passage after any atrocity in the national scene. Therefore, when the days of post-massacre dissent passed and pacification and reconciliation of the conflict was achieved, the media went back to its initial position of supporting the mine.

### **5.7.1 How this impacted the emotional roller coaster?**

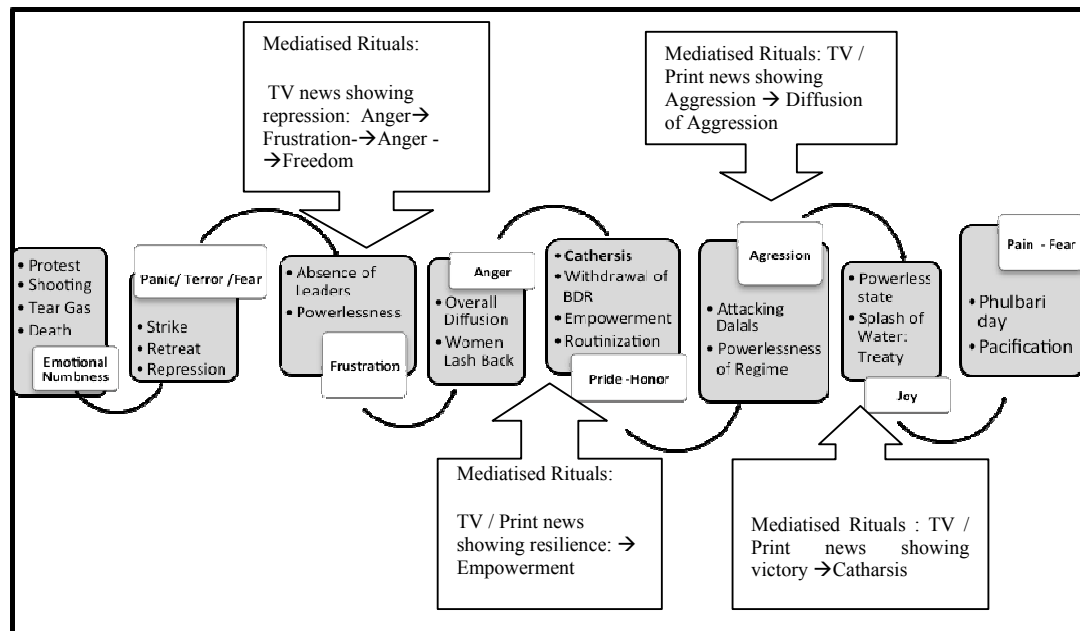
Electronic media were more efficient in influencing the emotional upheaval in post – massacre days than the print media. From *chhabbishe* evening, all satellite network channels in Bangladesh were broadcasting live updates of the events unfolding in the aftermath of the repression. Their correspondents were making phone-calls to national leaders and civil society activists who were in Phulbari for information on the atrocity. Nurolidin (wage labourer, male, 26) retorted:

they never broadcast anything on Phulbari Resistance in the past, not until there were people killed. At least the ‘dish channels’ [satellite networks] broadcast all news of protests after people were killed. BTV [national television channel] did nothing...as if nothing had happened ...until the deal was signed.

Most of the protestors and supporters of the resistance who lived outside of

Phulbari town reported having travelled distances (for example, by bike) to watch the news on TV on the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup>. They wanted to know what was happening. People inside Phulbari, however, were 'lucky' enough to be able to see the reign of terror unleashed in their own town by the BDR and the police. They saw footages of innocent women and children being brutally beaten by the BDR, people being shot at or chased around their own neighborhoods. This footage aroused a lot of emotion within the townspeople.

**Figure 5.5: Emotional Roller coaster revised by impact of media 'rituals'**



According to one local leader:

On the 26<sup>th</sup>, Phulbari residents were fewer than protestors from outside, however, when the repression came on their own skin and they could see what was happening throughout the town, they were very angry.

Other town-based protestors reported:

I saw more people from Phulbari the day after than on the 26<sup>th</sup>. On the 26<sup>th</sup> they were watching the procession from afar. But when BDR came to them regardless of their participation in it, they got angry.  
 We were watching TV and getting angry  
 They were showing how a girl was being beaten in the Bazar  
 I was frustrated to see that the national leaders went to Dhaka... I saw it in the news... we had to do something... what would the people who got hurt tell us...

how can we explain why they had to suffer and we are safe here... we have to do something about it.  
They showed on the news, how we cooked on the highway to stop police and RAB from going to Phulbari. My husband got a call from the OGPC leaders.

As demonstrated by these comments, the media’s ritualistic performance during the violent repression influenced the arousal of emotions and the sense of obligation to resist by providing the protestors image of injustice. Repeated portrayal of such injustices led to the moral outrage that forced further backlash.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

This chapter illustrates the powerful role played by emotion and community obligation in promoting the wave of anger that, in turn, prompted a backlash after a non-violent protest was violently repressed by the state. I have attempted to use a kaleidoscope of transversal politics where standpoints, no matter how different, are equally transposed. This provides a more nuanced collation of the patchwork behind resistance. While sewing together these patches, I have shown that the protest against the mine was not homogenous. People had different positioning about how and why the protest was taking place and, consequently, they perceived the unfolding events in a way that was different from people who were watching it from other positioning—despite the fact that all of them were attending the same event.

I have demonstrated how an emotional rollercoaster overshadowed the high risk and cost associated with further dissent in the immediate aftermath of the massacre. I have also shown how this turmoil travelled through a path and diminished after catharsis was achieved. In addition, I have proposed that the leaders of the protest, after the first phase of smoke and tears had cleared – mobilised large numbers of protestors by arousing feelings of a collective obligation to dissent – which was based in local cultural practices. Protestors were motivated to keep protest alive with high-risk activities even though the regime exerted unplanned and ill-managed coercion. Media augmented both emotions and the sense of obligation through repeated portrayals of the injustices. As such, I have illustrated how emotion, community obligation and ritualized media performance helped the protestors to use the weakness of the regime’s unplanned violence.

## Chapter 6

### Transnational Ties: Types and Tensions

This project is like - you know - the vision of a mad man - as far as I am concerned. I do not understand how someone is willing to do this for profit – how much suffering to how many people for how many generations to come - I find it pretty compelling (Anna, London 2011).

The resistance had not ended yet. Although representatives of the government of Bangladesh signed the agreement<sup>80</sup> on 30 August 2006, the plan to mine the coal was never completely withdrawn or abandoned<sup>81</sup>. Soon after the Phulbari agreement was signed, political volatility in the national scene increased the vulnerability of the protestors. From January 2007, the declaration of emergency rule in the country banned all overt political activities. The protestors against the mine were threatened by the repression from the armed forces. Consequently, the leaders decided to reach out to the international community to protect the safety of the protestors in the local and the national level.

While the resistance was already successful at the local and the national level, we need to evaluate the role that the newly formed transnational connections played in sustaining the resistance after 2006. These connections engaged people from different continents. This chapter and the next (**Chapter 7**) will analyse the transnational context and its actions in sustaining the on-going resistance. The success of the transnational coalition alone is not sufficient to explain this movement's success, though it is a necessary one. In this chapter, I address three interrelated topics: why the protestors had to continue to struggle against the national and transnational forces supporting the mine even after the government suspended operations; how the protest groups developed their relationships with transnational partners; and how they have managed these connections to sustain the suspension of the mine's operation. In so doing, this chapter contributes to the understanding of how resistance can continue despite tensions arising from

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<sup>80</sup> The government representatives signed a document based on the following six-point demands from the people of Phulbari: compensation for injury and loss of lives, suspension of all activities of the company until further notice, expulsion of the company from the country, promise of never permitting open cast mines anywhere in the country and establishing a martyrs' memorial in memory of the three protestors killed

<sup>81</sup> The irony of residing on top of a mineral deposit is perhaps an unceasing threat to the local community, with only one exception: when all the minerals are completely extracted from it.

contradictory values, diverse collective identities and varied levels of trust across, local-national and transnational fields. In particular, it shows how the Phulbari resistance continued to work together, in spite of these challenges to stop the mine and prevent it from starting again.

Scholars suggested that relocation of global capital investment in mining from the West to the South has seen simultaneous recurrent increase in transnational linkages of any protests against such investments (Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar 1998:234-235; Bebbington et al. 2008:12-25; Conway 2004; Escobar 1997:40-64; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Smith 2004:311-336; Tsutsui 2004:63-87; Widener 2007:21-36). Among these protests, some are ‘transnational’ - fought across local-national-transnational fields simultaneously. In cases of this kind, protest percolates from local space (an aggrieved village or town) to the national space (capital city or countrywide) and then to the transnational space (involving protestors from, at least, one different city from another state). Examples of human rights violation in indigenous communities of Latin America (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 79-120) or villages of India (Khagram, Riker and Sikkink 2002:6-20) for example, catches attention worldwide. Local problem in the global South attracts attention of a group of Northern organizations and then it organises transnational campaign (Bennett 2005; Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Della Porta (2007; della Porta et al. 2006) and her colleagues highlighted the global justice movements, where loosely connected organizations or transnational networks come together in one place to resist a multi-lateral dominant organization, for example, the WTO to promote global justice against capitalist greed (della Porta 2007:1-27; della Porta et al. 2006: 18-19, 232-247). Tarrow’s definition encompasses what transnational resistance mean: “socially mobilised groups with constituents in at least two states, engaged in sustained contentious interactions with power-holders in at least one state other than their own, or against an international institution, or a multinational economic actor” (Tarrow 2001: 11).

Smith (2008:240-41) has described three forms of transnational resistances: networks, coalitions and movements. Networks mostly exchange information and experiences only, coalitions exchange and share information, experiences, mutual support, and jointly perform actions and campaigns. Movements, along with all that coalitions possess also shares ideologies and political cultures. I shall identify and delineate which kind of transnational resistance fits the case in hand.

Smith (2008) also provided a detailed list of intensity of transnational ties, which included whether or not the ties were formal and routinized. However, while working with the Phulbari protestors, it emerged that given all these typologies the most integral part of understanding the dynamics of transitional ties were the processes through which any kind of (formal or informal, diffused or routine) ties were negotiated and mediated. The dynamics could be understood through the analysis of the mediation and negotiation of ties between different partners in forming the ties. Therefore, this chapter devotes much of its focus on formulation of ties in the transnational scene.

Major features of contemporary transnational resistances are as follows: first, depending on the use of space – national and transnational; secondly, based on the nature of actions – direct action or lobbying; and depending on the goal of the movement – radical versus moderate. My analysis of the Phulbari resistance shows that the resistance succeeded by combining all of the six types stated above. I show how local challengers to the mineral industry connect and interact with national and transnational allies in various spatial and discursive fields to resist the mine. I demonstrate that the protestors apply both direct action and lobbying tactics depending on the emergent need of the resistance. While some of the coalition partners have radical goals to overthrow the system, others have more moderate view of convincing governments to cut carbon emission. The Phulbari case elucidates how the local and national actors contained their core argument within the national boundary and yet succeeded in attracting both transnational and local support. The resistance is truly a domestic struggle with worldwide global justice partners.

In this chapter, I also address the often-overlooked role that the private corporations and its financial supporters play in defining how transnational resistances take shape. I also offer a discussion about the role that the diasporic communities have played in resistance against issues in their home countries, which is neglected by transnational movement research (a notable exception is Tarrow 2005). My examination of the micro-dynamics within different organizations and among individual protestors incorporates the non-resident Bangladeshis and their roles in initiating and sustaining these ties. Finally, I describe, in detail, local, national and transnational protestors connections and identify the tensions, factions and limits of this form of collaboration. But before going into all that, the next section starts with data issue, then describes the national political context to show why transnational coalition building started for Phulbari resistance, and how these ties were formulated or mediated.

## 6.1 Data

As discussed in **Chapter 3**, I found it very difficult to make the initial contacts with transnational protestors. Once access was established, collecting data was less challenging. In this chapter and the next, I draw on two sources of data: interviews and archival material. I have used the following three sources for archival data: the company, the protestors and the media. Company's data included published and web-based communication materials, letters, excerpts of discussions in the investors' forum, letters from the company's financiers and reports from government of Bangladesh. Secondly, I used leaflets, pamphlets, reports, letters, petitions, online content, fact sheet and e-mails (from the list serve) produced by the protestors. Thirdly, I also draw on international news reports (see Appendix F1) and those published in the London Stock Exchange. Although the resistance still continues, for my research purposes, I decided to stop at the end of December 2011. That gives me over a year of participant observation. It also gave me a five-year period to look at the share price related data from the Alternative Investment Market and the London Stock Exchange. Above all, it allowed me a six-month period to reflect on my experience, while I was writing about my intense engagement with the transnational movement.

## 6.2 The Company and its Old Ally

In this section, I provide a discussion of the company's share price and changes in the Bangladesh domestic political arena to show how together these two created the impetus for further mobilisation. The company during November 2005 traded its shares at 900 pence, the highest price per share it had ever had. In mid-August 2006, that is - before the blockade, share price was 312 pence (Coal Week International 2006). After the atrocity on *chhabbishe* and even before the agreement of 30 August, the share price plunged on the London-based Alternative Investment Market (AIM). The company desperately tried to shore up its share price. Its spokesperson denounced the National Committee as a "vocal minority with extreme ideas against foreigners putting money into these projects"(Ramesh 2006). It also reiterated the Bangladesh government's continued support for the project. Their share price plummeted when the news of signing of the Phulbari agreement on 30 August 2006 reached the AIM. The stock prices plunged by

166.5 pence in 70 minutes to 117 pence per share. The company had to suspend their trading on the following day (The Guardian: 2006 ).

The company remained 'committed' to the Phulbari Coal Project (Cooper 2006) and its shares returned to the market for trading on 6 October 2006 (AEC 2006). The company was reported to be convinced that the Bangladesh government would not cancel the mine. When they re-entered the market their share price fell slightly and was trading at 115 pence. The company spokesman noted, however, that the initiation of the project was conditional on the adoption of the government's proposed new coal policy (Citywire 6.10.2006). There is no way to know if the company executive quoted above was bluffing or he knew that the government was still 'committed' to mining the Phulbari deposit even though it had signed an agreement with the protestors to suspend operations. Despite strong resistance from the local and national constituents the government was still supporting the company over its people. Consequently, the Phulbari resistance would have to continue.

Meanwhile, changes at the national political arena of Bangladesh affected both the company and the protestors' abilities to act. About three weeks after the company shares were trading on the London Stock exchange, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)-led government stepped down amidst massive violence and disruptive political protests in the capital and allegations of corruption and cronyism. Awami League and its alliance of parties opposed to the BNP-led government led these protests. This alliance openly opposed the Phulbari mine in August and organised a countrywide half-day *hartal* to condemn the repression in Phulbari. The national political upheaval reached its peak when the Awami League-led alliance declined to accept BNP-led government's appointment of the election commissioner. The impasse became more serious when violence that erupted during the street protests left number of people dead.

Amidst all these, even months after returning to the market, share prices were not promising for the company (Cooper 15.1.2007; Das 2009). On January 11 2007, the company changed its name from the Asia Energy Corporation to the Global Coal Management PLC in order to: "better reflect [its] strategy of expanding its portfolio of coal investments on a global basis, while continuing to remain fully committed to the Phulbari project in Bangladesh" (Cooper 15.1.2007, GCM 2007). However in this same report, one mining analyst expressed scepticism at the impact of the company's change of name. Local and the national protestors against the mine believed that the company discarded its former name for being too badly tainted with the "blood of the martyrs of

Phulbari”<sup>82</sup>. On that same day – 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007 – Bangladesh experienced a non-violent coup and the chief of the caretaker government declared a state of emergency. The new Chief Adviser was a former employee of the World Bank. His new advisory board was alleged to have covert military support (Islam 2007)<sup>83</sup>. In December 2008, the much desired general election was held. The alliance led by the Awami League achieved a landslide victory and formed the government that will be in power until the next general election to be held in 2013.

The company’s attempt to shed its former 'look' and to replace it with a new 'global' outlook for avoiding the tainted reputation after the atrocity, did not work very well. In spite of its attempts, it never fully recovered: share was trading between 100 to 120 pence in January 2007. After that, the highest share price it would ever reach before December 2011 was slightly over 300 pence in June 2008 (Figure 6.1). The hike was partly caused by the speculation that another company, Polo Resources, would buy GCM Resources' shares after the Asian Development Bank withdrew its support from the mine in April 2008 (GCM 2008). This withdrawal was directly caused by concerted transnational activism (**Chapter 7**). Nonetheless, surprisingly, after ADB's withdrawal, share prices soared until late June 2008 and then nosedived to below 20 pence.

The lowest share price was in December 2008 – below 20 pence per share. This might have been a consequence of its perceived vulnerability before the national election in Bangladesh. Figure 6.1 clearly shows that in 2009, the share prices remained low too (below 100 pence). GCM has faced ‘loss’ (24.9.2009, GCM 2009). From the end of 2009, the share prices started to rise again and rose up to over 260 pence per share in October 2010 (GCM 2010). GCM had to sell its stake at its South African venture called the GCM Aura. In 2011, this steady decline in share prices continued and GCM 's price target was cut down to one-third (GCM 2011; Reuters 29.9.2009). In November-December 2011, the shares sold at less than 60 pence a share, a three-year low.

Although the company changed its name and re-established its relationship with the reconfigured Bangladesh government since 2009, the fluctuations in the share prices indicated that company remained vulnerable. Its risk averse shareholders paid heed to the political noise made by the protestors. In order to retain shareholders, both the new government and the company worked to persuade the public at large that the Phulbari

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<sup>82</sup> Interview 2010, Phulbari

<sup>83</sup> It was a civic-military regime with an ambitious project to clean 'politics' by their notorious 'minus-two' formula meaning they had planned to expel two top leaders of both powerful parties out of the country and 'clean' politics from the 'corruption' by their families.

mine was a viable project. Consequently, the fight against open mining at Phulbari continued. The national and local organisers of resistance to the mine sought connections with international environmental organizations so they could put more pressure on the government through transnational involvement.

### **6.3 Transnational Coalition: Who, What and Why**

Many scholars have already addressed the question of local protests collaborating or working with transnational NGOs (della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Van Dyke and McCammon 2010). Van Dyke and McCammon (2010) identified threat and ideological congruence to be the necessary factors in generating new alliances among different organizations. In the Phulbari resistance, these were not sufficient to explain the collaboration. In this case, threat of the mine existed since 2005. A reason to reach out to the transnational did not emerge until the domestic political space got squeezed after the state of emergency was declared in 2007. Indeed, contrary to Van Dyke and McCammon (2010), there were considerable ideological differences among the groups involved in the Phulbari coalition. Ideological tensions were recognized and sidestepped. One of the transnational coalition members (English-speaking) reported they followed a principle of 'don't put your foot in it'. They do not try to reach a consensus or congruence. In spite of their ideological differences, the resistance, managed to work together in their concerted attacks against the company.

In this section, I describe the beginnings of this transnational alliance and how they coalesced against the Phulbari mine: the initial transnational tie formation. In the next section, I shall discuss varied networking scenario of the challengers and propose some typology. The section next will deal with the tensions in this coalition.

Figure 6.1: Company Share Price January 2007 to January 2012



Source: <http://www.gcmplc.com/share-price-chart> downloaded on 25.1.2012

### **6.3.1 Initial Transnational Connections**

The local and the national challengers of the mining project launched their second phase of resistance. Though deeply rooted in the local movement this resistance expanded through its national allies towards a transnational alliance of challengers from Japan, Philippines, Australia, the UK, Germany and the USA (see Appendix F.2 for a list of organizations). This is a fluid and virtual network but cloistered against corporate espionage. Within the network, relationships between different organizations and individuals are diverse.

Drawing on Khagram, Riker and Sikkink (2002:3-23), della Porta et al. (2006: 18-19), and Smith (2008 in Goodwin and Jasper 2009: 240-248), I refer to the Phulbari resistance as an example of a transnational coalition. Transnational coalitions are sets of actors linked across country boundaries who coordinate shared strategies or sets of tactics to publicly influence social change (Khagram, Riker and Sikkink 2002:7). Therefore, in transnational coalitions like the Phulbari resistance, action repertoires are not transmitted or learnt (contrary to scale shifts described by Tarrow and McAdam (2005: 127) across the board, they can only coordinate a set of actions without necessarily copying each other. Coalition members retain their repertoire of actions and practices but remain loosely connected for mutual support and coordinated actions.

Anu bhai described how transnational connections for Phulbari resistance was established:

...we had to debunk all these well known 'development' rhetorics and to do so, we needed to collect information from international sources. Therefore, from January to August 2006, we started to search for information on open pit coal mining methods in different countries and its impact and resistance. We did have international correspondence from that time through e-mail and internet... International responses and information etc. were crucial because within the country, there was no one who could have helped us with this. We had to depend on AEC's own documents or internationally available resources on open mining. Geologists of the country had no idea of what they were dealing with here. There were no local experts about the open pit and we had to contact people abroad to teach us about open pits (Interview, Dhaka: 2010)

This quote suggests that contact with activists abroad existed since the beginning of the resistance. These contacts were like transnational advocacy networks (Keck and Sikkink 1998) which only shared information, values and discourses and did not coordinate tactics and strategies. Immediately after the violent repression of the mass

rally in *chhabbishe*, the protests attracted major international attention. News of the atrocity reached the world within a few hours after it occurred. The knowledge that three people were killed and hundreds injured was widespread (Ahmed 26.8.2006). However, before the transnational civil society would have intervened, the government retreated in the face of strong local and national protests in 2006 (**chapter 5**).

Media coverage (discussed in **chapter 5**), aroused some international interest. There were organizations that took interest and picked up the Phulbari case from a sense of obligation to resist the mine. New ties were initiated. In other cases, prior encounters and collaborations with other organizations led them to work more closely together. Simultaneously, the severe restriction of domestic space and the threat from the military-backed caretaker government increased the likelihood that the mining would begin again and active resistance to the mine re-emerged. Members of the armed forces violated the agreement within five months after *chhabbishe* in Phulbari. Halim bhai, leader of the Oil-Gas Committee, Phulbari (OGCP) described to me this sense of violation when he was arrested and tortured by the army on 8 February, 2007:

They came in [armed forces] and said they were arresting me on account of stealing a motorbike. They did not have any charges against me. So they had to cook this one up. They had beaten me in the bazar in front of hundreds of people. Then they arrested me. But people became defiant again. They called another blockade in Phulbari and the National Committee also organised protest events in Dhaka. Patriotic intellectuals of the country also joined those events. In the face of the two-pronged pressure on the Caretaker government, they released me. But by that time my body was permanently scarred bearing the signs of their torture. They have only been able to hurt me physically; ideologically I have not been shaken. ...the government had filed ten cases against me after *chhabbishe* August. During the caretaker government, ten more were added (Interview, Phulbari: 2010<sup>84</sup>).

Anu bhai described how National Committee reacted to this incident:

... we got the news from the locals in the morning. At that period, I thought that we don't know much about this government. History tells us that army governments were often pro-corporate and we still were not sure about the nature of this new regime, which later became clearer<sup>85</sup>. We were not sure how far this regime will go to take control of the coal mine. How aggressive were they willing to be? Will they be limited to that region? Then I felt that we needed to broaden our support base, nationally and internationally. Until this incident I was not very interested about these international connections ... circumstance did not demand that ...But after the emergency was declared, I took special initiative to connect to different international support groups with the intention of having at least our

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<sup>84</sup> Translated

<sup>85</sup> See page 8 & 135-136 for a brief discussion on this government

voice in the international arena if barred from having our voice in the national forum (Interview, Dhaka: 2010)

The convenor of the National Committee described similar attempts:

...we also opened up a new connection with a transnational group... the Company's website boasted that since there is an army government in power, they will very soon be able to start the project. By that time, the Phulbari resistance was gaining attention in the transnational arena. It was quite a story in international human rights circuit with the connection between military action and brutality against the protestors. (Interview, Dhaka: 2010).

This is a deliberate effort by the leaders of the National Committee to connect to entities outside the state boundary for concerted action against the company. This mobilised Bangladeshi transnational immigrants to connect the movement to the transnational arena since this could not be done within Bangladesh. Anu bhai described the organization of the first tie,

I think it was BEN - Bangladesh Environmental Network...they work on the environment, especially of Bangladesh. Faculty members from different universities worldwide as well as other professionals work in this organization. Through this network, first the emigrant Bangladeshis and through them other organizations came to know about the Phulbari coal project.... When we e-mailed and contacted BEN, BEN took a strong position against open pit mining. It was crucial for us. Among all these non-resident Bangladeshis a lot of geologists, mining experts, environmental scientists, and economists were connected through BEN. These people had lots of other connections in different countries. We got to BEN through BAPA [Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon or Bangladesh Environment Movement] (Interview, Dhaka: 2010)

BEN experts on their own initiative started to write about the adverse impacts of this mine and mediated the National Committee's ties with other organizations. Some experts, who had worked for the mining industry, knew about how the mining affected local communities. Their support was crucial to the National Committee since they could cross-check the adverse affects of open mining.

### 6.3.2 Tying the Knots: Types of Ties

Not all connections began in the same way. It is of utmost importance to learn how the connections or ties are formed in order to understand the dynamics of transnational coalition building. Based on my observation and interviews, I identified at least two interconnected dimensions and four types of connections as follows: first, depending on who initiates the connection, there are two types: reach out and pick up connections. Secondly, depending on who mediates the connection, there are two more types of ties: direct ties versus mediated ties (Table 6.1). For instance, with the local group making the connection they reach out to the groups that they think will help them. In ‘reach out’ an organization either connects to whoever is available and interested at that point in time or has a specific actor whom it wants to reach out to.

With the international group –they pick up particular local cases that meet their criteria and allow them to pursue their institutional goals. Pick up connections works if the particular local case fits within the wider purview of a broad based organization. For example, an organization working to achieve global justice might become interested in the Phulbari mine because of the massacre in 2006.

In mediated connection, the connection is preceded by and dependent on at least another dyad. At least one other organization initiates the relationship. Contrarily, where the connection is independent of any other preceding dyad, I call it a non-mediated connection since the link was direct. For that matter, either organization may have initiated the connection. The National Committee had direct contact with the non-resident Bangladeshi living in the UK since some of the British Bangladeshi communities were already involved with the National Committee and formed support groups in the UK.

In these cases the connection is selected from a pool of possible organizations. Groups seeking to make a ‘Pick up’ need to fit the selection criteria of the other organization. An activist from the International Accountability Project explained how they got involved in the Phulbari resistance through a mediated pick-up connection.

We are members of NGO Forum for ADB [Asian Development Bank]. One of the Bangladeshi community organization from Khulna [a southern district], informed us about the disastrous effect of the proposed mine and alerted us of the strong grassroots movement against it. They also informed us about the repression in 2006. Then we got connected. We started to search more on the project. Because Asian Development Bank was involved and we are good at

making them accountable, we thought we could add value. We did a fact finding commission with another colleague from Bank Information Centre back in 2006. Then we decided we would take it on (Interview, London: 2011).

**Table 6.1: Type of Ties**

	Direct ties	Mediated Ties
Reach Out	NC Central to NC support groups in UK and Australia.	NC and B.E.N <sup>86</sup> tie through BAPA If the convenor of NC was not a member of BAPA then this tie would have withered.
Pick up	MAC and JACSES to NC Central.	IAP, BIC, Bank Track all active transnational partners were brokered through some other organization.. MAP and CS would not have been in this resistance if IAP did not connect them. LMN would not have come if researcher Roger Moody did not connect these two.

Connecting to BEN through the BAPA was a mediated reach out connection.

When mediated pick up is occurring we need to take account of the following: pick up has inherent selection criteria. This led me to develop a concept – reciprocal tenacity.

The concept refers to the strength and longevity of the ties. Both the groups and organizations that are entering the relationship are doing so in a bid to benefit both. The relation is one of symbiotic mutual support; while the Phulbari resistance needed the outside support these organizations need groups to support. Connections start if shared concern and mutual interests match and survive as long as reciprocity sustains.

### **6.3.3 The Cases of Reciprocal Connections**

To show how the reciprocal connections work, I discuss few cases of pick-up connections: Japan Centre for a Sustainable Environment and Society, International

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<sup>86</sup> BEN = Bangladesh Environment Network, BAPA= Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bangladesh), MAC = Mines and Communities (UK), JACSES = Japanese Centre for a Sustainable Environment and Society (Japan), IAP = International Accountability Project (USA), BIC = Bank Information Centre (USA), MAP = Mangrove Action Project (USA), CS= Cultural Survival (USA) and LMN = London Mining Network (UK)

Accountability Project, Cultural Survival, where connections were successfully established and I would also discuss one case where connection did not work.

**JACSES:** Japan Centre for a Sustainable Environment and Society (JACSES) had a non-mediated 'pick up'. JACSES learned about the Phulbari mine from the media and decided to investigate it further<sup>87</sup>. They chose to work with the Phulbari resistance to hold Japanese government, a funder of the Asian Development Bank, accountable. Organizations interested in the Asian Development Bank's accountability, took interest in the Phulbari resistance because it fit their selection criteria and their programmatic needs.

**The International Accountability Project (IAP):** This was a case of mediated pick up connection. IAP is a human rights organization based in San-Francisco. In my interviews with two core members of IAP, I came to know about their project selection criteria. Their selection criteria to 'take on' a campaign in the global South revealed the reciprocity.

1. How destructive is the project? Is it a project of mass destruction?
  2. How strongly partnered is IAP in that region of the world with the alliances they already have? We have more strength in South Asia, than, for example, Africa
  3. Is there a strong local grassroots movement against the project that gives IAP legitimacy as speaking for the local people?
  4. Can we add value to the resistance? IAP has certain strengths and skills, like advocacy against banks. If the project involved banks, it is easier for us to add more value.
  5. How much can be done without funds for IAP? Our major researcher has been working voluntarily for Phulbari
- (based on my interview with two members of IAP in October and December 2011 in London)

In case of IAP to pick up a project, it has to be highly destructive and especially in an area where IAP can add value (involve banks), has strong regional partners, and has to spend the least resources. Also, the local grassroots have to be the strongest. Phulbari fitted all the criteria and it was picked.

**Cultural Survival:** IAP mediated a tie with Cultural Survival, an organization that helps indigenous communities to prevent destruction or degradation of their land and natural resources. Having Cultural Survival pick up this project involved a long selection process before Phulbari became one of their campaigns. For Cultural Survival to take on a project, it had to meet ten selection criteria. First there had to be a significant threat to

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<sup>87</sup> Interview with Anu bhai

an important eco-system and/or to environmental health and the safety of an indigenous community. In addition a credible, representative indigenous organization needed to invite them (Cultural Survival) to conduct a campaign on its behalf. If they do so, only then can Cultural Survival launch a campaign. Meeting the selection criteria was not sufficient since there were more groups requesting Cultural Survival's support than they can undertake. According to Anna (IAP volunteer and mediator of this connection):

First the good news: there is a good possibility that [ name of Cultural Survival Activist] will choose Phulbari as the focus of their next quarterly campaign. You should know that she is also considering at least one other campaign: an oil palm project in Sarawak. But, she is very interested in Phulbari and understands that it is now at a critical juncture, with new coal policy being formulated and policy-makers being wooed with propaganda trips to open pit mines abroad (E-mail to phulbari\_action mailing list, 23.12.2010).

Therefore, Cultural Survival was a mediated pick up connection. After taking on Phulbari as a campaign Cultural Survival achieved a lot of visibility<sup>88</sup>.

**Avaaz:** Selection criteria are very important in attempting to establish any connection. Here I discuss the failure to establish a connection with Avaaz that emphasizes the compatibility of the selection criteria. Avaaz is a very successful online petition organization. Their major selection criterion is urgency of the situation. Avaaz only launches a campaign when the threat is very imminent, a matter of a few days or hours, before decisions against communities or people will be made. They have millions of members who will deliver online petitions within hours to arouse attention to the pressing concern. Otherwise it will keep the petition in the pipeline and wait until such an emergency. Since the threat of Phulbari mine has not reached that critical juncture, Avaaz has kept the Phulbari petition in their pipeline from 2011.<sup>89</sup> According to their (Avaaz's) internal petition:

Now, the movement has appealed to our global network for solidarity– to raise a worldwide outcry to counter the international financiers and stop this mine. Prime Minister Hasina has spoken out against the mine, but she is under enormous pressure to approve it. Let's build a massive petition urging the Prime Minister to side with her citizens and their environment by rejecting the devastating mine – local organisations will deliver it to the Prime Minister and the consortium next week if we reach 300,000 signatures (phulbari\_action mailing list, 2011).

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<sup>88</sup> Field note 2011 during participant observation of the e-mail list serve

<sup>89</sup> [http://www.avaaz.org/en/communities\\_vs\\_coal/?v1](http://www.avaaz.org/en/communities_vs_coal/?v1)

When transnational groups are deciding which resistance movement to pick-up, they choose one where they can make the most significant, visible and measurable impact. These transnational-local connections support each side's goals and the relationship is reciprocal. Some scholars claim that there exists an unequal relationship between local and the transnational groups, but Phulbari was an exception. Transnational groups do not act as saviours of the local resistance movements. They benefit as well by showing their potential funders or boards or supporters that they have achieved measurable impact.

There was another example of connection – non-mediated and reach-out tie: it was between the national committee and the British-Bangladeshi solidarity groups. I will describe this connection in greater detail in the next section devoted only to this tie. The next section is crucial since analyses of transnational movements rarely address the role of emigrants (Tarrow 2005).

To sum the different cases of connections described above, Phulbari resistance illustrated a loosely connected coalition that has a shared concern (Rootes 2005: 27-28; Rootes 1997: 319-330) but diverse values and belief systems (Snow 2004: 396-400). Snow (2004: 397) reminded people studying social movements that ideology should be thought of as a variable phenomenon that ranges on a continuum from a tightly and rigidly connected set of values and beliefs at one end to a loosely coupled set of values and beliefs, at the other. The Phulbari resistance illustrates the ways in which organizations and individuals from so widely varied backgrounds with such a diverse range of values can only form a loosely connected network (see Appendix F.2). della Porta et al's (2006) idea of multiple belongings and tolerant identities fits this case effectively. Within the local field (Phulbari and the three other sub-districts), people from all political backgrounds, from radical left to centre-right, were involved in this resistance. For these people, the reasons for opposing the mine had been primarily to resist their displacement. In the national field, though the resistance is steered by the left-led National Committee, numerous non-left intellectuals and NGO activists opposed the mine to protect the broader national interests of Bangladesh.

The transnational organizations and individuals who oppose the mine comprise church-based religious groups, human rights organizations, trade unions, leftist political parties, women's organizations, and several other non-profit organizations. Some of these organizations are concerned about the fact that human rights will be violated if the mine started while others joined the movement to protect an endangered mangrove forest

that might be affected by the transportation of the coal if extracted from Phulbari. These different groups also have different collective identities. Although they are fighting for the same shared concern about the mine, they face dissonance in terms of these diverse identities. This dissonance does not deter them from having an efficient coalition in Phulbari. Saunders' (2008: ) study of the British Environmental organisations reports similar findings. This practice of tolerant identities of coalition organisations is a major feature of contemporary transnational coalitions. More examples can be found from Pellow's (2007) study of the circular flow of environmental injustice where southern countries had been increasingly successful in reverting the injustice based on their tolerant identities within the transnational environmental justice coalitions. Northern partners of such coalitions have to be cautious so that they recognise the unequal relationship exists between the northern and southern partners and avoid practicing 'environmental colonialism'.

#### **6.4 The British-Bangladeshi: Boomerang or Nesting Pigeons?**

The National Committee, as described in the earlier chapters, is an alliance of several left political parties of Bangladesh. Many Bangladeshi emigrants to other countries continue to support these parties. Through these people, the National Committee made direct connections to the UK- and Australia-based Bangladeshi solidarity groups. These solidarity groups became patrons providing financial support to the Phulbari victims. They also created popular support leading demonstrations outside the company's annual meetings from 2008 in London. These groups also participated in seminars, human chains and petitioning.

British Bangladeshi is the largest Bangladeshi population outside Bangladesh. They are major stakeholders in any decision relating to Bangladesh. They also form a significant minority in the UK. Lawson and Sachdev (2004:49) reported that people of Bangladeshi origin constitute the largest bi-lingual minority group in London. The vast majority of Bangladeshis in the United Kingdom come from Sylhet, a division in north eastern Bangladesh with a long tradition of emigration. They speak Sylheti which some argue is a diglossic "Low" variety and Bengali, the official language of Bangladesh, is the "High" variety (Lawson and Sachdev 2004). I mention language here because language is a very important driver of politics in Bangladesh. In the UK, it has even more significant impact in the politics within the British Bangladeshi community. Non-

Sylhetis often have a language edge over that of the Sylhetis but the Sylhetis outnumber the others. Tension within the British Bangladeshi community revolves around this language or population issue.

Earlier research on the Phulbari resistance ignores the role of these Bangladeshis living in the UK. There are two possible explanations for this: one is the separateness of the Sylheti group and the other is that researchers assume that Bangladeshi immigrants in the UK did not participate in the resistance. Sylhetis in the UK see themselves as very different from other Bangladeshis who they refer to as “*Dhakaiyas*” (inhabitants of Dhaka).<sup>90</sup> Since Phulbari is in the Dinajpur district and the Sylhetis simply were not concerned about this area, I assumed that the British Bangladeshi people had not participated in the Phulbari resistance at all and that is the reason why they are not visible in any literature. Even if some had participated, the numbers were so small as not to be visible.

In the transnational movement arena, incentives and resources for immigrant transnational exist to become politically active with their home countries as their targets. Tarrow has called this type of immigrant transnationals as the ‘nesting pigeons’ (Tarrow 2005: 51-53). Drawing on this argument, I interviewed two veteran community leaders<sup>91</sup> who also supported the Bangladesh’s National Committee. The interviews, quite quickly showed that my initial assumption was wrong. Abdul Mojid bhai (senior British Bangladeshi from greater Sylhet and a freelance journalist of a Bengali weekly published from London), told me that people from Sylhet know more and are more actively involved in the energy related politics of the National Committee than other Bangladeshi immigrants. He explained:

Do you know about the blow-out in Occidental's gas well in Magurchhora?<sup>92</sup> My village home is in Komolganj. Back in those days I was a local news reporter in Srimangal. There I came to know about the problems of collusion of these

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<sup>90</sup> In common Sylheti view, if you are from Bangladesh, you are either a Sylheti or a Dhakaiya. In reality, there are seven divisions in total in Bangladesh namely Dhaka, Sylhet, Barishal, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, and Rangpur. Phulbari mine project is located in Rangpur division. But in a non-Sylheti British Bangladeshi view, Sylhetis do not care about anything happening outside Sylhet and thereby will not be interested about the Phulbari resistance

<sup>91</sup> They are from London’s Tower Hamlet where most Bangladeshi live.

<sup>92</sup> On 14 June 1997, the accident occurred in the Magurchhora Gas field in Komolganj, Srimongol which is within the Sylhet division. The well that blew was managed by Occidental Petroleum Corporation. Gas reserve of about 245 billion cubic feet was burnt in the explosion while the environment, ecology and wildlife of the area were also severely affected, as per the report of a probe committee. However, capitalizing the incompetence of the then regimes neither Occidental nor any of its successors of the gas field ever paid any compensation for one of the biggest blow outs in the history of the country. National Committee has been working since 1997 to make the company pay for the damage. The fire burnt for more than a month. (<http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=13727>) downloaded on 29.1.2012 9.15 pm GMT.

corporations and our government, and how the National Committee was mounting resistance against such problematic resource extraction business. I joined the resistance. Coming from there makes you more knowledgeable because of the prior experiences with the natural gas sector (Interview, London: 2011, translated).

Bangladeshi's major oil and gas reserves are in the Sylhet region and this is one of reasons why Sylhetis have supported the National Committee's energy politics. The lived experience in Sylhet region evidently made them more learned about the energy issues of Bangladesh. Since 2010, I have attended about five protest events and seminars in London. I have met and chatted with many British Bangladeshi (Sylheti) people who gathered to protest against the Phulbari mine and I have observed the above case to be true. Abdul Mojid bhai's story on how he got involved with the National Committee and then with the Phulbari resistance hints how this can be the case:

I was in Srimangal... writing in my newspaper daily reports about the blow-out and people's resistance. One day the Chief Executive of Occidental paid a visit to my Srimangal home. He asked me to join as Occidental's Press officer. I declined. After a while, I migrated to UK in 2000 ... I started out as a labour leader in Bangladesh belonging to Awami League. After coming here, it was a chance event that I came to work so closely with the UK branches of Bangladeshi left parties. Right after I came here, the then-Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina was about to visit UK. Then a few of the leaders of Bangladesh Socialist Party (Bangladesher Shomajtantrik Daal, BA.SHO.D) requested me to connect them with the UK-based Awami League leaders so that they can submit a memorandum to Sheikh Hasina. I did this for them and that is how I started being part of the andolon [movement] in London (Interview, London: 2011)

This tells us two things; that involvement is usually mediated and that those who become involved do so because the movement resonates with their lived experiences. This was clearly the case with Abdul Mojid bhai who had been involved with the Awami League back in Srimangal but became involved with the National Committee solidarity groups in the UK. He became active in 2006. Now he works with the Workers' Party (Bangladesh) in the UK. He campaigned among the local British Bangladeshi (Sylheti) community about the oil-gas and mineral resources issues of Bangladesh. People from Sylhet may be more concerned about energy politics and Abdul Mojid bhai is a relatively new immigrant to the UK. But would British citizens with more distant connections be concerned about mining in Bangladesh?

Abdul Mojid bhai did not find it unusual for the British Bangladeshi community to be involved in such issues of national politics of Bangladesh. He pointed out that most

of these British Bangladeshi people have land, houses or other assets in Bangladesh. This fits with Gardner's (2008:477-495) findings. She found that "British-based Sylhetis were more than keen to invest in viable businesses in Sylhet, and actively sought opportunities for their business acumen" (Gardner 2008 : 488-489). Gardner (2008) also noted that rather than access to the income-earning potential in the UK, it is connectedness to the *desh* that is desired. This is a consequence of the rising Islamophobia in the UK which decreases their sense of belonging in the UK and increases their concerns for their long term security. Maintaining property in Bangladesh is one way of dealing with this. Given all this Gardner suggests that 'Londonis' also invest heavily to improve the status of their village kin (Gardner 2008).

Abdul Mojid bhai is similarly concerned to maintain his connections with his home community:

... I live in this country with my whole family. I still have my home in Srimangal. So does 99% of the other British Bangladeshis. Don't we need electricity for our homes there? Because our electricity is plundered by the foreign companies, we have to pay high bribes to[the] Rural Electrification Board to get our electricity connections. I am the one who has to pay the bill. The electricity connection is still in my name although I have a British nationality. Why? What if what happened in Uganda happens to us here? In Uganda, there were so many Indians who were expelled by the autocratic ruler and India did not accept them. They later had to come and take refuge in the UK. What if they throw us out of the UK in the future? If I have my village home, I still can go back there... my roots will be there. That is why I am saying every British Bangladeshi has to get involved about the gas-coal and electricity issues of Bangladesh. It is imperative for our own sakes.

Safdar bhai is the general secretary of Communist Party, Bangladesh in the UK, based in London. He explained the Sylhet connection this way:

You know how important it is for Sylhet to be involved in the oil and gas issues since this division produces major oil and gas for the country. Two major accidents also happened in Sylhet, therefore communities of Sylhet are very emotionally involved with these issues. The coal situation is slightly far away from them. But what we are trying to do is base our counter-discourse on patriotism. We tell them that this coal mine goes against the spirit of our national liberty and for the sake of our country we need to stop the mine. Our coal should be kept for our use not to be exported for the profit of a foreign company (Interview London 2011, translated).

Although the British Bangladeshi do not have voting rights in Bangladesh, domestic political leaders depend on this community for both financial support and local influence (Tarrow 2005). Through their connections with political leaders in Bangladesh

they are to pressure the government to create the necessary changes in the national arena and thus limit the company's ability to act. Keck and Sikkink call this ability a "Boomerang pattern of influence" (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Energy issues in Bangladesh do matter to people based in the UK, regardless other partners ignore their active role.

From Abdul Mojid bhai's perspective, natural resource issues are going to be one of the driving factors in the next elections in Bangladesh. That is the reason why the Sylheti community needs to be informed about what is happening in Phulbari and become supporters of the National Committee. Unlike Abdul Mojid bhai, Safdar bhai thought that Sylhetis were not active enough in their support of the Phulbari resistance. However, he thought that if they were shown how and why the development of the Phulbari Mine would directly affect them and their access to electricity, they would more actively resist the mine. He thought that the Sylheti community should be targeted for greater mobilisation. Similarly, Abdul Mojid bhai mentioned that

whenever I go to any sort of Sylheti meetings like a protest meeting, for example, the one against the proposed Tipaimukh Dam<sup>93</sup>, I told them that let us join our hands. We shall come and join your protest against Tipaimukh. Why don't you come and join us in the Phulbari resistance

Both said they were very optimistic that they could convince their community to become more active and they thought it was imperative that they do so. After the demonstration that the UK Solidarity group of the National Committee organised outside of the company's annual general meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2011, Safdar bhai told me:

We did not have thousands of people in our demonstration today, but that does not mean that thousands of people are not with us. They are, if situation becomes urgent, I believe they will come out and take the streets of London to stop the coal mine. Even in 1971, British Bangladeshis were the most vocal against the atrocities committed against the Bangladeshis back then. They used to protest every day and contributed to the relief funds. ...Their sense of responsibility originating from our British citizenship is also important in this respect. There is the sense of responsibility to the people of Phulbari. We being the citizens of Britain feel that we need to do at least this much to protect people of Phulbari from the destruction to be brought by a British company (Interview, London, 2011, translated).

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<sup>93</sup> A dam proposed by Government of India, in the river called Borak in the North Eastern state of India called Manipur. This river flows down to Bangladesh as Surma affecting wider Sylhet region. The proposal of the dam has been vehemently opposed by groups in Bangladesh, especially by communities in Sylhet region and in India by tribal population of Manipur.

### 6.4.1 Mediating New Connections

Protestors, who either belonged to the left parties in Bangladesh before they moved to the UK, like Safdar bhai or joined one as a result of their long attachment with the National Committee and its politics like Abdul Mojid bhai. People like him were already part of the support base of National committee before the Phulbari resistance started. They had direct connections with the National Committee from Bangladesh, no one needed to reach out to contact them. Since they acted on behalf of the Phulbari resistance for so many years, they are both well prepared to reach out and create new ties to strengthen their legitimacy within UK politics as well within the diaspora community. They have connected to British political parties such as the Communist Party and brought them into the alliance resisting the Phulbari mine. They have also reached out and connected with the South Asian Solidarity Group and the Tamil Solidarity while working alongside the broader transnational coalition.

**Table 6.2: Mediating New Connections**

South Asian Solidarity Group - New ally	suggests networking with people who are doing ‘occupy’ demo, create a strongly-worded leaflet (such as use occupy thing..)’no to corporate crime’ etc.  to forward festoon and other materials used during the Vedanta Campaign
South Asian Solidarity Group - New Ally	mention about various tactics used during the campaign against Vedanta mine – activists disguised as share holder went inside the AGM, demonstrated in front of the CEO’s residence early in the morning etc.
Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Pakistan - New Ally	mentions that a Baluch project ended up being 50% - 50% with 2% of the proceed would be going to the local people. He also mentions the coal mine turned into a gasification project.
Communist Party of Bangladesh (UK) - coalition member	The Phulbari Solidarity Group, London Mining Network and International Accountability Project are jointly holding a seminar on The Phulbari on 12/12/11 at the Amnesty International’s meeting hall in EC1. They invited MRB as a speaker and members of NC to attend and to take part in open discussion. Meeting agree that MRB should attend as a speaker. In his speech he will invite the organisers and participants to join our demo on 15th.
Udichi shilpi Goshthi, UK	will forward a list of emails to AR

Source: Excerpt from the original Minutes of the meeting of the National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas-Mineral Resources, Port-Power of Bangladesh 18.11.2011

Safdar bhai described their efforts this way:

We decided to involve British political parties in this resistance particularly because GCM is a British company. The Socialist Party of UK has been with us for a long time. This year, we wanted to bring in more like them. We contacted with the Communist Party of UK directly. They were happy to be involved, not only because they were invited - they did their own independent research on the company, its backers and supporters. Then they informed us that they wanted to join our protest. We hope to continue this connection (Interview, London: 2011).

Furthermore, a memo from one of their earlier meetings in November 2011 illustrated how they had created these new connections evolved by working together with other groups. The meeting took place in early December 2011 in preparation for the demonstration in front of the Annual General Meeting of the company. Table 6.2 provides information on the ways in which suggestions from new allies influenced decisions about what actions to take.

## **6.5 Maintaining Connections**

Both academics and activists agree that connections with the transnational sphere have been very important for the success of local resistance movements (Tarrow and della Porta 2005: 227-246, Rootes 2005: 21-44, Wiest 2010: 50-78, Rothman and Oliver 2002, Hanagan 2002: 75-96, Keck and Sikkink 1998, Sikkink and Smith 2002: 24-46, Khagram 2002: 206-230). However, the empirical evidence on the effectiveness of these local-transnational coalitions is mixed (Baviskar 2004; Baviskar 2010; Guha 1997: 17-39; Inclán 2009:85-106; Kirsch 2007:302-321; Muradian, Martinez-Alliers and Correa 2003: 775-792; Tsutsui 2004: 63 - 87; Widener 2007: 21-36). These authors draw our attention to the internal tensions between the different fields, local versus transnational, for example, that limit the success of resistances against extractive industries. How the local and transnational network maintains their connections requires careful investigation. I have explored the strategies and the ways in which connections were established. Now I will identify the tensions among various allies and the factions within the larger Phulbari coalition.

I have identified three limitations: first, lack of financial resources; secondly, the unease created by different ideological goals between the organizations, for example radical left parties versus transnational advocacy organizations and the resultant tension when making decisions or protesting, and finally, factions and divisions within the

movement. These tensions do not merely exist in the transnational-local relationships, they are quite widespread in all levels from Phulbari to London.

### 6.5.1 Resources

Activists from all levels – local, national, and transnational organizations all identified financial constraints as one of the major limits of their interactions and activities. Everyone struggles for resources. All of these organizations from the local to the transnational are dependent on membership dues and majority of members are involved in the movement voluntarily. At the local level, there were no paid positions; activists contributed their time to the OGCP. Locals lamented that they lacked funds to publish more leaflets or to buy more fuel so they could regularly visit the outskirts of the mine footprints to keep people motivated.

At the national level, two administrative staff were paid, the rest of the members were volunteers. Political parties contributed monthly dues while members collected money from their supporters within the limits of their group's policies. They do not accept corporate support or sponsorship for any event. They cannot receive any funds from international NGOs. In the Ecuadorian context, where local resistances were heavily dependent on the transnational resources, the protestors were limited by the transnational groups' goals and visions (Widener 2007). The Phulbari resistance were not dependent on transnational financial resources.

Following from the accounts of institutionalization of the environmental and human rights based social movement organizations in the West (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Rootes 2005; Rootes 1999; Rootes 2004), I assumed the transnational partners must be big organizations with resources that would be able to fulfil all the needs of the local and the national protestors (Doyle 2002, Widener 2007). However, in reality in Phulbari case, the transnational organizations are much smaller and themselves have resource constraints. For example, from 2008 to 2011, Anna (not real name) who is employed by one of the core partners of the transnational coalition, worked as a volunteer on the Phulbari resistance because her organization could not afford to pay her a proper salary.

This does not discount that large and resourceful organisations were present in the coalition. Amnesty International, Oxfam-America or Action Aid had been involved at some point in the movement but not as strongly as the local resistance could 'piggy back' and get all the resources they needed. When investigated further during my

participant observations, I discovered that it was not the case that the resource rich transnational organisations were not interested about Phulbari, rather it was local and national leaders of the National Committee and its volunteers in UK who took initiatives not to involve big transnational NGOs due to their critical political position against such organisations. In two instances, I have observed that the National Committee volunteers and leaders discouraged involving Oxfam and Action Aid in one of the transnational actions. The difference Phulbari resistance from the Ecuadorian example lies with its national level far left mediator – the national committee.

### **6.5.2 Tensions and Hostility**

The construction of a ‘we-them’ dichotomy between organizations within the same movement, increase the chances of hostility between organizations and factions within the movement (Saunders 2008: 227). This constraint is an issue for relationships among the local, the national and the transnational movements. It arises because of several dissimilar collective identities within the transnational coalition. I saw this most clearly at the transnational level. Saunders (2008: 227-253) analysed three environmental movement organizations in the UK. She identified how shared collective identity led groups to attain high solidarity and how the inverse – the lack of a shared collective identity — led to tensions and hostility between groups. However, these high solidarity groups were reluctant to collaborate with other groups even with shared interest. The Phulbari resistance does not have a singular collective identity rather there are many different identities.

The left party members of the National Committee alliance are uneasy working with national or international Non-Government Organizations and civil society members. This tension stems from the fact that the left party members see ideologically motivated NGO with their emphasis on civil society as advocates of neo-liberal capitalism and its imperialist endeavours. Feldman (2003: 22) suggested that the NGOs in Bangladesh and its backers in the international donor circuit work as buffers between the citizens and the state protecting the state and the donors by letting them off the hook and putting all the responsibilities on the shoulders of individuals (Feldman 2003: 5-26). The leftist supporters of the National Committee did not trust civil society promoting NGOs and were not enthusiastic about working with them.

Indeed, these leftists also did not trust individuals without party affiliations<sup>94</sup>. Sultana apa, who has been working to co-ordinate the transnational advocacy, networking and visibility of the Phulbari resistance for a long time often faced mistrust and suspicion since she does not belong to any of the left parties in the coalition of the National Committee. Her intentions were often questioned and characterized as *shushil* (its literal meaning is “civil,” but here it means member of the ‘civil society’ with a pejorative meaning very close to Feldman’s description). Sultana apa’s perception about this is illuminating:

There seem to have increasing tendency to suppress individual activists by a group of people ... I felt quiet offended, unwelcome, and isolated by the party activists throughout the last week. ... As you [Anu bhai] know that a number of people in the group led by [~Leader of Group1~] are active in forming a committee on their own, they were quiet [sic.] hostile to us, especially to me. ... A few of them even commented that they don't know me or I am a stranger (after knowing of my work for four years). Others have felt threatened that I would have become the chair of the potential committee (which I never wish to be) (E-mail to Anu bhai copied to me, London: 6.9.2011)

I was actively involved in organizing two seminars in London that were held in September and December of 2011. The goal of both seminars was to create more awareness among the British Bangladeshi population about the devastating impact of the mine. For strategic reasons the Phulbari Solidarity Group, made up of individuals who are resisting the mine, organised these seminars rather than supporters of National Committee although these supporters recognized the need to hold the seminars. Speakers at both the seminars included non-party ‘experts’ or individuals from academia or global justice activism.

Studying the long e-mail chains about these seminars, I realised that some of the National Committee support group leaders were also part of the planning and organizational process. Nonetheless, as the fourth row of Table 6.2 clearly shows, these supporters portray the seminars as events that were organised by people from ‘outside’ the National Committee. When asked why they did not declare their involvement in organizing the seminar, the leaders raised strategic issues. Because some of the Committee’s supporters oppose working with international NGOs and “civil society members,” they declared that these seminars were organised by the Phulbari Solidarity Group, International Accountability Project and London Mining Network and not by the

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<sup>94</sup> Meeting note in London 2011

National Committee. Thus, they could support the seminars without alienating their followers<sup>95</sup>.

This is analogous to Saunders' (2008: 243) account of sectarian solidarity of the Environmental Direct Action Group. Their rigid position and relentless anti-capitalist identity is rather similar to at least some of the supporters of the National Committee. They attended the seminar (December 2011) but as members of the audience rather than active participants. They refused to enter the shareholders meetings since this suggested collusion with the company, regardless of the fact that only one of the activists had shares in the company. They also ridiculed the advocacy meetings with UK government officials where the activists hope to increase the visibility of the potential devastation if the mine went ahead. They only participated with enthusiasm at the demonstrations outside the company's annual general meetings or events that their groups had organised solely (see Appendix F.3). My observation is that much of this mistrust and hostility results from their lack of knowledge about the partner organizations. Their deep mistrust of civil society and NGOs in Bangladesh also feeds their hostility to all such individuals and organizations that identify themselves as part of the global civil society. Although I do not want to over-generalize NGOs as angels or devils, this sort of insularity stemming from rigidly held ideologies might not serve these radical groups well at the end. It definitely will not help Phulbari resistance and leaders of the National Committee supporters in the UK need to pay attention to this and work to mitigate it.

### **6.5.3 Factions**

In the transnational field of protests and actions, the last and one of the most complicated limitations is the existence of factions among the supporters of the National Committee. The factions and resultant tensions were quite visible in the seminars that I was actively involved in. In December 2011, two factions, the Abdul Mojid group and the MRB Group attempted to overcome their differences and heal any breaches between them. According to Shafdar bhai, an MRB member:

We all are very happy that now we can finally work together. It was imperative that we reach this point, for the sake of the movement. Now we have one committee with three coordinators (Abdul Mojid bhai – the Workers' Party, Bangladesh; I – Communist Party, Bangladesh and the leader of BA.SHO.D). Our job is to prepare for a UK convention of the National Committee where the

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<sup>95</sup> Personal communication 2011

National Committee, UK will be formed. We are all very happy that after so many years [since 2002] we will be able to get a committee for the first time – a proper one (Personal communication, London, 2011)

The differences between these two groups were so severe that it made it impossible to have a proper branch of the National Committee for Bangladeshi expatriates. The factions emerged at both the national and the UK levels. First, divisions from the national level factions in any left party would directly feed to similar division here in the UK. Rivalry and enmity between major left political parties, especially Communist Party of Bangladesh, Workers Party and BA.SHO.D is directly reflected in factions on similar line in their branches here in the UK. I heard one origin story for the tensions between Abdul Mojid group and the MRB group. One of the leaders of Abdul Mojid bhai's group was suspended from CPB in Dhaka and this led to the faction that created the MRB group. National politics continue to affect expatriate Bangladeshi politics. One group accuses another of being 'anti-liberation'. The politicians labelled as 'anti-liberation' are not widely respected in Bangladesh. Similar attitudes are prevalent in the UK part of the population. One of the founders of the Abdul Mojid group had been labelled as an 'anti-liberation' collaborator. He was expelled from the supporters' group and deleted from the mailing list. It was alleged that he had overtly supported the Jamayat – e – Islami<sup>96</sup> and disrespected the birth of our nation<sup>97</sup>.

At the UK level, there are two sources of factions: one is personal dislikes and grudges, while the other is the Sylheti issue. First, some people simply don't like some others for deeply rooted personal reason but these manifests as grudge which creates distances among the supporters. According to Sultana apa's account, one of the leaders of the Abdul Mojid group was a restaurant owner who has said to have appointed several of his supporters to the National Committee. No one knows what actually happened but some of the workers in his restaurant spread rumours against him out of personal dislike and these aggravated pre-existing differences. Second, Sylheti members are seen as lacking the competence to be effective leaders and this has created unnecessary differences within activist group. Language plays a role here since Sylheti language is regarded as low class in contrast to higher class Bengali. Those that are not fluent in the higher form of the language are looked down upon even by the rank and file supporters

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<sup>96</sup> The party that overtly opposed the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 and continue religion-based politics in Bangladesh

<sup>97</sup> From Sultana apa through personal communication 2011

with the non-Sylheti British Bangladeshi background. The opposing argument is that the Sylheti members are the only powerful and competent leaders because they have a large number of supporters. Both of these arguments only deepen the split between the two segments of the British Bangladeshi community. This underscores the extant tension and mistrust within the British Bangladeshi actors of the Phulbari resistance. While these issues may seem trivial, they served to sustain the two factions and influence the resistance.

These factions make it difficult for the National Committee to operate. This antagonism often becomes sharply visible and deeply problematic whenever an event is being planned. Although neither faction had been formally named as a proper branch of National Committee yet each insisted that they were the UK branch of the National Committee. Therefore, naming leaders and identifying speakers for any event was always tricky. Two examples will suffice to illustrate this point: at the demonstration outside the company's Annual General Meeting in 2010, each factions brought their own banners rather than having a single banner for the whole group. The second example is based on my observations in trying to organise seminars with them. Trouble ensued around who gets to speak as the Convener of the National Committee. This was often the biggest hurdle to overcome. In one of the seminars arranged by the Phulbari Solidarity Group in September 2011 both groups were invited. MRB group did not show up claiming that they were not consulted from the beginning and accusing Sultana apa for favouring the group led by Abdul Mojid bhai. Abdul Mojid bhai's group attended the seminar.

Consequently, in the next seminar organised by the Phulbari Solidarity Group in December 2011, both groups were informed even earlier but MRB group got a chance to speak to balance between both groups remembering the last seminar. However during the seminar when their convenor spoke, Abdul Mojid bhai left the auditorium with his group.

The MRB group's refusal to participate in the first seminar in September, 2011 was disturbing and problematic: not only did members of MRB group refused to participate they also dissuaded some of the volunteers (who were in charge of logistic arrangements) to withdraw from participating. This created practical problem for the organisers. In the second instance, Abdul Mojid bhai's group's exodus from the seminar created another type of embarrassment for the organisers. One of the companies' investors who attended the seminar interpreted this exodus as the speaker's inability to

retain audience's attention. He ridiculed the speakers of the seminar on their ineptness and he made his views public through his posts in the investors' forum<sup>98</sup>.

These factions made it difficult to organise successful events and helped to undercut the committee's claims to represent British Bangladeshi views. It is a major achievement for the UK-based national committee activists to have resolved these issues and managed to come together and form one committee with both Abdul Mojib bhai (the Workers' Party, Bangladesh), Safdar bhai (Communist Party, Bangladesh) and a leader of Ba.Sho.D (Bangladesh Socialist Party) as coordinators leading supporters to organise an all-UK convention of the National Committee.

These groups are major opponents of the mine but they are understudied. The official narratives of National Committee do not even mention them. In my opinion, even the central National committee was embarrassed with the factions within the UK supporters. Nonetheless, they form a strong opposition group to the company for quite a while in spite of their lack of resources and deep personal and ideological differences. They also developed a moderate support base among the British Bangladeshi community. However, this is not enough as Safdar bhai pointed out:

There are challenges to organise resistance here in UK. Because of very busy lifestyle, it is not as easy to organise people here than, for example, in Bangladesh. Finance is also another important issue. We have a website to run regularly, we need a regular web developer. If we had enough resources, we could do that. To keep everybody united is also a big challenge. To work in tandem and with coordination is difficult. Also we need to reach out to these people: mainstream ordinary people. . . We have certain lacks that we need to overcome. . . We just need to include people from all walks of life and overcome the divide and perception about leftists that keep us apart from them (Interview, London: 2011).

Transnational collaboration and resistance literature does not include these types of organizations. This is an untapped resource for activists and researchers alike. These organizations need to be studied in more detail. To conclude, British Bangladeshis are very important since they do feel connected to their homeland which does not necessarily include only Sylhet. They felt obligated as British citizens to resist, when they saw that a British company is trying to uproot people from Bangladesh.

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<sup>98</sup> Screen shot of the discussion forum of the investors at III 2011.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

The Phulbari resistance reached out to the world when the declaration of emergency rule in 2007 restrained political opportunity in the domestic field. Leaders of the National Committee reached out to the world through their ‘nesting pigeons’ – the expatriate Bangladeshis spread around the world. Meanwhile a few organizations ‘picked – up’ the Phulbari resistance because this case fit their organizations scopes of work, such as criticising the Asian Development Bank or saving the mangrove forest. In some cases, the connections or ties to the transnational coalition was mediated through a third party, in a few it was direct. The British Bangladeshi population that supports the National Committee in the UK was directly connected to the transnational resistance and forms a major part of the transnational coalition. Like nesting pigeons (Tarrow 2005: 51-56), the British Bangladeshi activists against the mine are an important pressure point that helps to restrain the Bangladesh government from starting the mine. However, actors in the transnational coalition against the Phulbari mine suffer from lack of financial resources, tensions and hostility due to rigid collective identities of radical left parties and factions within the movement community.

In this chapter, I provided information on elements that are much overlooked by transnational movement researchers: I focused on the analysis of the company and its share prices to present the context of the transnationalization of the movement as well as bringing into light a discussion of the involvement of the diaspora into the study of similar movements. In addition, the typology I offer will help further researchers in the field to understand the relationship between transnational coalition formations. Also the discussion on the emigrants will help broaden the horizon of transnational movement research by including one more category of protestors we have ignored so far.

I have identified some limits of transnational coalition, which are probably not very unexpected in any coalition. However, they showed how Phulbari case was different than other cases with similar coalitions but unequal power and resource relationships (for example, Widener 2007). First, I have demonstrated how it was not necessary to have resource dependence on the western transnational organisations to continue a transnational coalition. Secondly, the western NGOs that had been perceived by most movement scholars as the providers of ideology, values and ‘master frames’ of environment based movements across borders; were not seen to perform such role at all.

Rather all partners within the transnational coalition had kept their own values intact. Even if there were learning from each other, it was in terms of the language of the trade rather than the ideology. The transnational partners performed only the pieces that were required from them and they were best able to do. They kept their values and beliefs to themselves. The concept of reciprocal tenacity is crucial in understanding the rationale of initiation of ties that has been discussed here. But in the next chapter I shall advance this concept further by including the discussion of relationships in action.

## Chapter 7

### Slowing down the Juggernaut: the Tactics of Resource Burn

I was concerned that the Goliath of the world mining industry would learn that we are just a bunch of Davids with our small shepherd's slings full of smooth stones (do you know this story from the Old Testament?). But there: I am sure they know anyway ... And David, with his sling, did in fact slay the giant, so I am happy to carry on ... (not that I wish to slay anyone!) (Richard Solly, London Mining Network 2012).

After internationalising, the local, the national, and the transnational resistance worked together to attack the company and its dominant backers to dissuade them from opening up the Phulbari coal deposit. From 2007 to 2011, this transnational coalition succeeded in placing obstacles before the company, the government of Bangladesh, multilateral banks, hedge funds and individual investors in the company. In this chapter I will show how these obstacles compelled the company and its backers to burn up their resources and how this financial and management expenditure, in turn, impeded the process of setting up the mine in Bangladesh. In Richard's words: David slew Goliath!

Contrary to some scholars' expectations, local views were not side-lined by transnational pressures within the coalition of local, national, and transnational protestors that worked to suspend the development of the mine. The major reason for this is the role of the national level mediator or the National Committee. Members of national committee were predominantly well-educated (tertiary education), had access to English language texts, and were conversant with Marxist and critical political tradition<sup>99</sup>. This must have augmented their critical stand against dependence on the transnational resources or even ideological bases of the global civil society. The far-left alliance of National Committee continues to have overt mistrust against the NGO-led civil society of Bangladesh. They are suspicious about the agenda of national as well as transnational NGOs. The National Committee had developed a position in favour of the resource nationalism that reiterates the use of natural resources by national demand only. Given the mistrust on the big NGOs home and abroad added with the idea of 'Coal for Country'

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<sup>99</sup> Based on short profile and bio-data of the leaders, Table 3.5 page 63

served as a powerful insulator that hindered uncritical dependence on the resources and ideas of the powerful transnational partners (the Northern NGOs).

Furthermore, the partners who have experience in the South Asian region also practiced caution not to appear as dominating to the local and national partners and their interests. Nora, an IAP activist described why they apply caution, especially while working with the South Asian partners:

It was in Cambodia. We organised a workshop where we were talking about Human Rights. Suddenly, we realised there were concerns among the audience. The South Asians, especially, started to raise their voices against why we, the white women were on stage and dictating the Cambodians while the Cambodians were quite unsuspecting (London 2011)

The transnational partners are cautious when they are dealing with the South Asian partners to ensure that they are not practicing ‘environmental colonialism’ (Pellow 2009). Therefore, whenever National Committee acted together with the transnational partners the independence of both the local and the national level protestors were maintained without jeopardising their relationship with the transnational. This tolerance of everyone's views contributed to the success of the resistance. Similar instance has been reported in case of Botswana’s Diamond mining and resettlement of tribes of bushmen (Resnick 2009:55-72) where we saw these tolerance between different groups with diverse identities and frame dissonance. I agree with Resnick (2009) that frame dissonance might actually complement support than dissuading it, if independence of the separate constituents can be maintained.

In this chapter, I focus on the actions of the transnational coalition to stop the Phulbari mine. Firstly, I propose a typology of the transnational coalition partners on the basis of their participation in actions against the mine. Secondly, I discuss the incremental attacks against the company and its various backers. Thirdly, I analyse the channels through which the coalition partners exerted pressure most strongly on the company. To assess the impact of the resistance, this chapter compares the fluctuations in the company’s share price with the data on protests and actions.

## **7.1 Types of Transnational Actors**

In 2007, 63 international organisations signed an open letter to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) dissuading it from supporting the mining project in Phulbari. Later, a group of 110 organisations sent a letter to the other financiers of the company (RBS and UBS)

expressing similar concerns (Appendix F.2). Only a handful of these 110 organisations have actively and continuously taken part in the campaign and fought with the resistance. Before going into detail about these more significant partners, I shall categorise the organisations that took part in the transnational coalition against the Phulbari coal mine. According to the length and depth of their participation, they fall broadly into three categories: one-timers, hibernators and enduring partners.

Tarrow (2005) categorises coalitions on the basis of the partners' cooperation and commitment to the goal. Following him, I examine the ties between the organisations within the transnational coalition. Instead of cooperation and commitment, however, I categorise partners according to reciprocity and tenacity. Reciprocity is more relevant in the case of Phulbari; as discussed in **Chapter 6**, since new connections were created on the basis of reciprocal benefits or needs. Therefore, in this chapter I examine how further reciprocity affects ties.<sup>100</sup> Tarrow (2005: 168) defines duration of ties as a combination of commitment, duration and involvement. I argue that Tarrow (2005) has defined his concept too broadly. I define tenacity as duration of the ties and do not take commitment into account because ties can perish despite continued commitment to the shared concern. Conversely, ties can endure even when commitment to the underlying issue is low.

### 7.1.1 One-Timers

Organisations that participated in any one of the actions against the company and its backers are defined as one-timers. One-timers may or may not have participated in protests. A typical one-timer has signed a petition or letter to the company, its financiers or the government in solidarity with the resistance. One-timers include: Anjuman Asiaye Awam (Pakistan), Oil Workers Rights Protection Organization Public Union (Azerbaijan), School Sisters of Notre Dame Cooperative Investment Fund (USA) (Appendix F.2). These organisations are likely to have been brokered through some other organisation and both these organizations and the brokers come from at least one broader alliance where they work on shared concerns. Although their activity within the coalition

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<sup>100</sup> For the purpose of the thesis, I broadly define reciprocity as a relationship between organisations involving the exchange of information, resources, ideas, actions or obligations.

is, by definition, short-lived, one-timers are numerically predominant in the resistance. I name these organisations ‘one-timers’, but they are also potential future allies.

### **7.1.2 Hibernators**

‘Hibernators’ are organisations that have gone further in their activism than signing one or two protest letters. These organisations actively engaged in at least one strategic moment of the resistance but later became inactive – either because they found they could no longer be useful, or because limited resources constrained them from continuing to participate in protest actions. They did not withdraw from the resistance, but rather became dormant.

‘Hibernators’ have a medium level of reciprocity and tenacity. Tarrow (2005: 162-164) termed short-term coalitions instrumental “if groups came together around an occasional conjuncture of interest, but drift apart or maintain purely formal ties after the issue that brought them together has dissipated” (Tarrow 2005: 168). On the contrary, I observed that informal affinity ties in the Phulbari resistance often endured even after instrumental aims were achieved based on the memory of their success in actions against the threat. Some of these hibernators broker new ties and are part of a broader coalition that tolerates many identities (della Porta and Tarrow 2005: 186).

Examples of hibernators in the Phulbari resistance include the NGO Forum on Asian Development Bank and the Japanese Centre for Sustainable Environment and Society (JACSES). The NGO Forum on ADB was involved with the resistance from 2006 to 2008.<sup>101</sup> JACSES got involved with the resistance at the same time. Since NGO Forum on ADB deals solely with ADB-related advocacy and JACSES was devoted to ensuring the accountability of the government of Japan, they joined the resistance as it fit with their organisational mandates. Reciprocity was high. These two organisations, along with other partners of the coalition, led a successful drive against ADB (how the Bank was targeted will be described later in detail). When ADB consequently pulled out of the project, NGO Forum and JACSES became less relevant to the resistance. Tarrow (2005) would argue that when cooperation and involvement end what is left is short-term coalition. On the contrary, in this case both organisations remained committed to

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<sup>101</sup> <http://www.forum-adb.org/inner.php?sec=13&ref=extras&id=19#>  
downloaded on 2.1.2012GMT 9.07pm. This website contains a Phulbari Coal Project page.

resisting the mine: if ADB decides to fund the project again, NGO Forum and JACSES will resume their activity. Although reciprocity ended, the relationship did not.

**Table 7.1: Coalition Partners: timeline of ties (Hibernators and Enduring Partners)**

Hibernators/ Enduring Partners	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
B.E.N						
NGO Forum on ADB						
JACSES						
IAP						
BIC						
WDM						
BERNE Declaration						
Bank Track						
London Mining Network						
Mines and Communities						
Cultural Survival						

-Currently Hibernating  
 -Currently Enduring

In 2008, World Development Movement (WDM), a UK-based anti-poverty campaigning organisation, was an active partner in the transnational Phulbari coalition that campaigned against Barclays Capital, RBS and the UK government.<sup>102</sup> They are still a strong ally but are mostly dormant due to resource constraints. Similarly, the Bank Information Centre (BIC) has too few volunteers or staff to carry on the resistance actively. WDM and BIC often suggest new allies to the group and actively connect the coalition partners with media outlets on Phulbari issue, indicating that they continue to be committed<sup>103</sup>.

**Table 7.2: Types of Partners in Action**

Type	Reciprocity	Commitment	Tenacity
<b>One-Timers</b>	Timed and short	Low/ Medium	Low
<b>Hibernator</b>	Timed and medium	High	Moderate
<b>Enduring Partner</b>	Un-timed and high	High	High

<sup>102</sup> <http://www.wdm.org.uk/submission-ids-sustainable-development-changing-climate> download date: 2.1.2012

<sup>103</sup> E-mail correspondence

### **7.1.3 Enduring Partners**

Enduring partners are the third type of partner in the transnational coalition. Tarrow (2005:172 -179) identifies ‘enduring coalitions’ that grow out of opportunities, institutionalisation and socialisation within the organisations involved in the coalition. I perceive enduring partners to be the organisations at the core of the transnational coalition. To qualify, organisations have to have been involved continuously for at least one year and must be active at the point in time under consideration. This means an enduring partner in 2007 may or may not be enduring in 2008. Enduring partners are those that actively observe, act and respond to the measures of the company and generate small, incremental obstructions in order to slow down the juggernaut of extraction. International Accountability Project, London Mining Network, Mines and Communities, Bank Track, and Cultural Survival are a few of the enduring partners. These organisations have high reciprocity and high tenacity, which may be due to their broader organisational goals. I shall now discuss these goals and interests.

The International Accountability Project (IAP), which is among the longest standing partners of the resistance, “challenges destructive development projects that uproot and impoverish millions of people across the global South”<sup>104</sup>. They joined the resistance in 2007 after their joint fact-finding mission with the BIC revealed that the locals were strongly opposed to the mine. IAP maintains a webpage on the Phulbari Coal Project which is frequently updated. It mediates and manages ties to the resistance with other organisations and participates in direct activism. Because their remit is not only certain banks but also human rights they offer broad and encompassing reciprocity and thus remain a relevant partner.

London Mining Network<sup>105</sup> (LMN) is an alliance of human rights, development and environmental groups committed to “exposing the role of companies listed on the London Stock Exchange, London-based funders and the British government in the promotion of unacceptable mining projects”. London Mining Network is a particularly important ally of the resistance because of their ability to target activism to any mining company listed on the London Stock Exchange or its Alternative Investment Market (AIM). So far, LMN has initiated share-holder activism inside the company's Annual General Meeting (AGM) (GCM 2008, GCM 2010, GCM 2011), participated in

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<sup>104</sup> <http://accountabilityproject.org/article.php?list=type&type=43> downloaded at 7.3.2012

<sup>105</sup> <http://londonminingnetwork.org/about/> download date: 2.1.2012

demonstrations and seminars, and organised many advocacy meetings with UK Government officials. They have also provided research support to the activists. As long as the company is registered in the London Stock Exchange, LMN will remain relevant.

Mines and Communities (MAC) exposes the social, economic, and environmental impacts of mining, particularly as they affect indigenous and land-based people. The MAC network responds directly to the needs of mining-affected communities. Bank Track and Cultural Survival are other enduring partners of the coalition against the Phulbari mine. While Cultural Survival is a relatively new addition to this group of partners, Bank Track has updated the Phulbari Brief in their 'dodgy deal' page regularly since 2007.<sup>106</sup>

All three types of transnational challengers exemplify reciprocal tenacity and mutual obligation in their challenges to the powerful. Hibernators are groups that have completed their reciprocity. One timers' reciprocity is short-lived and enduring partners' reciprocity is continued. Depending on the reciprocity, the tenacity can be varied. Returning to the concept of commitment, I found that commitment may or may not correspond to the tenacity (Table 7.2).

The tenacity of the connection might not work from one encounter to the next due to the following reasons: firstly, reciprocity may disappear (one-timers and hibernators); secondly, differences of values among the activists may surface causing the resistance to lose partners; thirdly, some of the partners may be stopped by lack of resources.

I have also observed a mutual obligation to resist. For the national counterpart of the transnational coalition, obligation to resist comes from the urge to protect national interests (**Chapter 4**), that is, by preventing the export of Bangladesh's mineral resources. As the resistance internationalised, the national and the transnational partners grew increasingly obligated to continue their struggle. After years of protesting against the mine they had aroused media attention, generated new knowledge about the mine and, above all, they had built 'the Phulbari resistance'. As Anna from IAP mentioned:

This project is like – you know – the vision of a mad man, as far as I am concerned. I do not understand how someone is willing to do this for profit – how much suffering to how many people for how many generations to come – I find it pretty compelling [to resist] (Interview, London 2011).

The stronger the reciprocity, the higher the tenacity: the higher the tenacity, the stronger the obligation. Many other enduring partners feel a similar obligation to resist

<sup>106</sup> [http://www.banktrack.org/show/dodgydeals/phulbari\\_coal\\_mine](http://www.banktrack.org/show/dodgydeals/phulbari_coal_mine)

because the Phulbari Coal Project would lead to so much destruction and loss. Furthermore, the development of the mine would signal the defeat of the Phulbari resistance – the textbook case of resistance against mineral industry. Resistance against mines rarely achieves success, but the Phulbari resistance did. Therefore, it is now even more likely that the partners will invest time, energy and resources to ensure this success continues. They will maintain partnerships, and be vigilant in order to continue their actions against the company.

## **7.2 Targets of Transnational Coalition**

For the transnational coalition, the first point of attack is the easiest target: multilateral banks. If a mine is being proposed by a junior company but is financed by a multilateral bank, such as the ADB or the World Bank, the latter will be the first target of the opposition. Multilateral banks are particularly vulnerable to a specific sort of campaign against them. Since these banks are increasingly constrained by policies and procedures on human rights and environmental sustainability, any weaknesses in these aspects of the company's proposal can harm the bank's reputation in the international arena. Banks want to avoid this kind of publicity. That is why banks financing bad projects are the most vulnerable targets.

Challengers in such cases start with small actions like petitions and open letters and follow up with advocacy delegations, face-to-face encounters with key decision makers, and street protests designed to persuade a wider audience to oppose the project. Meanwhile, media attention to the weaknesses of the company or the project (especially impacts on the environment or the indigenous population) increases pressure on the bank.

The opposition's next targets for incremental encumbrance are the governments involved. The government of the country where the deposit is located and the government of the country where the company is located are targeted so that they can change their policies to stop the mine. The next targets are the commercial entities backing the company. These entities are less likely to back off easily, but they can be persuaded to leave the company if the potential political risks of their investment are identified clearly. Last but not least, the opposition targets the company and its remaining shareholders. At this point, the opposition continually impedes the company with obstacles (GCM 2008, GCM 2009).

Steinberg (1999) suggested that when resisting large, powerful opponents, small scale annoyances and hindrances can slow development, leading to 'resource burn' of the dominant forces. The basic goal of the concerted effort is to incrementally increase such obstacles so as to completely stop the mining project. The more mature the resistance, however, the tougher the opponents become. Therefore, stronger actions and unity among the partners are required.

### **7.2.1 Public Institutions: the Asian Development Bank**

In May 2007, ADB organised a conference in Kyoto, Japan. Anti-ADB activists held a counter-summit. JACSES invited the member secretary of the National Committee to attend and talk about Phulbari Coal project and its impacts on Bangladesh at this counter-summit.

First, Anu bhai addressed Japanese citizens at a public meeting organised by JACSES. He talked about the disastrous aspects of the project and informed them that the Japanese government was supporting it. Next, he participated in a face-to-face debate with the head of the ADB that attracted a lot of media coverage. At the conference, Anu bhai connected with activists from different countries who opposed ADB's "disastrous projects". This campaign slowed down after his return to Bangladesh, but JACSES maintained an affinity-based relation to the Phulbari resistance.

JACSES, NGO forum for ADB, IAP, and BIC were actively searching for information about the mine within a similar timeframe. JACSES published a position paper while others started a petition. In December 2007, 63 organisations wrote an open letter against the mine to the president of the ADB:

We are writing to you on behalf of the people of Phulbari, Birampur, Nababganj and Parbatipur *upazillas* (sub-districts), Bangladesh to request Asian Development Bank (ADB) to remove its support of investment and political risk guarantee for the Phulbari Coal Mine Project. The ADB offers loans in the name of reducing poverty, but if realized, we believe that this project will increase the poverty of the local population as well as cause environmental disaster. The ADB will be helping Asia Energy, a private subsidiary of a UK owned corporation, in violating ADBs own policies regarding public disclosure and subsequently its environmental and social safeguards, Bangladesh laws and condoning internationally recognized human rights violations associated with this project (Open Letter to the Asian Development Bank, 2007).

Anu bhai described other actions targeting the ADB:

Bank Information Centre (BIC<sup>107</sup>) found a German group called Urgewald who had good connections within the Bank. The German groups' lobbying was very effective. Because of this connection they managed to get a chance to present inside the ADB board. Then colleagues from BIC, IAP and Urgewald went inside the ADB board of directors meeting and told the board why the board should decide to withdraw from this project. Within ADB, there were much tension between the private sector and public sector teams, those were brought into fore (Interview, Dhaka: 2010)

According to one IAP activist, Nora, during IAP's campaign against ADB's support of the mine they met with ADB's board of directors and did a presentation on the destructive aspects of the mine.

During the presentation, Bank Information Centre's [name of colleague] pointed out that some ADB staff were illegally pushing some people and pulling some strings to get the mine going. Then we also went to offices of people in ADB who were in favour of the mine to try to convince them otherwise. We also did good job in identifying the internal pressure produced by certain sections of the Asian Development Bank employees – which was also embarrassing for the bank. I don't know which one of these processes had clinched the deal. But Asian Development Bank withdrew its financial support behind the project in less than a week (Interview, London: 2011).

According to another IAP activist, Anna:

When in this sort of activism, it is imperative to show them that one, you are legitimate, i.e., you are speaking on behalf of the people aggrieved, two, you have your numbers correct, three you can speak the bank's language. (Interview, London: 2011).

These quotations show that the enduring partners knew which policies and regulations tied the bank with certain responsibilities and that those were the soft spots where they needed to strike. Moreover, core actors within these partner organisations went to very prestigious and elite universities and so had influential networks. According to one of the activists, the colleague from Urgewald went to graduate school with the chairman of the ADB board of directors and that is partly why they got the chance to present to the board. They also knew the “language” that could persuade the board members. The coalition of BIC, Urgewald and IAP concentrated their strike on a weak spot and defeated the ADB. It decided to withdraw funding and support from the Phulbari coal project in April 2008 (Mathiason 2008).

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<sup>107</sup> See Keck and Sikkink (1998) for the origin of BIC, p 121-163

Starting with Anu bhai going to Japan to speak to the Japanese tax-payers and meeting the ADB chief, actions against the ADB gathered momentum. Petitions, advocacy meetings and face-to-face meetings with the board all served to create small, incremental obstacles to developing the mine. The board of ADB was embarrassed and decided to pull out. It was a big achievement for the transnational coalition against the mine.

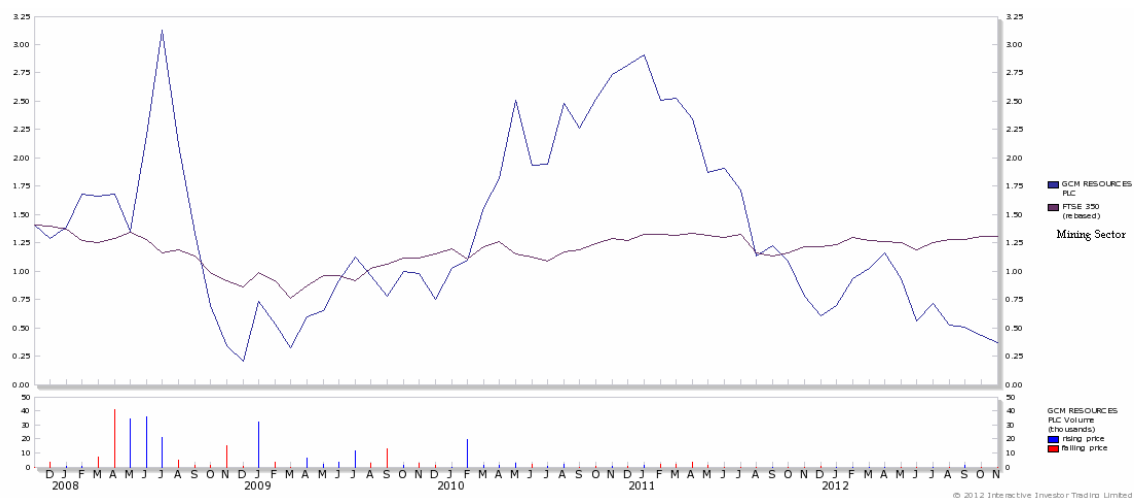
Confounding activists' expectations, after ADB's withdrawal of support the share price of the mining company kept soaring. Within the following two months it reached 310 pence – the highest share price since the company returned to the market in October 2006. I argue that it is not only the protestors' coalition that 'reaches out' – the company does so too. If others buy when someone pulls out, the company remains unharmed. The company, knowing that ADB was going to withdraw, must have reached out in an effort to keep their share price up. It is really difficult to be certain about what took place during that period due to the lack of data. We can suggest the following explanations: hedge funds (Morgan Stanley and Polo Resources) increasing stake or offering to buy a significant portion of the company's share after April 2008 created speculation in the market that delayed the fall of the share price for two months. The company's share price sharply declined in late June 2008 (Figure 7.1), soon after the news came out that Polo Resources was revoking their plan to buy major stocks in the company (GCM 2008).

At the same time, the transnational coalition sent an open letter to other financiers. World Development Movement participated in the shareholder activism inside Barclays Capital's AGM in London. Barclays was asked to sell its stake in the company and subsequently withdrew. The company's share price dropped consistently and was around 20 pence in November 2008. It remained low until the first quarter of 2009. After this point, there was a relative calm for about a year during which company's share prices remained low but with a 'bullish' (increasing) trend. Some of the transnational partners went into hibernation. JACSES, for example, was no longer relevant. The company was in a disadvantageous position due to the departure of two financiers: the ADB and Barclays Capital.

I argue here that the mobilisation by the coalition of actors against the mine has disadvantaged the company, which is manifested through the falling share prices. Alternatively, in order to show if structural forces of the market were responsible for the rise and fall of share prices instead of the mobilisation by national and transnational protestors, I looked at the company's share price against the mining sector index (Figure

7.2). This shows that GCM's share fluctuation is vastly different than that of the FTSE 350 companies of the same sector. As such, something must have happened in case of GCM resources. By looking at the share and protest data simultaneously (Figure 7.2), I argue that it was mobilisation and a reaction to it that explains the sudden rise and fall of the share price in 2008. Figure 7.2 shows that due to the protestors' mobilisation that successfully removed its biggest financiers, the company pre-emptively and dialogically publicised its prospective new sponsorship with a bid to appeal to the investors that this company is still reliable/ viable.

**Figure 7.1: Share price of the Company compared with mining sector index**



Retrieved from: <http://www.iii.co.uk/investment/> on 6/11/2012

## 7.2.2 Governments

The transnational coalition directly engaged with governments of three countries: Japan, the UK, and Bangladesh. I have already discussed the Japanese case in **Chapter 6**. After the exit of the ADB and Barclays Capital, the opposition targeted the UK and Bangladesh governments. The company statements claimed that they were very happy due to the 'credible' election in Bangladesh in December 2008. They also indicated that they hoped that the newly elected government would be able to take the decision to go ahead with the mine. The beginning of 2009 was, however, quiet. Throughout 2009, activists in Phulbari to London suspected that the company was trying to connect to the newly-elected politicians to gain influence over higher levels of the government. In

October 2009, a minister of the Awami League-led cabinet took an overt position in favour of the Phulbari mine.

Until this point the National Committee was cautious about the new Awami League-led government. Although this alliance had expressed solidarity with the resistance in the aftermath of *chhabbishe* and had observed a half-day *hartal* to protest the brutality, there was reason to fear that this alliance would side with the mining company<sup>108</sup>. 2009 was an otherwise eventful year for the National Committee. The National Committee was protesting against a new off-shore gas deal with US corporations when Anu bhai was severely injured by police brutality during a peaceful rally in Dhaka. This incident attracted a lot of media and activist support. The energy sector of Bangladesh became exposed to more scrutiny by the transnational actors. There was much speculation around this time in the AIM about the position of the government and the fate of the mine.

The people of Phulbari voted for Mustafizur Rahman in the election of 2008 with the hope that he would uphold Sheikh Hasina's (the leader of Awami League-led alliance) promise not to open Phulbari mine.<sup>109</sup> Consequently, Mr Rahman achieved land-slide victory in the 2008 national election. He got the highest vote from the Phulbari part of his constituency (Phulbari-Parbatipur), which had not been the case in any of the previous four elections he won from the same constituency. In 2010, the people in Phulbari widely believed that he was working in favour of the company. Firstly, suspicion was aroused because he was 'conveniently' absent from Phulbari during the peak of the protest in 2006. Secondly, after he was made the State Minister of Land for the government of Bangladesh, villagers reported that he was putting pressure on many of them to speak in favour of the mine. Since he was working for the mine,<sup>110</sup> the locals perceived that the Bangladesh government must have been supporting it. Therefore, the resistance felt they needed to target the government. Rabeya bhabi said:

...tell your minister to come and tell this [that mine is good] to us, tell your Shekh Hasina to come and tell this to us: has she forgotten her salute to the people of Phulbari! We will chop them into pieces so that they can never grab our lands. We made her the PM, we can as well throw her out of office (Interview, Phulbari, 2010).

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<sup>108</sup> Interview with Anu bhai

<sup>109</sup> She addressed a massive rally in Phulbari in September 2006, where she declared that, if her party came to power, they would never open the Phulbari mine.

<sup>110</sup> In the shareholders' AGM in 2011, the president of the company mentioned that Mr Mustafizur Rahman was in favour of the mine and was one of their key drivers in the "field" (Field note, London, 2011)

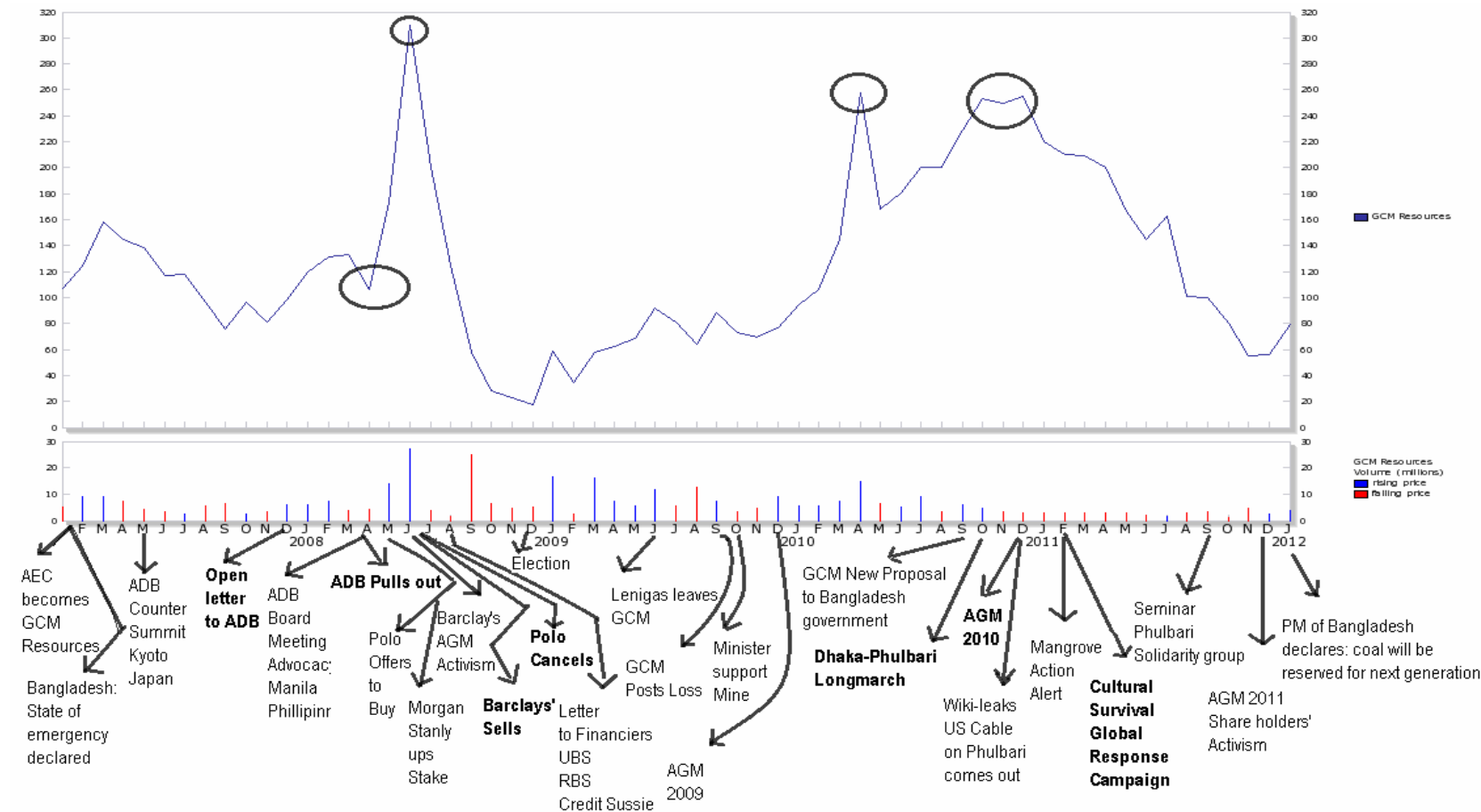
In addition, in July 2010, the company submitted a revised proposal for the mine to the government of Bangladesh. The local OGCP leaders proposed to the National Committee a mass non-violent demonstration to create a general awareness among the wider population, to persuade the company's supporters that attempts to open Phulbari would always face mass dissent, and to motivate and inspire the local population, which was predominantly against the mine (Notes of Meeting at the National Committee Office Dhaka 2010).

### **7.2.2.1 Government of Bangladesh**

#### The Long March 2010

The Long March was a joint local and national action programme that took place in October 2010 and influenced coordinated actions and media coverage in the transnational arena. The massive turnout throughout its path from Dhaka to Phulbari created a lot of interest among the transnational activists as well as the investors. Figure 7.1 shows that this massive event was not reflected in the share price of the company right away. There was a slight dip in the price then it picked up again. Two months later, a steep fall in the price began which was then aggravated after the AGM of 2010. One explanation for the delayed fall in share price could be as follows: the only way to keep share price up in the face of many oppositional activities was a public relations campaign to assure the investors that it was still profitable to be with the company – it was still possible to develop the mine. Before the 2010 AGM there was a lot of conversation in the investors' discussion forum about a potential green signal to the mine from the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. Steady opposition was visible outside the AGM, and when no green signal was declared share prices started to plunge again. Protests do have an impact on prices, but is not visible right away.

Figure 7.2: Company Share Price against the Transnational Activism



<http://www.gmplc.com/share-price-chart>. Downloaded on 25.1.2012

### The Global Response Campaign

The plunge in the share price that started after the 2010 AGM continued. The coalition against the mine did not stop at this. Instead, they were energised to create new ties and actions to increase the pressure. IAP contacted Cultural Survival and launched the Global Response Campaign. This is a flagship campaign of Cultural Survival's forty years of struggle for indigenous people and communities worldwide (discussed in **Chapter 6**).

At about the same time, IAP also contacted the Mangrove Action Project. Both these organisations targeted the government through their action. In both cases, civil society, youths and citizens from around the world were urged to write to the Prime Minister and concerned ministers of Bangladesh expressing their opposition to the mine on two grounds: it would displace indigenous communities and it would further threaten the Sunderbans (endangered mangrove forest and UN world heritage site). The national and non-resident Bangladeshi community provided information and support in drafting communication materials for both campaigns. These campaigns attracted a lot of press coverage. Several US-based investors made inquiries to Cultural Survival about the mining project after the campaigns were launched. Investors also discussed the websites of Cultural Survival and the Global Response Campaign in their discussion forum:

Who is that site aimed at?! I would say most Bangladeshi's, particularly, locals at Phulbari, are not aware of this site, the featured story or associated letter writing campaign (see the site). If the site is not reaching ordinary Bangladeshi folk, then what influence or importance does this site have in the context of this project or the general wider public opinion in Bangladesh...But there's nothing grassroots about this site or article – nothing that convinces me that this article or site should be seen as significantly indicative of the anti-mining movement in Bangladesh (From the III discussion group: 2011).<sup>111</sup>

There was a long discussion among the investors in the forum about whether or not GRC would contribute to stopping the mine. I asked Anu bhai about his opinion with regards to the effectiveness of the Global Response Campaign. His answer was as follows:

I doubt how many of these letters do really reach the Prime Minister. Even if they do, whether they can influence her decision is completely dependent on the donors. Is it a project that donors support? Then letters might not have an impact. But I guess, it does have some impact on the public opinion (E-mail correspondence, translated, 2012).

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<sup>111</sup> <http://www.iii.co.uk/investment/detail?code=cotn:GCM.L&display=discussion&it=le>

The campaigns attracted the media coverage, especially in the USA. This exposure helped capture the attention of the UN body of experts for right to life, water and food security, which would later (in 2012) denounce the mining project.

#### **7.2.2.2 UK Government**

Although the UK government was not directly involved in the project, activists targeted it because the company was based in the UK. They wanted to make the UK government aware of the company's weaknesses and force it to reprimand the company. According to Sultana apa:

After Anu bhai came to London in 2009, he became more involved in the transnational campaign. He spoke in different forum. We did a huge campaign for him ... Twenty five human rights organization attended our first public meeting. WDM and LMN, Oxfam all came... a colleague of World Development Movement arranged a meeting with his local MP... We contacted a law firm last year (2009) ... Then we went to see our local MP and complained against the company in the Joint commission for Human Rights in the parliament (Interview, London, 2010).

To put some pressure on the company through the government, World Development Movement initiated the complaint of human rights violations against the company. World Development Movement and London Mining Network submitted separate complaints against the company's destructive project to the Joint Commission on Human Rights within the UK Parliament. A third complaint with an attached eyewitness account of the killings on the 26<sup>th</sup> was also submitted. The company's CEO responded and engaged with the issues raised by the transnational NGO partners but dismissed the eyewitness report, saying:

... not all comment and analysis is well informed, balanced or constructive and so any changes to the UK framework should include safeguards to ensure that a UK company does not expend unnecessary resources in responding to ungrounded accusations from ill-informed organizations.

The CEO did not respond to any of these complaints, instead suggested to the Joint Commission on Human Rights, UK:

Any formal UK process for investigating complaints against UK companies should include controls to screen out unsubstantiated allegations at an early stage as possible so that the company's reputation is not tarnished nor is it necessary for

it to expend significant financial resources and management time (GCM's response to the Joint Commission on Human Rights, 26.6.2009).

The Joint Commission did not print or publish in their report the evidence provided by the eyewitness, blaming it on the print cost. The evidence was only 15 pages long and the omission of this from the formal publication enraged activists. E-mail correspondence showed:

From London Mining Network:

...this was for reasons of printing costs. This seems extraordinary unless [eyewitness's name] submission flagrantly broke the length limitations for submissions.

From Sultana apa to the group;

Second and more interestingly, the JCHR has failed to print the original evidences that were prepared by the witnesses and development researchers just to reduce print costs. This can be seen as a ridiculously silly reason as the House of Commons in UK is not facing such financial hardship that would disallow them printing 10-15 pages.

In response to London Mining Network's query about this, the Commission Clerk said:

The two concerned made very specific allegations about firms, including about named individuals. As you know, the Committee is not able to investigate individual cases and decided not to pursue complaints against specific firms in detail which is why it decided not to publish the submissions.

The complaint was lodged on 1 May 2009 and the report was published in January 2010. What this series of e-mails shows is, first, the eyewitness's evidence submitted by Bangladeshi activist was considered to be 'not proper'. Excerpts shows why:

In this report, we, the two researchers in UK, embark on an attempt to reveal the fact that the businessmen of GCM Resources Plc are to fuel a civil war in Bangladesh. To seize the high quality coal in Phulbari the company has already launched genocide in 2006 in the northern region of Bangladesh. In this report we will articulate how GCM Plc's are moving ahead for further killing and bloodshed with its destructive initiatives in the country which is rich in natural resources. ... The company is actively engaged in killing, bribing and kidnapping the local people in the region to seize the coal. Being based in UK and having its main office at Piccadilly in London the company and its subsidiaries are reportedly active in shutting down people's voices striking the world and bringing shame for the state of UK (Eyewitness' report, 2009).

The omitted submission did not speak the accepted "discourse". Whereas the NGOs' submissions were seen to fit the complaint procedure and were engaged with, the

eyewitness statement was not. Secondly, the omitted evidence opened up a space for the company to downplay the graveness of its role during the atrocities of the 26th. Thirdly, what the GCM's response points out for the UK government is a major hint as to what these small hindrances and actions were achieving: they were burning up the company's financial and management resources by making it prepare responses to all these complaints.

### **7.2.3 Commercial Institutions and Corporations**

After a concerted effort against the ADB the coalition gained strength and continued challenging the corporate supporters or financiers of the company. The next target was the Barclays Group. World Development Movement and Bank Track attended Barclays Capital's AGM and raised the issue of the devastation to be brought by the mine. In a later press release, Barclays reported that they had sold off their shares in GCM (24 June 2008). This might be one of the major reasons why the share price of GCM dropped so quickly after June 2008 (Figure 7.1). The pulling out of big funders (the ADB and Barclays Capital) and Polo Resource's decision not to buy GCM's stock increased the pressure on the company little by little and made it appear vulnerable to its risk-averse investors.

On 21 August 2008, 110 civil society organisations sent letters to the other financiers of the company, including UBS, RBS, Morgan Stanley and Credit Suisse, urging them to retreat from the project. Bank Track, along with its Swiss-based ally Berne Declaration, wrote to UBS on behalf of the local community representatives outlining the grave environmental, social and human rights problems associated with the project. They offered to put the financial institutions in direct contact with communities in the area. Responding to questions about their 11 percent investment listed in the company, UBS denied any strategic interest. They said that their holding in the company was in relation to a client transaction and was not of a proprietary nature. Credit Suisse sent the same response. Royal Bank of Scotland informed the challengers that it did not have a share holding in GCM.

## **7.2.4 Encountering the Company**

The transnational coalition began to directly engage with the company in 2009. For example, following the Chief Executive's reply to the complaint submitted to the UK Joint Commission on Human Rights, World Development Movement, London Mining Network and Mines and Communities wrote to debunk the company's position. The debate continued after Cultural Survival launched its Global Response Campaign and wrote a letter to the company urging them to abandon the mine project. The CEO engaged with Cultural Survival with regards to the mine's social and environmental impacts. These rebuttals drained the company management's time and energy, which was met with frustration by company shareholders. Many complained about the company's ineptness at convincing its "strong opposition" (Appendix G.1, G.2).

The coalition also encountered the company and its investors online and face-to-face. Online encounters occurred through the investors' forum. One investor posted a rather abusive open letter to Professor Anu Muhammad which provoked a lot of reaction within the local, national and transnational activists. The letter read:

You are just an unprincipled old man who would rather see his fellow countrymen impoverished indefinitely than relinquish the creaky platform that you have built for yourself and on which you have staked your academic reputation. You would have no standing whatsoever apart from your position as self-appointed spokesman for the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Power and Ports; you would just sink into a well-deserved obscurity. But you don't want that, do you, Anu? So you continue with your obstructive rantings – the last gasps of a man drowning in the cesspit of failed communist ideology. I hope it chokes you (Original post 2011).

Many activists wanted to respond to this and other insults in the investors' forum. After long discussions and e-mails, it was decided not to engage with these attacks. Individual activists often encountered these investors in other social media, such as facebook and the comments sections of online alternative media. In most such encounters, I observed the investors to be aggressive and insulting toward Bangladesh, its people, politicians, civil servants, the National Committee and its supporters.

### **7.2.4.1 Annual General Meeting 2010**

Since 2008, London-based activists have been demonstrating outside of the building where the company holds its AGM. The AGM had always taken place in December. I

have attended two AGMs (2010 and 2011) and in this section I shall present my findings in relation to those two. The demonstration outside the AGM was organised by Bangladeshi Community in the UK, in conjunction with the UK Socialist Party and the UK Branch of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Power, Ports, and Mineral Resources of Bangladesh. During the demonstrations face-to-face encounters with the investors were imminent. In 2010 there was lot of anxious speculation among the protestors about probable infiltration, violence or coercion by the police, but nothing untoward happened during the demonstration. This fear was in reaction to violent posts (Appendix G.2) by investors, such as:

Investor 1: These guys must be as thick as Senn [another investor who is notably pessimistic]. I'm sure some of them can't have even read the feasibility [sic] study or the draft coal policy considering some of the rubbish arguments [sic] they come up with grrrrrrr, need to pop down to the AGM & punch a protestor in the head.

Investor 2: I'm going, picked up a new baseball bat this morning.<sup>112</sup>

Despite the cold winter weather and the investors' threats, the demonstration was carried out peacefully. After the AGM the company's share price started to fall. From before the AGM there were discussions in the investors' online forum about the possibility of a 'green light' for the project from the Prime Minister of Bangladesh (as I have hinted in an earlier section). The investors were very eager for this signal, which they predicted would be released at a press conference after their AGM. The AGM ended but there was no press conference. Share prices plunged and protestors were very happy:

Activist 1: The demo went tremendously well! GCM literally locked themselves in and the official AGM result was circulated within 46 minutes of starting the meeting! A BIG thanks to everyone!

Activist 2: There was not any Press conference by PM, rather Finance Minister said on 8 Dec that coal policy would be finalized in June 2011! So, 'green signal from PM soon' was a GCM propaganda to save its face before AGM (E-mails to Phulbari List: 2010)

The protest organisers' press release reported:

... the share price of GCM has started to plunge in the London based Alternative Investment Market (AIM) right after the end of the protest. The price per share declined from 265 pence to 233 pence on 6th December 2010. The organisers of the protest outside the AGM have reasons to believe that the shareholders will be

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<sup>112</sup> <http://www.iii.co.uk/investment>

more aware of the risk to invest in this company and soon would withdraw their investment completely (Protect Resources of Bangladesh 2010).<sup>113</sup>

The share price of the company, despite attempts to keep it afloat, never came back to where it was before the December 2010 AGM (Figure 7.1).

#### **7.2.4.2 Leaked Cable and Investors Reactions**

When Wikileaks disclosed an official cable sent by the US ambassador in 2009, the covert pressure the US government was putting on the counterpart in Bangladesh became clear (Karim 2010). Moriarty (US Ambassador to Dhaka) said he had urged the prime minister's energy adviser to authorise coal mining, saying that "open-pit mining seemed the best way forward". Later on in the cable, Moriarty privately noted: "Asia Energy, the company behind the Phulbari project, has sixty percent US investment. Asia Energy officials told the Ambassador they were cautiously optimistic that the project would win government approval in the coming months" (Karim 2010).

There were demonstrations in the national capital, Dhaka, against the US ambassador in response to the revelations. The leaked cable also prompted criticism in the international press about the US role in Bangladesh. The transnational coalition partners published opinion editorials in different newspapers. British Bangladeshi groups organised human chains. Whereas the activists recognised the leak as an opportunity to protest against the government and the 'imperialist' USA, the shareholders of the company interpreted the cable positively. For them, it demonstrated that the company had strong support. One investor's reaction was: "I think we will be ok as most of the people [of Bangladesh] can't read English." Another's was: "Great to read there is pressure at that level."<sup>114</sup>

#### **7.2.4.3 Seminar December 2011**

I attended a seminar on 'Phulbari Coal Project: Risks, Impacts and Resistance', jointly organised by the Phulbari Solidarity Group, the London Mining Network and the International Accountability Project that was held at the Amnesty International Auditorium (London) on 12 December 2011. As the speakers highlighted the adverse

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<sup>113</sup> <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/68006757/Ad-evsjv-k-Rally#>

<sup>114</sup> <http://...www.iii.co.uk/investment/detail?code=cotn%3AGCML&display=discussion&thread=748783>

effects of the mine, two investors repeatedly interrupted them. Brian Mooney, Chief of Corporate Affairs of the former Asia Energy Corporation in Bangladesh, was present in the seminar and at one point started to shout. He rebuked the organisers and speakers as propaganda-mongers. He and his colleague continued to interrupt the speakers while they were answering questions. Later, Mr. Mooney became even more belligerent and made his way up to the podium while shouting in aggressive manner. Part of the audience had to intervene and the investors had to leave the premises. The company and its investors were exasperated by the relentless attacks of the challengers. The resource burn led to frustration that was seen in the company employees' bursts of anger and aggressiveness during the seminar.<sup>115</sup>

#### **7.2.4.4 Annual General Meeting 2011**

A group of challengers, me included, attended the company shareholders' AGM in December 2011. The challengers encountered the key figures of the company face-to-face. The president of the company, Gerald Holden, maintained that the fall in share prices was the result of risk-averse investors. The company's 2011 AGM was extended to almost two hours, in contrast to the 46-minute AGM of 2010. It lasted longer because the challengers of the mine raised questions and issues in front of the shareholders (London Mining Network 2011).<sup>116</sup> Activists from Mines and Communities, and IAP raised the majority of the questions. A council leader from Tower Hamlets read out a statement from the communities of Phulbari asking the company to stop their disastrous plan to mine their region. Richard read out a response to GCM's letter to Cultural Survival and I handed out a symbolic eviction letter sent by the protestors outside.

A demonstration attended by both groups of the UK-based National Committee took place outside the meeting room. In the first few hours after the AGM the share price dropped then recovered. Investors' discussion in their forum revealed that after the challengers of the mine left the meeting, the company arranged for a separate meeting for the 'proper' shareholders. The president of the company informed them that 80 percent of people in Phulbari wanted the mine now. For a week or so the price stayed between 60 and 80 pence. When the Prime Minister of Bangladesh declared that the coal would be

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<sup>115</sup> Field note 2011, Informal meeting with Richard and Anna.

<sup>116</sup> <http://londonminingnetwork.org/2011/12/gcm-challenged-to-pull-out-of-phulbari-coal-project/>  
download date: 4.2.2012

reserved for the next generations and that the country would use imported coal for the newly established coal-fired power plants, however, shareholders showed mixed reactions. Nevertheless, share prices remained 'bullish' until March 2012, reaching 115 pence. After that the price sunk steadily and in July 2012 was trading at 39 pence. The share price declined 72 percent from the July 2011 price.

These discussions lead us to conclude the following points: transnational activism and national political decision can affect the company's well being (Figure 7.1). Second, continuous activism can burn the company's and its share holders' resources. Third, activists' repertoires include first targeting big and vulnerable targets like multilateral banks, then targeting foreign governments where the company and its interests are concentrated, and then targeting commercial banks. Fourth, a concerted campaign against the domestic government can lead to decisions that might affect the company's chance of being assisted by the government (Figure 7.2).

The impact of these actions on the share price of the company might not, however, be readily discernible. It might take a while to register the effect. For example, share price was not negatively affected for two months after ADB's withdrawal from the project. The lag in time is attributed to the company's efforts to resist the fall. In this chapter, I showed how protests adversely affected the company – both protests in a remote town in a small southern country as well as protests in the centre of London. In concert, both types of protests have a graver impact. There were structural factors stemming from the general nature of the stock market. Other factors affecting the company and its investors depend on the government of the country that hosts the mine or the company.

### **7.3 Conclusion: Transnational Influence**

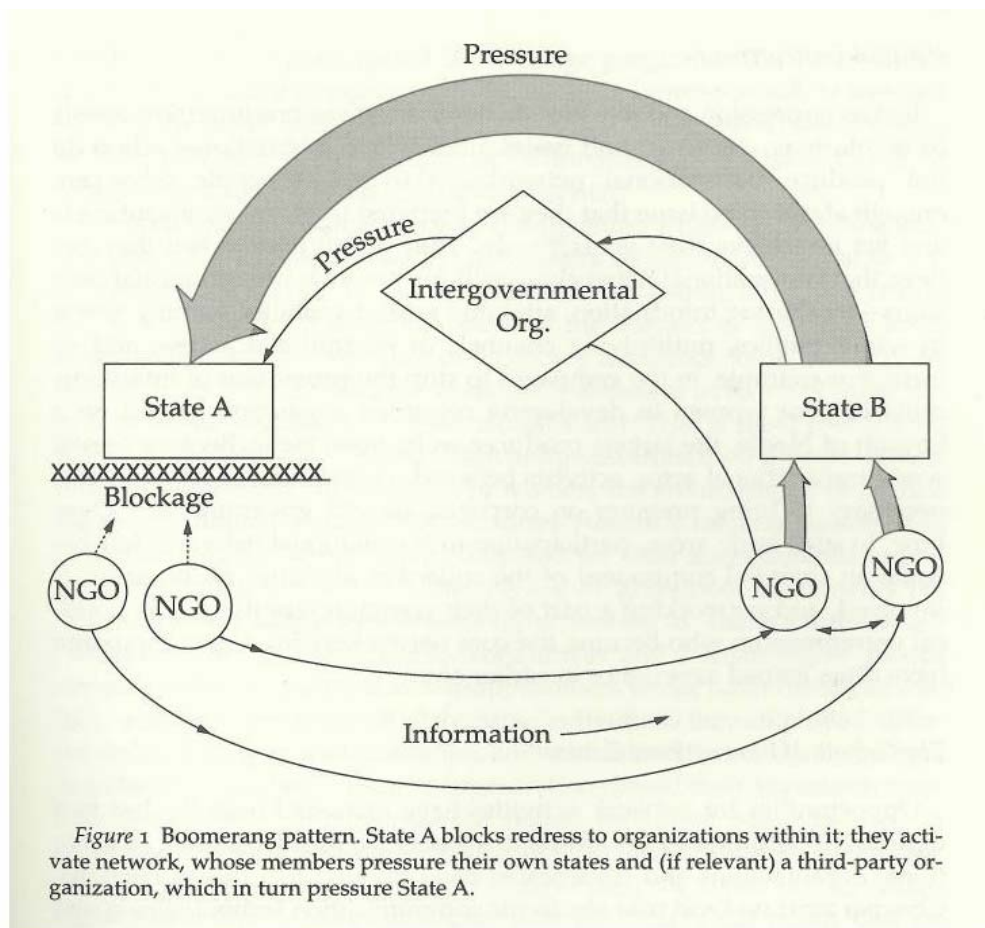
Keck and Sikkink (1998: 12) described their famous Boomerang pattern as follows:

When channels between the state and its domestic actors are blocked, the boomerang pattern of influences, characteristic of transnational network may occur: domestic NGOs bypass their state and directly search out international allies to try to bring pressure on their states from outside.

In other words, domestic organisations skip states or hierarchy of actors (the domestic organisation followed by the domestic government and finally the international organisation and foreign governments) so that international actors can exert pressure from above, forcing the weaker domestic state to succumb to global norms of human

rights. Keck and Sikkink argue that transnational coalition politics work through information, symbols, leverage and accountability (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 10-38). What they call leverage politics most closely aligns with the events in Phulbari. According to their theory of leverage politics, in order for state A to respond to criticism or change its policies, state B or an intergovernmental organisation must exert pressure (pressure exerted by an organisation within state A will not be sufficient) (Figure 7.3).

**Figure 7.3: From Keck and Sikkink (1998), Original Boomerang Pattern**

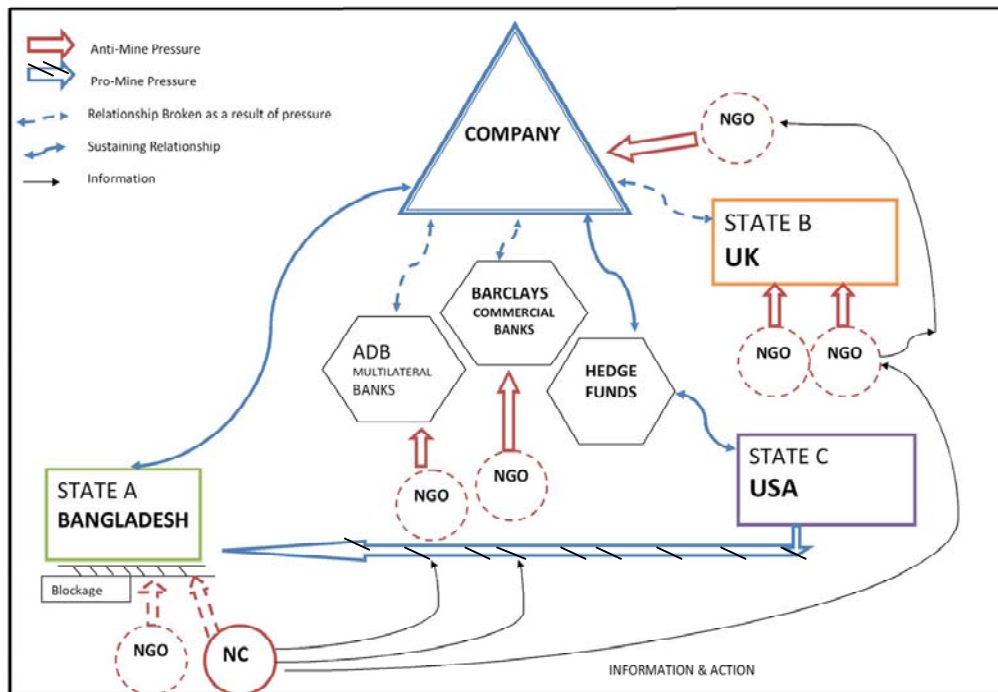


Tarrow (2005: 143-160) expands on Keck and Sikkink's boomerang theory and describes three different pathways for externalising domestic claims depending on the nature of domestic context (whether or not there was repression), framing and the forms of collective action. Where access to other organisations (EU parliament/criminal justice system) is needed, or where direct action seems to be the only way to connect to the

transnational, actors are more likely to take pathways other than those described in Keck and Sikkink's classic diagram (1998:13).

For my case, I found a much-revised pathway of connection, action and impact. As indicated in Figure 7.4, I identified no boomerang pressure exerted through transnational connections (except the non-resident Bangladeshi in London, discussed in Chapter 6). But what differs most greatly from the classic boomerang in my case is that the major target is not another state; it is the mining company and its backers. Figure 7.3 shows that these local efforts against the mine are also partially successful. Organisations that aspire to belong to a normative community of organisations (e.g. multilateral banks) are more susceptible to transnational attacks than ones that do not have such aspirations (e.g. hedge funds).

**Figure 7.4: Boomerang pattern: Phulbari case**



Therefore, the ADB was attacked and successfully convinced to leave the mining project. Similar persuasion worked for Barclays Capital, which withdrew its funding for the company's project. At one point these transnational partners targeted the government of the UK and Bangladesh. The UK government's Department for International

Development (DfID) subsequently announced after the protestors queries that they did not support the mine.

Thus, in the case of Phulbari, challengers did not channel pressure through other states to intergovernmental organisations. Instead, protestors targeted the company and its backers – the most vulnerable first – to persuade them to leave the company. In terms of tactical repertoire and the process of externalisation, these pressures included petitions, letter writing, direct action and complaint making, as well as frame expansion, frame bridging and frame transformation, which identified a combination of pathways. Furthermore, by analysing the ties in action, I uncovered how tenacious transnational collaboration set hurdles on the company's and state's path to resource extraction. By 'burning' the resources of the dominant forces (Steinberg 1999), these small and incremental obstacles gradually slowed down the juggernaut of coal extraction.

## Chapter 8

### Conclusion

Despite the increase in protests against the mineral industry in the global South, studies analysing these in their fullest, that is, encompassing all three levels of local, national and transnational political space, are rare. Those studies that do exist are not clear about the initiation and furtherance of the protests beyond borders (Doyle 2002; Holden 2005; Horton 2010; McAdam et al. 2010; Obi 2000; Oliver-Smith 2010; Ray 2005; Shultz and Drapper 2008; Widener 2007). There is also a lack of attention to the targets of anti-mining resistance, especially private corporations. The role of emigrants in transnational coalitions is another issue too often neglected in the literature. In general, within the broader remit of environmental or global justice movements, anti-mining protests warrant further attention. This is due to the fact that these site-based protests affecting communities directly by displacement and potential environmental loss are on the rise since the last decade.

The spatial features of open-pit mining related resistance can draw similarity from the NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard) movements where community members resist the establishment of un-wanted land use in their neighbourhood – a waste incinerator or a nuclear power plant. The anti-mining resistances are unique because mines cannot move. The threat of mining will be ever present until the minerals are completely extracted or in other words, the mine's potentials has been utilised. Although I agree that, some other spaces like the green field sites can always be subject to threat by would-be developers while a waste incinerator or nuclear plant can be shifted to other areas as a result of protests. However, in case of the first instance, the public good that is under threat due to housing development will affect fewer people since fewer people will be displaced. Moreover, in Western democracies, to-be-affected-population in a green field site, will know that they would be fully compensated and properly rehabilitated.

Contrarily, for its counterparts in the global south fighting against mining, the situation will be much more complicated since there will be much larger population under threat of displacement, without any prior experience of receiving proper rehabilitation or compensation from the dominant side. This will lead to higher possibility of long-term

protests over the years and be further driven by existing negative image in public perception about open-pit mining. For example, it would be easier to convince private owners to give up their land for financial benefits than a group of people on a government owned natural resource base. Therefore, in cases of sustained resistances, scope for longitudinal study of the same resistance will open up new spectrum of research about environmental and space-based movements.

I started this research with four core questions about the protest against the Phulbari mine: 1) why was there such a large-scale mobilisation against the Phulbari Coal Project in a remote, impoverished part of Bangladesh? 2) Why and how did state violence lead to stronger mobilisation? 3) How were national and transnational actors mobilised to join the movement? 4) How did the coalition of local, national and transnational protestors halt the mining project? In this chapter, I present my findings, discuss their implications, and conclude by offering directives for future research.

Following the traditions of anti-mining protest research and the nature and breadth of the protests, I decided to use a qualitative case study approach to explore my research questions listed above. I have detailed the process of collecting and presenting the local, national and transnational protestors' narratives in the context of transversal viewpoints or positioning. The transversal positioning allowed me to present a collage of events from the viewpoints of different respondents. This tool also enabled me to check data against any potential bias by including differing viewpoints in the analysis. I appreciate that the data collected relied on recall and thus are vulnerable to omission or hindsight bias. Collecting data from many sources, however, permitted me to triangulate and mitigate such bias from the data. In addition, my involvement with the process shaped my understanding of the protest. I faced dilemmas in several phases of the research about whether or not to detach myself emotionally from my respondents and when to do it. I tackled this by reporting all my engagements in the text.

In the following sections, I shall discuss how each of my chapters helped to answer my four major queries, highlighting any new findings that contribute to our understanding of contemporary protests against the extractive industry.

## **8.1 Protests against Mines in South Asia**

In order to determine why the Phulbari resistance became so widespread, **Chapter 2** investigated the context of open-pit mining and explored the factors that have led people

to resist other open-pit mines in the region. Research on mining resistance emphasised on displacement, environmental loss and threat to national interest as reasons for inciting protests against open-pit mine (Bebbingdon et al 2008: 16-25; Cernea 1999; Doyle 2002; Guha 1997; Holden 2005; Kirsch 2007; McAdam et al 2010; Moody 2008; Muradian et al 2003; and Rootes 2004: 618-629). Scholars elaborated that open-pit mining displace and resettle larger number of people than other mining methods, and therefore more likely to face protests from the community threatened to be dispossessed. An important feature of this argument is it includes a special space for vulnerable groups, especially ethnic minorities and indigenous groups (*adivasis* in South Asian terms). This view expects that the *adivasis* of South Asia are more likely to react against private capital for big development projects, especially mining.

The second possible reason for protests against mining is environmental loss. Mines are environmentally precarious sites. Muradian et al. (2003) distinguishes these as locally unwanted land use. These mines visibly alter terrain; create pollution (dust, slurry, noise, and increased traffic), cause deforestation, and ‘de-watering’ (open-pit mines need to pump out water to reach the deposit). Some mines might lead to tailing dam accidents that discharge pollutant in water bodies (Kirsch 2007: 305). Doyle’s (2002) study on the South East Asian protests against mines highlights high risk of environmental pollution by the mineral industry. He argued that this is because governments of these countries fail to control the mineral industry. On the other hand, Doyle (2002) suggested that the protestors against mining often use conflict-prone, violent protest strategies, which are more popular and appropriate. According to Pellow (2007), in some cases, such radical environmentalism is more successful.

The third cause of protests against mining is related to the sense of belonging – nationalism. If the mining venture is controlled by multi-national capital, people of the mine-host nation often perceive the mine as a violation against their national interest. Perreault and Valdivia (2010: 689-90) termed it ‘hydrocarbon nationhood’. They showed how communities on the basis of a populist idea of nationalism resisted national policies for hydrocarbon extraction or export where state was willing to sacrifice national interests for foreign interests. Examples of Bolivia and Ecuador showed that political economy and cultural politics are inseparable in the context of resource conflicts, which involve struggles over the meaning of development, citizenship and the nation itself.

Drawing on these three concerns, this chapter looks more closely at what is happening in the mining sector (focusing on the open-casts only) in India and

Bangladesh. This analysis included 398 mines in India and Bangladesh and community resistance against these mines using newspaper data. Results showed that most mines did not face protests – or at least did not face protests significant enough to be reported in the media. Three mines, including the Phulbari coal deposit, had unusually high numbers of protests against them. They also attracted the most media attention. To determine why only some open mines face protests, I looked at district-level indicators of displacement, environmental hazards and other social factors for each mine.

Mining-induced displacement in very densely populated India and Bangladesh mean that first, there might be huge numbers of people displaced in some districts than others. Secondly, there will be insufficient land to resettle the population displaced by the mining. Mining will destroy valuable croplands putting more pressure on already vulnerable food security (Hoshour 2010). It is very likely that communities will resist such a threat. Yet my findings reveal that even though expropriation from land occurs (or is threatened, if it is a deposit) in all of the mines in my sample, not all faced protests. I hypothesised that displacement will only lead to protests when human costs are high. This chapter also shows, whether environmental loss is relevant in the popular protests against open-pit mining in South Asia. In India, there are instances of protests against mining on the basis of concerns about deforestation at the hill-top, erosion and pollution of the water resources, and threat to loss of heritage (Bhengra 1996; Dash and Samal 2008; Gadgil and Guha 1994; Sarangi 2004). Therefore, one would expect that presence of a visible environmental resource – forests or water bodies or nature reserves – within the area under impending threat of mining would increase the likelihood of protest.

Studies that analysed mining induced environmental degradation and resultant protests also identified that indigenous people were important drivers of protest since displacement and environmental degradation affect them disproportionately (Holden 2005; Horton 2010; Kalafut and Moody 2008; Kirsch 2007; Muradian, Martinez-Alliers and Correa 2003; Oliver-Smith 2002). Downing (2002) and Oliver-Smith (2010) also maintained that people who are already marginalised with poverty will be more vulnerable to displacement and therefore they are more likely to resist. On the other hand, literate people will have more capacity to engage in collective action because they are more likely to know about their rights and stand up for these. I expected that percent of people who are poor and literate are more likely to be positively affecting protests against mining. I expected that district level density of population per square kilometre,

proportion of poor people, forest cover, proportion of literates, Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Scheduled Caste (SC) population would explain protests.

The result of the logistic regression revealed that just using these simple and crude measures, we have surprising degree of success in predicting the occurrence of protests by social and demographic factors. For example, mines in areas with higher population density, a larger proportion of area under forest cover, or a higher proportion of Scheduled Castes are more likely to generate protest. A mine owned by a multinational company is three times more likely to face a protest than a mine owned by domestic company or by the state. Factors that were not found to be significant in predicting protests include: the proportion of poor people, literates and Scheduled Tribes in an area, and whether or not the area was affected by left-wing extremism. Therefore, results were different than Baviskar's (2004) and Oliver-Smith's (2010) findings. They found that the poorer sections and indigenous communities of the society are more likely to initiate protests against big development projects.

The increase of protests with the increase in the density of population per square km in non-urban regions emphasises that concentration of population threatened by displacement determines opposition against the threat (mining). This is important for the mining industry when they plan their investment in densely populated and non-urban part of a country. The effect of density of population on likelihood of having a protest against an open-pit mine is non-monotonic. In urban areas the relationship reverses at the highest levels of population density. Open mining also has an image of environmental degradation attached to it, which makes communities resist against it since it involves loss of biodiversity (in this case, forest cover). The estimated effect of the proportion of SC in the district population was positive but not statistically significant. This indicates to the political opportunity that the Schedule Castes enjoy in contemporary India.

Of the three South Asian mines that faced sustained and multiple protests and attracted the most media attention, Phulbari was the only one in Bangladesh. My analysis showed that the Phulbari coal mine had the highest predicted probability (0.96) of having a protest, making it a unique case to study in depth. Being located in a country with no history of open-pit mining, Phulbari offered an opportunity to study the initiation and development of the resistance against open mining amidst less analytical complexity.

Most scholarly research on transnational mining resistance has focused on Latin America and Africa. By looking in depth at a case in Asia, this research addresses a gap in the focus of the literature on transnational anti-mine resistance in Asia.

## 8.2 What mobilised the mining protests: obligation

**Chapter 4** explored the reasons why mobilisation against the mine was so widespread, showing how protests began and developed, gained allies and grew in strength. The drive to protest is based on the perception of the threat of the mine. In order to better understand how this perception of the threat was constructed and became pervasive, I explored the role of protestors' 'meaning work' (Snow and Benford 1992). This chapter, first, traced the history of framing (defining the injustice) from February 2005 to August 2006, when the challengers constantly opposed the frames of the dominant power – the company and the government. This trajectory of 'meaning making' by the local and the national protestors illustrates how radical local frames were transformed into a nationalist obligation frame based on the costs of the mine by a far-left alliance of political actors in Bangladesh.

In other words, unlike protestors in Steinberg's case (1999), protestors against Phulbari mine succeeded though the protestors chose to stay within the boundaries of the dominant position on economic progress. According to Steinberg's (1999: 769-770) case, local contestation between liberal factory owners and working class radicals over the pace and extent of political reform ended with the spinners (working class) losing the game. Steinberg claimed in his theory of dialogic framing to show that the spinners ('challengers' in his words) were defeated since in the process of making claims, they re-inscribed themselves as partly captive to the truths of their opponents whose discursive frames spinners were using to fight against the opponents (p.770).

Local challengers of the Phulbari mine initially had radical discursive repertoires and they succeeded. Not because the frames were radical but since these frames were modified according to the emergent need of justifying the protestors' position against the mine. The dialogic framing between the dominant powers and the protestors produced an accurate costs and benefits assessment of the Phulbari coal mine, which the protestors utilised to construct their concept of 'we' versus 'them'. Local protestors initiated the dialogue, bringing the mine into the centre of the discussion and criticising it with radical frames. Their injustice frames (Gamson 1992:112-113, Gamson 2005) contended that there are things that cannot be exchanged for compensation – graves of family members, land that is the centre of livelihood and identity, social ties, the physical environment and the cultural processes attached to it. They did not say we need more compensation or

better management, they said the things the mine is asking for cannot be compensated for at all. In other words, the popular local position was: ‘money cannot buy everything’.

This frame was not, however, enough to stop the mine. In order to be heard, the locals had to change their portrayal of the injustice by co-opting the language of the dominant powers using their discursive field, at least in the initial period. This helped them win the frame game against the company. This finding is different than what Steinberg found. Steinberg attributed the failure of the spinners he studied to the fact that their discursive repertoire was limited by the dominant discourse. This Bakhtinian explanation of the contentious repertoire occupies significant place in the analysis of collective action discourse contextually rigid to on-going hegemonic struggle (McCammon et al 2007, Skillington 1997, Steinberg 1998, 1999). In the Phulbari case, the protestors chose to appropriate the dominant discourse and still succeeded in garnering wider support. I emphasise that there exists a clear and active will of the local protesters, which is absent in Steinberg’s (1998, 1999) analysis. His deterministic account gives all the credit to the dominant position by perceiving it as a rigid context where protesters are always tied.

The target audience (Bangladeshis) had initially perceived the protestors as self-interested people who stood in the way of the development of the country. Through piecemeal dialogic framing and alliance building outside of the mining area, the local protestors discovered the cost of the mine for the whole nation. They exposed the mine as a threat against the national interest of energy security and domestic development. As a result, the Phulbari mine went from being perceived as a threat to people only in the four sub-districts to being perceived as a threat to the national interest within the framework of economic development. The dominant position on the mine determined (and limited) the protestors’ new cost-benefit analysis for the national audience. This less radical position, which was based within the discourse of progress, resonated better with the wider population.

**Chapter 4** used a game metaphor to explain this process of dialogic framing and strategic shifting of identity. As long as one team can debunk the frame of the other in the public domain, it can remain in the game (not out). Scoring points, however, depends on creating new rules and new game space (e.g. having a good standing in the media or creating political opportunities or ties). This frame game amplified the sense of injustice to the wider audience, incited obligations among the constituents and compelled them to resist.

This obligation was based on a 'resource-nationalism' frame. Like many other protests in natural resource-rich countries, this protest involved a hydro-carbon nationalism (Perreault and Valdivia 2010). The National Committee advocates for national/public ownership and use of the mineral resource when the government would prefer that multinational companies exploit the resource. Even activists like the National Committee cannot resist the idea of economic development. Their obligation is to the idea of national economic progress. They decline the use of multinational capital without criticising the dominant idea of economic growth of which multinational capital is only a part.

Locals are more radical in rejecting monetary compensation for the loss of sacred values and livelihood, but the less radical framing of the nationals speaks the official 'language' and thus has more traction among the wider population. Whether locals embrace the national framing out of a temporary instrumental rationality—as opposed to doing so without realising the possible implications of the partnership—would only be revealed in a hypothetical situation, if the company abandons the project and the state decides to engage a domestic public corporation (accepting no foreign capital) to exploit the coal for exclusively domestic consumption. If the deposit were to be developed as an open mine under these conditions, the protestors' loyalty to the national interest frame would be tested. How would the local protestors and, more importantly, the National Committee adjust their national interest frames against the mine? Would mining under these circumstances be agreeable to them? Would the National Committee stop supporting the locals? Until this situation arises, the National Committee will be regarded as an advocate for the resonant frame of national interest and a major supporter of the resistance. A relevant implication of this finding will be to consider experiences of other Asian countries where open-mining in densely populated areas has been resisted by community protestors on the basis of livelihood options in local area, resource nationalism in the national field and environment and human rights in the transnational.

In more general terms, we can expect to see dissonance of frames across local, national and transnational fields of resistances against mining. If national interest frame or resource nationalism was the most justifiable claim for the success of protests, similar national interest frames will become equally successful for other anti-mining protests in South Asia.

### 8.3 Emotion, Obligation and Rituals

**Chapter 5** explores the influence of the August 26<sup>th</sup> massacre on further protests. It discusses the micro-level emotional context of the protests and describes the effect of emotions one after another on the decision to advance the protest after a non-violent protest is violently repressed by the state. I found that both specific cultural practices and the media aroused a sense of community obligation, which augmented backlash protests for four consecutive days and forced the government to accept the protestors' demands. I have used a kaleidoscope of transversal politics where standpoints, no matter how different, are equally treated and included in the collage of positions. This kaleidoscope allowed me to create a nuanced mosaic to understand the resistance. Using this tool, I presented a micro-level narrative of the protest and the harsh repression that led to the backlash.

Effect of protest control is difficult to ascertain due to contradictory findings in the extant empirical literature. Earl (2006: 134) decided that the empirical evidences are inconclusive. However, variables like impact of repression in arousing emotions such as anger, fear and outrage and the capacity of the protestors to withstand repressive tactics is important. In **chapter 5**, I have explained the role of emotion and existing cultural practices of the protestors in initiating and sustaining follow-up protests after violent repression by the state forces.

Repression leading to more protests is not uncommon in history (e.g. Bloody Sunday in Northern Ireland) or even in contemporary times (e.g. Tahrir Square, Egypt during the Arab Spring). In that sense, the pattern of the Phulbari resistance is nothing new. Nonetheless, scholars often fail to identify the link between the repression and the high-risk backlash protests through emotion (exceptions include Goodwin and Pfaff 2001). What happens emotionally after repressive attacks that compel protestors to protest further? **Chapter 5**, presents an account of the emotional upheaval ('psychological incentive' of Opp 2009 or 'emotional climate' of Goodwin and Pfaff 2001) that overshadowed the ego and sense of self harm. By suppressing fear, protestors carried on even in the moments of towering tensions. Goodwin and Pfaff (2001: 284) described that the importance of emotional management to calm reflexive emotions like fear during a sudden rise in a high-risk situation is needed to continue the collective action. They also showed, by encouraging the affective emotions like loyalty, how they made collective

engagement sustain. In Phulbari case, in the first phase, complete emotional confusion was followed by anger and outrage, suppressing fear of persecution and motivating protestors to continue protesting.

In addition, this chapter also shows how after the first phase of smoke and tears was cleared, leaders of the protest mobilised a large number of protestors by arousing a feeling of collective obligation to dissent. Cultural practices like funeral processions engendered this sense of duty. Protestors were motivated to keep protest alive with high-risk activities even while the regime exerted unplanned and ill-managed coercion. This cultural opportunity – *janeza* – translates into obligation (moral incentive) to resist. This explains why cultural opportunities led to more and not less protest after repression. This can be used in explaining similar backlash protests in other Muslim majority nations.

Rasler (1996) and Schrodt and Yilmaz (2007) studied the backlash protests in Iranian and six Middle Eastern countries' respectively and hinted at this cultural trait as a factor behind backlash protests. However, what Phulbari resistance shows us is the concept of the 'sense of obligation' that is inherent within the community's extant cultural rites, comes out to be an important motivator of the continued protests even in the face of violent repression by the state forces. This obligation is not of an individual but of a community. According to the teachings of Islam which is the religion of the majority in Bangladesh, at least some members of the community has to perform the *fard* of protesting as an obligation to the martyrs. If not, punishment through negative labelling and non-cooperation within community will occur. Therefore, if community obligation (*fard e kyfia*) is an enshrined value, we would expect similar arousal of the sense of obligation and emotion when protests are violently repressed and the community wants to continue to protest against the injustice.

The media augmented both emotion and the sense of obligation to protest by repeatedly portraying the injustice that is the state-run repression against 'innocent' citizens. I also showed that media has its own instrumental rationality that is necessary to assist protests externally when emotions are high. Although democracy in Bangladesh was not stable when these events were unfolding, a free and attentive media was an important accelerator for further protests.

As such, **chapter 5** helped to explain how state repression increases protest, with a special focus on emotions and culture during the time between the repression and further protests. The chapter shed light on the impact of the roller coaster of emotions, the sense of community obligation and ritualised media performance on the protestors'

actions after the repression. It showed that repression is translated and channelled through the emotional, cultural and mediatised realms and ultimately influences backlash protests.

## 8.4 Ties and Tensions

While the strong opposition from the local and the national protestors explains why the Phulbari resistance was widespread, it is also important to look at what happened outside Bangladesh to garner insight into transnational movements against mines. In **chapter 6**, I answer the third question: how were the national and transnational partners mobilised to join the movement? To do so, I have detailed the organisational-level mechanisms of connecting to different types of transnational partners, the limits of such connections and the contribution of emigrant Bangladeshis who bridge the national and the transnational. Repression in August 2006 attracted international attention to the mine and initiated some collaboration against it. The resistance reached out to the world when political opportunity in the domestic field was restrained by the declaration of the emergency rule in Bangladesh in 2007. Leaders of the National Committee made connections through expatriates around the world, or their ‘nesting pigeons’ (Tarrow 2005: 51-56). The British Bangladeshi population that supports the National Committee was directly connected to the transnational resistance and formed an important part of the transnational coalition. They helped to maintain the connection between the activists at the national and transnational levels.

Literature on transnational coalition building suggested that ideological congruence and perception of threat is crucial in generating trans border coalitions (MacCammon et al 2007). della Porta et al (2006) emphasised that these coalition’s success in operation depended on their multiple belongings and tolerant identities. Tolerant identities are defined as multifaceted collective identity that allows very different fragments of diverse cultures to be fitted together into a broader discourse by partly combining them and partly leaving broad margins for separate development. Dissonance is tolerated for the sake of resisting a global ‘enemy’: extractive industry in our case (della Porta et al 2006: 240-241).

My findings were different to MacCammon et al’s (2007) but similar to the findings of della Porta et al (2006). The chapter showed that based on a symbiotic relationship, the transnational NGOs ally with each other despite ideological gaps. They

serve the cause as long as their presence is needed despite existing ideological tensions with its allies. They tolerate dissonance in framing and diverse identities within the alliance to fulfil its rationale of joining the movement – to resist the mine of the company. This chapter provided a nuanced typology of organizational ties and showed who initiated the ties and how. It introduced the concepts of reciprocal tenacity and mutual obligation. The concepts refer to the strength and longevity of the ties. Both the groups and organizations that are entering the relationship are doing so in a bid to benefit both. The relation is one of symbiotic mutual support; while the Phulbari resistance needed the outside support these organizations need groups to support. It starts if shared concern and mutual interests match and survives as long as reciprocity sustains.

Trying to apply them in other transnational coalition scenarios can test whether or not these types of ties are useful. The shifting collective identity or the connections forming for mutual obligation are not instrumental – these are symbiotic (Rootes 2005). Transnational resistance that maintains ties across the globe often tolerates different identities and values as long as the reciprocity remains relevant and the obligation to resist exists. In addition, with increasing investment in mining in the global South, I argue that similar injustice through open pit extraction is going to be widespread (Bury 2002, Bebbington 2007). Pellow (2007) argued that environmental pollution is unequally distributed across the globe and he also suggested that the success stories of stopping environmental injustice in the global South is more likely due to its more radical nature than in the post-material West. To add to this, I argue that Phulbari resistance shows us why this might have been possible. One of the reasons will be the presence of a national level organisation like the National Committee. The role of National Committee in mediating the Phulbari alliance is key to understand contemporary environmental justice movement. The National Committee had been the forerunner through which the tolerant identities were created and nurtured. Any dissonance was tackled at the national level consulting with the local protesters and then based on that consensus transnational partners were briefed. Therefore, we would expect similarly strong transnational coalitions in cases where an organisation like the National Committee exist as a mediator.

## **8.5 Tactics of Resource Burn**

**Chapter 7** explored how the concerted efforts of the local, national and transnational protesters forced the company to burn its resources and ultimately halted the project. I

have done so by detailing the actions and performances of the protestors at three levels of the coalition and comparing these to fluctuations in the share price data of the company. This final empirical chapter explored the transnational actors' encounters in local, national and global politics and how they affected the company's growth. Once transnational ties are formed, challengers rely on their reciprocal tenacity to challenge the powerful. Based on this reciprocity, three different types of partners were identified in the transnational coalition: one-timers, hibernators, and enduring partners. These partners target their direct action and/or lobbying against multilateral banks, public institutions, domestic or foreign governments where the company has significant financial resources, commercial banks, or the company itself. The only entities that have remained safe from the activists' actions are the hedge funds.

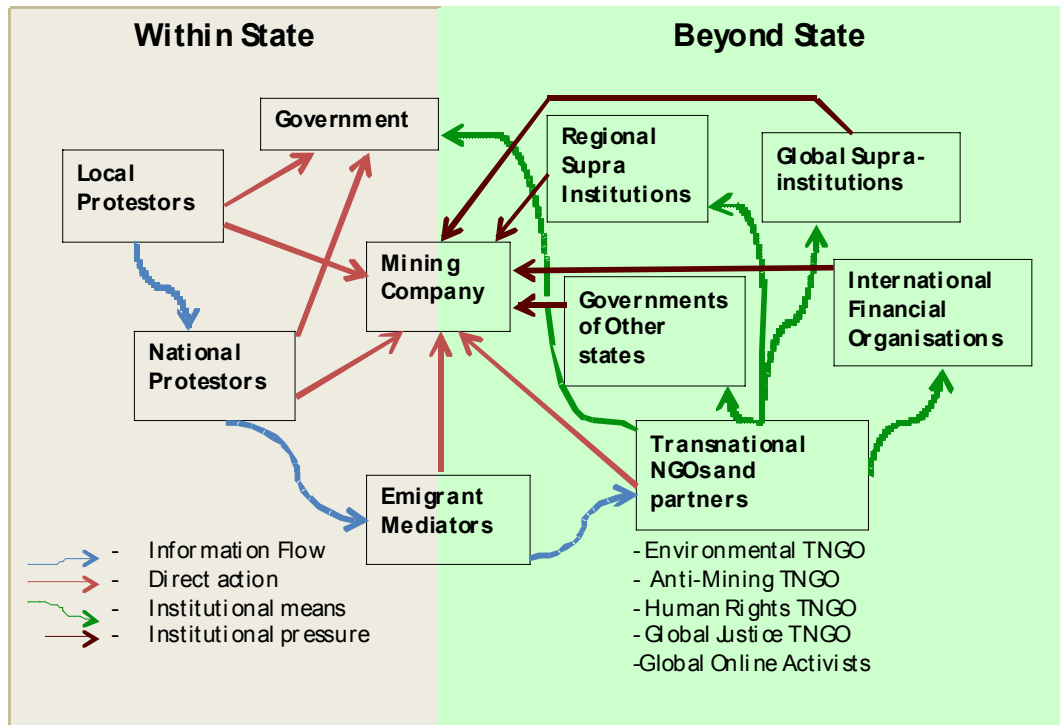
Furthermore, analysis of the ties shows how through these connections, the coalition produced numerous small obstacles on the path of the dominant process of resource extraction proposed by the company (and possibly with the state's tacit support). Such obstacles are incremental and small but have the power (Steinberg 1999) to drain the energy or lead to 'resource burn' of the dominant forces. I showed this resource burn through the use of share price fluctuations against the transnational actions. In Phulbari case, the game still continues. The resistance has significantly slowed down its opponent, illustrated by the company president's comment at the 2011 Annual General Meeting: "The fall in the share price this year is most likely a result of increasingly risk-averse investors. GCM's Board shares our investors' disappointment over the fall in the company's share price" (Field note, London: 2011).

How this discussion on slowing down of the juggernaut of extraction can help us explain contemporary globally connected environmental justice movement and its tactics is shown in Figure 8.1 where I propose a general model to summarise the actions of transnational organisation against extractive industry. Drawing from Keck and Sikkink (1998), Tarrow (2005) and my own case, I propose paths of alliance building through transmission of information and paths of pressure through institutional tactics and direct action.

In this figure, we see that, alliances are built through the path of information. In this path, information about the injustice of developing the mine in question is forming the basis of the connections. In case of transnational activism against human right violations (Keck and Sikkink 1998), we see that the flow of information constitute pressure on foreign governments and intra-state bodies that put pressure on the

government of the concerned country where the violation occurred and ensure that these violations do not occur again. In such cases, national governments are the targets of the transnational activism. However, in cases of anti-open-pit mining resistance the target is not mainly the government of the mine hosting country, it is the company that wants to develop the mine.

**Figure 8.1: General Model of Transnational Action Paths against Mining Industry**



In the diagram, I showed that information flow (blue arrow) do not put pressure on the company or even on an international organisation until the connections have been established through it. Then, different paths of pressures to resist the injustice take place. Maintaining the reciprocal tenacity and mutual obligation, the local and national protestors put pressure on the company and the government mainly through the path of direct action (red arrows). Transnational organisations use the institutionalised means like formal complaint, petition, letter writing and so on (green arrows) to motivate International Financial Institutions like Asian Development Bank, global and regional supra institutions like the UN Special Rapporteurs and the OECD complaints mechanism, and Governments of other countries like the UK government. These entities then create

indirect institutional pressure especially on the mining company and its major financial backers.

## **8.6 Implications and Future Directions**

People from a remote, impoverished part of Bangladesh have successfully stopped the company from initiating mining operations in Phulbari. They reached out not only to the national capital but also to Kyoto, Manila, London, Berlin, Washington, and San Francisco. They resisted the company in the local, national and transnational field with actions and lobbying. Their success can be attributed to the following reasons: 1) local, grass-roots resistance was consistently antagonistic to the project; 2) the Bangladesh government's violent repression of the Phulbari issue kept the protestors (at all levels) vigilant, making it more difficult for the company to break the opposition; 3) the idea of national interest and sovereign self-sufficiency of natural resources helped the National Committee to achieve popularity among a wider population; 4) the role of media and the democratic political system of Bangladesh held governments back from forcing the mine in, and, 5) a loose network of transnational activists helped to make opposition to the company less draining for the coalition members' resources. This network had an adverse impact on the company and benefitted the resistance by attracting new allies and more visibility.

There were tensions within the coalition of the activists – local, national and transnational. The relationship between the local, the national and the transnational is built on cooperation, coordination and actions. The tension between these relationships, identified in prior research, was not as divisive in case of the Phulbari coalition because of three interrelated reasons: 1) the locals never asked for financial resources from the transnational sector; 2) the transnational activists were vigilant about not stepping into the realm where they were dictating rather than behaving like a partner; 3) most importantly, the National Committee stood as a mediator and gatekeeper between the Bengali protestors and the transnational coalition, helping to keep the tension to a minimum.

Here, I am compelled to emphasise the role of cultural practices, that is, the movement culture. Their institutional targets dominate the language and symbols that the challengers of the mine use. For example, the local opposition against the mine in 2005-2006 had to co-opt the language of costs and benefits analysis to resonate to the idea of national progress and resource nationalism. Similarly, when the UK government's Joint

Committee on Human Rights' complaint barred the submissions made by eyewitnesses of the atrocity (**Chapter 7**), it signalled the role that discourse plays. It is not sufficient to have a compelling opposition against the company; the case has to use the accepted discourses of development and human rights. If the discursive repertoire is not acceptable by the dominant powers, no matter how harmful and compelling the project may be, resisting it will be difficult. In addition, I showed how the core actors of the resistance in local to transnational fields are individuals who have knowledge of the languages of transnational resistance norms as well as the skill to understand the science and politics behind open-cast mines.

In studying protests against mines or similar large-scale environmentally degrading development activity, obligation is the key to resisting the mine, aroused through framing, emotion, cultural practices and transnational networking. The protestors at the local, the national and the transnational level can be identified as people with a sense of obligation to the environment, human rights or global justice and who have skills to exchange and are looking for partners with whom to coalesce against a case of injustice. Their symbiotic reciprocity makes it mutually obligatory to resist the injustice/threat. Most of the energy of the resistance is spent to create or justify that obligation. The task becomes easier for the protestors if the state or regime is democratic still becomes repressive and the company proposal fails to meet international standards of environmental stewardship and human rights.

Moreover, in an increasingly connected contemporary world, this research provides multiple hypotheses that can be tested in a bigger survey of similar movements connecting South and North in concerted actions against multinational targets. The methodological focus on the micro-level of narratives of the local, national and transnational protestors as well as investors in the company and the organisational-level decision making processes will create an opportunity for comparative social movement research.

The locals, interacting with the national and the transnational protestors, discovered the pitfalls of the mine. This broadens the scope for future studies to consider how information is used at a local, national and transnational level to frame the injustice and arouse a sense of obligation. Further research should concentrate on the link between framing and information processing. Conversely, how the shareholders of the mining company use the same information and frame their opposition to the challengers of the

mine can be investigated further. Shareholders' forum discussion excerpts can be the source of information for such analysis.

The way emotion and cultural opportunity influenced protestors towards backlash protests shows how repression might not stop protest in a democratic country with an attentive press. It also opens up an opportunity to study the impact of culture on decision making after repression of a protest. Future research should concentrate and compare if different religious and cultural practices of funerals would still have the similar encouraging impact on further protests.

Analysis of the company's share prices against the protest actions has showed that (Figure 7.2) there is a time lag between strong protests and the impact they have on share prices. Further scrutiny of how companies endeavour to withstand the impact of protests is required. Moreover, future research should concentrate more on shareholders' behaviours: why did shareholders continue their relationship with the junior company despite the risks?

Local protestors have shown that, regardless of the electoral power of the political actors, they chose their allies depending on whether they are willing to help the resistance. The National Committee is not powerful in the formal political arena but they were the ones that listened to the locals' grievances and were willing to help the cause. Why local protestors would prefer electorally and politically less powerful groups as their allies is an intriguing puzzle and should be investigated further.

## **8.7 Conclusion**

Bebbingdon et al (2008) and Bury (2007) has pointed out that extractive capital has flown to the South. In case of the coal mining, this has been a consequence of environmental movements in the West making it more expensive to mine. This is supported by the findings about the environmental justice movements against waste disposal (Pellow 2007). Secondly, given a huge dip in the coal price in the world market, operating open-pit coal mines was regarded more viable in the Southern countries since the governments are often unprepared and less stringent against the environmental problems arising from the open mining. Also environmental movements are often at their rudimentary stage, without much training and technical skills to fight against mining engineers in these countries. When such mining capital enters a country peripheral in the world economy, the governments of this country will embrace it as a Foreign Direct Investment and show

all eagerness to incentivise these ventures often at the expense of the rights of its own citizens.

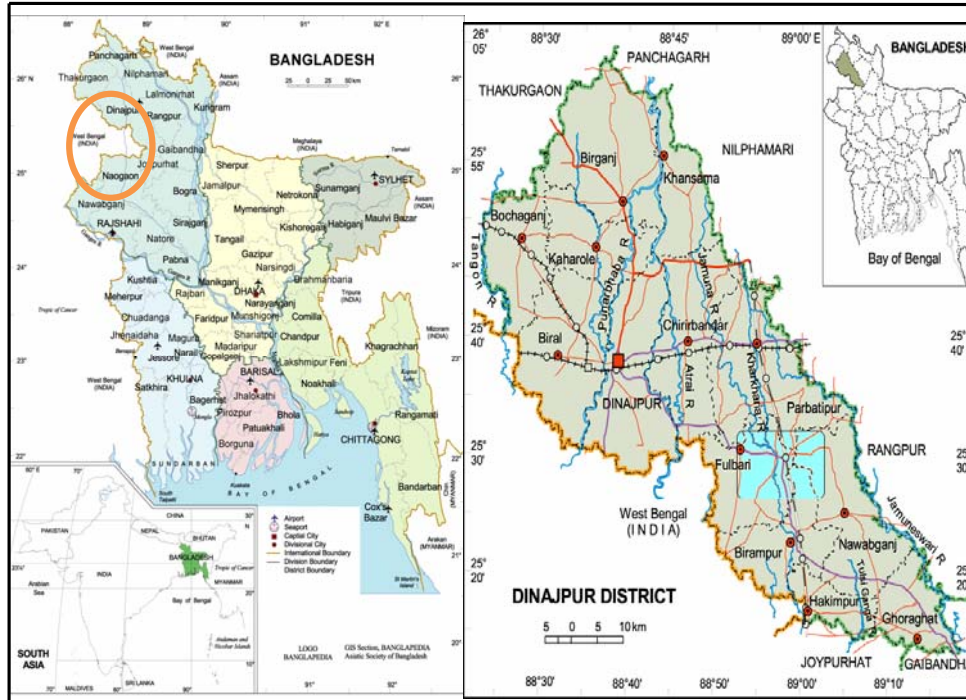
By looking at the protests against mining in India and Bangladesh, we have found that protests are also on the rise in South Asia. Whether or not such protests become transnational depends on the following: nature of the political opportunities within the nation state and the nature of capital that owns the mine. If domestic political space is squeezed and repression to national protestors is common, the protests are likely to spread outside of national boundaries. This is exemplified by the Phulbari case. Secondly, if the mine is owned by transnational capital it is more likely to reach out of national borders to attract attention of the international communities. In India, resistance against the Domiasat Uranium Mine showed that the target of the protests was the national Uranium Corporation and the long-standing resistance did not have a significant transnational alliance. Contrarily, in case of Phulbari and Nyamagiri mines in India, the target was transnational (the companies) and both cases had significantly active transnational coalition.

In contemporary world of global connections (Tsing 2005), protestors from different parts of the world fight against different companies but similar extractive capital and are able to coalesce with each other. They form a critical mass of transnational expert campaigners against extractive capital. Their expertise in anti-mining advocacy is continuously shared, adopted and put to test in different country conditions. Drawing from Pellow's (2007) optimism about the probability of success of environmental justice movements against waste disposal in the global South, I conclude that confronting the mineral industry in the South would have similar success. A coalition of campaigners from around the world including environmental, human rights and global justice activists with a strong, grounded local protest group is more likely to succeed in their resistance when it is mediated through a well-connected national group. The success of such coalition can also be bolstered by the presence of a large community of emigrants who can translate between the local and the transnational. This transnational coalition impedes the target company by aiming at their international financial organisations, Western governments, the government of the host country, and the investors in the company.

# Appendices

## Appendices for Chapter 3

### Appendix C.1: Map of Bangladesh and Dinajpur district



Source: Banglapedia 2006

**Appendix C.2: List of Active Participation in Mobilisation**

Year	Month	Event	Location
2010	March	Krishok Khshetmojur shomitee, Council	Phulbari
2010	March	Boropukuria UG Coal Mine Workers' Strike and Rally	Parbatipur
2010	March	Lakhipur Ganer Ashor 2	Phulbari
2010	March	Boropukuria UG Coal Mine Workers' Strike and Blockade	Parbatipur
2010	March	Bhabanipur, Parbatipur Public Meeting to resist Phulbari Mine	Parbatipur
2010	April	Procession and Rally in Phulbari by OGCP	Phulbari
2010	May	Press Conference by NC Dhaka	Dhaka
2010	June	Bonik Shomiti Procession 1	Phulbari
2010	June	Bonik Shomiti Procession 2	Phulbari
2010	June	OGCP Office BD News	Phulbari
2010	June	OGCP Office Drafting leaflet	Phulbari
2010	June	Khuli boithok Phulbari by OGCP	Phulbari
2010	June	Procession and Rally in Phulbari by OGCP	Phulbari
2010	June	Meeting of the core OGCP	Phulbari
2010	June	NC Dhaka and OGCP core group Meeting	Dhaka
2010	June	NC Dhaka Podojatra - Procession	Dhaka
2010	December	GCM AGM London	London
2011	September	Seminar London	London
2011	October	Skype Meeting, London, Oxford, San Francisco	Multiple
2011	October	Core group Meeting London UEL	London
2011	December	Seminar London	
2011	December	AGM Protests London	London
2011	December	Shareholder meeting inside AGM	London

**Appendix C 3: Sample page of list of Villages for selecting respondents**

ID	JL Number	Village	Mouza	Union	Upazila
1	3	Salgaria [REDACTED] 20.01.2010	Salgharia	Joypur	Nawabganj
2	4 (South Side Only)		ManjuPara	Joypur	Nawabganj
3	31 (West Side Only)	Chamundai [REDACTED] 01710944636 Amra Katal [REDACTED] Chaner danga [REDACTED] Katolmary [REDACTED]	Chamunda	Joypur	Nawabganj
4	32 (West Side Only)		Bamanagar	Golapganj	Nawabganj
5	33	*	Joypur	Joypur	Nawabganj
6	34	Uttar Shahbazpur [REDACTED] Tepukuria [REDACTED] 01820506202 Buri Katal [REDACTED] 01714978401 [REDACTED]	Uttar Sahabazpur	Joypur	Nawabganj
7	44 (West Side Only)		Boro Raghunathpur	Golapganj	Nawabganj
8	35		Khair Mirzapur	Joypur	Nawabganj
9	36	Bukchi?? Boro Gram?? [REDACTED]	Dakshin Sahabazpur	Khanpur	Birampur
10	37	*	Belpukur	Khanpur	Birampur
11	38	*	Kurshakhali	Khanpur	Birampur
12	39	*	Ramdebpur	Khanpur	Birampur
13	40 (North side only)		Maupukur	Khanpur	Birampur
14	41 (North side only)		Pashchim Joydebpur	Khanpur	Birampur

## Appendix C.4: Sample of a Consent Form (In Bengali)



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তারিখ:

প্রিয় .....

আমি সামিনা লুৎফা, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সমাজবিজ্ঞান বিভাগের সহকারী অধ্যাপক। আমি বর্তমানে অক্সফোর্ড বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সমাজবিজ্ঞান বিভাগে পি.এইচ.ডি. গবেষণা করছি যার বিষয় হলো: "সম্পদ লুপ্তন প্রতিরোধ: স্থানীয়, জাতীয় ও আন্তর্জাতিক পর্যায়ে ফুলবাড়ি কয়লা খনি বিরোধী আন্দোলন"। এ গবেষণার অন্যতম উদ্দেশ্য হলো ফুলবাড়ির স্থানীয় জনগনের এ আন্দোলনে সম্পৃক্ততার ইতিহাস বিশেষণ।

আমার এ গবেষণায় আমি আপনার সহযোগিতা কামনা করছি। আপনি ফুলবাড়ি কয়লা খনি বিরোধী আন্দোলনে সক্রিয়ভাবে অংশ নিয়েছেন এবং এ আন্দোলন সম্পর্কে আপনার অভিজ্ঞতা রয়েছে।

সুতরাং, আপনার নিকট অনুরোধ, আন্দোলনে আপনার অংশগ্রহণ ও আপনার সামাজিক অবস্থান সম্পর্কে তথ্য প্রদান করে আমার গবেষণায় ও ফুলবাড়ি কয়লা খনি বিরোধী আন্দোলনের ইতিহাস প্রণয়ণে অংশ নিয়ে বাধিত করবেন। উল্লেখ্য, আপনার নাম ও পরিচয়ের সম্পূর্ণ গোপনীয়তা রক্ষায় আমি প্রতিজ্ঞাবদ্ধ।

নিম্নোক্ত তথ্য সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতিগুলোর যেগুলোতে আপনি অংশগ্রহণে রাজী আছেন, তা জানানোর অনুরোধ করছি :

- |  |           |   |
|--|-----------|---|
| ১. প্রাথমিক পরিচিতি তথ্য ফরম :                                   | হ্যাঁ/ না | — |
| ২. মৌখিক সাক্ষাৎকার (ইলেক্ট্রনিকালি রেকর্ডেড):                   | হ্যাঁ/ না |   |
| ৩. স্থিরচিত্র:   | হ্যাঁ/ না |   |
| ৪. ভিডিও চিত্র (পরবর্তীতে আন্দোলনের প্রয়োজনে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে): | হ্যাঁ/ না |   |

ধন্যবাদান্তে

বিনীত

সামিনা লুৎফা  
সমাজবিজ্ঞান বিভাগ  
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়  
ঢাকা ১০০০

## Appendix C. 5: English version of a Consent form



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**December, 2010**

Name & Designation:

Organization:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at University of Oxford. My doctoral research is titled '*Confronting the Juggernaut of Extraction: Local, National, Transnational Mobilisation against Phulbari Coal Mine in Bangladesh*'. This research aims to unravel the extent, rationale and strengths within transnational alliance of mobilisation against global capitalist extractive industry to understand how the emergent trend of supra-national alliances are influencing contention of this century.

This correspondence is to seek your support in carrying out my doctoral research project.

Since you and your organization(s) play (s) an active stake in Phulbari resistance; I would like to request you to spend some time to talk to me about the nature and extent of your participation in the resistance and oblige thereby. I use an open ended guide of questions which might take an hour and half of your time.

I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that any research materials collected from you/your institution will be treated in the strictest of confidence, and that every step will be taken to ensure the anonymity of all participants in the research. I would also be willing to sign an agreement with you/your institution confirming data confidentiality. You can pull out from this interview at any moment you deem uncomfortable.

If you agree to be interviewed for the above stated research, please provide consent:

Yes/ No. Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Yours faithfully,

Samina Luthfa  
Department of Sociology  
[samina.luthfa@sociology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:samina.luthfa@sociology.ox.ac.uk)

## Appendix C.6: Short Profile Questionnaire (Sample in Bengali)

প্রাথমিক পরিচিতি প্রশ্নপত্র

DS 500060

নং: ০২২  
 ৩/১, সজেনবী কোণ, মোস্তফাদপুর, ঢাকা. ১২০৭

পাড়া-----গ্রাম-----ডাকঘর-----মৌজা-----ইউনিয়ন-----উপজেলা-----

নাম: [Redacted] মেন বয়স ৬২ লিঙ্গ পুরুষ জাতিসত্তা বাঙালী

ধর্ম: সি.এফ.ডি পেশা মিস্টার

অবিবাহিত/বিবাহিত/বিচ্ছিন্ন/তালকপ্রাপ্ত/পরিত্যক্ত/বিধবা, পরিবারের আকার ৩ ৬

কৃষি পেশা হতে আয় (মাসিক/বার্ষিক)-----X-----

অকৃষি পেশা হতে আয় (দৈনিক/সাপ্তাহিক/মাসিক)-----৪৫,০০০/------

ভূমিহীন/ বর্গাচাষী/ ছোট কৃষক/ মাঝারী কৃষক/ বড় কৃষক-----স্বল্পে মত-----

ভূমির পরিমাণ-----বসতভিটা-----নিজ আবাদ-----বর্গাদান-----বর্গগ্রহণ-----বন্ধকদান-----বন্ধকগ্রহণ-----

২০০০ ৫

## Appendix C.7: Interview checklist (Transnational)

No. 5.

Interview Guide for Transnational Activists against Phulbari Mine

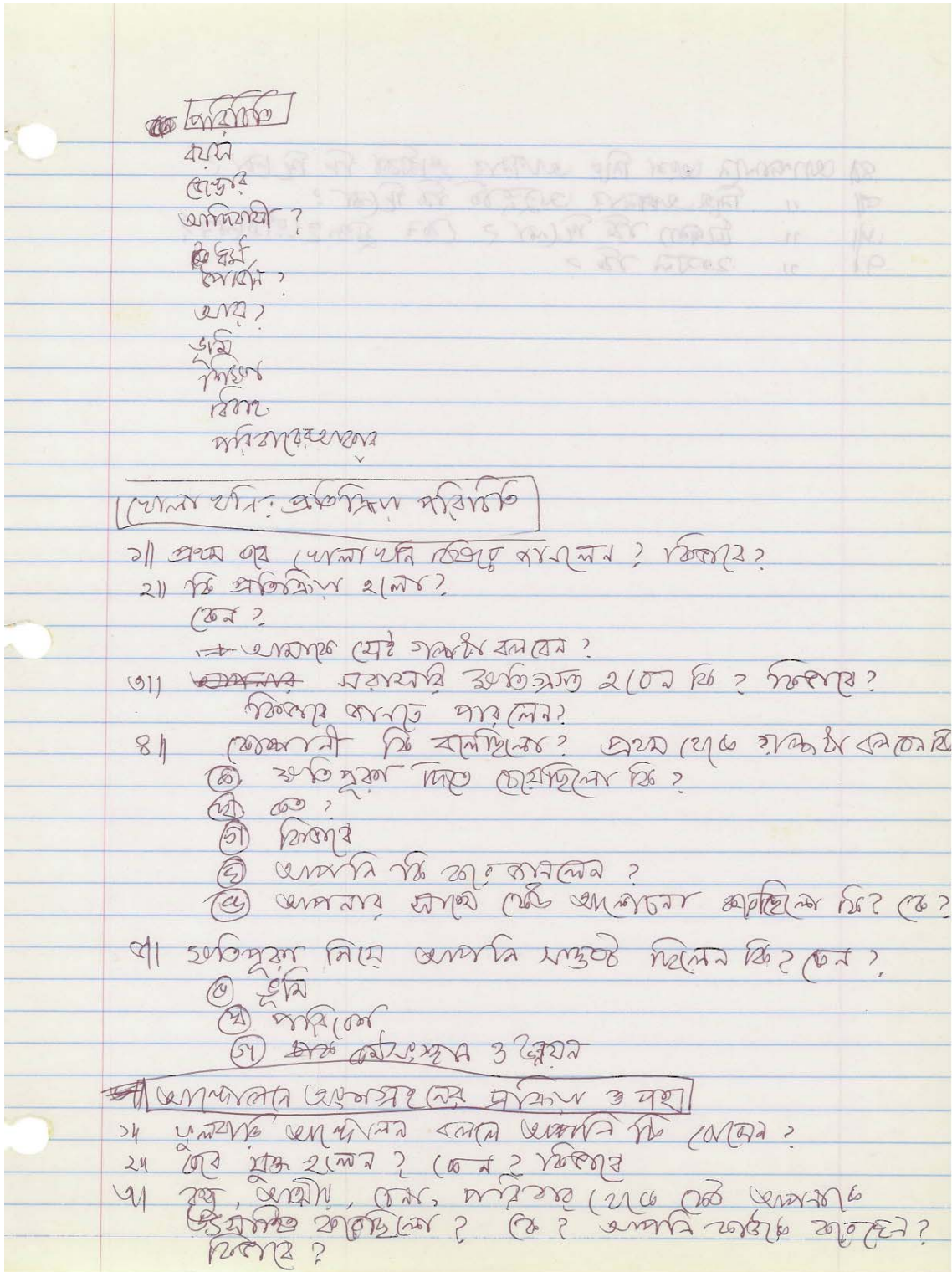
1. Profile of respondent and organization or Network: ~~Inception, income and resources, size, ideological stand~~ JAP
2. When and how did you first know about the mine? initial reactions? Why? Indi Vs Orgzn
3. ~~What was regarded to you as the greatest threat to the community in Phulbari (and people of Bangladesh) if the mine went ahead?~~
4. ~~Who do you think was responsible for this mine? Why?~~
5. ~~What were the main arguments in favour of the mine? Agree/disagree? Why? Compensation? Consultation?~~
6. ~~Were you convinced by the compensation package? Why?~~
7. When did you decide to join the movement? How? Why? Who approached you? 2008  
2006 2010
8. What happened after you joined the movement? What type of activities?
9. What were the reactions of those tactics from the company side? UK and Bangladesh?
10. ~~Who do you define as Us and Them? How?~~
11. Do you know anyone from Phulbari Raksha Committee? How? National Committee?
12. ~~Are you a member of any other civic/political organizations in Bangladesh? UK?~~
13. How long has your organization/network been involved in contention against coal mines or mining in general? Why? Who else is involved? Who are your organizational allies?
14. When did your organization decide to join Phulbari Resistance? Why? Who decided? How?
15. ~~Were people from Phulbari consulted while you strategize your tactics? Has everything worked according to your plan?~~
16. How was the open letters developed? What was the guiding principle behind writing the letters? (Walk me through)
17. The report on Phulbari Mine was commissioned by Bank Information Centre. How was this liaison established?
18. What tactics were performed to make financial institutions to withdraw support?
19. When did you know about the violence against the community on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 2006? How did you feel? Why?
20. How optimistic were you about stopping the mine (when you joined the movement)? Now?

21. Highlight of the whole experience.



December 2011

**Appendix C. 8: Local FGD Checklist (in Bengali)**





## **Appendix C. 10: Thematic Codes for discursive frames and their indicators**

**Development:** Includes positive references to the development of the mine as a determinant of job security, increased GDP, income and increase in Foreign Direct Investment.

**Displacement:** includes negative reference to moving out of challengers' abode or cultivable land for the mine

**Economic dependence:** negative references to the economy and poverty scenario after being affected by the mine

**Efficiency of Company:** references to the incapability and limits of the company that can significantly affect people in the mining area.

**Energy Security:** includes reference to how the mine will produce energy which will end the energy crisis of Bangladesh through exploiting coal resources.

**Environment Negative:** includes references to natural environment and the mines negative impact on such environment

**Environment Positive:** references to managing the environmental costs while mining

**Health and Safety:** references to the threats of health and safety issues of the people residing in the mine footprint

**Identity and Culture:** references to the threats to traditional ways of life, to graveyards and other places of religious and cultural significance

**Imperialism:** includes reference to the foreign countries involved with the mining as a force exploiting and controlling the country for profit.

**National Interest:** reference to the national capacity building and using the resources for the nation's own use

**Sustainable Mining:** includes positive references to resettlement, consultation and good practices of mining.

## Appendix for Chapter 4

### Appendix D 1: A Stylized Dialogue

Company: Here is an excellent mine for you. It will compensate your loss and bring jobs and electricity for you  
GoB: We need to encourage FDI.

This is good for the country since it will bring energy security

Community Leaders: We need proper compensation! Resettlement and Jobs!

Company: We would ensure high national and international standards of sustainable mining

Local and Regional Business Leaders: People who do not want the mine are hindering the progress of the country

GoB: This will bring growth. People who are against it are not patriots

Mining Expert: This is the best thing that can happen. The protestors are leftist, miscreant and a vocal minority.

International Financial Organisation: The only way to remove energy deficit for Bangladesh is to go for the coal

Company and GoB: those who dissent are not patriotic

Company: we will reduce the size of the mine. We will create a water reservoir. We will give you jobs. We will do sustainable mining

Government: If you do not want the mine, you are hindering the progress of the country

Community Leader: Will we be compensated properly? What are the chances?

Woman 1: I do not want to leave my trees and my relatives

Woman 2: I don't want to go to the settlement village to get sick in this age

Local Leader1: It will destroy our livelihood, our environment and our existence

Chapaiya: We do not have proper lease document, how will we get the compensation?

Local Leader 1: The GDP contribution from the agriculture of the community under threat is bigger than the royalty and profit the mining company is offering Bangladesh

Local Leader 2: Extracted coal will be exported

National Leader1: Mining Phulbari with open method will displace a hundred thousand people, destroy our environment our heritage and identity. If they export 80% of the coal, what are we going to make the electricity with?

NL 2: This will destroy the underground water aquifer and affect the whole region's agriculture.

Environmental hazard is too high

Local-National leaders: By opposing the mine we are the upholding the national interest – we are the biggest patriots.

## Appendices for Chapter 5

### Appendix E. 1: News Headlines

2005: 'Phulbari: attempts to extract coal again', 'Bangladesh has coal that measures as much as 53 TCF of gas', 'Bangladesh can get 7 billion dollar benefits from Phulbari Coal mine: an international survey report says'.

2006 Jan - June: 'Coal mine starts soon: Expert team in Phulbaria, Dinajpur', 'Mass conspiracy against Phulbari Coal Mine', 'People of Phulbari needs to know in light whether darkness is descending', 'Blockade of UNO office if Phulbari coal mine is NOT implemented', etc.

2006 June- Aug 5: 'Speakers at the Phulbari Rally: We'll fight till death to scrap the treacherous lease of the mine', 'Set Trial for those who has signed the deal with Asia Energy: Phulbari Declaration', 'Greater movement if AEC programs are not halted in Phulbari after 21 July', 'Asia Energy office blockade on 26th August'.

2006 Aug 6- Dec: 'Phulbari Alight: people have seized AEC offices and blazed homes of Dalals', 'DC Fails to appease the masses', 'Phulbari Tragedy 1: 7 killed hundreds injured as BDR fired at peaceful demo at Phulbari', 'Administrations' apathy to be blamed: Phulbari tragedy 2', 'Phulbari people has shown what true patriotism is', 'Thousands Defy Ban, Stage Protest: Phulbari Coal mine killing', 'Probe Committee report will be delayed: Phulbari Tragedy 4'.

## Appendices for Chapter 6

### Appendix F.1: International Media Coverage

News source	Date	Headline
AFP	26.8.2006	One Killed as Bangladesh Security Forces fire on Protestors
AFP	26.8.2006	Two Killed, 50 injured in Bangladesh protests: Police
AFP	26.8.2006	Three Killed, 50 injured in Bangladesh Protests: Police
AFP	27.8.2006	Bangladesh Towns Shut after Coal Mine Protestors Killed
AFP	27.8.2006	Northern Bangladesh Town Shut in Protest of Coal Miner Deaths
The Calgary Herald (Canada)	30.8.2006	Violent Protests Follow Shooting of Mine Opponents
The Telegraph	30.8.2006	Bangladesh Hit By Riots over British Mine plan
The Guardian	30.8.2006	Six Killed in Protests over UK mining Firm in Bangladesh
BBC Worldwide Monitoring	30.8.2006	Bangladesh
The Express	1.9.2006	Coal Mine Riots rock Asia Energy
The Guardian	1.9.2006	Mining Suspended
Coal Week International	4.9.2006	Asia energy Share Suspended
Investors Chronicle	22.9.2006	Identify the risks
Citywire	6.10.2006	Asia Energy might displace 40,000 Bangladeshis
Coal Week International	15.1.2007	Asia Energy changes name
LONDON (AFX)	22.1.2007	Global Coal buys 26.5 pct stake in Bangladesh's Peoples Telecom for 5 mln usd
LondoN (Thomson Financial)	13.2.2007	Global Coal Management raises stake in GVM Metals to 18.38 pct
Coal Week International	5.3.2007	Global Coal Management has global ambitions beyond its Bangladesh Phulbari coal project
London (Thomson Financial)	12.3.2007	GVM Metals swings to H1 pre-tax, net profit, raises 6.1 mln
LONDON (AFX)	16.3.2007	Global Coal H1 pretax loss widens to 1.03 mln stg on one-time charge
London (Thomson Financial)	16.4.2007	Global Coal says to form alliance with Aura Energy for African uranium projects
LONDON (Thomson Financial)	16.5.2007	Global Coal to pay \$5 mln for 5 % China Coal & Energy stake
London (Thomson Financial)	8.6.2007	Global Coal Management says upped stake in GVM Metals to 10.33 %
LONDON (Thomson Financial)	10.10.2007	Global Coal widens FY pre-tax loss on adoption of new accounting standard
UNB	29.11.2007	Coal Policy Review Committee to hear Asia Energy's view on Phulbari project
London (Thomson Financial)	15.2.2008	GCM Resources to invest further 2mln stg in PeoplesTel ups stake to 37 pct
London (Thomson Financial)	20.2.2008	Polo Resources shares restored, co ups stake in GCM Resources
London (Thomson Financial)	6.3.2008	GCM Resources swings to H1 pre-tax profit of 2.071 mln stg vs loss 1.025 mln
Observer	9.3.2008	Business & Media: Business: News: Fury at Bangladesh mine scheme
Coal Week International	17.3.2008	ADB considers \$100 million loan for Phulbari coal project
London (Thomson Financial)	27.3.2008	GCM Resources says Polo Resources lifts stake in company to 29.72%

London (Thomson Financial)	3.4.2008	ADB Pulls out
Observer	6.4.2008	Business & Media: Business:News: Asian bank scuppers UK mine project in Bangladesh
London (Thomson Financial)	8.4.2008	GCM Resources says still awaiting Phulbari scheme of development approval
London (Thomson Financial)	10.4.2008	GCM Resources, Aura Energy expand into Niger for uranium exploration
London (Thomson Financial)	7.5.2008	GCM Resources finds uranium mineralisation at new JV licences in Mauritania
London (Thomson Financial)	19.5.2008	GCM Resources says gets preliminary offer from Polo resources at 175 pence/share
London (Thomson Financial)	21.5.2008	GCM Resources acquires 13 percent in Aura Energy
London (Thomson Financial)	23.5.2008	Polo Resources says 'satisfied' with progress, 'confident' on growth prospects
Coal Week International	26.5.2008	Polo offers 50% premium to prise Phulbari project from GCM
The Times	28.5.2008	Dattels makes move on GCM
London (Thomson Financial)	12.6.2008	Polo Resources says terminates offer talks with GCM
London (Thomson Financial)	13.6.2008	UK smallcap opening - GCM Resources lower as Polo terminates bid talks
Coal Week International	16.6.2008	Polo Resources breaks off takeover talks with GCM
London (Thomson Financial)	17.6.2008	GCM Resources says Morgan Stanley lifts stake in company to 12.08 %
London (Thomson Financial)	18.6.2008	UK small cap opening - GCM Resources climbs as Morgan Stanley ups stake
London (Thomson Financial)	20.6.2008	GCM Resources says not aware of any reason for share price movement
London (Thomson Financial)	18.9.2008	GCM Resources swings to FY pre-tax profit of 1.28 mln pounds vs loss 1.25 mln
London (Thomson Financial)	27.10.2008	Polo Resources says retains strong financial position with \$81 mln in cash
London (Thomson Financial)	16.12.2008	BRIEF-GCM Resources says cash balances 'sufficient'
Reuters	2.1.2009	Glance-STOCKS NEWS EUROPE-GCM Resources up on 'credible' elections
London (Thomson Financial)	26.1. 2009	UPDATE 1-Polo gets offer approach, shares soar
London (Thomson Financial)	25.6.2009	BRIEF-GCM Resources says David Lenigras leaves board
London (Thomson Financial)	24.9.2009	BRIEF-GCM Resources posts loss as equity investments fall
Observer	28.9.2009	GCM remains committed to Phulbari coal project in Bangladesh
London (Thomson Financial)	29.9.2010	BRIEF-GCM Resources moving forward on Bangladesh project
London (Thomson Financial)	20.10.2010	BRIEF-GCM Resources sells stake in GCM Aura JV
UNB	22.12.2010	US pushed for reopening of Bangladesh coal mine
Reuters	27.9.2011	BRIEF-RESEARCH ALERT-RBC cuts GCM Resources price target

## Appendix F. 2: Transnational Coalition of Phulbari Resistance

### Signatories- Letter to the Asian Development Bank (1-63)

1. NGO Forum on ADB
2. Bank Information Center (USA)
3. Solo (Indonesia)
4. Public Services International Research Unit – Asia Desk
5. Center for Rural Development in Central Vietnam (Vietnam)
6. National Forum of Forest People & Forest Workers (India)
7. Citizens Concern for Dams and Development (NE India)
8. Urban Research Centre (India)
9. Images Asia Environment Desk (Thailand)
10. Oxfam Australia
11. Aid/Watch (Australia)
12. International Accountability Project (USA)
13. Sri Lankan Working Group on Trade and IFIs (Sri Lanka)
14. Centre for Environmental Justice (Sri Lanka)
15. Sri Lanka Green Movement (Sri Lanka)
16. Rural Development Services Centre (Vietnam)
17. NADI (Indonesia)
18. University of Delhi (India)
19. Rural Reconstruction Nepal / South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (Nepal)
20. Eco Centre (Tajikistan)
21. Creed Alliance (Pakistan)
22. Pakistan Institute of Labour Education & Research (Pakistan)
23. Anjuman Asiaye Awam (Pakistan)
24. ActionAid – Pakistan
25. Society for Environment and Human Development (Bangladesh)
26. Institute for Essential Services Reform (Indonesia)
27. Greenpeace India
28. VOICE (Bangladesh)
29. The Ecological Society Green Salvation (Kazakhstan)
30. Bangla Praxis (Bangladesh)
31. Oil Workers Rights Protection Organization Public Union (Azerbaijan)
32. Greenpeace Southeast Asia
33. Vikas Adhyayan Kendra (India)
34. Collective Initiative for Research and Action (Nepal)
35. EarthRights International
36. Researcher of Environmental Law Center "Armon" (Uzbekistan)
37. Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (Philippines)
38. North East Peoples Alliance on Trade, Finance and Development (NE India)
39. Ecological-Lawful Initiative Center "Globus" (Kazakhstan)
40. Center for Development of Civil Society (Tajikistan)
41. NGO "TAN" (Kazakhstan)
42. Both ENDS (The Netherlands)
43. Energy Probe Research Foundation (Canada)
44. Environmental Defense (USA)
45. Greenpeace India
46. A SEED Europe (The Netherlands)

47. Earth Economics (USA)
48. Mangrove Action Project (Thailand)
49. Institute of Science in Society (UK)
50. Global Response (USA)
51. International Conservation Initiatives Sanctuary Asia (USA)
52. Forest Peoples Programme (UK)
53. Berne Declaration (Switzerland)
54. ~PP~
55. Japan Center for a Sustainable Environment and Society
56. Urgewald (Germany)
57. Gender Action (USA)
58. Oceans and Communities (USA)
59. Les Amis de la Terre (France)
60. CSSC "Kalam" (Tajikistan)
61. Ecologistas en Acción (Spain)
62. Focus on the Global South (Philippines)
63. Focus on the Global South (Thailand)

### Letter to RBS and UBS (1-110)

1. Association "For Sustainable Human Development", NGO in Special Consultative Status with UNECOSOC, Armenia
2. AID/WATCH, Australia
3. Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc, NSW, Australia
4. Courthouse Climate Action Group, Australia
5. Friends of the Earth, Australia
6. Jubilee, Australia
7. Locals Into Victoria.s Environment, Australia
8. Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Australia
9. Oxfam Australia Queensland Committee and the University of Queensland Environment Collective, Australia
10. Resistance, Australia
11. Rising Tide Newcastle, Australia
12. Sutherland Climate Action Network, Australia
13. FIAN, Austria
14. Oil Workers Rights Protection Organization Public Union, Azerbaijan
15. ActionAid, Bangladesh
16. BanglaPraxis, Bangladesh
17. Coastal Development Partnership (CDP), Bangladesh
18. Solidarity Workshop, Bangladesh
19. VOICE, Bangladesh
20. Núcleo Amigos da Terra, Brasil
21. Green Policy Institute, Bulgaria
22. FOCARFE, Cameroon
23. Friends of the Earth, Cyprus
24. Friends of the Earth, Finland
25. Les Amis de la Terre, France
26. Asienhaus, Germany
27. FIAN International, Germany
28. Urgewald, Germany
29. Forum for Indigenous Perspectives and Action, India
30. Indian Social Action Forum -INSAF, India
31. Nadi Ghati Morcha, India
32. National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers, India
33. North East Peoples' Alliance on Trade Finance and Development, India
34. Public Interest Research Centre, India
35. Urban Research Centre, India

36. Debt watch, Indonesia
37. Institute for Essential Services Reform (IESR), Indonesia
38. Campagna per la Riforma della Banca Mondiale, Italy
39. Japan Center for a Sustainable Environment and Society, Japan
40. NGO Globus, Kazakhstan
41. Community Environmental Promotion and Cultural Association (CEPCA), Lao PDR
42. Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, Nepal
43. National Concerned Society, Nepal
44. Nepal Policy Institute, Nepal
45. Water and Energy Federation Nepal (WAFED), Nepal
46. BankTrack, Netherlands
47. Both ENDS, Netherlands
48. Milieudefensie / Friends of the Earth, Netherlands
49. Participatory Development Initiatives, Pakistan
50. Umeedenaao Citizen Community Board, Pakistan
51. 11.11.11, Philippines
52. Center for Environmental Concerns (CEC), Philippines
53. EmPOWER Consumers, Philippines
54. Freedom from Debt Coalition, Secretary General, Philippines
55. NGO Forum on the ADB, Philippines
56. ODA Watch, Philippines
57. Philippines Rural Reconstruction Movement, Philippines
58. Public Services International Research Unit, Philippines
59. NGO Environmental Law Center "Armon", Republic of Uzbekistan
60. Friends of the Earth, Scotland
61. Wave, Scotland
62. Centre for Environmental Justice, Sri Lanka
63. Aktion Finanzplatz Schweiz, Switzerland
64. arbeitskreis tourismus & entwicklung, Switzerland
65. Basler Appell gegen Gentechnologie, Switzerland
66. Berne Declaration, Switzerland
67. berweigerconsulting, Switzerland
68. BeTrieb, Switzerland
69. fair-fish association, Switzerland
70. Greenpeace, Switzerland
71. Grüne Partei der Schweiz, Parti écologiste suisse, Switzerland
72. HEKS, Swiss Interchurch Aid, Switzerland
73. medico international schweiz, Switzerland
74. Responsible for Projects of medico international schweiz, Switzerland
75. Schweizerisches Rotes Kreuz Kanton Zürich, Switzerland
76. SOLIFONDS, Switzerland
77. Swiss Red Cross Canton Zurich, Switzerland
78. World Without Mines, Switzerland
79. Youth Ecological Centre, Tajikistan
80. Forest Peoples Programme, U.K.
81. Platform, U.K.
82. The Corner House, U.K.
83. War on Want, U.K.
84. World Development Movement, U.K.
85. Adrian Dominican Sisters, U.S.A.
86. Congregation of St. Joseph, U.S.A.
87. Congregation of the Sisters of St. Agnes, U.S.A.
88. Crude Accountability, U.S.A.
89. Environmental Defense Fund, U.S.A.
90. Friends of the Earth, U.S.A.
91. Forest Ethics, U.S.A.
92. Gender Action, U.S.A.
93. Global Response, U.S.A.
94. International Accountability Project, U.S.A.
95. International Rivers, U.S.A.
96. Maryknoll Sisters, U.S.A.
97. Midwest Coalition for Responsible Investments, U.S.A.
98. Mission Hospital, U.S.A.
99. National Association of Muslim American Women (NAMAW), U.S.A.
100. Oil Change International, U.S.A.
101. Pacific Environment, U.S.A.
102. Rainforest Action Network, U.S.A.
103. Region VI Coalition for Responsible Investment, U.S.A.
104. School Sisters of Notre Dame Cooperative Investment Fund, U.S.A.
105. Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, U.S.A.
106. Sisters of Charity of New York, U.S.A.
107. Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, U.S.A.
108. Sustainable Energy and Environment Network, U.S.A.
109. Instituto del Tercer Mundo (ITEM), Uruguay
110. Rural Development Services Centre,

**Appendix F.3: Leaflets of the demonstration in 2010 & 2011, London**

# GCM, HANDS OFF BANGLADESH

**NO TO DISPLACEMENT OF 200,000 PEOPLE**

**NO TO DESTRUCTION OF FOOD PRODUCTION**

**NO TO DESTRUCTION OF WATER SOURCES**

**NO TO PLUNDER OF 94% COAL FROM PHULBARI**



**NO OPEN CAST MINING IN PHULBARI**

**JOIN THE DEMO AGAINST GCM RESOURCES PLC TO PROTECT RESOURCES OF BANGLADESH**

[protectbdresources.org.uk](http://protectbdresources.org.uk)



GCM Resources plc is a British company supported by major hedge funds and banks including UBS, Credit Suisse, Barclays Bank, L1 Global, and Argos Greater Europe Fund. It is planning an open pit coal mining in Phulbari, Bangladesh bringing massive displacement, loss of livelihood and environmental devastation.

**No to open pit mining!** An incarnation of the notorious Asia Energy plc which was thrown out of Bangladesh by people's movements in 2006, GCM Resources' mine will:

- Destroy 660 acres of highly fertile land crucial to food production.
- Displace nearly a quarter of a million people – most of them indigenous farmers, destroying their land and livelihood
- Cause massive environmental devastation- acid poisoning of soil and water and air pollution in a densely populated region.
- Allow GCM to take away 94% of coal resources and on top of that they'll benefit from 9 years of tax holiday! Force Bangladesh to buy its own coal at the exorbitant prices of the international market.

In August 2006, 6 people were killed and 200 injured after Bangladesh paramilitary forces fired on a massive protest against Asia Energy plc by the Phulbari people's movement. This was followed by widespread strikes. Eventually the government declared that Asia Energy would have to leave Bangladesh and that there would be no more open-pit mining allowed in the country. However in October 2006, the company changed its name to Global Coal Management plc, claimed that it had received no notification from the government of Bangladesh of any changes to the terms of its contract, and that it was fully committed to the Phulbari Coal Project in Bangladesh. Later it changed its name again to GCM Resources plc. Resistance to the company and the open pit mine has continued with a 100,000 strong protest rally in Phulbari in October 2010.



In the UK and internationally the National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas-Mineral Resources, Port-Power of Bangladesh is campaigning in solidarity with the people of Phulbari to throw GCM Resources plc out of Bangladesh and the International Accountability Project and Cultural Survival are calling on Bangladesh's Prime Minister to defend human rights by rejecting the Phulbari project and banning open pit coal mining.

**Come and show your solidarity with the people of Phulbari Bangladesh**

Protest at the AGM: Sceptre Court  
40 Tower Hill London EC3N 4DX  
10.30 am, Thursday 15th December 2011.

For further information: [www.protectbdresources.org.uk](http://www.protectbdresources.org.uk)  
Published by: Mahmudur Rahman Benu,  
Convener, The National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas-Mineral Resources, Port-Power of Bangladesh, UK Branch  
Tel: 07950 483696.





**Appendix G 2: Two major Investors' reactions (93 messages)<sup>117</sup>**

Month and Year	Shared news from Bangladesh Press	Verbally Attacked Protestors <sup>118</sup>
October 2010	3	8
November 2010	7	17
December 2010	5	25
January 2011	1	5
February 2011	4	22

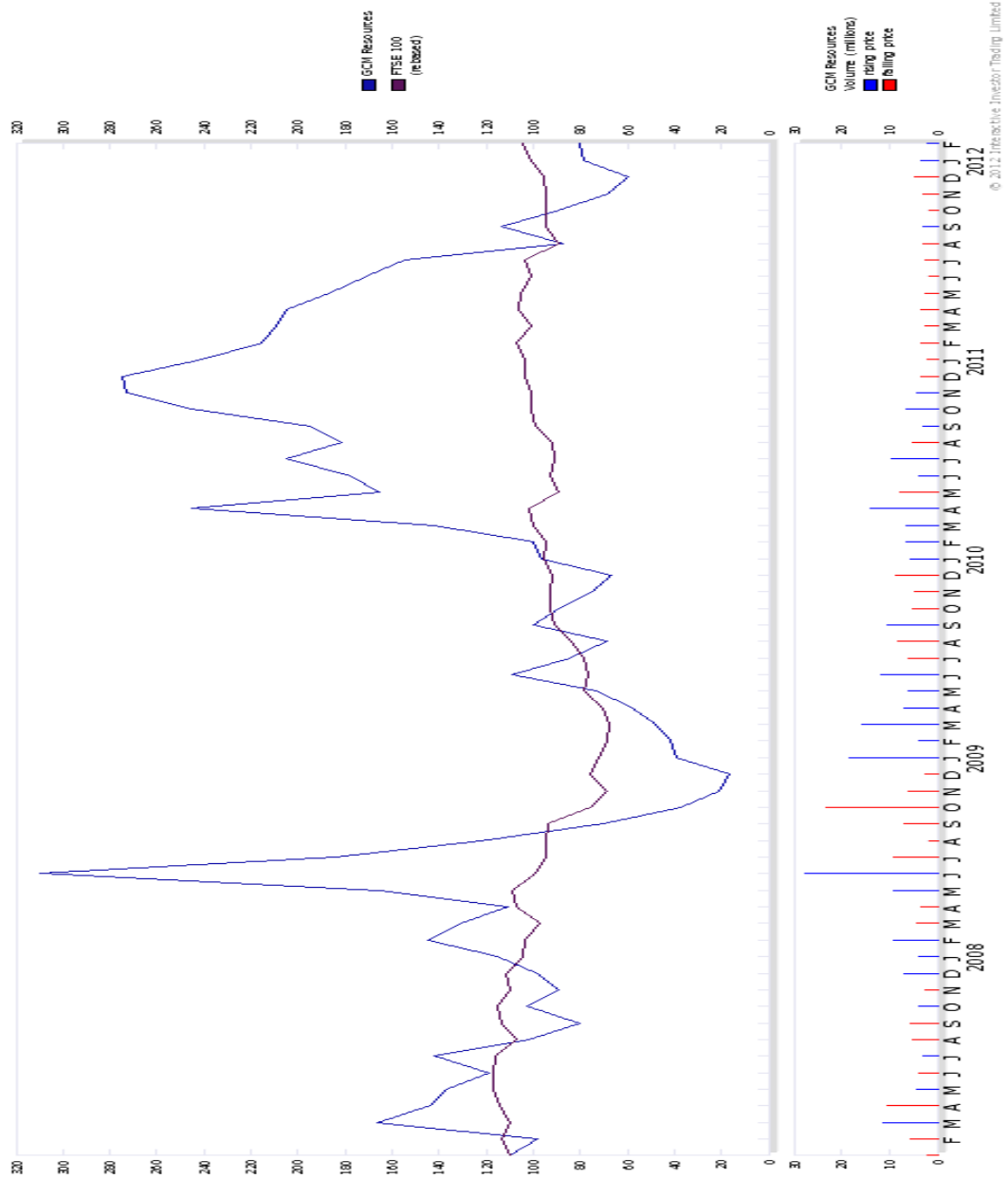
Source: III bulletin board for GCM investors

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<sup>117</sup> The message contents are not mutually exclusive. Some messages that shared news also abused the protestors. Irrelevant posts (25) were not considered.

<sup>118</sup> This did not even spare the Prime Minister of Bangladesh

### Appendix G 3: Share Price in contrast to the FTSE 100



Source: III downloaded on 21.1.2012<sup>119</sup>

<sup>119</sup> <http://www.gcmplc.com/share-price-chart>. Downloaded on 25.1.2012

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