

Doctoral Dissertation

**Counteracting Civil Intelligentsia of Bangladesh: An Understanding  
through the Relational Social Movements  
(Summary of the Dissertation)**

MOSHREKA ADITI HUQ  
D172568

Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation  
Hiroshima University

The study explores the counteracting role of the civil intelligentsia of Bangladesh toward power imposition and state hegemony. In that relation, the study adopted two relational social movements. This study argues that by resisting the state-sponsored political imposition and flawed development policies, the progressive platforms of the civil intelligentsia of Bangladesh create a counter-hegemonic struggle toward the state's hegemonic dominance.

The Sundarban-Rampal Anti Power Plant Movement located civil intelligentsia, actively struggling the establishment of a coal-fired power plant on the edge of the mangrove forest, the Sundarbans. This plant is believed to be disastrous for the country's southern zone's ecosystem, risking future dispossession and migration of local people. Similarly, the Chandpur-Begumkhan Tea Workers Movement represents civil intelligentsias' soft resistance against the establishment of an economic zone in the cultivable agricultural lands of tea workers in the northern part of the country. This project violates the tea workers' various rights, risking them for future displacement as well. By applying Foucault-Gramscian theoretical understanding, this study intended to examine (1) the way civil intelligentsia generates dissent to the power imposition by the government; (2) the way they contribute in the counter-hegemonic role being active and soft resistance participants; and (3) the rudiments of the counteracting mode of the civil intelligentsia. In this effort, concerning the methodology, the study entirely followed a qualitative approach with an anthropological perspective. Therefore, the research techniques of Interview, Focus Group Discussion, Participation-Observation, Key Informant, and Memoirs, and Narrations were beneficial.

**Chapter One** clarifies the two movement backgrounds, research proposition, research objectives, and questions, literature reviews notifying the research gaps, study rationales, theoretical framework, research significance along with research methodology, and distribution of the chapters.

**Chapter Two** primarily distinguishes the social resistances of Bangladesh, engaging the historical emergence of intellectuals. Initially, the elaboration facilitates the years between 1952 and 1971, considering this era as the rise of Bengali nationalism and independence. Then it elaborates on the social movements relating to political and intellectual struggles between 1972 and 2000. It identifies this as the era of construction, transition, and transformation of national politics encompassing social resistances. The final segment describes the preparatory phase of changing politics from 2001 until the present day of 2020, involving the changing trends of social movements and intellectual entities.

**Chapter Three** conveys the description of the three research objectives regarding the case of the Sundarban-Rampal Anti Power Plant Movement. It attends the composition of civil intelligentsia platform explaining the National Committee to Protect Oil Gas Mineral Resources Power and Port of Bangladesh (NCBD), National Committee for Saving the Sundarbans (NCSS), Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA), Left democratic Alliance (LDA), Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), and independent intellectual entities for the Sundarban Movement. Consequently, the six specific movement phases are presented containing 1) Primary reaction; 2) Initial stage, 3) Interval for the national election and post-election reaction; 4) Rigorous movement; 5) Slow and mild; and 6) Stage of resettlement and reconstitution.

Concerning the imposition, the chapter detects the manifestations of the government's rationale, regulation, and suppressive strategies applied in the Rampal Coal-fire Power Station project. The field findings show the alienation and political apathy of the masses in the affected area,

which influenced the resistance. The study encompasses the counter-conducting civil intelligentsia in responding to the eco-governance, neoliberal development, violent development, and suppressive power attributes. It shows that their scholarly writing, criticism, understandings, and academic protests had become the process of manifesting dissents.

The chapter discusses the problem of hegemony and the question of the subaltern in this issue. It shows that subalternity is possible even for the advantaged civil society bodies in a specific power context. However, civil intelligentsias' counter-hegemonic struggle distributes them into two types of activism: 1) Academic Epistemic Activism and Institutional Applied Activism. The first type included scholarly, academic, and cultural attributes. Similarly, the second type of activism encompassed mostly the political demonstrations of civil intellectual members. These two kinds of demonstrations altogether identify them in the 'active' resistance for this movement.

The discussion also places the flexible organic relationship between civil intelligentsia actors, which found: 1) the comprehensive participations of core intellectual bodies and civil societies to give this movement a well-accepting character; 2) the necessity of the engagement of academic intellectuals in the action constructing counter rationales; 3) organic bridging of civil societies who would arrange the advocacy, and network with international bodies of experts, analysts, human rights organizations, and policymakers; and 4) the importance for removing the political stigmas through the Sundarban Movement.

It shows that the eco-nationalist consciousness, patriotism, political consciousness, organizational-personal commitment, and personal-social frustration motivated the civil intelligentsia's spirit of resistance. The specific seven functional limitations of the civil intelligentsia comprised: 1) problem of academic language; 2) internal group tensions; 3) representation of a messianic role; 4) suppressive interruptions 5) constant campaigning of the government; 6) practical weakness of organization center, and 7) particular geography of the problem area. Finally, this chapter shows a contradictory stand between intellectuals and the government regarding 'eco-nationalism' and 'development-nationalism.' However, the study also indicates the subjugated people's anxiety regarding the development and changes, whose voices are not recognized yet in the power context.

**Chapter Four**, for the case of Chandpur-Begumkhan Tea Workers Movement, also answers the three research objectives and questions. Contrary to the Sundarban Movement, these protesters comprised two wings: mass tea workers and the civil intelligentsia respectively. Therefore, the description emphasized civil group Committee to Support for Saving the Agricultural Land of Tea Laborers (CSSALTL), Shorbopran Shangshkritik Shakti (The Cultural Strength for Every Living Thing), and independent intellectuals for the intelligentsia wing. It also describes the tea workers' primary resistance platform representing Chandpur-Begumkhan Land Protection Committee (CBLPC) and Bangladesh Tea Workers Union (BTWU) as another protest wing. The main dispute and the four movement phases of 1) Primary Reaction; 2) Militant Counter; 3) Strategic Executions with Stable Activities; and the 4) Natural Declination and the Renewal of Spirit, are described.

This chapter, too, illustrates the attributes of government's power imposition through authority's rationales, the regulation process for targeted workers, and strategies like campaign and suppression by the local government agents. Similarly, the other part investigates civil intellectual entities' understanding of neoliberal market expansion and colonialism and how they offered their criticism regarding this violent development scheme.

The chapter postulates the two-fold hegemonic dominance (colonial rulers and present government authorities) on the tea workers. Afterward, it depicts the issue of subaltern tea workers. To show the counter-hegemonic role of the civil intelligentsia, the discussion identifies them as the cultural movement's career. In that regard, it emphasizes their cultural attributes of Epistemic Activism more than their Institutional Applied Activism, which is usually more political. Their both kinds of demonstrations and degree of participation signifies them in a 'soft resistance' role in the movement.

Detecting a flexible organic relations between the actors of the intelligentsia wing, the study finds two mentionable features. Those are: 1) The way intellectual actors distributed their activism through organizing, cultural attributes, and scholarly attributes; and 2) the way the intellectual members contributed a 'civil resistance' without non-partisan characteristics. Besides, their organic connection with the tea workers' wing was the utmost necessity. Finally, the chapter shows six factors of time, duo-presence, romanticism, personal frustration, political interest, and interest in theoretical understanding as intellectual dissenters' motivation.

**Chapter Five** intended to offer a discussion on the projected points of the two cases and their core findings. The continuance initially mentions the significance of time, duo-presence, and resistance of the civil intellectual dissenters showing the 'relational' nature of the cases. Among the three significance, the time shows the correlated acceleration of both movements. The result of the intellectual bodies' duo-presence found the common protesters of the Chandpur Movement, who were equally active in the Sundarban Movement. Mentioning intellectuals' active and soft activism, the third point emphasizes the inevitability of the subalterns' resistance.

Depicting two cases' resemblance and variance for three research questions, the chapter shows the movement outcomes, contradicting rationales of eco-nationalism and development-nationalism, top-down and bottom-up movement approaches of the intellectual actors, dissenters' compositions, and the basic problem motive. Then it focuses the government authorities' imposed attributes in applying eco-governance, the exercise of colonial mentality, & suppressive power applications with the motive of business expansion and violent developmentalism. It found the civil intelligentsia, expressing their dissents through counter-rationales, counter-logics, criticisms, and realization for both cases. Afterward, the chapter shows types of hegemony, subject of subalternity, and active and soft resistance in the counter-hegemonic struggle of the civil intelligentsia. It indicates both the collective and individual ground of intellectual bodies in organic relations, along with different motivation and functional limitations. The third research question reaches the central finding of the counteracting civil intelligentsia identifying six common rudiments like protest mentality, critical thinking, the language of the intellectuals, leadership, and political consciousness in this reasoning.

**Chapter Six** portrays the conclusive remarks. It concludes by mentioning the core arguments for each chapter and detects the particular answers to the three research questions and presumed objectives. It shows the contributions to the research gaps, features of counteracting civil intelligentsia regionally and globally, study limitations, and future scopes of the present study.

The study found the counteracting civil intelligentsia as the traversed cluster of intellectual entities with liberal insubordination to supremacy who equalize explicit organic activism and traditional roles. Being counteracting, a tendency of questioning power, and thinking critically-had been satisfactorily present in their social function. They are spirited, voluntary, and organic people of morals who resist inequality with political consciousness with urban civil features in

its existential formation. The civil intellectuals are socially recognized professionals who uphold not fully but a deep tendency- as Gramsci stated, “new intellectuals with organic character’ to merge subaltern people and subalternity. Their exceptional resistance features make them ‘counteracting,’ certainly, where they stand against any kind of uneven authoritarian power.