

# Adversarial Project Stakeholders. Influencing Projects With Options

Aurangzeb Z. Khan<sup>1</sup> & Miroslaw Skibniewski<sup>2</sup> & John H. Cable<sup>3</sup>

1: Department of Management Sciences, COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Islamabad, Pakistan; aurangzeb\_khan@comsats.edu.pk

2: Project Management Center for Excellence, A. James A. Clark School of Engineering, University of Maryland, College Park, MD; mirek@umd.edu

3: Project Management Center for Excellence, A. James Clark School of Engineering, University of Maryland, College Park, MD; jcable@umd.edu

Stakeholders are considered the key driving force and most important critical success factor on every project. They fall into two basic categories, namely, the internal or primary stakeholders who are contractually or legally bound to the project and normally have a vested interest in its success, and the external or secondary stakeholders who have no active role in the project but who are being affected by it in the positive or negative sense and who consequently may adopt a supportive or hostile stance towards the project. The entities in the latter group, known as the adversarial stakeholders, may actively seek the project's prevention, disruption or even premature termination by exercising their power and influence against it through application of several 'options' which lie at their disposal. It is thus important for project practitioners to be aware of these options in order to prevent their application or at least seek to minimize the detrimental effects on their projects which may result therefrom.

Based on an in-depth analysis of over fifty high-profile, well-documented and controversial completed and on-going projects primarily in construction and in civil infrastructure in several developed and developing countries, this research has identified a broad spectrum of soft and hard options which adversarial stakeholders have used, often successfully, against the projects studied. Our research has determined that while some options are universally applied regardless of project location, others tend to be country and/or context specific. Effectiveness of the options depends on myriad factors such as the stakeholders' access to information, their awareness and ability to network and organize against the project, and enlist media and public support for their cause. Furthermore, adversarial stakeholders have a higher likelihood of achieving their objectives in countries where democratic as opposed to authoritarian systems are prevalent.

## Introduction

In their paper *Understanding Project Stakeholder Psychology. The Path to Successful Project Stakeholder Management & Engagement* the authors discussed six psychological attributes which determine the course of action all stakeholders adopt towards a project. The authors research showed that external or secondary stakeholders fall into three distinct categories – neutral, supportive, and adversarial – the last of which represents a potentially severe risk for the project if these stakeholders are not engaged by it appropriately. The fact that even many larger projects encountered severe and sustained stakeholder opposition to an extent that, in some instances, forcefully brought about their premature termination, lucidly demonstrates the possible existential challenge posed by actively adversarial external stakeholders and the criticality of effective adversarial stakeholder engagement for project owners, managers, planners and executors.

Consequently, in order to confront and at least seek to successfully overcome the challenges adversarial stakeholders pose to projects, it is imperative to understand how and to what extent they can adversely

affect projects. External stakeholders, individually and collectively, possess power and influence which they can exercise in the form of 'options' against the project per se or against its constituent phases, technical and managerial activities and processes and deliverables, consequently jeopardizing attainment of its goal and/or its scope, cost, schedule and other objectives. This gives rise to several questions: What are these options, can they be categorized, how effective are they when exercised individually or collectively, are they applicable on a global level, and how can the project counteract these options proactively as well as reactively in order to safeguard itself? In this research the authors have attempted to provide answers to these questions and in doing so achieve a twin objective, namely, to provide awareness and insights to key project stakeholders which can help to significantly reduce their project risk while simultaneously prompting them to pursue collaborative instead of confrontational strategies vis-à-vis their stakeholders and in doing so to achieve a win-win solution for both sides.

For this exploratory empirical research study the authors have carefully reviewed over fifty medium to large completed, prematurely terminated or still on-going projects in both developed and developing countries across the globe, focusing primarily on projects in construction and civil infrastructure development. The choice was not arbitrary; projects involving spatial development tend in general to be more controversial in stakeholder perspective because the external stakeholders affected, regardless of whether they are supportive or adversarial towards the project, are often numerically comparatively larger, are compositionally more heterogeneous, and their range of motivations and especially their concerns broader than those of the external stakeholders of other project categories. Moreover, the life-cycles of medium and larger projects in construction and civil infrastructure development tend to be longer-lasting during which offers more opportunity for opposition to emerge, develop, spread and increase in intensity and because of their high-profile visibility, coupled with often poorly conceived and implemented stakeholder engagement, court considerable media publicity which is often of the negative sort. Projects across the globe and in both developed and developing countries were chosen in order to determine whether any locational differences in adversarial stakeholders access to options exists. However, due to resource limitations a comparative analysis of option effectiveness in either country category was not performed.

Whilst undertaking this research, two aspects became apparent. First, the more stakeholders expect they stand to incur a net loss in consequence of a project - irrespective of whether their expectation is real or imagined – then the higher is the likelihood they will attempt to hinder or obstruct the project by exercising the options available to them. Sometimes, fearing for their livelihoods, homes, communities or even their very existence, desperate stakeholders tend to be more receptive to the use of 'harder' options and may resort to acts of violence and intimidation in the hope of preventing, stopping or changing a project to the extent that they are satisfied it poses no existential or major threat to their interests.

Adversarial stakeholders are not a homogeneous entity but are like a microcosm of society. They comprise individuals, groups, communities, associations and organizations – even countries. Some adversarial stakeholders are powerful, others are not. The intensity of their adversity can vary significantly. Some stakeholders feel much more passionately than others about the project and its current or anticipated impact on them as well as on the people, places and things they hold dear and may exercise all options which are available to them with a view to causing maximum damage, disruption or embarrassment to a project. Other stakeholders may refrain from doing so. Adversarial stakeholders may have diverse interests, goals, backgrounds, abilities, education, awareness, intelligence, outlooks on life, belief systems and so forth but they all share one common objective, namely, their opposition to the project. As the authors suggested in

their paper *Understanding Stakeholder Psychology: The Path to Effective Stakeholder Management and Engagement*, stakeholder opposition to a project normally stems from the disequilibrium which arises between their respective expectations and perceptions. Consequently, unless and until the project can convince its adversarial stakeholders otherwise, which it can attempt to do by designing and executing well-crafted engagement strategies, their opposition will persist and possibly gain momentum over time. It is clearly not in the interest of any project to have a large number of adversarial external stakeholders, especially powerful and influential ones, arrayed against it and the more numerous these become, the greater is the potential danger for the project when they exercise their options. Thus, the onus rests with the project to identify and analyze the causes of stakeholder opposition and to proactively attempt to eliminate or reduce opposition to the maximum possible extent. Projects cannot prevent adversarial stakeholders from exercising their options but they can discourage them from doing so through effective, creative, flexible and sustained stakeholder engagement, based on a robust and in-depth stakeholder analysis, which directly and convincingly address both general and specific stakeholder concerns, and ensure that preferably all or at least most stakeholders ultimately stand to gain, not to lose from projects.

Second, the number of options available to stakeholders appears to be country and culture-specific. In democratic and enlightened societies where most people are educated and aware of their rights and empowered by law, where judiciary is generally impartial and grievances can be redressed promptly by courts, where the media is independent and where public administration is less corruption-prone and civil society is very strong, the stakeholder option spectrum is broader and more potent than in non-democratic or in authoritarian/totalitarian states and non-enlightened societies where the above features are generally lacking if not altogether non-existent. The inability of stakeholders in such situations to seek and gain redress for their grievances against projects through conventional options – coupled with the sheer and frequent disregard for their concerns and lack of engagement by the projects - however, renders them more susceptible to adopt forms of violence to express their opposition and this is borne out by numerous widely publicized incidents which have occurred in recent years.

### **Adversarial External Stakeholder Options**

The authors' research shows that the adversarial stakeholder option spectrum comprises four distinct categories: *General Options* which are frequently encountered on construction and civil infrastructure projects, *Visible Public Opposition* which involves an open and usually organized open display of adversity by a large number of stakeholders towards a project, *Acts of Intimidation and Violence* against the project and its proponents, and *Transnational Options* which find application solely in the context of projects having transnational character. In addition, the authors have determined that there is a fifth category, *Special Options*, which are usually country-specific, rarely exercised and apparently few in number, and which due to its rather exotic nature was excluded from this study.

**General Options:** Commonly encountered in the context of construction and civil infrastructure projects, these options are numerous, diverse in nature, and legally and ethically non-contentious. While many are collectivist in character, i.e., they tend to involve a large number of stakeholders all acting against the project in a coordinated manner according to the 'strength in numbers' principle, some can also be exercised by stakeholders acting individually or in a small group. From their research the authors ascertained that it is typical for most, and sometimes even for all these options to be exercised at some point in time

against projects. By exercising multiple options a project the stakeholders can drastically increase their potency potential and consequently the threat level to the project. Seventeen of the more prominent options are introduced and briefly discussed below:

*Disputation of the project need and/or outcomes* are frequently raised by adversarial stakeholders. They view the project either as probably ineffective or even likely to worsen the deficiency it is intended to overcome, impossible to undertake or simply unnecessary and constituting a wastage of resources which could be utilized on other schemes higher up on their need priority list. Likewise, the intended outcomes may be considered too optimistic and non-commensurate with the resources invested in the project and in future may even be eclipsed by the negative foreseen and/or unforeseen consequences of the change brought about by the project. A case in point is the I-270 highway widening project in Maryland's Montgomery and Fredrick counties whose enormous estimated cost of approximately 3.5 billion Dollars far exceeded other feasible traffic decongestion options under consideration. Opponents of the project claimed that widening the interstate would encourage rampant sprawling in both counties in future which in turn would result in traffic congestion in time, thereby negating the positive outcomes the project is supposed to deliver. In the event that project adversaries can produce convincing scientific evidence to support their claims, which they often tend to do, then the pressure on projects to refute or disprove such evidence increases, failing which the projects will be portrayed in a negative light resulting in more public opposition to them. However, the authors' research findings indicate that need and/or outcome disputation and good argumentation by stakeholders per se appears to be largely ineffective in transforming or halting projects.

The adversarial stakeholder option *proposition of alternative project design* is usually used with the objective of minimizing the anticipated adverse social and environmental repercussions anticipated from the execution of the design adopted by the project owner and planners. Developing one or more 'superior' alternative designs for consideration may require a high level of technical and engineering expertise and experience in addition to quality informational input on the part of the adversarial stakeholders or those entities commissioned by them for this purpose. Though non-binding on the project owners, alternative designs which appear superior to the project's own design may attract the attention and the support of other stakeholders, including highly influential ones, which consequently may compel the project owners to adopt or at least consider using them. Stakeholder-proposed alternatives are common on construction and civil infrastructure projects but while noted, in most instances they go unheeded. Exceptions are there, however. A notable case in point concerns the famous Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. Keen to construct a commercial road through the park's northern section, which would have heavily disrupted the eco-system and in particular the migration of wildlife, the Tanzanian government agreed in the wake of fierce internal and international opposition to modify its plans by considering the construction of an unpaved road through a remote northern section of the park and also by reviewing the possibility of constructing an alternative southern road, financed by the World Bank, which would bypass the eco-system.

*Public Hearings and Consultations* are mandated by law in many countries for public and commercial construction and civil infrastructure projects. They provide adversarial stakeholders with an excellent opportunity to voice their general and specific concerns about the project and if they can, to suggest alternative design proposals through the processes of consultation and participation. While the recommendations of the stakeholders usually are non-binding and the events themselves have some serious inherent organizational and other shortcomings, their input does enable a critical reflection about project in question and the possibility that changes to the project design are carried out in order to ease the level of observed

and anticipated opposition to the project or to incorporate valuable insights that may not have been apparent initially to the project owners or planners.

Another common option used against projects by adversarial stakeholders is *non-cooperation*. This can assume several manifestations such as refusal by stakeholders to sell their land, goods or services to the project or to work for the project, withholding information which can be beneficial for it, or declining to give consent and approval which may be a legal or procedural requirement in the project approval process. An excellent case in point is Michael Forbes, the Scottish farmer in Aberdeenshire who made world headlines in 2007 for refusing to sell his 23 acres plot of land to the billionaire property developer (and now incumbent US President) Donald Trump. Forbe's strategically located land was needed for Trump's highly controversial project to construct a golf course, luxury hotel and other facilities in the scenic coastal spot despite intense opposition from environmentalists. Despite heavy pressure bordering on harassment and intimidation exerted over a prolonged period of time on Forbes and his co-resident aged mother both by Trump's project team and the Scottish authorities, he has to this day successfully fought to retain ownership of his property.

*Boycotts* are another option occasionally resorted to by stakeholders. Boycotts in some manifestation or the other have occurred across the world for over a century. After the second world war and, in particular, since the last thirty to forty years these have been used increasingly as a means of collective protest against practices by commercial organizations whose practices are deemed unethical or at odds with acceptable contemporary standards, especially in regard to human and animal rights, preservation of the environment, and sustainability. In some places – India for instance - nationalism has driven calls for a public boycott of foreign companies and multinational's products and greater reliance instead on local substitutes. Though boycotts usually target the operations of organizations it seems reasonable to conjecture that on-going and under consideration projects of these organizations – for example, factory construction and product marketing campaigns - may be affected by boycott calls if management deems them a threat to future business and revenue in which case the projects may be redesigned or executed in a manner which seeks to incorporate the misgivings expressed by its opposing stakeholders.

*Land acquisition, parcelization and ownership distribution* is a novel and creative adversarial stakeholder option that has cropped up on at least a few occasions, most notably with the objective of thwarting the extension of Heathrow Airport in London through the addition of a third runway. Dubbed 'Airplot!', supporters of the environmentalist organization Greenpeace, including an Oscar-winning actress and an acclaimed comedian, purchased a plot of land half the size of a football field in direct proximity of the proposed runway, and subsequently invited the general public to attain co-ownership rights at no cost by adding their names to a form posted online. Several thousand promptly did so raising the possibility of legal gridlock in the event of a compulsory purchase order being passed by the British government and which consequently would significantly delay the new runway's construction.

To prevent the proposed destruction of cherished buildings and structures stakeholders have sometimes exercised a financially costly but very effective option – they *purchased the project site/place* in question. The house where the famous musician Ludwig von Beethoven lived in the German city of Bonn is a case in point. It was saved from demolition and converted into a museum back in 1889 by a concerned group of citizens. Similarly, the acclaimed British author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's residence at Undershaw near London, which was slated for conversion into flats in 2010 after it was used as a hotel for decades, was

purchased by a charitable foundation in 2014 which gave a commitment to restore the estate to its original Doylean state. Several recent cases of residents pooling their resources to purchase historic properties destined for demolition came to light in Portland, Oregon.

Another way of preventing building demolition or undesired building modification projects is for stakeholders to seek *landmark* or *protected status* for the effected buildings and structures. Landmark or protected status are typically accorded to buildings or structures which possess cultural, historical or aesthetic value and/or are considered historically or architecturally significant, thereby warranting their protection against demolition or structural alteration. Many countries have laws in place for this purpose. In the United States demolition review laws adopted by hundreds of cities and towns across the country are credited with preserving hundreds of properties earmarked for demolition through the intervention of concerned stakeholders. A high-profile - albeit unsuccessful - recent attempt by stakeholders to have a building designated as protected concerned the project to develop an Islamic cultural center “Park51” in close proximity of the destroyed World Trade Center in New York City.

Stakeholder opposition to projects can also be expressed through *Petitions*. These are requests by stakeholders for action to be taken – in the project context for or against some project, either in its entirety or some aspect thereof - and are usually directed at the public agencies on which the project depends on for its approval and who under certain circumstances, such as widespread public opposition, may be empowered to re-evaluate, halt or prevent it. Petitions are frequently used within and outside the project context across the globe and the petitioners seeking redress of their grievances against projects sometimes number in the tens of thousands. Such petitions and the projects which are the target of their opposition and hostility hence attract considerable public attention and interest which increases the pressure on public agencies to possibly intervene in it whereby the possibility and degree of intervention depends on the project context, location and the regulations applicable there. In recent years the internet has become an increasingly popular medium for stakeholders to reach out quickly and efficiently to a large audience and to create, post and collect signatures for petitions for and against projects, small and large, on specially designated websites such as [petitions.moveon.org](http://petitions.moveon.org) and [change.org](http://change.org) where several petition-based ‘victories’, including against several projects in the US and in other countries, are outlined.

*Celebrity Activism* offers stakeholders another option to oppose projects. Numerous celebrities across the globe, notably in the entertainment industry, in art and in sport, have over the years taken up the cause of championing themes of contemporary major interest and concern such as preservation of the natural environment, wildlife conservation, global warming, clean energy, human rights, combatting poverty and improving access to education and health. Celebrity activism brings with it considerable media attention to an extent which may not be possible otherwise and on several occasions celebrities have spoken out against specific projects. A good and very recent case in point is the controversial Dakota Access Pipeline project against which several Hollywood actors and actresses joined hands to express their solidarity with and support for the native American Sioux tribe’s campaign to stop the crude oil pipeline’s construction. A less recent case in point is South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s support for the bushmen who in court successfully fought their forced eviction by the Government of Botswana from their ancestral hunting grounds in the Kalahari desert in order to make way for a diamond mine project.

*Negative publicity* in the print and electronic media – particularly if it is extensive, sustained and based on sound logic and scientific argumentation by knowledgeable and respected individuals and organizations -

has on many occasions had a negative impact on construction and civil infrastructure projects. In particular the electronic media presents stakeholders with the opportunity, quickly and cost-effectively, to address a global audience to an extent which was not possible before the advent of the internet and emergence of social media. In project perspective such wide-scale adverse publicity brings unwanted attention and applies indirect pressure on other stakeholders who are actively involved in the project or who have sanctioning power over it and are keen to steer clear of controversy. The controversial Illusu Dam project, one of 22 planned dam projects termed ‘Southeastern Anatolia Project’ on the river Tigris in eastern Turkey, is a case in point. Much of the media-driven criticism against Illusu centered on the consequent inevitable inundation of the 10,000 years old ancient historical town of Hasankeyf and resettlement of its inhabitants. Consequently, British, German, Swiss and Austrian participants in the project dropped out, seriously delaying the project. Negative media publicity is also credited with having played a role in the revision of the Avanca Brasil project under which the Brazilian government earmarked some 40 billion Dollars for development schemes over the period 2000-2020 in the Brazilian Amazon river basin region. In Bolivia negative global media coverage – and a 264-mile protest march by thousands of people to the capital La Paz - resulted in the controversial TIPNES road construction project in a national park and indigenous lands being put on hold for four years.

Stakeholders sometimes create *Associations* whose specific mission is to oppose projects. Often they have their own website outlining, inter alia, their goals and concerns about the project’s anticipated adverse impacts (sometimes suggesting alternatives to the project) and/or the way it was conceived and planned, a timeline of events, and extending an invitation to other stakeholders to join their anti-project campaign. Associations are hence a quick, cost-effective and public way to mobilize adversarial stakeholders and to draw critical attention towards the project, thereby adding to the pressure on it.

*Alliances and Coalition Networks* are a very potent option which stakeholders have exercised on numerous occasions. These are formed when stakeholders, which can be individuals, associations or organizations, leverage their respective strengths and resources in a jointly coordinated campaign, sometimes lasting years, with the objective of obstructing construction and civil infrastructure projects. An example – and just one of many – is the Vancouver-based Mining Justice Alliance which brings together civil society organizations, community members, students and activists, to fight Canadian mine projects inside Canada and across the globe. In a widely publicized case in Latin America, support from a coalition of national and international campaign groups and the dogged determination of a Peruvian subsistence farmer were instrumental in bringing the 5 billion Dollar open-caste Conga mine project by the US Corporation Newmont to a halt. Similarly, coalition networks were instrumental in halting a large open-caste mining project at Phulbari in Bangladesh. In the Pacific region, where sea-bed mining has attracted much controversy in recent years, a campaign by a coalition network prompted the Government of Vanuatu in 2013 to announce a moratorium on experimental sea-bed mining projects.

In order to proceed, construction and civil infrastructure projects typically require official permits, licenses, concessions etc. in addition to fulfilling a plethora of conditions. Failure to satisfy the conditions or violation of the terms stated in the official documents or in the project approval process and procedures can lead to serious administrative and/or legal complications for the projects. A case in point for the *administrative option* of adversarial stakeholders is the Canadian-based Bear Creek corporation’s Santa Ana silver mine project in Peru whose license was revoked by the government following seven weeks of civil unrest by local communities upset at lack of consultation by the project owners and fearing for their

environment and livelihoods. In neighboring Brazil, the licensing process needed for construction of the 8000 MW Sao Luiz de Tapajos Dam, the country's second largest, were put on hold in April 2016 given concerns over its possible impact on indigenous Munduruku community. In 2014 the energy minister for the Australian state New South Wales announced that the resource company Metgasco's license to drill for gas at Bentley off the coast would be suspended because of its failure to undertake genuine and effective consultation with the effected community.

*Litigation* constitutes one of the most potent options available to adversarial stakeholders to challenge projects. Over time numerous construction and civil infrastructure projects across the globe have been severely impacted by litigation brought on by adversarial stakeholders in the sense that they were compelled by courts to amend their design or scope in order to address stakeholder concerns, were delayed for months and sometimes years through stay orders and injunctions granted due to procedural or legal violations, and, in several cases, were cancelled at or before their initiation or, in more drastic instances, were obliged to prematurely terminate while in execution. Many of the legal challenges were mounted on behalf of indigenous people, pitting them against powerful companies allied with state governments, local administrations and security agencies. A prominent example where adversarial stakeholders secured a legal victory against a large project followed the almost decade-long and internationally publicized struggle between an indigenous tribe in the Indian state of Orissa, the Dongria Kondh, and their supporters around the world, and the British-based mining company Vedanta Resources over a planned one billion pound open-caste bauxite mine on the mountain deemed 'sacred' by the tribe. India's Supreme Court decided in favour of the Dongria Kondh in a landmark ruling in April 2013. In a similar case involving indigenous people seven years earlier, the High Court of Botswana ruled in favour of more than one thousand Kalahari bushmen forced off their hunting grounds and ancestral lands by their government which sought to develop the lands for mining and other projects. Citing the Canadian government's failure to consult with effected aboriginal tribal groups, a Canadian federal court in June 2016 quashed the Government's approval of the 7.9 billion Dollar Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline project under which oil from Alberta was to be sent to an export terminal on the west coast of British Columbia. A more recent (though less spectacular) example is a court decision in the US state of New Jersey delaying the South Jersey Gas Pipeline project because its opponents, the Pinelands Preservation Alliance, claimed it violated New Jersey's State Administrative Procedure Act and the State Utility Board's comprehensive management plan. In February 2017 the Austrian Federal Administrative Court ruled against the construction of a third runway at Vienna's international airport on the grounds that it would inevitably result in a drastic increase in carbon monoxide emissions and thereby conflict with Austria's commitments and regulations on emission reductions and climate change. A month later a South African high court blocked construction of the Thabametsi coal-fired power station on the grounds that the Department of Environmental Affairs's environmental authorization for the project failed to adequately take its climate change impact assessment into account and ordered it to do so and review public comments. In late March 2017 a judge in New York city handed stakeholders opposing the construction of a 200 hundred million Dollar performing arts center on a pier along the Hudson river a victory when she revoked the permit issued by the US Army Corps of Engineers for the project.

*Political Pressure* for and against projects is an option frequently exercised by project stakeholders. Politicians are partly influenced by their own and their party's ideological leanings and partly by their concern at losing public support in the event that they opt to champion or endorse unpopular projects or fail to vigorously oppose them. Consequently, negative sentiments on a broad-scale towards projects often

result in a decrease in political support for the projects in question, and vice versa. An excellent case in point is the proposed Kalabagh Dam on the river Indus in Pakistan. Under consideration for decades the project to develop a 3600 MW hydropower dam proved politically too contentious to pursue given the enormous opposition it encountered from Pakistan's smaller provinces and the uncertainty caused by the divergent expert opinions regarding its multi-dimensional implications. A clear political divide also revealed itself in connection with the Keystone XL pipeline project between Canada and the US with Democrats tending to oppose the project which culminated in Barrack Obamas decision to decline the requisite presidential permit in 2015 and Republicans tending in favour of it, consequently leading to President Donald Trump's passage of an executive order in January 2017 followed two months later by his grant of the presidential permit. Political differences, in particular over funding, are also playing a crucial consideration in the CALTRAIN electrification project in California.

The *electoral process* has on occasions been used to challenge construction and civil infrastructure projects deemed highly controversial. Large-scale public opposition to the relocation of US naval base facilities on the Island of Okinawa resulted in the election of Governor Takeshi Onaga in November 2014 who ran his campaign on an anti-base platform. In Taiwan, construction of the 2600 MW Lungmen nuclear power plant near Taipei became an important election issue in 2000 with Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party, then in opposition, pledging to scrap the project if elected which it was. In March 2016 the people of the Columbian town of Cajamarca voted almost unanimously against a project by Anglo Gold Ashanti Corporation to create what was termed 'the world's largest open pit gold mine' in their municipality. And in a controversial national referendum held in Switzerland on November 29, 2009, the majority of Swiss voters endorsed an amendment to their national constitution prohibiting the construction of mosque minarets in their country.

**Visible Public Opposition:** The options in this category differ from the core options discussed above in that the opposition towards the project is expressed by a large number of stakeholders acting collectively and very publicly. Specific options included in this category are (peaceful) rallies, marches, protests and demonstrations, sit-ins and blockades, site occupations, strikes, self-inflicted injuries and suicide.

*Rallies, marches, protests and demonstrations* against the project are closely related and organized public events which usually are accompanied by considerable media publicity. Rallies are a frequent and normally peaceful means of expressing opposition to the project by a gathering of persons. Large turnouts may attract considerable attention, possibly prompting other stakeholders who are positively inclined towards the project to reflect upon and reconsider their attitude towards it. Marches, protests and demonstrations exhibit a relatively more forceful character. Marches typically involve the movement of persons towards pre-designated places of significance for the project which is often the project site itself or the offices or residences of its owners or key advocates and facilitators. Protests and demonstrations may likewise involve the movement of participants or they may confine themselves, voluntarily or involuntarily, to a specific location but they leave no doubt about the level of their participants' opposition to the project. Oftentimes as experience with several projects has shown, marches, protests and demonstrations can rapidly escalate into serious rioting and clashes between project opponents and project supporters or law enforcement personnel, causing extensive material damage and resulting in arrests, injuries or even deaths. Such was the situation when rioting which resulted in several fatalities prompted the Peruvian government to put on hold the 1 billion Dollar Tia Maria copper mine project in 2011 on the grounds that its environmental impact

assessment was inadequate. Although a new EIA was approved in August 2014 the construction permit for the project is still pending.

An excellent high-profile case in point for rallies, marches, protests and demonstrations which have stayed mostly peaceful concerns the proposed relocation of the US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma on the Japanese island of Okinawa to Henoko Bay. Under consideration for almost half a century, interest in the project surged in the late 1990s when the US and Japanese governments decided to pursue the relocation project in order to relieve the social pressure and tension caused by maintaining a large military base in a densely populated civilian area. Heavily criticized for its anticipated adverse environmental impact, and also due to other considerations, the project has encountered stiff public opposition from the majority of Okinawan citizens and its governor which resulted in the halting of construction work until 2015. Public protests in Lianyungang in China's Jiangsu province, rumored to be the site of a joint Franco-Chinese 15 billion Dollar nuclear fuel recycling project, reportedly led to the project's 'suspension' in 2016. Three years earlier mass protests halted the construction of a similar facility at Jiangmen in China's Guangdong province. An interesting current case involving large-scale public opposition to a major project and which has attracted global attention concerns the Keystone pipeline extension project Phase IV which envisages construction of an oil pipeline from Alberta in Canada to the US state of Nebraska. Much of the public controversy about this project centers on environmental concerns. Years-long opposition to the project, accompanied by mass arrests of protestors, stalled the pipeline's construction and the project itself was declined the requisite presidential permit by Barrack Obama in November 2015 after six years under review – a veto that was promptly reversed by the Trump administration in January 2017.

On occasions project sites, facilities and access routes are subjected to *sit-ins* and *blockades* by adversarial stakeholders. To stage sit-ins stakeholders enter and temporarily occupy the project site in whole or in part whereas a blockade results in barring of entry to and from the project site for project employees and project supplies. Stakeholders hereby sometimes resort to dramatic measures such as chaining themselves to gates or other heavy objects to prevent their forcible removal easily. Project activities are consequently delayed, in some cases for months, as negotiations to lift the sit-ins and blockades are held or law enforcement personnel are finally called in which not infrequently culminates in violence, arrests, injuries and deaths. Many of the instances of sit-ins and blockades encountered by the authors in their research for this paper concern tribal or indigenous people. In December 2007 about 100 members of the Enawene Nawe tribe in the Brazilian Amazon occupied the site of a dam construction project and nearby highway to protest about the construction of a series of dams, supported by large companies, on the Juruena river upstream of their land which they claim would destroy their livelihoods. In August 2016 in Papua New Guinea traditional landowners blockaded a liquified natural gas facility at Hides in Hela province in response to their government's years-long failure to meet its financial benefit sharing obligations from the facility's operations. The blockade was promptly lifted when the Government promised to meet its commitments to the landowners. An interesting sit-in occurred in the Australian city Sydney where aboriginal activists erected a 'tent embassy' for fifteen months at a project site to protest at what they perceived was the Aboriginal Housing Company's prioritization of commercial interests over the provision of affordable housing for the indigenous community. The tent encampment was dismantled in August 2015 after the Federal Government brokered a deal with the Company which assured the protestors that the project's social housing component would be expanded. A two-year blockade by indigenous people led to the declaration of a moratorium on construction of the controversial Baram dam in Sarawak state on the Malaysian Island of Borneo.

*Hunger strikes* are an interesting option used occasionally by stakeholders to express opposition to projects. Because of their rather dramatic effect, especially when a large group of individuals opt for a hunger strike, they garner widespread attention and generate very negative publicity of the project. Interestingly, all instances (of which there were several) encountered by the authors relate primarily to energy infrastructure projects undertaken in India. Hundreds of villagers affected by the planned construction of an international container transshipment port at Enayam in Tamil Nadu state staged a day-long hunger strike against the project in September 2016. Also in Tamil Nadu state several hundred people, including prison inmates, staged a hunger strike in February 2017 against a hydrocarbon exploration and extraction project at Thilegar Thidal. Professor Agarwal, a devout Hindu and one of India's most venerated scientists, commenced a hunger strike on June 13, 2008, in Uttarkashi to protest at several dam projects on a 125-kilometer stretch of the Bhagirathi river which runs into the Ganges river, considered sacred to Hindus who believe its unimpeded flow must be maintained. Following 18 days of fasting and an assurance by the Indian Central Government to determine a mutually acceptable solution, Agarwal broke off his fast but resumed it in New Delhi on January 14, 2009, when no solution was forthcoming. Nearing death after 38 days of fasting, the state government of Uttarkhand ordered immediate suspension of work on the Loharinag-Pala hydropower project which was considered most contentious of the dam projects on the Bhagirathi river. Agarwal's campaign was taken up at the political level and the Ganges was subsequently declared a 'national river'.

The most extreme expression of opposition by adversarial stakeholders in this option category are *self-inflicted injuries* which can on occasions result in their death. Self-immolation is perhaps the most dramatic form of this. Frustration, anger, desperation, isolation and a sense of utter helplessness all converge in this disturbing phenomenon. Most of the known self-immolation incidents occurred in China and appear to be a direct consequence of the rapid modernization and urbanization which have characterized its development over the past few decades. A sad case in point – and just one among several - is Tang Fuzhen, a 47-year old woman who doused herself with petrol and set herself alight following a three-hour violent stand-off with officials in the Chinese city of Chengdu on November 13, 2009. She died in hospital from her injuries two weeks later. Trigger for this horrific incident, which was captured on a mobile phone video and broadcast on Chinese national TV and on the internet, was Fuzhen's forced eviction from her home earmarked for demolition as part of a development project. Public shock at this and other self-immolations in protest at forced evictions prompted a small group of influential academics from the University of Peking to press for a revision to Chinese law on urban housing demolition with the objective of curtailing forced evictions and which was subsequently taken up for consideration and opened for public comments.

**Acts of Intimidation & Violence:** This set of options encompasses actions employed by adversarial secondary stakeholders and directed against the project and its facilities, infrastructure and logistics, as well as against those stakeholders directly and/or indirectly participating in it. Such acts are hence both property- as well as person-oriented and, unlike the options falling under the visible public opposition category, are both criminal and unethical in nature because of the evident willingness of stakeholders to consciously employ coercion and violence and to transgress laws in order to express their opposition to projects. They symbolize the highest intensity of adversarial stakeholder behavior and opposition towards projects and occur globally although their occurrence evidently tends to be comparatively more frequent in less developed states. *Pilferage, theft, vandalism and sabotage, and rioting, arson and bombing* and other physical destructive activities by adversarial secondary stakeholders that target projects are typical examples of 'property-oriented options'. An insightful article published in the Journal of Construction Engineering and Management in 2005 revealed the immense extent theft and vandalism occurs in the

construction industry. Though less frequent, riots have frequently taken place against large controversial projects – Narita airport in Japan being a long-running and especially notorious example. Plans for urban renewal projects in economically deprived suburbs of Paris may have played a role in sparking serious rioting there in 2005.

‘Person-oriented options’ include *verbal abuse, threats, blackmail and extortion, harassment and bullying, physical assault* (with or without causing injury), *abduction, forced detention, torture and murder*. As these involve temporary or permanent physical and/or psychological damage to people they are more serious than the property-oriented options. In the event that both these options are employed by adversarial stakeholders then, consequently, due to the ensuing physical damage and the fear effect which deters primary stakeholders from pursuing their project responsibilities or which causes them to abandon the project completely out of concern for their safety, project activities can be significantly delayed with costly implications. The complications for projects are especially high when they enter their execution phase and material, technical and human resources are mobilized and start collecting at the project locations.

Several projects reviewed for this research indicated being afflicted with acts of intimidation and violence, spontaneous or organized, in some form or the other and usually well-planned and executed, either targeting property or persons, often both. In the late 1970s opponents of the CU-Powerline project in the US state of Minnesota toppled twenty power line towers and damaged ten thousand electrical insulators. Often the hostility displayed by secondary stakeholders towards projects appears to have political or ideological underpinnings. An excellent case in point is the Indian state of Bihar which for decades has been plagued by a violent Maoist insurgency. Over years many infrastructure projects there, notably in road and railway construction, were systematically attacked resulting in damage to and destruction of project machinery and equipment, and injuries and deaths of project employees, and halting work on the projects for months. Also in India, rioting by locals and violence and threats directed against project employees resulted in the abandonment of Tata company’s project to set up a car manufacturing plant in Singur in Gujarat state. The mayhem was eloquently summed up by Tata Group Chairman Ratan Tata who stated: “You cannot run a plant when bombs are being thrown at the site. You cannot run a plant when workers are being threatened and intimidated”. In remote areas of northern Pakistan, functional and under construction secondary schools have often been targeted by religious extremists angered by the provision of education to girls and at co-educational teaching. In Afghanistan Taliban insurgents attacked several road construction projects resulting in the deaths of dozens of Indian, Chinese and other foreign engineers and workers in addition to Afghans. Likewise, US and foreign contractors working on projects in Iraq after the second Gulf War in 2003 were a prime target of insurgents resulting in several hundred deaths. Opponents of the Shell oil company’s activities in Nigeria have on occasions damaged Shell’s pipelines.

**Transnational Options:** In their paper *Stakeholders and Transnational Projects* which was presented at the University of Maryland’s third annual project management symposium in May 2016 the authors showed that countries and their populations also can be stakeholders on many projects, usually of a larger-scale, which are undertaken in other countries and jointly between countries. Sometimes projects are opposed at country level by other states, neighbouring or distant, which may harbor security, environmental, economic or other concerns about the projects which they believe stand in serious conflict with their national interest. In this case the opposing (or adversarial) states have an arsenal of options at their disposal which are briefly presented below in ascending order of intensity.

The mildest and probably most frequently exercised option is the lodging of a *Formal Complaint* against the project which is conveyed usually discretely and usually at ministerial level by the opposing state to the project-executing state. Since most projects of transnational significance are planned and undertaken in the public sector by the relevant ministry, a direct communication against a project from one or more opposing states' counterpart ministry will normally have to be reviewed and formally responded to in accordance with protocol. Consequently, the project-executing state can either accept the reservations expressed and suspend or cancel the project or at least undertake a critical plan and design review of it with consequent modification to satisfy some or all of the expressed misgivings, or dismiss the reservations altogether and simply proceed with the project.

*Official Protest* is a stronger and more public means of expressing concern by a state or states opposing projects in or by other states. It is usually conveyed at ministerial level or through diplomatic and ambassadorial channel in letter form. The exercise of this option conveys a sense of urgency coupled with an assumption that proceeding with the project may lead to a disruption in bilateral relations between the project-executing and project-opposing state/states. Cambodian protests to Vietnam in 2015 over road construction and infrastructure development projects in a contested border region, Chinese objections to Indian road construction work in the Himalayan territory Ladakh in 2016, and stiff protests by Turkey and Turkish-administered northern Cyprus to the Republic of Cyprus over the latter's oil and gas exploration activities in the eastern Mediterranean are cases in point.

Passing a *Resolution* is a formalized, official and public expression of opposition to projects undertaken by states. Resolutions are often passed by representative bodies such as national parliaments or regional institutions (for instance, the European Parliament, and European Council), and the United Nations. The latter's resolutions against the construction of new housing settlements and expansion of existing ones in Israeli-administered East Jerusalem is an enduring case in point.

*Third Party Mediation* can be used to attempt to solve an issue which arises between states when one state seeks to undertake a project which is opposed by the other. This, off course, is contingent on both sides accepting the mediation effort by another (state or non-state) entity which acts impartially and is chosen because of the credibility it commands. The Acta de Brasilia negotiations between Peru and Ecuador in the late 1990s is a case in point.

*Arbitration* and *Litigation* are options which states have occasionally resorted to in order to settle disputes arising out of controversial projects. In the course of its over one hundred year history the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague, Netherlands, has inter alia decided several cases between contesting governments. A recent and interesting case in point is a dispute between India and Pakistan regarding India's decision to proceed with the construction of a dam (Kishenganga Hydro-Electric Project) on the Kishenganga/Neelum river. In this case the Court was approached by the government of Pakistan which expressed concern at the anticipated reduction in its river water inflows given Pakistan's location downstream of the dam site. The International Court of Justice, which is the United Nation's judicial branch and, like the Permanent Court of Arbitration is based in the Hague, presided over a dam dispute between Slovakia and Hungary over the Gabčíkovo–Nagymaros Dam, which arose when Hungary stood in breach of its commitment to participate in the bilateral project. Another inter-state project-related dispute presided over by the Court was the Pulp Mills dispute between Argentina and Uruguay which was prompted by

Uruguay's grant of permission to foreign companies to set up factories which Argentina feared may have resulted in the pollution of a border river.

*Condemnation* is a harsh verbal expression of opposition by a state or states to a project being undertaken by another state. An example is the condemnation voiced especially in the West and in East Asia following the development and testing of a nuclear explosive device and missiles by North Korea in 2016-17, and the international condemnation voiced at a new Israeli Regularization Law which legalizes the expropriation of private Palestinian land and construction activities there.

Sometimes states perceive projects to constitute a challenge and a danger of such proportion that they warrant a forceful response. Egypt, whose survival historically is primarily dependent on the Nile River, has on past occasions resorted to issuing *Threats* against Ethiopia, where three of the river's four main tributaries originate, in the event that the latter should halt or drastically reduce the flow of river water into Egypt. In the past few years, however, threats have given way to cooperation and a more coordinated water resource management strategy between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia. Similarly, between 1975 and 1991 Syria and Iraq reportedly twice threatened Turkey with war over its damming projects on the rivers Tigris and Euphrates.

More action-oriented options include imposition of *Sanctions, Incentive Programs, Sabotage, Assassination*, and pursuit of direct *Military Action*. The most famous contemporary instances of sanctions concern the nuclear programmes of Iran and North Korea, the goal of the sanctions being to prevent both states from developing, testing and deploying nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. Sanctions can assume many forms in several crucial spheres - diplomatic, trade, financial, insurance, investment, political, cultural, technological, arms sales, travel, and so forth. Though the impact has been quite severe in terms of the overall economic and social hardships caused the sanctions apparently may have delayed but have failed to eliminate either states' nuclear and missile programs with North Korea testing several nuclear devices and missiles in 2016.

*Incentives* – the counterweight to sanctions - have been used on occasions as a softer means to encourage states to abort or freeze controversial programs and projects. Under the Clinton Presidency, an incentive program was offered to North Korea in exchange for a freezing of its nuclear programme in consequence of which the Korean program was put on hold for some years until its subsequent resumption. Incentives were also offered to the Libyan government and were instrumental in bringing about the abandonment of its nuclear weapon program in 2003.

An interesting application of the Sabotage option in the post-Cold War context is the use of cyberspace to disrupt Iran's nuclear program, in particular its Uranium enrichment infrastructure, in 2010. A malicious computer worm dubbed 'stuxnet' – which was reportedly developed jointly by the US and Israel as a secret intelligence operation - targeted Iranian nuclear centrifuges destroying almost one-fifth of them and causing a significant and unexpected setback to the program besides attacking Iranian air defenses, communication systems and power grids. Suspected sabotage under a covert US cyber and electronic warfare program initiated by Barack Obama's administration reportedly may also have played a role in the failure of several North Korean ballistic missile tests since 2015.

*Assassination* as an option of disrupting projects has been employed on a few recent occasions, most notable being the murder between 2010-12 of four Iranian nuclear scientists working on Iran's nuclear program and

which Iran promptly blamed on Israel and the US although no concrete evidence to this effect has been discovered.

The option of direct military action in the form of a *Military Strike* embodies the most forceful response by one state against another. An excellent case in point was the Israel's destruction of Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor facility near Baghdad on June 07, 1981. Israel's apprehension that Iraq would use the facility to develop nuclear weapons which would be used to obliterate it prompted it to resort to this drastic measure which it repeated by destroying Syria's Al-Kibar nuclear facility in September 2007.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The authors' research shows that adversarial external stakeholders typically have access to a broad spectrum of options that can severely disrupt CCID projects and on occasions threaten their very existence. In most cases they seek to do so because they believe that the projects conflict with their interests and more often than not this appears to actually be the case empirically. Stakeholder opposition however is not a constant but can increase or decrease over time depending on myriad factors. Since these stakeholders are outside the project's control, the onus lies on the project to devise engagement strategies with the purpose of discouraging adversarial stakeholders from exercising their options (prevention) or, if they do so, which minimize the damage to the project which stems from exercising of the options. Doing so necessitates, especially in the project design and planning phase, very careful consideration of the project's stakeholder dimension which usually tends to get sidelined by the traditional and heavy focus on the project's technical and administrative work aspects. Sincerity, empathy, and a robust stakeholder analysis and assessment constitute the first step towards acquiring an understanding of the adversarial external stakeholders, the reasons for their opposition to the project, and the potential adverse consequences this could entail. Legitimate stakeholder grievances must be decisively addressed and resolved by the project. Doing so is the ethical responsibility of the project and, moreover, ensures a win-win solution for both the project and its stakeholders because it benefits the project materially by significantly reducing or eliminating stakeholder opposition and its consequent risks, and at the same time it also benefits the stakeholders by ensuring that most, if not all of them, experience a net gain or at least no or minimum loss from the project.