

## **Student Politics: A Game-Theoretic Exploration**

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## **Abstract**

*Students in institutes of higher education often engage in campus-politics. Typically there are student-parties who electorally compete with each other to gain control of the union which is usually the apex student body dealing directly with the higher authorities on student-related and other academic issues. Often however, campus politics act as fertile breeding grounds for future politicians of the country. As a result there is often direct intervention by larger political parties into student affairs. In fact, the student parties on campus are essentially student wings of larger national parties, which command huge amounts of resources that are used during elections, often instigating conflict and violence on-campus. This paper game-theoretically models the interplay of such `extra-electoral' investments and electoral outcomes in an otherwise standard probabilistic voting model. We find that the political party who is likely to be more popular is also more likely to expend greater resources towards `extra-electoral' elements, in turn spawning greater violence on-campus, even when such investments are disliked by student-voters. We also look at some plausible extensions of the benchmark model where this basic conclusion still holds true. The essential flavor and predictions of the model are borne out by several historical and contemporary instances of student politics in some countries like India, Burma, and Latin America.*

**Keywords: Student politics, Partisanship and conflict, Electoral competition in colleges, National parties and student politics**

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The author gratefully acknowledges the seed money grant of the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore for the project `An Economic Analysis of Student Politics in India' during 2010. The fund was mainly used to survey some colleges in Kolkata to get a sense of political turmoil on campus.

# STUDENT POLITICS: A GAME-THEORETIC EXPLORATION

SOUMYANETRA MUNSHI

ABSTRACT. Students in institutes of higher education often engage in campus-politics. Typically there are student-parties who electorally compete with each other to gain control of the union which is usually the apex student body dealing directly with the higher authorities on student-related and other academic issues. Often however, campus politics act as fertile breeding grounds for future politicians of the country. As a result there is often direct intervention by larger political parties into student affairs. In fact, the student parties on campus are essentially student wings of larger national parties, which command huge amounts of resources that are used during elections, often instigating conflict and violence on-campus. This paper game-theoretically models the interplay of such ‘extra-electoral’ investments and electoral outcomes in an otherwise standard probabilistic voting model. We find that the political party who is likely to be more popular is also more likely to expend greater resources towards ‘extra-electoral’ elements, in turn spawning greater violence on-campus, even when such investments are disliked by student-voters. We also look at some plausible extensions of the benchmark model where this basic conclusion still holds true. The essential flavor and predictions of the model are borne out by several historical and contemporary instances of student politics in some countries like India, Burma, and Latin America.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is much too important a matter to be left to the educators.

(Statement by French statesman Clemenceau, cited in India and the World University Crisis by Philip G. Altbach (ed) [4])

Student politics often occupies a center stage in the political life of the third world countries<sup>1</sup>. These are essentially political activities undertaken by students of undergraduate and postgraduate levels at institutes of higher education, mostly public universities and colleges,

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*Key words and phrases.* Student politics, Partisanship and conflict, Electoral competition in colleges, National parties and student politics.

<sup>1</sup>See Altbach [2], [3], [5] and Lipset [17], for example, for excellent overviews of the topic of student politics and for an insight into student politics in the third world, in general, and India, in particular. Among others, see Allardt and Tomasson [1] for an idea of Scandinavian student politics, Silverstein [26] for an idea about student politics in Thailand, Burma, Malaysia and Singapore, Halsey and Marks [14] for British student politics, Pinner [21], [22] for student politics in Europe, and Levy [15] for Latin American student politics, to name a few.

and can range from minor disruptions to major upheavals in the political history of nations<sup>2</sup>. With time, however, the nature of student politics has changed, and especially after attainment of independence in many of the earlier colonies, student politics has tended to become more and more involved with local issues<sup>3</sup>. Moreover student wings of national political parties have become especially active and involved in campus affairs<sup>4</sup>. Unfortunately however, political competition in campuses has spawned conflict in campuses, sometimes violent enough to raise alarms and cause consternation among policy makers and civic society in general. In fact history of student politics is replete with occasions when it has got banned by authorities<sup>5</sup>. However most of the extant literature (which is predominantly from political and sociological perspectives) is quite dated<sup>6</sup>.

This paper revisits the dynamics of student politics from a political economic perspective using game theory. At the outset, it should be noted that ‘student politics’ as an umbrella term could mean a variety of things. This paper however concerns itself with a particular variety of campus politics - one where larger political parties play a major and decisive role in determining campus outcomes. Not all student politics has such a characteristic. (See

<sup>2</sup>As in India, the strongest tradition among students in the developing countries, like Indonesia and parts of Africa, has been one of radical nationalism during independence movements. In China, the students provided key manpower for the movements which overthrew the Manchu dynasty and led to the establishment of the republic in 1911. In Turkey, South Korea, South Vietnam, and Ecuador, student demonstrations have actually brought down governments. In Japan, student demonstrations in 1960 forced the resignation of the Kishi government, and student upheavals in France shook the very foundation of the de Gaulle regime in France.

<sup>3</sup>In India, as well as in other developing countries, after attainment of independence, student activism remained, but its nature transformed. Instead of mass nationalist movements, a number of more local groups, mostly ad hoc in nature, developed. Agitation has tended to be localized, focused on university issues or local political conflicts, rather than on national or broader ideological questions. For example, in the Indian state of Orissa, the state chief minister was forced to resign in the face of a series of students demonstrations charging him of corruption and demanding his resignation. In 1965, students sparked rioting in south India against the imposition of Hindi as a national language. In late 1966, Calcutta was convulsed by student demonstrations in favor of a United Left Front anti-government campaign. When violence broke out, university authorities shut all educational institutions that affected one hundred thousand students.

<sup>4</sup>In India, for example, a majority of students’ organizations active in the campuses today are backed by political parties. Some of these are as follows: ‘Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad’ (ABVP) affiliated with ‘Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh’ (RSS), ‘Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Sena’ affiliated with ‘Shiv Sena’, ‘All India Democratic Students Organization’ (AIDSO) affiliated with the ‘Socialist Unity Centre of India’ (SUCI), ‘All India Progressive Students Union’ affiliated to ‘Revolutionary Socialist Party’ (RSP), ‘All India Students Association’ (AISA) affiliated to ‘Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)’ (CPI(ML)), ‘All India Students Bloc’ affiliated to ‘All India Forward Bloc’, ‘All India Students Federation’ affiliated to ‘Communist Party of India’ (CPI), ‘Muslim Students Federation’ affiliated to ‘Indian Union Muslim League’, ‘National Students Union of India’ affiliated to ‘Indian National Congress’ (INC), ‘Samajwadi Chhatra Sabha’ affiliated to ‘Samajwadi Party’ (SP), ‘Students Federation of India’ (SFI) affiliated to the ‘Communist Party of India (Marxist)’ (CPI(M)), ‘Trinamool Chhatra Parishad’ affiliated to ‘Trinamool Congress’ (TMC), and many others. However not all the organizations are active in all campuses.

<sup>5</sup>See Levy [16], for example, for a decline of such movements in Latin America and Silverstein [26] for a similar fate in Burma.

<sup>6</sup>There was a spate of academic work during the 1960’s and 1970’s when student movements occurred in many countries all over the world. In many countries though, like Burma and some countries in Latin America, democracy has been suppressed by repressive military regimes at some points in time thereafter. So practices of student politics in these countries that have been referred to in this paper, typically imply episodes of the past (when student politics was even allowed to be practiced). However, in countries like India, democratic practices on campuses are still in vogue.

appendix A for a sociological attempt at categorizing different types of student politics.) Importantly, for the purposes of our model, whenever campus politics acts as a recruiting ground for future politicians of the country, it implies presence of national political parties or their wings in campus politics. This has, in fact, been true of many countries like India, Britain, and Latin America, and hence our model applies to the variety of student politics in these countries, for example. In other words, student parties have access to resources<sup>7</sup> which are in part or wholly coming from external sources (in the sense of funds etc. coming from the larger parties that they are affiliated to). It is this aspect that our model has explicitly incorporated. Otherwise, our model employs standard game-theoretic techniques to shed light on various aspects of student politics - the novelty is that we have done so after taking into account possible influence of larger political parties behind campus politics which we call ‘extra-electoral’ investments. (We discuss presence of such extra-electoral elements by citing several examples later, see section 4).

Several issues like relationship between partisanship and possible electoral outcomes have been explored. We also consider extensions of the basic model by incorporating differential impact of conflict investments by parties on voters, possibility of abstention on the part of individual voters and ideological parties. Broadly speaking, we find that conflict investments of the student parties (extra-electoral investments) moves in the same direction as perceived popularity of these parties. In other words, the more popular a student party, the more will it engage in conflict, even when such conflicts are disliked by the voters. This is because, since it is more popular (partisanship of voters are in its favor), even when voters are against on-campus politics, the party does not get hurt too much by engaging in conflict. Such an effect is further exacerbated when student-voters are differentially impacted by campus violence - they are less careful about punishing their favorite parties compared to punishing the lesser favored one for undertaking disruptive activities. In this case, the student-party is even more confident about getting away with engaging in conflict since it is even more less likely to lose its core supporters when it engages in conflict. Also, ideological parties are likely to invest more in conflict than non-ideological ones.

This trend is somewhat mitigated with the possibility of abstention of the voters. Assuming each voter is equally likely to abstain, we see that parties will temper this conflict investments, lest the voters who do turn up to vote punish the student parties. This can also help explain the near-absence of conflict in professional schools where opportunity cost of voting is very high and abstentions are very likely.

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<sup>7</sup>Often, however, these are not openly acknowledged. For example, regarding a candidate in Allahabad University elections, Andersen and Pant [8] writes, “While claiming that he does not belong to any political group, it is a well known fact that he has close ties with the Youth Congress, who sponsored him in the election.”

These trends are very well borne-out by student politics in India, for example, where student and national politics work hand in glove with each other. We discuss these and other examples from different countries in somewhat greater details later, see section 4. The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 lays down the benchmark model; Section 3 considers some possible extensions of the benchmark model; Section 4 discusses several instances of various aspects of the model in real-life student politics; Section 5 concludes.

## 2. THE BENCHMARK MODEL

There are two student parties,  $A$  and  $B$  in the college which are potentially affiliated to two larger national parties, and there are two kinds of conflict they engage in with each other<sup>8</sup>. One conflict is the usual electoral conflict or simply political competition where each party tries to maximize its vote share and increase the probability of forming the apex student body, often called the student union<sup>9</sup>. But often competition is not just confined among the ballots but rather spills over to other forms of combat. Let us call this aspect the ‘extra-electoral’ conflict that parties engage in. In principle, these could just be monetary transfers given by larger political parties to their student wings to be spent on something innocuous like printing pamphlets, but in practice, these can take various forms like hiring goons to exert muscle power to intimidate students, pressing for irregular appointments, barricading teachers etc. In fact, often one hears allegations of involvement of ‘externals’ in vandalism carried out within the campus like destroying college property when demands of student party have not been met (see a more detailed discussion below in section 4). For purposes of our model, we just assume that such extra-electoral elements increase conflict and violence on-campus. We employ a probabilistic voting model as follows:

**The voters.** Each student is a rational voter and takes both electoral competition and extra-electoral conflict into consideration when deciding about ballots. Specifically, each student-voter  $i$  votes for student party  $A$  or  $B$  (we do not consider abstention in the basic benchmark model but introduce it later as an extension, see section 4.4). Student-voters belongs to a  $[0, 1]$  interval ordered according to their preference for some policy variable

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<sup>8</sup>This is reminiscent of two kinds of conflict that trade unions engage in - with one another and with the management, see Dasgupta [10], for example.

<sup>9</sup>In case of larger universities with many affiliated colleges under them, often, there are two levels of elections. Firstly, students in colleges (affiliated to the larger university) elect representatives for their respective college unions. Secondly, the elected college representatives then elect the representatives of the university union. At every level, there is evidence of manipulation and interference by ‘external elements’ sponsored by larger political forces and hence the model is amenable for formalizing the dynamics in any such election. See Oommen [20], for example, for the details in case of Delhi University elections where there are many colleges affiliated to Delhi University. In case of university with a single campus, there is an electoral process to select representatives for the sole university union, and the model can then be applied to that single election.

$p$ , like proposed admission and examination fees, library rules, etc.<sup>10</sup>. The population is uniformly distributed on this interval. Each voter cares about three things: policy, ideology, and extra-electoral conflict levels.

Let  $i$  be a generic voter. Student  $i$  would support party  $A$  if

$$v_{iA} + u_i(p_A) - c_A \geq v_{iB} + u_i(p_B) - c_B;$$

where  $v_{iA}$  is the partisan preference<sup>11</sup> of the student for party  $A$  and  $v_{iB}$  is that for party  $B$ , and  $u_i(p)$  is his utility from the pliable policy  $p$ , where  $p_A$  is the policy adopted by party  $A$ , and  $p_B$  is that adopted by party  $B$ . Everything else equal, partisanship captures the bias that a person has towards one party or another. This bias (or rather the difference in biases), is modeled to be probabilistic (as in probabilistic voting models, see Grossman and Helpman [13], for example) and drawn from a distribution, as described below.

Moreover we assume that extra-electoral activities  $c_A$  ( $c_B$ ) makes total utility from voting for that party lower<sup>12</sup> by exactly the amount of such activities. (We propose an alternative formulation of the way such activities might affect total utility from voting for a party in extension 3.1.) Hence the higher such activities of a particular party, the lower is the utility of the voter from voting for that party, everything else equal.

$u_i$  is assumed to have a unique maximizer (preference is assumed to be single-peaked over policy  $p$ ) and for simplicity I assume that the maximizers are increasing with  $i$ . Hence for any two voters  $j$  and  $k$ ,

$$j > k \iff \arg \max u_j(p) > \arg \max u_k(p).$$

For simplicity, we could assume, that  $\arg \max u_i(p) = i$ , i.e. all citizens at position  $i \in [0, 1]$  like the policy issue  $i$  most. This just means that smaller  $i$ 's like smaller  $p$ 's while higher  $i$ 's like more  $p$ .

<sup>10</sup>As instances of possible policy variables, Andersen and Pant [8] lists the following as demands of student union of Allahabad University:“(1) proposing expanded enrolment and lower academic standards (e g, lowering the Second Division limits for B Com and B Sc students, permitting all affiliated colleges to open graduate and law classes; giving failed law students the right to take the examination again); (2) seeking greater power for union officials (e g power to union President to appoint student representatives to conferences); (3) expanding facilities (e g more athletic facilities, more and better equipped hostels, better mess provision).”

<sup>11</sup>Even though it is widely believed that student inclinations are towards the left, political attitudes could be conservative, moderate or liberal. As Lipset [17] note that “a study conducted among students in 22 universities and colleges throughout China in 1937, a period when student radical activity was at its height, revealed wide variation in student ideological orientations. Of some 1,160 students, 10 per cent, were “conservative”, 14 per cent “fascist”, 12 per cent “democratic”, 10 per cent “Christian”, 19 per cent “radical” (communist) and 16 per cent “nationalist”. See also Altbach [3] for a similar thought regarding student inclinations.

<sup>12</sup>So the underlying assumption is that violence on-campus is certainly not liked by the students. See Silverstein [24], for example, for the such feelings among Burmese students.

To help us obtain closed-form solutions, we make standard assumptions about functional and distributional forms. Let the  $i$ th citizen's preference over  $p$  be:

$$u_i(p) = -(p - p(i))^2;$$

where  $p(i)$  is the most-preferred policy of  $i$  and utility falls the further one goes from  $p(i)$ . As discussed above, let  $p(i) = i$ ,  $\forall i$  (student  $i$  likes policy  $i$  most). Hence the utility from  $p$  for the  $i$ th voter is:

$$u_i(p) = -(p - i)^2.$$

Hence  $i$  votes for  $A$  if

$$v_i \geq (p_A - i)^2 - (p_B - i)^2 + c_A - c_B;$$

where  $v_i = v_{iA} - v_{iB}$ , and as standard in probabilistic voting models,  $v_i$  is assumed to be randomly chosen from a prior distribution that is known. Let  $v_i \sim U\left[\frac{b}{f} - \frac{1}{2f}, \frac{b}{f} + \frac{1}{2f}\right]$ . This gives a uniform distribution with height  $f$  which measures the diversity of preferences for the fixed positions of the two parties, and a shift parameter  $b$  which measures popularity of a party's fixed positions (image) on the whole. Hence a small  $f$  would mean a flatter distribution with possibly many partisans. For example, if  $p_A = p_B$  and  $c_A = c_B$ , then  $i$  votes for party  $A$  if  $v_i > 0$ . Now if  $b > 0$  the whole distribution is shifted towards being positive so that party  $A$  is more popular (since  $v_i > 0$  is more likely to be realized) whereas if  $b$  is negative, the distribution is shifted towards being negative which means party  $B$  is more popular, based on the fixed images of the parties only. Hence the probability that voter  $i$  votes for party  $A$  is given by,  $P_A^i$  as follows (we assume conditions that make the expressions meaningful):

$$\begin{aligned} P_A^i &= \Pr(v_i \geq (p_A - i)^2 - (p_B - i)^2 + c_A - c_B) \\ &= \frac{1}{2} + b - f[p_A^2 - p_B^2 + 2i(p_B - p_A) + c_A - c_B]. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the vote share of  $A$ ,  $V_A$  can be calculated to be

$$\begin{aligned} V_A &= \int_0^1 P_A^i di \\ &= \frac{1}{2} + b - f[p_A^2 - p_B^2 + p_B - p_A + c_A - c_B]. \end{aligned}$$

Now in order to know the probability that party  $A$  wins, we assume the shift parameter  $b$  to be random and distributed according to  $U\left[\frac{\gamma}{\delta} - \frac{1}{2\delta}, \frac{\gamma}{\delta} + \frac{1}{2\delta}\right]$ . Then assuming majority rule, we can calculate the probability that party  $A$  wins electorally,  $P_A^E$  as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \Pr(\text{A wins electorally}) &= P_A^E = \Pr\left(V_A \geq \frac{1}{2}\right) \\ &= \frac{1}{2} + \gamma - \delta f[p_A^2 - p_B^2 + p_B - p_A + c_A - c_B]. \end{aligned}$$



*Extra-electoral contest.* We model extra-electoral conflict using probit-form contest success function as follows<sup>13</sup>: Let  $c_A$  be the amount of extra-electoral conflict investment by party A and  $c_B$  be the amount of extra-electoral conflict investment by party B. Then party A wins extra-electorally if

$$c_A + \varepsilon_A > c_B + \varepsilon_B,$$

where  $\varepsilon_A$  and  $\varepsilon_B$  are random noises by which actual investments by parties end up differing. Hence party A wins extra-electorally if

$$\varepsilon_B - \varepsilon_A < c_A - c_B.$$

Let  $\varepsilon_B - \varepsilon_A = \varepsilon \sim U\left[\frac{\alpha}{\beta} - \frac{1}{2\beta}, \frac{\alpha}{\beta} + \frac{1}{2\beta}\right]$ . Hence we can calculate the probability that party A wins extra-electorally,  $P_A^{EE}$  to be as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \Pr(\text{A wins extra-electorally}) &= P_A^{EE} = \Pr(\varepsilon < c_A - c_B) \\ &= \frac{1}{2} - \alpha + \beta(c_A - c_B). \end{aligned}$$

**The parties.** The parties choose policy  $p$  (party A chooses  $p_A$  and B chooses  $p_B$  respectively) and extra-electoral activity/conflict levels  $c$  ( $c_A$  and  $c_B$  respectively) to maximize their expected utilities as given below:

$$\begin{aligned} (1) \quad U_A &= \Pr(\text{A wins electorally}) * \Pr(\text{A wins extra-electorally}) * R - \frac{c_A^2}{2}; \\ (2) \quad U_B &= \Pr(\text{B wins electorally}) * \Pr(\text{B wins extra-electorally}) * R - \frac{c_B^2}{2}; \end{aligned}$$

That is,

$$\begin{aligned} (3) \quad U_A &= P_A^E * P_A^{EE} * R - \frac{c_A^2}{2}; \\ (4) \quad U_B &= P_B^E * P_B^{EE} * R - \frac{c_B^2}{2}; \end{aligned}$$

where  $R$  is the rents from office which we have normalized to 1 in the rest of the analysis. Both electoral and extra-electoral victories are important for a party to enjoy the spoils of office but to what extent is a debatable question. Here we assume an extreme which is that a party enjoys its rents from office only when it wins both electorally and extra-electorally. We could consider variations of this assumption where a party enjoys different levels of benefits when it achieves victories in either electoral or extra-electoral conflicts but not both. Here we have just simplified things by assuming that all these other levels of rent is essentially 0 and there is a positive level ( $R$ ) only when a party is victorious on both fronts. Each party also incurs convex costs for undertaking extra-electoral activities in the form of  $c_i^2/2, i = A, B$ .

<sup>13</sup>This has been chosen in favor of more widely used ratio-form contest success function due to algebraic simplicity. See Dixit [11], for an illustration of the use of such a contest success function, for example. The primary difference with a logit-form function is that in the logit-form, success probability depends only on expended resources, whereas, in the probit-form, it depends not only on the expended resources, but also on a noise.

Each party  $i$  (the player),  $i = A, B$ , chooses policy  $p_i^*$ ,  $i = A, B$ , and the level of extra-electoral conflict  $c_i^*$ ,  $i = A, B$ , (which are the strategies available to player  $i$ ) to maximize (expected) utility  $U_i$  (the payoff),  $i = A, B$ . Hence we can define the game  $G$  as follows:  $G := \langle \{A, B\}, \{p_i, c_i\}_{i=A,B}, \{U_i\}_{i=A,B} \rangle$ . Here the timing is as follows:

1. The parties announce  $p_i^*$ ,  $i = A, B$  and  $c_i^*$ ,  $i = A, B$ . Neither  $v_i$ 's nor  $b$  nor  $\varepsilon$  are known at this point.
2.  $v_i$ 's,  $b$  and  $\varepsilon$  are realized and all uncertainty (individual and party levels) is resolved. (Only  $b$  and  $\varepsilon$  need to be realized for aggregate uncertainty to be resolved.)
3. Elections are held and electoral winner is determined as well as winner as per extra-electoral conflict investments are determined. A party enjoys rents from office only if it wins both kinds of conflict - electoral and extra-electoral.

The following proposition summarizes the Nash equilibrium of  $G$ :

**Proposition 1.** *Suppose  $\gamma + \frac{1}{2} \geq 2\delta f \left[ \frac{\gamma\beta + \alpha\delta f}{1 + 4\beta\delta f} \right] \geq \gamma - \frac{1}{2}$ , and  $\alpha + \frac{1}{2} \geq 2\beta \left[ \frac{\gamma\beta + \alpha\delta f}{1 + 4\beta\delta f} \right] \geq \alpha - \frac{1}{2}$  hold. Then  $\{p_A^*, p_B^*, c_A^*, c_B^*\}$  constitute a Nash equilibrium of  $G$  where*

$$(5) \quad p_A^* = \frac{1}{2}$$

$$(6) \quad p_B^* = \frac{1}{2}$$

$$(7) \quad c_A^* = \frac{\beta}{2} - \frac{\delta f}{2} + \frac{\gamma\beta + \alpha\delta f}{1 + 4\beta\delta f}$$

$$(8) \quad c_B^* = \frac{\beta}{2} - \frac{\delta f}{2} - \frac{\gamma\beta + \alpha\delta f}{1 + 4\beta\delta f}.$$

*Proof.* Idea: Taking FOCs of  $U_i$ 's w.r.t  $p_i$ 's and  $c_i$ 's, we get the above results. The parametric conditions ensure that probabilities are well-defined. ■

*Observation 1.* Policy  $p$  converges to median since both the parties announce the median policy<sup>14</sup>,  $p_A = p_B = \frac{1}{2}$ .

*Observation 2.* If both  $\gamma$  and  $\alpha$  are 0, then  $c_A^* = c_B^*$ . That is, if both partisan preferences and noise in extra-electoral conflict technology, are equally biased in favor of each party, then the level of extra-electoral conflict investment are same for both the parties.

*Observation 3.* If  $\gamma < 0$  and  $\alpha < 0$ , then  $c_A^* < c_B^*$ . That is, if partisan preferences are perceived to be against party A and noise in extra-electoral conflict technology is perceived

<sup>14</sup>Often stance of student parties converge on major issues. For example, Andersen and Pant [8] writes the following about positions of Allahabad University candidates before the election of 1969, "All maintain that Hinduism needs to be reformed to remove untouchability and caste exclusiveness. None are religious." Similarly, Glazer [12] writes regarding politics in Chile, "The two competing forces differed less in policy than in style and reputation. Their platforms were strikingly similar, especially in their general emphasis on the need for sweeping social change."

to be in favor of party A, then the level of extra-electoral conflict investment by party A are smaller than that of party B.

*Observation 4.* On the other hand, if  $\gamma > 0$  and  $\alpha > 0$ , then  $c_A^* > c_B^*$ . That is, if partisan preferences are perceived to be in favor of party A and noise in extra-electoral conflict technology is perceived to be against party A, then the level of extra-electoral conflict investment by party A are larger than that of party B.

*Observation 5.*  $\frac{\partial c_A^*}{\partial \gamma} > 0$ ,  $\frac{\partial c_B^*}{\partial \gamma} < 0$ . That is, if partisan preferences move in favor of party A and against party B, then extra-electoral conflict technology of party A increases, and that of party B is likely to fall.

*Observation 6.*  $\frac{\partial c_A^*}{\partial \alpha} > 0$ ,  $\frac{\partial c_B^*}{\partial \alpha} < 0$ . That is, if noise in extra-electoral conflict technology of party A increases, and that of party B falls, then extra-electoral conflict investment of A increases and that of B falls.

*Observation 7.*  $\frac{\partial P_A^E}{\partial \gamma} > 0$ . That is, if partisan preferences move in favor of party A and against party B, then the probability of winning of party A increases (in spite of extra-electoral conflict investment of A rising).

Observations 2 - 5 essentially imply that the more popular party undertakes greater conflict investments while observation 7 implies the more popular party winning the student election.

### 3. EXTENSIONS

In this section we consider three plausible extensions of the benchmark model. Specifically, in extension 1, we see how outcomes are altered when voters are differentially affected by conflict undertaken by the parties. In extension 2, we introduce the possibility of not voting for individual voters, while in extension 3, we introduce ideological parties.

**3.1. Extension 1: Differential impact of extra-electoral conflict.** The only point of departure of this model from model 1 is the way we think about extra-electoral conflict levels affecting utility of a voter. Specifically, we assume that extra-electoral activities  $c_A$  and  $c_B$  in campuses affects utility as follows: both  $c_A$  and  $c_B$  causes utility to fall for a particular voter but it falls lesser if such conflict is inflicted by the party which is closer to the voter policy-wise. For example, if  $i$  is 0 or close to 0 (i.e. policy-wise more pro-party A), then increase in  $c_A$  will hardly affect the utility of voting for party A whereas and increase in  $c_B$  will have a large impact on utility from voting for party B. The opposite is true if  $i$  is closer to party B policy-wise. In this case, increase in  $c_B$  get mildly punished whereas any increase in  $c_A$  gets more severely punished by the voter. So essentially increase in extra-electoral conflict levels alienates all voters but differentially - it is likely to alienate otherwise

supporters to a lesser degree than otherwise opposition supporters. This assumption again has support from reality. This formulation is captured in the specification below where student  $i$  would support party  $A$  if

$$v_{iA} + u_i(p_A) - c_A i \geq v_{iB} + u_i(p_B) - c_B(1 - i).$$

Hence the probability that voter  $i$  votes for party  $A$  is given by,  $P_A^i$  as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} P_A^{i1} &= \Pr(v_i \geq (p_A - i)^2 - (p_B - i)^2 + c_A - c_B) \\ &= \frac{1}{2} + b - f[p_A^2 - p_B^2 + 2i(p_B - p_A) + (c_A + c_B)i - c_B]. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the vote share of  $A$ ,  $V_A$  can be calculated to be

$$\begin{aligned} V_A^1 &= \int_0^1 P_A^{i1} di \\ &= \frac{1}{2} + b - f[p_A^2 - p_B^2 + p_B - p_A + \frac{1}{2}(c_A - c_B)]. \end{aligned}$$

We can calculate the probability that party  $A$  wins electorally,  $P_A^{E1}$  as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \Pr(\text{A wins electorally}) &= P_A^{E1} = \Pr\left(V_A^1 \geq \frac{1}{2}\right) \\ &= \frac{1}{2} + \gamma - \delta f[p_A^2 - p_B^2 + p_B - p_A + \frac{1}{2}(c_A - c_B)]. \end{aligned}$$

Substituting in the utility function of the parties, we can get the game  $G$  redefined as above (with the utilities/payoffs of the parties redefined for this extension), call this game  $G^1$ . We can now calculate the optimal conflict and policy levels of  $G^1$  as summarized the following proposition.

**Proposition 2.** *Suppose  $\gamma + \frac{1}{2} \geq \delta f \left[ \frac{\gamma\beta + \alpha\delta f}{1 + 3\beta\delta f} \right] \geq \gamma - \frac{1}{2}$ , and  $\alpha + \frac{1}{2} \geq 2\beta \left[ \frac{\gamma\beta + \alpha\delta f}{1 + 3\beta\delta f} \right] \geq \alpha - \frac{1}{2}$  hold. Then  $\{p_A^{*1}, p_B^{*1}, c_A^{*1}, c_B^{*1}\}$  constitute a Nash equilibrium of  $G^1$  where*

$$(9) \quad p_A^{*1} = \frac{1}{2}$$

$$(10) \quad p_B^{*1} = \frac{1}{2}$$

$$(11) \quad c_A^{*1} = \frac{\beta}{2} - \frac{\delta f}{2} + \frac{\gamma\beta + \alpha\delta f}{1 + 3\beta\delta f}$$

$$(12) \quad c_B^{*1} = \frac{\beta}{2} - \frac{\delta f}{2} - \frac{\gamma\beta + \alpha\delta f}{1 + 3\beta\delta f}.$$

*Proof.* Idea: Taking FOCs of  $U_i$ 's w.r.t  $p_i$ 's and  $c_i$ 's, we get the above results. The parametric conditions ensure that probabilities are well-defined.  $\blacksquare$

*Observation 8.* If both  $\gamma$  and  $\alpha$  are 0, then not only  $c_A^{*1} = c_B^{*1}$  (like in observation 2) but also  $c_A^{*1} = c_A^*$  and  $c_B^{*1} = c_B^*$ , so that we get  $c_A^{*1} = c_B^{*1} = c_B^* = c_A^* = \frac{\beta}{2} - \frac{\delta f}{2}$ . That is, if both partisan preferences and noise in extra-electoral conflict technology, are equally biased in favor of each party, then the level of extra-electoral conflict investment are same for both

the parties, even when voters are differentially affected by extra-electoral conflict, and this level is equal to the level of the benchmark model.

*Observation 9.* If both  $\gamma$  and  $\alpha$  are  $> 0$ , then  $c_A^{*1} > c_B^{*1}$  and  $c_B^{*1} < c_B^*$ . That is, if partisan preferences are biased in favor of A, and noise in extra-electoral conflict technology are biased against A, then when voters are differentially affected by extra-electoral conflict, the level of extra-electoral conflict investment by A increases, and that of B falls. Hence we see that extra-electoral conflict levels are exacerbated when voters react differentially to such conflict, specifically punishing less when such activities are undertaken by their favorite party.

Notice that this strengthens the general conclusion of observations 2 to 5, that is, popular parties are more violence-prone.

**3.2. Extension 2: Possibility of abstention.** We introduce the possibility of abstention in a very simple way - every voter votes with probability  $q$ ,  $0 < q < 1$ , and does not with the remaining probability. Only when a voter votes, does he have to decide which party to vote for<sup>15</sup>, and hence undertakes the comparison of the benchmark model. Hence the probability that voter  $i$  votes for party  $A$  is now given by,  $P_A^{i2}$  as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} P_A^{i2} &= qP_A^i \\ &= q \left[ \frac{1}{2} + b - f[p_A^2 - p_B^2 + 2i(p_B - p_A) + c_A - c_B] \right]. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the vote share of  $A$ ,  $V_A$  can be calculated to be

$$\begin{aligned} V_A^2 &= \int_0^1 P_A^{i2} di \\ &= q \left[ \frac{1}{2} + b - f[p_A^2 - p_B^2 + p_B - p_A + c_A - c_B] \right]. \end{aligned}$$

We can calculate the probability that party  $A$  wins electorally,  $P_A^{E2}$  as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \Pr(\text{A wins electorally}) &= P_A^{E2} = \Pr\left(V_A^2 \geq \frac{1}{2}\right) \\ &= \frac{1}{2} + \gamma - \delta f[p_A^2 - p_B^2 + p_B - p_A + \frac{1}{2}(c_A - c_B)] - \frac{\delta}{2q} + \frac{\delta}{2}. \end{aligned}$$

Substituting in the utility function of the parties, we can get the game  $G$  redefined as above (with the utilities/payoffs of the parties redefined for this extension), call this game  $G^2$ . We can now calculate the optimal conflict and policy levels of  $G^2$  as summarized in the following proposition.

<sup>15</sup>The literature is divided on how the decisions get taken, that is whether a voter first decides to vote and then decides to whom to vote for, or whether he first decides whom to vote for and then decides whether or not he wants to vote at all, is a moot question. See Turner and Eymann [27], for example, where the authors empirically argue that both the decisions are simultaneously taken.

**Proposition 3.** Suppose  $\gamma + \frac{1}{2} \geq 2\delta f \left[ \frac{\gamma\beta + \alpha\delta f - \frac{\delta}{2q} + \frac{\delta}{2}}{1 + 4\beta\delta f} \right] + \frac{\delta}{2q} - \frac{\delta}{2} \geq \gamma - \frac{1}{2}$ , and  $\alpha + \frac{1}{2} \geq 2\beta \left[ \frac{\gamma\beta + \alpha\delta f - \frac{\delta}{2q} + \frac{\delta}{2}}{1 + 4\beta\delta f} \right] \geq \alpha - \frac{1}{2}$  hold. Then  $\{p_A^{*2}, p_B^{*2}, c_A^{*2}, c_B^{*2}\}$  constitute a Nash equilibrium of  $G^2$  where

$$(13) \quad p_A^{*2} = \frac{1}{2}$$

$$(14) \quad p_B^{*2} = \frac{1}{2}$$

$$(15) \quad c_A^{*2} = \frac{\beta}{2} - \frac{\delta f}{2} + \frac{\gamma\beta + \alpha\delta f}{1 + 3\beta\delta f}$$

$$(16) \quad c_B^{*2} = \frac{\beta}{2} - \frac{\delta f}{2} - \frac{\gamma\beta + \alpha\delta f}{1 + 3\beta\delta f}.$$

*Proof.* Idea: Taking FOCs of  $U_i$ 's w.r.t  $p_i$ 's and  $c_i$ 's, we get the above results. The parametric conditions ensure that probabilities are well-defined.  $\blacksquare$

*Observation 10.*  $\frac{\partial c_A^{*2}}{\partial q} > 0, \frac{\partial c_B^{*2}}{\partial q} > 0$ . That is, conflict levels move in the same direction as the individual's probability of turning out to vote in the first place. Hence conflict levels fall as the probability of voting of individual voters falls.

In fact, this observation can very well rationalize the near-absence or at best low-key presence of conflict in campuses of professional curriculum like management and engineering schools or even very costly private schools. Presumably because of high cost of voting (high opportunity cost of lost time which can otherwise be devoted to preparing for highly competitive exams etc., or very high monetary costs), the probability of voting for individual students is likely to be quite low. And as the above model suggests, this can imply very low incentives for political parties to engage in extra-electoral conflict, the reason being that such conflict will further worsen turnout and in turn, further hurt the probability of winning (see discussion below in section 4, subsection 4.4).

**3.3. Extension 3: Ideological parties.** Suppose now that parties are not just office-seekers but are also 'ideological' in the sense of having a favorite policy  $\bar{p}_i \in [0, 1], i = A, B$ , so that implementation of any other policy  $p_i, i = A, B$ , involves utility loss for the parties. To keep things as simple as possible, suppose party A is the 'rightist' party with respect to policy preference over  $p$  and likes policy 1 the best, that is  $\bar{p}_A = 1$ , while party B is the 'leftist' party and likes policy 0 the best, that is,  $\bar{p}_B = 0$ . A simple way to capture this would be to write a 'welfare' function for each of the parties that captures the welfare emanating from the policy<sup>16</sup>. We assume this to take the following form: Let the welfare for party A

<sup>16</sup>As modeled in case of voters, a more standard way to capture disutility from a policy, say,  $p$ , away from one's favorite, say,  $p^*$ , is to take negative squared distance: disutility from a policy  $p \neq p^*$  is  $-(p - p^*)^2$ . This takes care of deviations in both directions. However we simplify things by assuming parties' favorites to be at the extremes and hence assume a linear disutility function.

from policy  $p$  be

$$W_A(p) = p.$$

And let welfare for party B from policy  $p$  be

$$W_B(p) = 1 - p.$$

Notice that these reflect the policy preference of the parties as articulated above, i.e.  $W_A$  is maximized at  $p = 1$  while  $W_B$  is maximized at  $p = 0$ . Hence we can rewrite the utility functions of the parties as follows:

$$(17) \quad U_A = P_A^E * P_A^{EE} * p_A - \frac{c_A^2}{2};$$

$$(18) \quad U_B = P_B^E * P_B^{EE} * (1 - p_B) - \frac{c_B^2}{2};$$

Here  $U_A$  is maximum when  $p_A = \bar{p}_A = 1$  while  $U_B$  is maximum when  $p_B = \bar{p}_B = 0$ . However the announced policies,  $p_A$  and  $p_B$  need not be equal to the favorites. In fact, contrary to what we have seen in the benchmark model (where parties were pure office-seekers and where optimal announced policies converged to the median policy), here we can see from the FOCs that announced policies do not converge to the median anymore. Hence announced policies, say  $p_A^*$  and  $p_B^*$ , are neither the median nor the favorites of the parties but rather in between the median and the favorites, that is,  $\frac{1}{2} < p_A^* < 1$  while  $0 < p_B^* < \frac{1}{2}$ . However, explicitly calculating the level of policy becomes cumbersome and instead we see the effect such ideology has on the level of extra-electoral conflict. The following proposition summarizes the level of conflict in terms of policies (assuming all required conditions for meaningful probabilities hold).

**Proposition 4.**  $\{c_A^*, c_B^*\}$  are given by

$$(19) \quad c_A^* = p_A^* \frac{\frac{\beta}{2}(1 + 4\beta\delta f(1 - p_B^*)) - \frac{\delta f}{2}(1 + 4\beta\delta f(1 - p_B^*)) + \gamma\beta + \alpha\delta f}{1 + 2\beta\delta f p_A^* + 2\beta\delta f(1 - p_B^*)}$$

$$(20) \quad c_B^* = (1 - p_B^*) \frac{\frac{\beta}{2}(1 + 4\beta\delta f p_A^*) - \frac{\delta f}{2}(1 + 4\beta\delta f p_A^*) - \gamma\beta - \alpha\delta f}{1 + 2\beta\delta f p_A^* + 2\beta\delta f(1 - p_B^*)}.$$

*Observation 11.* We can calculate that  $\frac{\partial c_A^*}{\partial p_A} > 0$ . Hence as we move from office-seeking parties to ideological parties,  $p_A$  increases and so does conflict. Similarly,  $\frac{\partial c_B^*}{\partial p_B} < 0$  which means as  $p_B$  falls (which happens in this case of ideological parties), conflict increases.

Hence as parties become more and more ideological, we should expect more and more violence. This is also borne out in reality (see Discussions in section 4 below.)

#### 4. DISCUSSION

We discuss two aspects of the theoretical model - its premise and its predictions.

*Premise: Presence of extra-electoral elements.* An important theoretical premise of the model is the extra-electoral investment of a given student-party which we essentially imply to be contributions of larger political parties. In other words, by extra-electoral elements, we mean presence of resources (human, monetary and others) that are not directly related to electoral processes and hence excludes potential voters and candidates. Rudolph et. al [23] say that the national parties “attempt to penetrate, organise, mobilise, and recruit students as a social category and a political class by taking an interest in student demands and grievances and by establishing or patronising student or youth organisations and leaders. And students who mean to go into State and national politics know that making a name and a following in the university arena can contribute to that end.” For example, Oommen [20] writes about both human and monetary support to the student wings of the Communist Party of India in Delhi University (the Delhi State Student Youth Federation with C.P.I. (M) leanings and the Delhi University Student Federation supported by C.P.I):

*These Federations claim that they are not receiving any financial aid from any party. But there seem to be certain arrangements by which aid is routed through other organizations. One can also notice that certain persons who are not students at Delhi University usually come to the University and advocate the policies and programs of Communist Parties.*

In fact, influence of such external persons are not just confined to advocacy of policies and programs. Oommen further observes the following:

*...past presidents of the DUSU [Delhi University Student's Union] had also been “puppets” in the hands of informal leaders who had assisted them in winning the election. These informal leaders are generally political workers, paid or unpaid...*

Andersen and Pant [8] writes regarding campaign contributions by “friends” before elections at Allahabad University in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh,

*Often these friends turned out to be local political leaders. Donations were not always in the form of money. Often a jeep would be loaned, or pamphlets would be published.*

We have also noted the presence of such extra-electoral influence on student politics of Britain. Concerning a protest at LSE, Halsey and Marks [14] state that a “noticeable feature of the LSE conflict was the participation of students from other universities and colleges.” These countries are by no means the only ones where such national political forces are involved with student politics. See Lyman [18], for example for such a phenomenon to be present in Indonesian student politics.

Next, we will discuss some of the predictions of the theoretical model.



*Predictions.* An overarching prediction of the model is that the more popular a party, the more is it likely to indulge in violence. Other predictions include the congruence between national and campus politics and the lower incidence of violence with possibility of abstention.

**4.1. Popularity and conflict.** Observations 2 to 5, as well as observation 9 mean that the more favorable are partisan preferences of the voters for a party, the more likely is that party to indulge in extra-electoral conflict. Let us assume that the election results of larger outside-campus politics reflect partisan preferences of the student community as well. In other words, when a party does well in the state-level election for example, suppose that it is likely to be the case, that that particular political party is more popular among the student-voters as well (so that the student wing of that political party is expected to be more popular on-campus). In this case, the model predicts that there should be escalation of extra-electoral conflict on-campus.

This is evident in events in colleges of the Indian state of West Bengal. West Bengal's ruling leftist government was toppled by Trinamool Congress (TMC) after a span of about four decades which certainly indicates partisanship favoring TMC for large part of the electorate. Soon after there were reports of many incidents of campus violence where allegations arose against students wing of the ruling party, TMC<sup>17</sup>. Dadu [9] specifically notes<sup>18</sup> violence in campuses of Kolkata colleges, during college elections and also presence of external elements/outsideers perpetrating much of the on-campus disturbances.

**4.2. Congruence between larger and campus politics.** In line with observation 7, the more favorable are partisan preferences (as reflected in election outcomes of outside-campus politics) the more likely is that party to win elections. See Rudolph, Rudolph and Ahmed [23] for similar trends in campus and national politics of India. They note, "In India, student politics tend towards congruence with national politics." For example, Oommen [20] writes,

*The relationship between student politics and the wider political system is clearly reflected in the trends of DUSU politics in the last few years. Until recently the DUSU president belonged to or was supported by one or another of the Congress factions. But after the Jan Sangh captured power in the Delhi Metropolitan Council, its student wing, Vidyarathi Parishad, has gained strength on campus, culminating in the election of a Parishad candidate as President in 1971-72.*

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<sup>17</sup>This has been evident from numerous media reports, both on television and in print. See for example, Sulagna Sengupta's report in Indian Express (2013, Feb 14), "Antisocials, goondaism behind rise in campus violence: student leaders", available at <http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/antisocials-goondaism-behind-rise-in-campus-violence-student-leaders/1073881/>. Similarly, see another online piece at <http://www.telegraphindia.com/archives/archive.html>.

<sup>18</sup>Dadu's [9] work, has, in part, been an empirical analysis of the data collected by the author as part of her seed money grant project, 'An Economic Analysis of Student Politics in India'.

Similarly, such trends are discernible in reflections of Weinberg and Walker [28] on Latin American student politics:

*When new movements or parties have emerged, these have tended to be incorporated into the university political subcultures, presenting slates of candidates and seeking to dominate university government as their counterparts seek to dominate the national government.*

**4.3. Aggravation of conflict with ideological parties.** As we see in observation 11, as parties become ideological the level of extra-electoral conflict increases. This is definitely true and we see this in intense extra-electoral conflict among student wings of left and right parties in Indian universities. For example, in the context of student politics at Allahabad University, Andersen and Pant [8] note that SYS takes a “consistently more radical stand on issues” compared to the Youth Congress and the Vidyarthi Parishad candidates. And as the model predicts, the means of conflict also becomes more violent. The authors note,

*In an effort to generate enthusiasm, the strike leaders [belonging to SYS] adopted a more radical posture. An effigy of the Vice-Chancellor was burned before the Senate Hall.*

**4.4. Abstention and conflict.** The near-absence of conflict in professional schools (see McClung, Warfield, and Martin [19]) can be explained by observation 10. For example, we can think of ‘costs’ in terms of time devoted to examinations/evaluation components, or level of entrance requirements. In these terms then, voting is relatively much more costlier in professional schools leading to many voters in these schools to not vote and we know from our model that abstention tempers violence. Not just in professional schools, even science and commerce streams in universities demonstrate this trend. Andersen and Pant [8] talks about turnout in elections of Allahabad University where “Estimates of the number of science students who vote varies from 10 per cent to 25 per cent (the overall voting average is about 39 per cent). This is undoubtedly quite low.”

In business schools, for example, where examinations need to be taken at very frequent intervals, level of involvement with other activities tend to be much lower than in other colleges with annual examination system. Hence, like in many countries, the cycle of student activism almost tend to get predictable on the basis of examination schedules. Entrance requirements to a university may also affect political reactions of students. It is possible that very stringent examinations to get seats in business schools, medical schools and other professional schools, translate to very high costs of voting leading to abstention and lower campus unrest. For example in the context of strikes in Allahabad University, Andersen and Pant [8] demonstrate how they are often boycotted by science stream students.

*The student union leaders were able to persuade the arts students to boycott their classes, but the science students stoutly resisted the call. Anti-strike slogans appeared in the science block. ... Over 400 science students presented the Vice-Chancellor with a memorandum informing him of their opposition to the strike.*

Similarly, Glazer [12] writes about how politics was kept at bay from medical and engineering schools in Chile<sup>19</sup>.

## 5. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Student politics occupy the center stage of not just the academic arena in a country but is often at the heart of the identity of a nation itself. This is certainly true in many developing countries, including India. Student politics in India, in recent times, have been plagued with indiscipline, politicization and even violence. Campus politics though, is often a ground for interactions among fertile minds and leaders-in-the-making, especially in countries like India where political recruitment often starts from campuses.

This paper is an attempt to formalize many of the key issues pertaining to student politics, especially the nature of its link with larger politics. We find that the more popular student party is more likely to engage in conflict on campus. This tendency is further exacerbated when student-voters are averse to punishing their favorite parties for engaging in violence and when parties become more ideological in their policy stance. However such tendencies are checked when we introduce the possibility of abstention on the part of individual voters. The findings of the model finds much resonance in historical and current episodes of student politics and conflict in many countries, especially India, where national political parties actively play a role in directing campus politics.

## APPENDIX A. DIFFERENT TYPES OF STUDENT POLITICS

Weinberg and Walker [28] categorizes student politics into four cases depending on potential presence or not of two factors: first, student politics as a “process of political career recruitment”, and the second, the “degree of centralization of government control over university financing”. Pertaining to the first, they hold the following: “Where political parties are highly organized and centralized at the national level, and are thus able to sponsor mobility into professional political careers, they are likely to turn to universities as sources of able, well-educated candidates. This in turn leads to the development of student political

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<sup>19</sup>Glazer [12] cites the example of Luis, a history student, “... Luis’s experiences in the School of History differed from those of his friends in engineering, so did they diverge from those of young Chileans entering the School of Medicine. Roberto, a first-year medical student, was well aware of the social problems of his country. ... Yet, it was also obvious to him that his major challenge in the next few years would be to learn the basic materials in the biological sciences. ... he realized that becoming a good doctor had to be his primary concern. ... Roberto knew that professional commitment and political interest were kept quite separate at the Medical School. The classroom was a place where medical knowledge was imparted and learned. Politics had to be put aside at the door. While other schools might be affected by strikes, the medical students had to remember that their major responsibility was to their work.”

clubs or branches of national political parties on university campuses, where aspiring politicians may become socialized and prove their mettle to party recruiting agents.” Pertaining to the second, they elaborate as follows: “Where a government agency channels all or most of the funds to finance higher education, and where the same agency plays an important role in instituting new universities, courses of study, examination procedures, and the like, this centralization of authority is likely to have its counterpart in a strong, centralized organization of students at the national level the national student union.” They further emphasize that presence of both these factors “is likely to generate and sustain a strong concern among students for influence in the national political arena, and this is liable to be reciprocated by the public and by political party leaders, who watch the outcomes of student campaigns as an indication of the present political sentiments of future elites. Thus we would expect the emergence of student political factions under conditions of intense competition for support, influence, and career benefits.”

Weinberg and Walker [28] further elucidate the linkages in their four-fold typology by giving concrete examples of countries where each type of student politics is in vogue: in the United States, for example, none of the factors operate so that both national student unions and student branches of the national political parties are weak. The former are weak because there is no centralized authority that controls of higher education with which to bargain. The latter are weak because recruitment to political careers does not depend on performance in student branches of national political parties. France, appears to be an example of a country where only the second factor operates. “The universities are totally dependent on governmental subsidy, and decisions on higher education are highly centralized in the government and its civil service. As in the United States, recruitment to political candidacy is a locally controlled process. French legislators are often elected on the basis of holding a local office, which they retain while holding their national office ... The result is a powerful national student union, the Union nationale des etudiants frangaise (UNEF)...”. See Pinner [21], [22] for further elaboration on student politics in some European nations.

Britain, has strong presence of political party branches in universities but not a national student union since “all universities are centrally funded by a body composed of senior civil servants and the heads of universities -the University Grants Committee. The result is that the universities have virtual autonomy in their financial affairs despite central funding”. Hence the second factor is absent. However the first factor is very much present so that “[T]he form of student political organization which results is the student political club affiliated with national political parties. The latter use the clubs as recruiting grounds for future members of Parliament as well as for the party organization. There is intense competition for high office in these clubs... .” In Britain, there are three main political organizations connected with the major national political parties: the National Association of Labour Student Organizations (NALSO), a federative organization of Labour and Socialist clubs, the Federation of Conservative and Unionist Organizations (FUCUO); and the Union of Liberal Students and “[S]everal of its [NALSO’s] chairmen in the early and middle fifties entered Parliament as Labour MP’s in the 1964 and 1966 elections.” (Halsey and Marks [14]) Not only are national leaders recruited from among student leaders, the student body in general act as a massive vote bank and national parties (as well as their student wings) sought to woo them: “The field for Labour Party proselytisation is no longer just the colourful and eccentric revolt of a few upper-class scions; university students represent a growing class, and a class whose votes are of great importance to the Party. They are now, or will be, the professional, managerial, and scientific middle class; they represent the new middle class in the affluent society [whose] votes were so significant in Orpington and Luton.” (“Memorandum on the State of NALSO for the December Meeting of the Youth

Sub-Committee,” Angus Calder, Quoted in Halsey and Marks [14]) Historically Burma can also be thought of as an example in this type of student politics<sup>20</sup>.

Latin America is given as an example where both factors are present. For example, pertaining to intervention of national parties in Latin American student politics, Weinberg and Walker [28], writes about university branches of national parties playing an important role in university affairs, and university elections and often receiving support from their parent parties. Levy [15], for example, talks about “the recruitment link between student politics and local or national politics.” Describing the environment in Mexico he writes:

*Their [the students’] talent may be recognized and ultimately rewarded with jobs by their part-time professors (the bulk of the professoriate), who work in government or party positions. Many student leaders move directly from party posts in the university to party posts in the regional or national arena. Such links are found in some Mexican states, but they are more pronounced in Venezuela, where the major national parties have greater legitimacy within the universities.*

Again Levy [15] cites Costa Rica’s student politics as an example where student politics is highly politicized.

*Vigorous competition takes place for virtually all administrative positions, including rector. ... . As in Venezuela, there are strong links between student and national partisan politics.*

This paper attempts to model student politics, especially in the presence of the first factor in Weinberg and Walker’s typology (that is, whether it acts as a political recruitment process). The second factor (central financing) has not been explicitly modeled. Hence our model can potentially encompass the cases of student politics in Latin America, for example (where the second factor is also present along with the first) as well as Britain (where only the first factor is present but not the second). In any case, the model probably does not apply to cases like France (where the first factor is absent, second is present) and the United States (where both are absent).

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<sup>20</sup>In Burma, Silverstein [24] speaks of the “interlocking relationship between student political organizations and national political parties.” He elucidates as follows (this quote appears both in Silverstein [24] and [25]:

*...from 1945 onward the students and their organizations became part of the national political process and an object for control by the rival political parties. This was due, ... in part, to the fact that the rivals for political power were products of the student movement and sought to continue their links, despite their graduation into the world of national politics.*

However political discourses etc. were firmly silenced by an undemocratic military regime from 1962 onwards.

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