

Historicising Student Activism and their Pamphleteer Discourses: a Textometric Analysis

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Abstract

Recovering those writings on the wall: this paper aims at providing new insights on youth Indian activism through presenting preliminary results of a textual study on campus politics. Through a lexicographic analysis of a recently (2015) digitalised database of pamphlets in a predominantly left-leaning university in New Delhi, I present three main findings. Mainly, pamphleteer rhetoric in this campus operationalises a vituperative type of discourse based on competitive-argumentation, slanders and truth-claiming. Moreover, textual statistics helps us to identify phases, changes of political leadership and the advent of new political debates in the university, which echo those emerging in the country. Lastly, activists authoring pamphlets build on pre-existing ideologies embedded in Indian politics, as they draw from the political culture of the party they belong to.

Key words: pamphlet, activism, periodisation, campus, student movement, Indian communism, occurrences, vituperative discourse, archive.

1. Introducing Textual Analysis to Campus Politics in India

The common assertion that history should not be written only by the victors is at the center of many debates of modern historiography. Ranging from des Annales school to Subaltern studies, several successful attempts were made to historicise non state-centric voices, including those of workers, minorities, migrants or small-scale activists. How can text-analysis best make sense of these alternative discourses?

By accumulation and interpretation of a large corpus of pamphlets produced by students' organisations in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), this paper helps to validate the relevance of lexicometric methods for the political analysis of medium-scale countercultural movements. The study exploits the resources of the "Pamphlet Repository for Changing Activism" (PaRChA), a new digital platform I set up as part of my doctoral project. The use of optical character recognition (OCR) permits the extraction of words from the printed material and it makes the huge body of text suitable for statistical analysis through the use of TXM (Heiden *et al.* 2010) and Mallet (McCallum 2002) computer tools.

The ambition of this study is threefold. First, the use of textometric tools allows for a periodisation of activist discourses based on discussed themes and also enables the study of their frequencies. The article empirically confirms that for the examined case study, speech matches political change. To sustain such claim, correspondence analysis is mobilised in order to identify years in which pamphlet publications displayed a more analogous

vocabulary. In the case of JNU political history in the last two decades it is possible to distinguish four homogeneous periods, and each one can be linked to both the localised historical context of the university and to broader episodes of Indian politics.

Apart from that identifiable language elements and *topoi* (i.e. recurring themes) in pamphlets can be specifically associated to the organisations who write them. Beyond necessary ideological and strategic cleavages, it is possible to identify pamphlets as a type of discourse *en soi* (Le Bart 2009), at the crossroad of satirical and polemist repertoire. Third, in an Indian context, I give preliminary evidence for a typology of pamphleteer discourses based on the word specificities of each authoring political organisation. Lexical frames are outlined, making sense of a “Hindu-nationalist” dialectic as well as the “democratic-struggle” of communist-inspired organisations. Each one embodies a specific worldview in which righteous voices unmask conspiracies, slander and oppression proposing new understandings of notions such as gender violence and caste discrimination. The final goal of this textometric approach is to identify the language-identity of political organisations and their student base.

The argument is largely based on the interpretation of word occurrences. By using this method the paper identifies the lexicon over-represented in a particular sub-section of the pamphlet corpus. Additionally, an identification of “topics” – understood as cluster of words frequently occurring together – is also solicited. Topic modelling is used here as a statistical techniques to categorise individual texts in order to outline a typology of the aforementioned university-based pamphlets.

2. The Pamphlet Corpus

The PaRChA repository comprises 72,424 documents covering the period 1975-2015. They were mainly drawn together from six different sources¹. After removing documents that are not strictly relevant (posters, manifestos, reports, press releases, letters to administration, statements of the teachers’ association), 37,430 pamphlets were kept, ranging from 1994 to 2015 and authored by 13 different student organisations² – sometimes grouped together in

¹ The material was collected from private holdings of Lenin Kumar (DSF and SFI), Tapas Ranjan (AISA), Ashutosh Kumar (AISA), Kunwar Sudhanshu Lal (AISF), Subin Dennis (SFI), MD Naushad (ABVP and DSU). I would like to thank them for their support and their cooperation. Caroline Fortunato and Sanjay Dharia kindly assisted me in the scanning process. I am also particularly indebted to Guillaume Loret, who helped design the PaRChA online database. The project is accessible here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/parchaproject/> ID: parchaproject.guest@yahoo.com Password: guest2015.

² The “Pamphlet Repository for Changing Activism” (PaRChA) project gathers archival material of student organisations such as AISA (All India Students Association, student branch of Communist Party of India Marxist-Leninist CPI-ML), SFI (Students’ Federation of India, student branch of Communist Party of India Marxist CPI-M), DSF (Democratic Students’ Federation, associated to Left Collective), DSU (Democratic Students Union, supporter of the Communist Party of India Maoist CPI(Maoist)), AISF (All India Students Federation, student branch of Communist Party of India CPI), ABVP (Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, student wing of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh RSS), NSUI (National Students’ Union Of India, student branch of the Indian National Congress). PaRChA also comprises material released by elected student representatives in bodies like JNUSU (JNU Student Union) and GSCASH (Gender Sensitisation Committee Against Sexual Harassment) as well as teacher representatives in the JNUTA (Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers’ Association) and cultural-political associations such as the United Dalit Student’s Forum (supportive of the Bahujan Samaj Party) or Youth for Equality (i.e. group of students opposing reservations).

clusters when too small. 10 out of these 13 organisations are presented in Figure 4. English is the medium of education in JNU, consequently ~95% of the text in the corpus is in this language. The sparse material in Hindi (devanagari script) and other languages (mainly Urdu and Bengali) was not included in the analysis. It is assumed that the proportion of pamphlets in Hindi is constant over time and that all the organisations use them in minimal proportions. The same scanning material was used for the entire pamphlet corpus, so errors generated during the OCR text extraction are spread evenly across the various sub-corpus. This is important in order to ensure that various results of the text analysis (in particular topic models) are grasping political differences and not stylistic differences between sub-corpus.

3. The Pamphleteer Tradition of Jawaharlal Nehru University

What makes a pamphlet different from other documents? Some forms of discourses, such as European institutional communication (Hermand 2014) and international organisations' reporting – e.g. the World Trade Organisation annual report (Siroux 2008) – are keen to neutralise polemical effects and de-problematise social phenomena. According to Passard (2015), the French pamphlet in the late XIX century is the exact opposite of this, as it has as main function to “de-pacify” the political game. Usually understood as a brief document (Jonge & Nicolas 2009), its purpose is to *react* to a specific political situation (Saenen 2010). It can be understood as a media ambitioning to politicise passive individuals in order to make them witness and feel – often through the use of pathos – a particular injustice. This attempt of rejecting an existing imposture leads pamphleteers to claim the monopoly over honesty (c.f. Foucault and his concept of *parrêsia*) and truth-enunciation (Avril 1978). Drawing on the work of Angenot (1995 [1982]) three more pamphleteers functions can be identified. It can be perceived as a *performative* document (also Danblon 2006) calling its readers for immediate action against a political prejudice. The pamphlet is also targeted at a clearly identify enemy (rival, specific class, politician, ethnicity etc.) that has to be decried. This Manichaean cosmology of conflict sometimes involves oratory violence in the pursuit of having the “last word” (Rosenvallon 1992). Lastly, the pamphlet articulates particular rhetorical features, at the crossroad of satirical and polemist repertoire. In this genre, micro-narratives such as the anecdote, parabola, and testimony (Angenot 1978) are embedded in an argumentation that involves both indictment and plea. Such a discourse specialisation involves necessarily a form of professionalisation of the actors to write pamphlets (Passard 2015). Though no study has analysed the specific components of pamphleteering in an Indian context it is safe to say that it has a longstanding tradition of radicalism that can be traced back to the early *swadeshi* (i.e. Indian independence) movement and the 1905 partition of Bengal (Sanyal 2014). In a context in which scholarship on the subject is fragmentary, it is important to rely on ethnographic evidence in order to understand the way pamphleteering is practiced in JNU.

“*Before submitting a text to analysis, a social critique of the status of the document has to be made*”. Bourdieu, while commenting on a 1983 conference in Saint-Maximin (France) on the topic of reading, expressed the view that a pamphlet was not only a text container, but also a social ritual (Reeser & Spalding 2002). In the line of this thought, I argue that a sound analysis of Jawaharlal Nehru University pamphleteer discourse cannot be made from the sole point of view of textual analysis. First, it is important to understand JNU as North Indian campus characterised by a socialisation centred on politics (Martelli 2015) and dominated by organised student organisations affiliated with various communist student organisations. In this context of political competition, in which activists defend identifiable political positions,

a pamphlet can be seen as markers for argumentative differentiation. “*All kinds of debates happened and we defeated them...not with money or muscle power like in DU [Delhi University]...we just used arguments, logic*” (Tapas, interview 2015). These argumentative jousts between organisations contribute to the saturation of the campus with political messages structured around its “pamphlet culture” (Kshetrimayum, alumni 2003).

JNU provided me a platform to meet students from diverse backgrounds and socio-political orientations. Bunches of pamphlets distributed by student organizations along with dinner and breakfast, and public meetings in hostel organized regularly attracted me towards student politics. (N.S. Rao, alumni 1987)

Therefore, I did not actively participate in any political activities during 1978-80, but enjoyed its election meetings, posters and pamphlet making, the student union elections and the nights of counting of election result. (S.N. Singh, alumni 1980)

While some pamphlet traditions are meant to be chanted or recited (Jouhaud 1985), the one in JNU residences – 73.2 per cent of the students live on campus according to their annual report – relies first on individual reading. However, that does not mean that no social practice is attached to it. For instance, activists do room campaigns, class campaigns, mess campaigns, signature campaigns, *chanda* campaigns (money contribution campaigns) and by doing so distribute pamphlets mostly at dinner time and later in the night – during electoral campaigns distribution happens even at breakfast times. *Parchas* (pamphlets) are for instance heavily associated with meal eating in refectories. “*Ordinary meals turned into gourmet meals thanks to the stack of pamphlets on various national and international issues kept in the hostel dining hall*” (D. Sahu, alumni 2010). Pamphlets are debated while having food, so that politics framed by activists irremediably becomes a collective matter. As part of the JNU community dining, pamphlets do not only serve as a tool of communication, they are also a tool for connecting regular students to political activists. For instance, during class hours (usually between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Thursday), affiliated students will stand in front of student residences or hostels and distribute material to them, often inviting them to events, protests, campaigns, cultural or political events organised same day or the day after. Not only do pamphlets serve as a pretext for activists to get in contact with students, they are also used as proof to the broader community that their organisation keeps working for them while pursuing broader political interests. In that sense, pamphleteering is the written component of activist’s performance in a climate of political contention. To sum up, pamphlets in JNU serve three main purposes:

- To take position in light of fresh political events and differentiate politically from other organisations.
- To help keeping “*contact with people until it reaches an amazing level*” (Aardra, interview 2015).
- To provide a constant account of actions taken.

I argue that JNU pamphlets emphasise on a specific form of language performance that can be called *vituperative* (Hastings 2009), emphasising on criticism and need for change. Evidence of these written *calls for action* against mainstream politics are clear when looking at the most

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recurrent words³ in the corpus. Pamphleteers in the PaRChA corpus strike us as combating for a better world, word by word, pamphlet after pamphlet. Words like struggle and fight fill the column inches. Against is the single most used word when excluding those of places and people. The frequency of against mirrors the exigencies of JNU campus politics. It is accompanied by a pamphleteer literary tradition of anger against injustice (Hastings *et al.* 2009). Most co-occurring lemmas along with the term against emphasise on the wrongdoings of society, its unfairness, its violence, the angering lies it propagates (c.f. figure 1 below). Vituperative discourse seems to apply both to local issues (campus, 32,969 occurrences; administration, 28,902) and broader ones (India, 25,138; government, 21,622). Irrespective of the authoring organisation, most JNU pamphlets offer comments on current political events and inevitably call for an appropriate reaction. This is the reason why JNU pamphlet discourses use predominantly present tenses; the most used being is (170,715 occurrences), has (100,336), be (96,333), are (79,553) and have (74,139). As a JNU activist admits: “*you open the newspaper in the morning, it tells you what you are going to protest against in the afternoon*” (Ishan, interview 2014).

No	Cooccurrent	F ^a	Co-F	Score ^b	Distance	No	Cooccurrent	Freq	Co-F	Score	Distance
1	the	1201418	76140	1000	4.4	51	Green	1121	200	66	3.6
2	of	603597	32963	1000	5.2	52	humanity	585	144	66	1.2
3	and	464094	31157	1000	4.8	53	leveled	98	66	65	0.9
4	protested	803	473	1000	0.9	54	FYUP	664	151	64	2.7
5	disciplinary	634	284	210	2.1	55	mobilizing	558	139	64	3
6	vigilant	894	321	201	0.8	56	motion	442	122	62	2.2
7	anger	858	313	199	2	57	complainant	887	170	61	2.2
8	slander	1120	352	198	1.8	58	campaigns	1011	182	60	2.3
9	strict	604	265	193	2.7	59	protracted	889	167	58	3.1
10	allegations	892	277	155	1.5	60	FIR	380	110	58	2.1
11	injustice	895	277	154	1.9	61	hatred	804	157	57	2.6
12	Iran	1112	305	153	1.8	62	saffronisation	390	110	57	2.9
13	tirade	272	166	153	0.5	63	custodial	296	97	57	1.2
14	to	461861	22852	151	5.5	64	acquisition	644	139	56	3.2
15	waging	486	204	144	2.7	65	IAEA	435	115	56	3.5
16	displacement	746	236	134	2.3	66	vitriolic	189	79	56	1.9
17	baseless	730	230	130	2.3	67	crackdown	908	164	55	3.8
18	grab	1066	269	126	3.6	68	campaigning	356	102	54	1.5
19	pitting	114	99	118	2.9	69	guard	356	102	54	0.7
20	odds	284	134	103	1.3	70	diatribe	65	50	54	0.7
21	forefront	888	215	97	3.7	71	neo-liberal	928	164	53	3.7
22	Unite	871	212	96	1.2	72	hikes	761	147	53	3.1
23	mobilized	448	156	96	3.4	73	speaking	726	144	53	2.6
24	pit	133	94	96	3.5	74	vicious	675	138	53	3.3
25	imposition	775	200	95	2.2	75	levelled	86	55	53	0.8
26	patriarchy	836	205	93	1.6	76	fascism	904	160	52	2.7
27	lodged	526	164	92	2.5	77	venom	323	96	52	1.2
28	launch	706	183	88	3.2	78	aggression	499	116	51	2.6
29	mobilize	694	178	85	3.5	79	malicious	372	101	51	3.1
30	discriminated	228	109	85	0.1	80	revolt	168	71	51	2.2
31	authoritarian	997	210	83	3.1	81	occupation	933	160	50	3.9
32	uncompromising	672	174	83	2.5	82	spoken	248	83	50	1.9
33	pitted	74	67	83	0.8	83	casteism	436	107	49	2.9
34	voted	731	179	82	0.8	84	finer	946	158	48	3.2
35	commercialization	970	205	81	3.2	85	resentment	166	68	48	1.8
36	Hunt	933	201	81	4.4	86	communalisation	183	70	47	2.1
37	neoliberal	981	204	79	2.6	87	discriminates	56	43	47	0.3
38	warn	895	195	79	3.6	88	abuse	1029	162	46	2.9
39	directed	686	170	78	1.4	89	threats	1027	162	46	3.6
40	struggled	573	156	78	1.6	90	spewing	73	47	45	1.8

³ Lexical forms indicating oppositional stands are numerous. Examples among the 50 most used signifying words in the PaRChA corpus are following. Against (Frequency: 55,298; Ranking in the table: 4), struggle (35,582; 5), issue (31,238; 8), demand (27,970; 11), should (23,719; 15), more (22,546; 19), movement (21,526; 22), give (19,134; 25), ensure (19,042; 26), must (18,634; 27), protest (15,608; 33), fight (14,780; 37), need (13,978; 43), increase (12,515; 48), hold (12,396; 49).

41	unjust	470	142	78	2.5	91	lumpen	967	153	44	3.6
42	punitive	400	132	78	2.5	92	warns	466	104	44	3.5
43	discriminate	113	77	77	0.6	93	Recommendations	1136	166	43	3.4
44	commercialisation	655	159	72	3	94	heroic	333	88	43	3.8
45	intensify	989	194	71	3.6	95	mobilised	315	85	43	3.7
46	onslaught	927	188	71	2.7	96	derogatory	236	75	43	2.8
47	forcible	306	111	71	2.6	97	bias	673	123	42	2.7
48	canards	226	97	70	1.2	98	principled	940	146	41	3.3
49	neo-liberal	1043	196	68	3.2	99	Harassment	866	140	41	2.8
50	Operation	1014	191	67	3.7	100	spirited	579	113	41	3.3

^aFrequency of the word in the JNU pamphlet corpus. ^bIndicator of the probability of encounter between *against* and its cooccurrent. List of cooccurrents N°101-200, c.f. below: hunt (Score: 40), accusations (40), feudalism (40), Banging (40), repressive (39), takeover (39), procession (38), agitating (38), racial (38), racism (38), crusade (38), Fight (37), brave (37), high-handedness (37), spreading (36), lumpenism (36), livelihoods (36), colonialism (36), Jagatsinghpur (36), arbitrary (35), undeclared (46), peoples' (34), hegemony (34), unitedly (34), Singhal (34), battles (34), exemplary (34), regressive (33), peacefully (33), defending (32), tribals (32), racist (32), registered (32), plunder (31), weapon (31), spoke (31), dictatorial (31), corporatisation (31), corporatization (31), frenzy (30), campaigned (30), tide (30), relentless (29), spate (29), mobilise (29), discriminatory (28), Indo-US (28), Christians (28), spearheaded (28), mobilisations (28), nationwide (28), Sharmila' (28), corrupt (27), firm (27), assertion (27), Imperialism (27), file (27), mongering (27), eviction (27), mobilising (27), slandering (27), fights (27), Amritashva (27), injustices (27), state' (26), oppressive (26), wave (26), Xth (26), intensifying (26), authoritarianism (26), vocal (26), victimisation (26), Bandh (26), Bachao (26), bulwark (26), state-sponsored (25), witch-hunting (25), pogroms (25), spontaneous (25), fee-hike (25), resolute (25), valiant (25), barricade (25), ranting (25), defamation (25), plotting (25), divisive (24), Nuclear (24), Violence (24), minded (24), fellow (24), faulty (24), Bhaskar (24), exploitative (24), witch (24), profiling (24), uprising (24), communalization (24).

Figure 1: Highly Associated Cooccurrents of the Word “against”.

The 100 words displaying the highest specificity scores are presented in figure 1. The table was elaborated using the default cooccurrences parameters of TXM 0.7.7. The minimum frequency and cofrequency threshold is set at 2 occurrences. Cooccurrents' distance from the pivot word is bound to 10 lexical units on both left and right sides. Apart from conjunction and, preposition of and article the, distance between against and its cooccurrents rarely exceeds 4 units. This intertextual proximity shows the high level of attraction of lexical forms such as injustice, discriminated or baseless. The significant association between the pivot and cooccurrents help us understanding the nature of JNU political discourse. Words in figure 1 refer to broad social justice issues (caste discriminations, neo-liberal inequalities etc.) rather than educational aspects (fee hikes, infrastructure shortages, administrative delays). Thus, the context in which the word against is used indicates that the primary concern of JNU pamphleteers is to challenge the existing Indian social order.

4. Tracing Changes in Political Discourse: The Four Periods of JNU Campus Politics (1994-2014)

So far I have showed that JNU pamphleteering displays a form of angered politics, articulate political rivalries, and is an alley for politicisation – in which students are invited to gain activist-like consciousness and participate in anti-establishment movements. However this approach is incomplete as it does not account for historical and political changes. Indeed, JNU pamphlets should not only be approached as a literary genre, but as an alternative historical material, offering anti-establishment views over a certain period of time. In order to avoid orientalist essentialisations, it is important to recall historical processes which have deposited an *infinity of traces* (Said [quoting Gramsci's *quaderni*] 1977) and lead to discourse change. The use of textometric tools allows for a periodisation of activist discourses based on the themes discussed and their frequencies (Sousa 2012). To explore this issue, correspondence analysis (Brunet 2011) can be used in order to identify years in which pamphlet publications displayed analogous vocabulary. Chronological textual sequences have to be interpreted globally according to their curbed orientation around the centre of the graph (Mayaffre 2000).

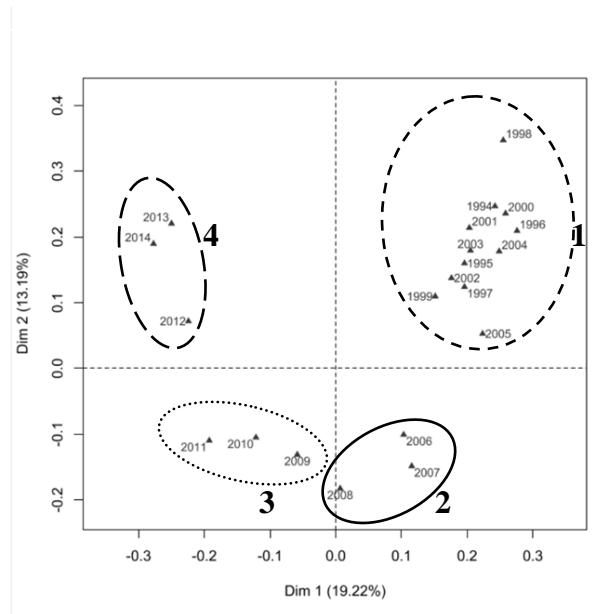


Figure 2: Correspondence Analysis of the Pamphlet Corpus Partitioned per Year

In the case of Jawaharlal Nehru University's history during the period 1994-2014, it is possible to distinguish four homogeneous lexical periods. In this paper I suggest that three sets of mechanisms might best explain lexical changes between the periods 1994-2005 (1), 2006-2008 (2), 2009-2011 (3) and 2012-2014 (4).

3.1. Emergence of Dominant Forces

Results of the correspondence analysis can inform us of a change of the main locutor-enunciator in JNU campus politics. From 1995 to 2005, 32 out of 44 elective posts (campus level) in JNU were occupied by activists affiliated (or in alliance) with SFI, the student wing of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) – the dominant parliamentary Left force in India. The academic year 2004-05 constituted a turning point as the post of president was won for the first time in a decade (since 1995) by AISA (c.f. footnote n°2), a rival communist organisation, linked with the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). From that year onward, the previously dominant student organisation never regained the topmost representative post in JNU campus politics (except in 2006-7), paving the way for a hegemonic dominance of AISA, especially after 2012-3 and the organisational split of SFI. Another turning point in campus politics is the period 2009-2011, years in which no student union was elected, after a 2008 order of the Supreme Court of India, considering that JNU student union constitution was violating government recommendations regarding the conduct of student elections.

3.2. Watershed Events

Change in political representation doesn't emerge in a vacuum, it is marked by events that polarise public opinion and make electoral change possible. JNU as a political space is no exception to this, and each lexical period, as well as the transition between them tell us more about the main polemics that fuelled campus political life. In combination with ethnographic knowledge, looking at language specificities in JNU can tell us more about recent history of communism in India.

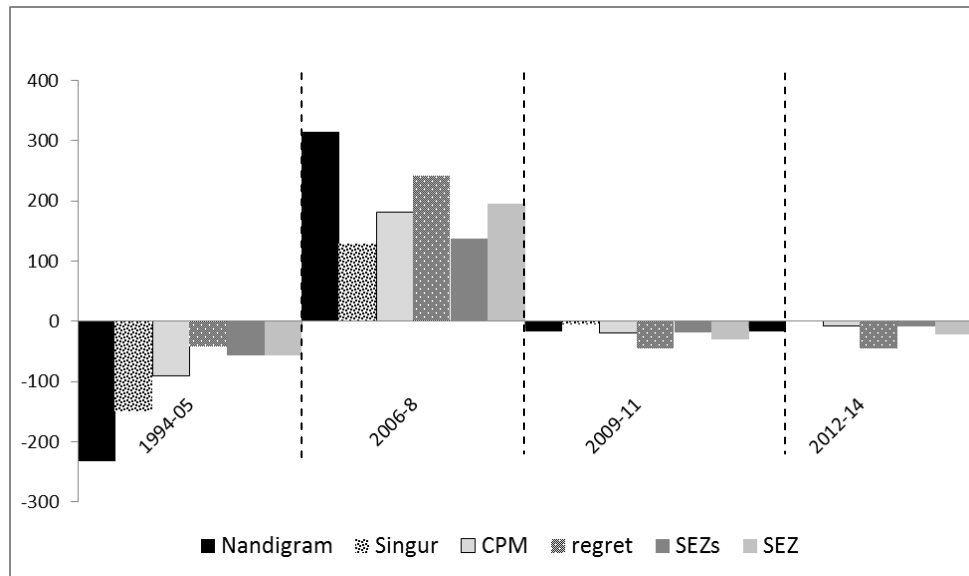


Figure 3: Singur and Nandigram Controversy in the Pamphlet Corpus

Perhaps the most influential nation-wide controversy on communist-dominated campus politics, the 2007 killing of displaced farmers in Singur and Nandigram by CPI-M led Bengal government (in order to acquire land for SEZ, i.e. Special Economic Zones for industrial projects) created the condition for intense anti-SFI pamphleteering. Former students of JNU and Delhi University acknowledged that: “It was massively debated, students of Jadavpur University [i.e. in Kolkata] had even come to our college to seek our support” (Smitana, interview 2016).

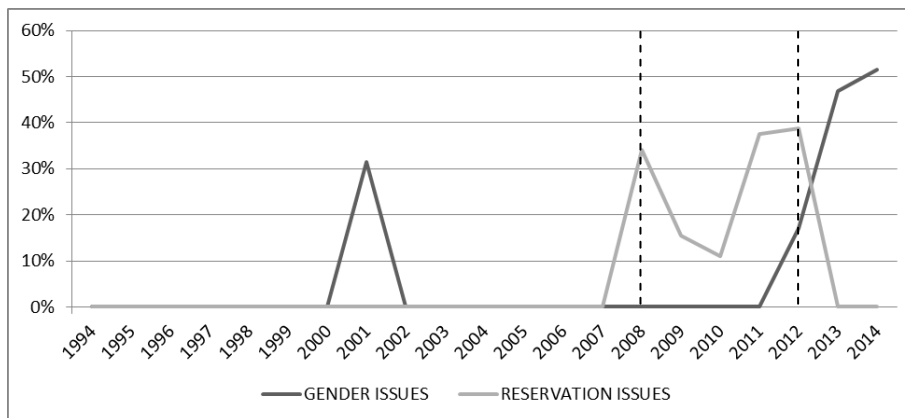
Those who have murdered the farmers of Nandigram and Singur village, those who are standing with the murderer of Afzal Guru, those who disassociate themselves from workers movement and associates with Administration, those who are supporting force in Tripura, those who are in this campus are separated from issues of Students, those who believe that student worker movement in this campus starts on 2nd of November [election date] please beware. (AISA presidential candidate, 2013)

Accused of siding with capitalist “oppressive forces”, SFI progressively lost the political support that placed it as the leading representative force in JNU. The political transition between AISA and SFI was further fuelled by in-campus polemic around the possible implementation of a Nestle-owned shop in campus. Accused of letting “market forces” penetrate the campus, SFI-led student union lost its ability to embody a radical anti-establishment ethos. Specificity scores – indicating the likelihood of over/under representation of words in specific parts of the corpus – of terms such as *MNCs*⁴ (score of specificity is 47 in 2004, 191 in 2005) or *outlet* (219 in 2014, 66 in 2005) climaxed in 2004-2005, thus revealing acrimonious debates in campus to the detriment of SFI. Perceived as more committed toward the revolutionary ideal, AISA gained political mileage in order to become the leading student organisation in campus.

⁴ MNCs stands as the acronym for “Multinational Corporations”.

3.3. *New Debates*

Finally, content evolution of JNU pamphleteer discourses can also reflect the emergence of new debates in Indian society. For instance, the government's decision (following the recommendation of the Mandal Commission) to implement affirmative action quotas for Other Backward Classes – a generic term used by the state to define various disadvantaged groups of Indians – to higher education became polemical and stirred riotous demonstrations across the country. Reflecting the magnitude of this controversy, groups of words associated with issues of reservations for admission in the university have far higher probabilities to appear in the years 2008-2012. Similarly, after the 2012 gang-rape on the outskirts of JNU (i.e. in Munirka), which created an immense emotional response in the country, the weight of the topic related to gender violence gained tremendous prominence in campus – at around 50% in years 2013-14. The level of focus on this particular issue was unheard of since the approval by a JNU council of the Gender Sensitisation Committee against Sexual Harassment (2001), an offshoot of a national provision hardly implemented in other Indian universities.



Predictive words for the Topic “Gender Issues”: *gscash, women, sexual, struggle, gender, elections, justice, harassment, struggles, lyngdoh, mcm, movement, committee, recommendations, rape, protest, hostel, rights, hostels, left* (sample 1 out of 2).

Predictive words for the Topic “Reservation Issues”: *obc, reservation, protest, seats, seat, land, reservations, increase, year, violence, implementation, intake, blasts, lyngdoh, court, deal, category, nandigram, communal, workers* (sample 1 out of 5).

Figure 3: *Weight of Topics of Gender and Reservation in the Pamphlet Corpus*

5. Political Organisations in JNU: A Language Identity on Their Own

This article considers that campus politics is not different than other political arenas, it has its contenders, its formal party structures and even a residential public opinion. Therefore JNU can be seen as an autonomous political field “*which increases with the development of permanent organisations of professionals, [which] means that the positions adopted by the agents are primarily determined in relation to the universe of competing political positions*” (Bourdieu 1981). In this competitive environment, textometry can help the researcher to profile political affiliation according to identifiable features contained in pamphleteer political discourses. Identifiable language elements and *topoi* in pamphlets can be specifically associated with the organisations who write them. Lexical characteristics can be many; including the choice of contentious themes, the tenses used, the syntax composition of sentences etc. By looking at the lexicon overrepresented in pamphlets of a specific organisation, it is possible to make sense of their ideological positioning – within the

spectrum of Indian politics – and compare their discourse strategies in campus with other competitive structures.

It is beyond the scope of this article to describe in details the political culture of various parties and student wings in Northern India. I would however like to stress that organisational pamphlets in JNU inherit the knowhow and the tradition of their parent party. For instance CPI-ML, an underground structure until the 1990s (leading Maoist-type guerrilla actions in Bihar and present-day Jharkhand) aims at carrying a revolutionary struggle led by the rural proletariat (Bhatia 2005, Louis 2002). This ambition is perfectly reflected in pamphlets of its student branch (AISA), who shows emphasis on “hatred elites” such as capitalists, industrialists and military apparatuses – the latter being described as the oppressors of deprived sections of the Indian population. This lexical disposition of AISA within the JNU political fields can be compared to a rival communist organisation such as SFI which prefers stressing campus-specific issues (such as scholarship shortages or the lack of student accommodation). This can be linked to the welfarist tradition of its parent party (the CPI-M) who governed Kerala, Tripura and West Bengal for long decades.

In Figure 4, I present some of the highly occurring words (i.e. with specificity scores higher than 3) for each student organisation. I subsequently organised these words in broader lexical profiles – labels in brackets are mine – in order to put an emphasis on the specific ideological repertoire of each student organisation. Contrary to figure 3, these topics were not computer-generated. While all the words below are overrepresented in their sub-corpus, they actually appear in the table only if they are relevant to the lexical field. The final selection of words is informed by my ethnography in JNU campus and extensive reading of the pamphlets contained in the PaRChA archive.

	1st Lexical Profile ^a	2nd Lexical Profile
ABVP^b	[Hindu Nationalism] Mataram, nationalism, nationalist, Bharat, Pakistan, China, Parishad, anti-national, Jai, Vandemataram, civilization, Vivekanand(a), Chinese, Tibet, Nationalist, Bharatiya, western, science, separatist, colonize, Aurobindo, Tibetan, Hinduism, partition, Anti-National, Motherland, secessionist, civilization, Beijing, Pakistani.	[1.Hinduism & 2.Islamophobia] (1) Ram, ancient, cultural, religious, Ramayana, Hanuman, Sita, history, Hindu, Swadeshi, culture, motherland, Indian, Sanskrit, temple, Ravan, Lord, faith, unholy, God, Vedic, Durga, Valimiki, worship, Ayodhya, Mother, goddess (2) Bangladeshi, Assam, terrorist, Muslim(s), Islamic, Islam, terrorism, infiltration, population, fundamentalist, church, immigration, beef.
AISA	[1.Anti-Establishment viz. 2.Hindu Right & Israel] (1) Sangh, communal, racist, BJP, Golwalkar, VHP, Gujarat, sena, Ayodhya, nationalism, Modi, hate, Vajpayee, Saffron, Parivar', fascism, BJP-NDA, Hitler, Shiv, khaap, BHU, Achin (2) Israeli, Palestinian, Sharon, Ariel, Bush, American, Iraq, Saddam, Guantanamo, Jews, Iran, Jewish, Imperialist, Gaza.	[1.Anti-Establishment viz. 2.Capitalism & Military] (1) grab, Corporate, MNC(s), SEZ, contractor, expansion, corruption, boycott, super-rich, Wage, Poor, peasant, worker, farmer, labour, NREGS (2) AFSPA, POTA, Killer, blast, massacre, Manipur, crackdown, kill, repression, murder, Army, shoot, Lalgah, torture, troop, Surrender, LTTE, brigade, Violence, CRZ, witch-hunting, rioting, Bodies.
SFI-AISF	[Campus-Issues] MCM, Scholarship, SFCs (Student-Faculty Committee), CMP, forthcoming, agreement, IDSA, hostel, university, seat, GBM, composition, demand, accommodation, centre, gain, mobilize, library, admission, debate, fight, effort.	[1.Anti-Establishment viz. 2.Imperialism & Communalism] (1) attack, imperialism, secular, imperialist, bourgeoisie, bourgeois, forward, crisis, Chavez, exemplify, IMF, isolate, position, unity, struggle, Indo-US, anti-people (2) Communal, RSS-BJP, goon, RSS-ABVP, lumpen, NDA.
UDSF	[1.Caste Identity & 2.Reservation Rights] (1) Bahujan(s), manuvadi, Caste, SC Shudra, Ambedkar, ancestor, Dalit(s), Babasaheb untouchable, self-respect, lover (2) OBC, cut-off, reservation, AIBSF, mark, ST, fill category, MHRD, criterion, arbitrary, anti-reservation implement, Cut-Off.	[Origins of Caste and Caste Discrimination] ram, Brahmin, Ramayana, Valmiki, cruel, culprit, conspiracy, Sita, Ravan, Aryan, Bhakti, Jat manuputras, justice, Brahminical, casteist, scripture teacherous, goondaism, Lord.
DSF	[Anti-CPI-M, Bengal Politics] neoliberal, TMC, Kolkata, progressive, Trinamool, centralism, Patnaik, Jadavpur, praxis, Bengal.	[Organisational Split] Lenin, unit, party, dissolve, non-sectarian, sectarian, Pranab, Mukherjee.
GSCASH	[1.Gender-Issues & 2.Intimacy] (1) Sexual, patriarchal, Gender, justice, workplace, myth, regressive, orientation (sexual 67% of the time), patriarchy, female, LGBTIQ, sex, queer, man, backlash, hierarchy, Vishaka (judgment), love (2) dispenser (napkin), gynecologist, contraception, bathroom, sanitation, relationship, pornography, stigma.	[Enquiry Procedures] complaint, enquiry, complainant, case, Verma (recommendation), representative, clause, conciliation, nominate, sensitization, institution, administrative, procedure, confidential, inquire, guideline.

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JNUSU	[1.Campus Demands, 2.Infrastructure] (1) Charter, councillor, council, anomaly, Councillor, Demands, community, financial, ensure, President, category, centre, payment, minimum, proposal, issue, fellowship, disbursal, procedure, implementation, catalogue, fulfillment, legally, deadline, crowd, photocopy, monitoring, capacity, deposition, PH, requisition, semester, Certificates, applicant, software, upgradation, Xerox, Notice (2) library, computer, delay, construction, bus, facility, provide, hostel, contractor.	[1.Actions, 2.Dealing with Administration & 3.Admission] (1) Hunger, Protest, demonstration, Votes, hunger, action, continue, appeal, urge, join, today, tomorrow, yesterday, week, meet, tonight, Hunger, month, rustication, timing, E-UGBM, (2) withdraw, approve, impasse, approve, express agree, condemn, congratulate, fulfil, increase, follow, inform, resolve, attitude, should, implement, concede, pressure, insensitive, constructive, assurance, decide, session, Dean, process, verbally, UGC, MHRD, DTC, VC, Chairperson (3) admission, Intake, seat-cut, assistance, mark, grade, quota, Allotment, reservation.
DSU	[Maoist Insurrection] state, fight, Hunt, Green, DSU, people, Operation (Green Hunt), Saibaba, revolutionary, mass, war, LCR, army, police, Salwa, revisionist, Liberation, Judum, Hem, village, armed, camp, arrest, Maoist, adivasi, UAPA, forest, hunt, War, renegade, surrender, abduct, CRPF, Naxalbari, vigilante, revisionism, Bastar, massacre, torture, kill, loot, battle, Naxal, prison.	[Resistance against Oppression] class, ruling, fascist, feudal, reactionary, Brahminical, brute, authoritarian, farcical, persecute, voice, capitulation, impunity, farce, discontent, degenerate, draconian, dalit, silence, resistance, casteist, overhaul, mercenary, landlord, destitution, uncompromising, crush, brutal, against, dare, Lyngdoh, power, reject, sangh, oppressive, repression, annihilation, imperialist, Eelam, rhetoric.
NSUI	[Nationalism] Hind, India, Gandhi, Congress, Mahatma, leftist, Gandhiji, comrade, we, nation, China, community, Marxist, our, vision, Chinese, nationalism, dream, ideology, lumpens, Swaraj, prestigious, anti-national.	[Secularism] secular, tradition, bouquet, Kalam, Khan.
Y4E	[Anti-Reservation] caste, Representative, reservation, backward, layer, equality, creamy, OBC, Supreme, Court, category, quota, general, seat, UGC, backwardness.	[Nationalism] Tibetan, nation, India.

^aWords contained in topics where chosen among those who have a high chance (99.9%, equivalent to a specificity score $S > 3$) to be overrepresented in specific sub-corpus of the various organisations. They are presented in descending order. ^bC.f. footnote n°2 for names of campus student organisations and their affiliation at the National Level.

Figure 4: Lexical Specificities of Student Organisations Organised per Topic

6. Conclusion

Through a year and a half of fieldwork at Jawaharlal Nehru University, I was able to retrieve a large number of pamphlets from personal holdings. The latter were kept in mediocre condition and their integrity was jeopardised. However, digitalisation is not only an essential step towards durable preservation; it offers the possibility of showing the usefulness of the use of software-assisted tools in the analysis of understudied political discourses.

This article shows that pamphlet production in one campus of Delhi can be described in two different ways. It can be seen as a specific form of speech, with defined codes and stylistic prerequisites: indignation and accusative tone, search for political truth. But pamphleteering can be also seen as a component of activism as a social practice. Through pamphlets distribution, affiliated students politicise their generation, communicate an ideological interpretation of society and introduce new concerns – such as gender equality or inclusive caste representation – to the broader community of students. A textual analysis of JNU pamphlets is not only useful to understand better the anti-establishment culture of this university, it helps to make sense of the various language identities of communist and nationalist parties in India as a whole. Last but not least, changes in pamphleteer vocabulary overtime are a sign of political change; they enable the historian to outline distinctive periods of left activism in Jawaharlal Nehru University.

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