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# Student as a category of change : the being and becoming, the case of Assam.

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## Abstract (in French and/or English)

Based on ethnographic field research in the state of Assam in Northeast India this paper emphasises on the complexities involved in the establishment of the students as a political category of change and campuses as sites of political action. In the hill town of Halflong, the headquarter of Dima Hasao hills districts in Assam there are dormitories for students maintained in the style of traditional tribal dorms run by Dimasa Students Union (DSU), an ethnic student organisation of the Dimasas, one of the larger tribes in the region. These dormitories are used by Dimasa youths coming from remote hill hamlets to study in the handful of institutions in Halflong or to prepare for their next phase of career often in terms of migration to metros across the country. These students are thus embedded in the project of the construction of a modern Dimasa identity anchored around the aspirations for an ethnic Dimasa homeland- a '*Dimaraji*'. In a context like northeast India where the state is simultaneously the target, sponsor, and antagonist for social movements, the paper argues that student groups in Assam are functioning as 'social movement organizations' that play an important role in keeping movements 'moving' by maintaining debates, supporting events, nurturing leaders during ebbs in movement activity, and more generally in helping produce submerged networks or latent social movements (Townsend 2004 ).

**Keywords:** Student Politics, Assam, ethnicity, Identity Northeast India

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