PhD Proposal
University for Humanistics Graduate School
in cooperation with the Promoting Pluralism Knowledge Program

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2. Research summary in Key Words (maximal 300)

The broad *context* of this proposed study is the crisis of the project of modernity itself, especially the liberal conception of abstract citizenship and how it is being interrogated by various identity movements that have spawned in various jurisdictions in the last few decades. In fact, the mutual and uneasy contamination of the liberal and democratic traditions, and the tension inherent in the articulation of the democratic project of our times, which is liberal democracy, has surfaced in myriad ways and it seems urgent that they are addressed adequately. This has also provided a context for the contest between pluralization and fundamentalization on a global scale. One of the central themes that this proposed study will reflect on is the crisis of ‘democracy’ itself, and indulge in tracing and recovering the trajectories and traditions of thought / practises where it could be probably relocated so that a meaningful ‘rethink’ is enabled. Moreover, it would also navigate between the various imaginations of social action and transformation available to us, especially in the context of social
movements, and reflect on the limitations and possibilities of the question of ‘translation’ itself. Moreover, these opening concerns will be explored from the vantage point of the site of the Pasmanda Movement, which is a social movement of lower caste Indian Muslims.

**Keywords:** crisis of modernity ♦ abstract citizenship ♦ democratic paradox ♦ identity politics ♦ minority rights ♦ pluralization ♦ fundamentalization ♦ agonistic democracy

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4. **A Focused Introduction of the Research**

(a) *Discuss the key ideas, concepts and scientific theories that are of importance to your research. Include a critical review of the relevant literature (attach 3-4 pages) in which you demonstrate that you are aware of the debates and issues raised in relevant bodies of literature. References to key articles and texts should be made to show that you appreciate their relevance to your research area.*

As we know, the conception of democracy is not novel. However, it has been articulated and negotiated in a number of ways throughout history. One crucial difference between ancient practices of democracy and the recent ones has been a shift from direct forms of democratic rule to representative forms owing to the complexity of modern societies. Moreover, what marks out the modern ‘democratic revolution’ is a radical symbolic transformation wherein power, law and knowledge experience a radical indeterminacy (Lefort 1988). No longer is power stable and embodied in some transcendental authority; every political move has to be located in the precarious equilibriums and the hegemonic struggles that
There are three basic conceptual approaches that I think are particularly worth noting here. The first is the ‘communitarian’ (and multicultural) frame that has employed the categories of ‘difference’ and ‘culture’ to question the impoverished atomistic nature of the liberal self. It has underscored the constitutive and embodied nature of the ‘self’ in the ‘community’ and has draped its argument in terms of ethics or the ‘good life’. For the communitarians the key goal is self-realisation and recognition forms an important dimension in ensuring that (Taylor 1994; Kymlicka 1995; Sandel 1998). The second approach is that of ‘deliberative democracy’. The deliberative democrats have sought to achieve a normative and rational consensus around the basic institutions of liberal democratic regimes and have tried to provide a solid basis for allegiance to it by reconciling the idea of democratic sovereignty with liberal institutions. By critiquing the instrumentalist dimension that was writ large in dominant theories of liberalism they have attempted to recover the moral dimension. In short, they have reinstalled both the Enlightenment values of ‘universal’ and ‘rationality’ and the democratic project in their theories through various moves (‘justice as fairness’ for John Rawls and ‘communicative power’ for Jurgen Habermas) (Rawls 1971; Habermas 1984-87; Benhabib 1996). The third attempt has been made by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe who have proposed the ‘new theories of discourse’ (Torfing 1999) and their framework of ‘agonistic pluralism’ which is informed by the post-structuralist turn in social theory. By employing and developing the concepts of discourse, hegemony and social antagonism they have strongly critiqued the essentialist renderings of identity and articulated a new framework of ‘radical plural democracy’ and ‘radical democratic citizenship’. While being extremely critical of the modernist underpinnings of liberalism they have made a strong case for retaining the democratic project as such by inscribing the relevance of the ‘political’ (antagonism) at the very heart of it (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Laclau 1990; Mouffe 2005). In various ways their works intersects with that of William Connolly’s and so I would include him too in this approach (Connolly 1991).

In an indicative and provisional sense, I find the discussions by Laclau, Mouffe and Connolly to be particularly useful in framing my research concerns, especially in the latitude they offer for a critique of dominant notions of social science and their alertness to ontopolitical preunderstandings that inform them. Indeed, Chantal Mouffe points out at the ‘paradox of modern democracy’ and suggests that ‘[I]t is therefore crucial to realize that, with modern democracy, we are dealing with a new political form of society whose specificity comes from the articulation between two different traditions. On one side we have the liberal tradition constituted by the rule of law, the defence of human rights and the respect of individual liberty; on the other the democratic tradition whose main ideas are those of equality, identity between governing and governed and popular sovereignty. There is no necessary relation between those two distinct traditions but only a contingent historical articulation’ (C. Mouffe, 2000, 2-3: emphasis mine). She further points out that there has been a dominant tendency to privilege the liberal side of the story in the articulation of democracy at the expense of the notion of popular sovereignty, thereby inaugurating a ‘democratic deficit’ which ‘can have very dangerous effects on the allegiance to democratic institutions’ (ibid., 3-4). Both Laclau and Mouffe see this tension between liberal and democratic traditions (or between freedom and equality) as the dynamic principle which keeps the liberal regimes alive. The key to understanding democratic politics lies in the recognition that it is possible to mediate and negotiate between the two antagonistic principles, but it is impossible to reconcile them without at the same time dispensing with the ‘political’ that is the condition for the emergence of democracy. Consequently, they have taken issues with the ‘rationalists’ (deliberative democrats) and ‘communitarians’ (also multiculturalists) who, according to them, rather than taking this democratic paradox seriously attempt in various ways to eliminate it. So in a way they remain blind to ‘the political’ with its central dimension of antagonism.

William E. Connolly on the other hand concentrates on the ‘paradox of difference’ and interrogates the reification of identity constructs by foregrounding their relational and collective nature. He critiques
the dominant understanding of ‘pluralism as diversity’ and provides a fascinating discussion on what he calls the dialectic of ‘pluralization’ and ‘fundamentalization’. This correlation between pluralization and fundamentalization is not accidental, for each conditions the other: each drive to pluralization is countered by a fundamentalism that claims to be authorized by a god or by nature. Moreover, any drive to pluralization can itself become fundamentalized. These two drives participate, therefore, in the same political matrix (Chambers and Carver 2008, 37-38). His concern is to explore ‘how the contemporary condition sometimes fundamentalizes contending parties and what might be done to renegotiate and disperse these divisions’ (ibid., 37-38). In this context he recommends the cultivation of an ethos of critical responsiveness and an ethics of engagement. I think he hits at the core of this problem of fundamentalization and offers an opening when he suggests: ‘Maybe the drive to the knockdown argument in ontopolitical interpretation is a corollary to the drive to fundamentalism in political life. Perhaps by pondering more closely the irreducible character of ontopolitical contestation we can move the pluralist imagination into domains that have heretofore escaped it’ (ibid., 60).

Moreover, these paradoxes of ‘difference’ and ‘modern democracy’ can be reasonably located within the deep crisis of the political project of modernity (expressed by the institutions of constitutionalism, moral autonomy, democracy, human rights, civil equality, industry, consumerism, freedom of the market and secularism) itself, especially as has been manifest in the closing decades of the twentieth century. Indeed, one of the great emancipatory visions (metanarratives) of modernity, the liberal project of abstract citizenship, remains more or less an elusive dream. This is reflected sharply in the various recent assertions of ‘selfhood’: also captured through the tropes of ‘politics of particularisms’, ‘identity politics’, or in the Foucauldian phrase ‘insurrection of little selves’ (Nigam 2006, 1). Quite clearly we have not arrived at the unmarked citizen which has been able to transcend the constitutive attachments of community life. Besides, the public sphere has not only acted as a forum for rational debate but also as an exclusionary space; it ‘is a space necessarily (not just contingently) articulated by power’ (Asad 2003, 184).

Perhaps at the root of this impasse lies the Enlightenment notion of subjectivity. The idea of a disengaged agency, of a rational human subject not constituted by cultural attachments, is the ground on which the entire logic of liberal democracy, abstract citizenship and secular nationalism stands. However, the problem is that the disenchanted modern world throws not only this kind of disengaged rational subject, but also the ‘mass man’, which quite in contrast, ‘acts through the process of mobilisation, of mediations that produce him...as an extension of an always-already constituted collectivity—the nation, community or simply the ‘mass’—moved by passion and perceived self-interest’ (Nigam 2006, 6-7). In the post-colonial context one can suggest that this ‘mass man’ is not affiliated to solidified communities, but more justifiably to communities in transition that are not adequately modern or pre-modern. This partially explains the increasing gulf between the enlightened, progressive elite and the backward, sectarian and passionate masses in the contemporary political life. Both of course enter the arena of parliamentary democracy, but with a very different language and set of notions. Theorists have therefore found it worthwhile now to distinguish between ‘civil society’ and ‘political society’ in the Indian context, where the former refers to self-organised associations and social movements that were set up in the heydays of colonial modernity and are usually governed by the modernist elite, and the latter refers to political parties and other contestants for power and is usually construed as a site of manoeuvre for the subaltern. Partha Chatterjee, in particular, identifies political society with democracy and civil society with modernization and contends that in the post-colonial states it is the former that will be the crucial site for social transformation (2001). He succinctly points out at the ‘conflict that lies at the heart of modern politics in most of the world. It is the opposition between the universal ideal of civic nationalism, based on individual freedoms and equal rights ...and the particular demands of cultural identity, which call for the differential treatment of particular groups on grounds of vulnerability or backwardness or historical injustice, or indeed for numerous other reasons’ (Chatterjee 2004, 4).

In India, at least in the last three decades, we have witnessed various new social movements, especially
organised around caste and religion, which have seriously interrogated the elite driven project of secular nationalist democracy. One of their primary targets of critique has been the vision of ‘secularism’ (unity in diversity) which by default privileges the majoritarian Hindu-Brahmanical culture when it is translated into actual practise (Upadhyay 1992). Moreover, these movements enter the democratic theatre through a thick narrative of social or cultural exclusion. Indeed, what we have witnessed is a ‘secularisation’ or ‘politicisation’ of these identities; no longer is caste only about ‘hierarchy’ or religion only about the ‘sacred’ but they are being increasingly articulated around discourses of power (Kothari 1997, 62). Moreover, to be only fair, caste and religion were in a way always imbricated with power. It was only the hegemonic colonial conceptual fossilisation which had displaced them to the ‘traditional’ that had probably persuaded us to think otherwise for a while (Dirks 2001, 267).

In this context, I have found the Pasmanda Movement, which is a recent social movement of lower caste Indian Muslims, to be particularly interesting because it selectively appropriates and synthesises both the resources and vocabulary of caste and religion in creative ways. So far the relation between ‘caste and religion’ was framed in terms of Hindu religion and the caste movements were seen as the dissent of lower caste Hindus against the hegemonic Hindu higher castes. However, in the last two decades the ascendance of lower caste movements among ‘religious minorities’ (like Muslims, Sikhs and Christians) have alerted us to the fact that even these religious groupings are segmented along lines of caste and the lower castes among them too frame their narratives of exclusion, humiliation and moral injuries in terms of caste (Anwar 2005; Jodhka 2004; Lobo 2005). In this sense the movement complicates both the politics of lower castes (articulated within the rubric ‘social justice’ in India and hitherto restricted to Hinduism only) and minority religions (articulated within the rubric ‘minority rights’).

In a way the movement has challenged the conflation of the interests of the higher caste Muslims with the politics around Islam and ‘minority rights’. By privileging ‘caste’ over ‘religion’, it has focused on intra-group inequality than inter-group inequality. There is a strong urge for the democratization of Muslim society and the institutions that govern them in their name. It has also stressed the dialectical relationship between ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ fundamentalism and proposes to contest minority fundamentalism from within in order to wage a decisive battle against majority fundamentalism at the national level. Needless to mention it openly expresses discomfort over the conception of a monolithic Muslim identity and sees it as a fiction sustained by the upper caste Muslim elite in order to derive material and other advantages from the state. Moreover, it has sought to work out horizontal solidarities of similarly placed caste groups in all religious identities thereby challenging the forces of religious communalism (Alam 2003). Overall, I think this is an interesting site to reflect on the paradoxes and concerns I have indicated earlier.

Let me just close this section by suggesting that despite an effort to restrict caste and religion in the private sphere by the modernist Indian elite, their persistence in the post-colonial phase and recent ascendance can only lead to a rethink of the project of secular-nationalism itself. Perhaps, what was not appreciated by them, due to the constitutive power of concepts more than anything else, was the tendency by the subaltern to employ and creatively rework the old and available vocabularies of community to address a world that was being increasingly ripped apart by a top-down project of modernisation. So democracy in India has not really operated only through the abstract citizen and public sphere as the site for unmediated rational conversations and transactions. Rather, what we have witnessed is the appropriation and employment of democracy by various particularistic subject positions (identities) in multifarious ways in a struggle for hegemony in order to inscribe their own story on the ‘universal’. Quite, clearly the ‘political’ with all its antagonisms and cleavages stares us now in interesting ways.
Following this initial reading of the literature discuss the gaps, silences and limitations or areas that in your opinion have not been covered adequately, and explain what you hope to contribute to the existing body of knowledge

The challenge to the project of abstract citizenship was sought to be resolved through the notion of ‘differentiated citizenship rights’ and putting ‘minority rights’ in place (Kymlicka 1995). This was moreover informed by two interpretative treatments of the notion of ‘equality’, the central trope of the democratic tradition: the first privileged the cultural and ethical (‘the good life’) dimension (Taylor 1992; Honneth 1992), and the second foregrounded the social justice and moral dimension (Bauman 2001; Fraser 2001). However, despite these different treatments most of contemporary identity politics can be succinctly captured by the phrase ‘politics of demand’ where the ‘...mode of social action assumes the existence of a dominant nation attached to a monopolistic state, which must be persuaded to give the gifts of recognition and integration to subordinate identities and communities’ (Day 2005, 14-15). This opens the way for an infinite variety of claims to be propped up and negotiated, for old sedimented identities to be challenged and contested, and for an installation of an anxiety among the privileged sections and a parallel and competitive desire among the marginalised to challenge them. In a way this is what sets the context for the contest between ‘pluralization’ and ‘fundamentalization’.

Of course, the obvious problem with ‘minority rights’ is that it is biased towards recognition/representation/integration of institutionalised cultures under the pretext of inter-cultural inequality, and consequently intra-cultural inequality often takes a back seat (Fraser 2001, 34). As Susan Okin complains, ‘when minority cultures win group rights, women lose out’ (1998, 25). However, one may go further and ask for a re-evaluation of this stress on the conversation between ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ in an increasingly fragmented world. For Connolly, ‘...it is clear that the speed and scope of capitalism helps to foment a veritable minoritization of the world, as numerous constituencies of multiple types cross old borders and enter into relations with a “majority” culture that often makes up an actual minority of the populace. The story that globalizing capital is a homogenizing force, while true in some respects, exaggerates. Capitalism also helps to foment a minoritization of the world, with minorities of numerous types jostling against each other more closely and often than heretofore. So, yes, the issue of pluralism is a central question of late-modernity...The same forces that foment a minoritization of the world draw out reactive forces that seek to slow the world down and “return” to the centred life of the nation’ (Chambers and Carver 2008, 323; emphasis mine). One may also recall in this context Foucault’s insistence on how every nation-state has been only possible by silencing its internal wars by diverting them into institutions managed by the two central modes of power in recent times: ‘discipline’ (which works through individuation and consent) and ‘regulation’ (which is about managing humans in large numbers) (discussed in Chakrabarty 2009). It is this trajectory that is pressing us to revisit the notion of minority rights and majoritarian culture in various ways.

However, in the Indian debates on ‘minority rights’, especially in the context of Islam and Muslims, there has been a tendency to work with a monolithic image of Muslims, and so there has been little discussion on the internal contradictions (like gender and caste) within the Muslim community (for the dominant representations see, for instance, Weiner 1985 and Noorani 1998). Even when internal cleavages are addressed it is usually gender that is represented, and caste hardly finds mention (See: Minault 1998; Jayal 1998; Das 1995). [The only work that seems to have taken any note of caste within Muslims in the context of minority rights and state policy, to my knowledge, is Jenkins 2003. Moreover, I find the elision of lower caste movements within Muslims intriguing in Jaffrelot’s work, all the more so as his site has been North India (Jafferlot 2003).] Besides, there is hardly any work that seems to have interrogated the majority/minority framework from Connolly’s vantage point of a ‘veritable minoritization of the world’. I think these are serious elisions, limitations and gaps which need to be reflected on and theorised further.
Besides, all these identity movements have a critical point of emergence (‘enactment’), where the
differentiation with the ‘Other’ is framed through a narrative of exclusion, humiliation or moral injury
and various similar signifiers. Often, the real or imagined actions of the other are articulated through
the frame of ‘conspiracy’ or ‘intent’ (Nigam 2000). It is true that the charter of liberation for the
underdog (gender, race, caste, and so on and so forth) has seldom come from hegemonic locations. But
is it only because of ‘intent’ or ‘conspiracy’? While there are obvious reasons for the employment of
these angles, there is seldom an appreciation that the agency of the other may also be constituted and
guided by a certain conceptual assemblage in many unconscious ways. The constitutive grip of
discourse on the agency of subjects is not much appreciated in these movements. Afterall, why does it
take such a long gestation period for the articulation of the marginalised to emerge? How is this related
to the ‘events’ that trigger a disturbance in the discursive space thereby creating a possibility for their
articulation? I think there needs to be more emphasis on the discursive constraints and relaxations,
owing to wider shifts in society, that enable these articulations than the straitjacketed explanations that
are usually forwarded in the social movements. Though an appreciation of the reworking of
‘difference’ in Derrida’s or Connolly’s works, or the reworked notion of ‘articulation’ in Laclau and
Mouffe, go far in complicating the conspiracy or intent angles and open spaces for pluralism and
tolerant in a theoretical sense, one is again not sure of the strategies to be employed to effect this
reflectivity in social movements. The suggestion of the need to cultivate an ‘ethos of critical
responsiveness’ and an ‘ethics of engagement’ by Connolly, or the need to transform ‘antagonism’ into
‘agonism’ by Laclau and Mouffe, though offer interesting openings, do not seem sufficient in my
preliminary reading to address the issue of communal conflict and violence. How can we translate
these ideas in institutional and practical terms, or whether we can ever translate them at all? I think the
question of translatability requires some more intellectual investment.

Hence, this proposed research aspires to contribute by deepening our understandings of the concerns
around democracy, pluralism and social action by engaging with the site of the Pasmanda Movement,
which is in its own right an under-studied movement. In this respect one feels that the traditional
explorations into caste among Muslims through the ‘cultural’ or ‘structural’ frames are particularly
limited in making sense of these concerns. Both cultural and structural approaches to caste are
attempting to arrive at some closed factity (Aggarwal 1966; Goodfriend 1983; Guha 1965; Hasan
1986), either in terms of underlying structure (‘essence’ in Marx) or abstract rules in consciousness
(‘structure’ in Levi-Strauss). What are not adequately explained by such approaches are the conditions
of the possibility of the emergence and articulation of such movements, and that various
transformations in the caste-forms only make sense in the backdrop of the interactions, intersections
and negotiations amidst the various social, political, and economic articulations and other institutions,
practices and techniques. What interests this study are the various processes that shape a particular
structural-cultural sedimentation of caste and its articulation and employment as a transformatory
movement, and various displacements and the impact of the same, rather than any so-called objective
or normative caste-structure as such.

5. Concise Statement of the Research Problem and Key Research Question(s)

Following from the above discussion clearly and succinctly (in a few sentences) explain the
problem that undergirds the study and state your key research question(s)

Statement of Research Problem

The context of this study is the ‘paradox of modern democracy’ and the concomitant strains in the
articulation of the negotiation between ‘liberal’ and ‘democratic’ traditions, that is constitutive of liberal
democracy, in the last few decades. This has to be further located in the crisis of modernity and the
emancipatory project of abstract citizenship that is being interrogated by various particularistic identity
movements. While this has set the context for the contest between pluralization and fundamentalization, the resolution of these strains through ‘minority rights’ privileges institutionalised identities and apparently suppresses the question of intra-community inequality. Besides, the increasing fragmentation and minoritization of the world presses us to rework the dominant majority-minority conversations. The proposed research aspires to theorise and reflect on these gaps in the articulation of citizenship and minority rights in the Indian debates, and also reflect on the strategies that could be employed to contain fundamentalism and related violence, through the understudied site of the Pasmanda Movement, which is a social movement of lower caste Indian Muslims.

Key Research Question:
What are the ways in which one may rethink the relationship between democracy, pluralism, and identity politics (especially the articulation of ‘citizenship’ and ‘minority rights’), in the backdrop of the strained relationship between modernization and democracy as manifested in the emergent thematic of ‘Caste and Islam’ (due to the onset of the Pasmanda Movement) in the Indian context?

Subsidiary Research Question(s)
1. What are the conditions of the possibility of a discursive formation that becomes an enabling factor in the articulation of the ‘political’ notion of caste, thereby triggering the onset of the Pasmanda Movement?
2. How does the field of ‘Caste and Islam’, reinvigorated in a ‘political’ sense by the Pasmanda Movement, impact or complicate the theory/praxis employed to explain and manage communal violence in India?

6. Research Methodology and Design
(1) Provide an outline and rationale of the methodological approach to your study. You need to demonstrate an understanding of the approach that you consider suitable for your research
(2) Describe for each research question how you will go about your data collection (including information on empirical data collection) and data analysis
(3) Outline the anticipated structure of the thesis
Since the context of the emergence of research questions and the problematisation have already been addressed in the earlier sections, I shall confine myself to outlining here the contours of the social theory I will be employing to frame and reflect on the voices from the site (in this case the pasmanda movement). From a preliminary investigation I find the ‘new theories of discourse’ as developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe to be particularly useful for my project. The central concepts in their works are: discourse, hegemony and social antagonism. Moreover, these concepts are supposed to substitute for the more traditional concepts of structure, politics and conflict respectively. The conception of structure is usually invoked to capture the complex patterns of social meanings and relations (also rules, norms, procedures) that guide interaction within a social system. It has an explanatory role. The concept of discourse too has an explanatory role since it is held that social interaction can only be explained by taking cognisance of its discursive context. The difference however is that discourse has fully dispensed with the idea of an organising centre that arrests and grounds the play of meaning. Thus it has less determining power than the concept of structure. In the same manner politics is often conceived as the pursuit of interests, or rather of choosing a policy option from a pre-given hierarchy of preferences. Hegemony is another name for politics but one which emphasises that identities are constructs. So identity is not the starting point of politics but rather something that is constructed, maintained or transformed in and through political struggles. Finally, conflict usually
alludes to episodic rivalry. However, this conception tends to miss the central role of conflict in constructing the identity of hegemonic discourses. This constitutive aspect of friend-foe relation is captured by the concept of social antagonism (Torfing 1999, 81-82).

Overall, their theory offers a nuanced and anti-essentialist conception of identity and identification. The pre-condition to any meaningful plural and democratic project, according to Mouffe, is to perceive ‘differance’ (Derrida) as the condition of the possibility of being. Any social objectivity must be construed as constituted through acts of power. Thus, its very formation involves an act of exclusion which also dialectically governs its constitution (‘the constitutive outside’). Since everything is constructed as ‘difference’ and has inscribed within it something other than itself, it cannot be conceived as pure ‘presence’ or ‘objectivity’. Since the constitutive outside is present within the inside, as its always real possibility, there is an element of contingency in every identity. Hence, power is not an external relation taking place between two pre-constituted identities, but rather constitutes the identities themselves (Mouffe 1995). While contingency and particularity are central to understanding modern politics, ‘this particularity cannot be constructed through a pure ‘politics of difference’ but has to appeal, as the very condition of its own assertion, to universal principles’ (Laclau 1995, 150). However, there is an indeterminate character to the universal and its final meaning can never be fixed. Various political players will, however, try to hegemonize the content of this universal and in this process, many empty signifiers will be produced. The imprecision of the main signifiers of political language acts as a surface of inscription of political demands. Not only is this indeterminacy the precondition of democracy, but ‘the more political imaginary is organised around empty signifiers, the more democratic that society will be’ (Laclau 1993, 231).

While celebrating the fact that in Gramsci politics is finally understood as ‘articulation’ (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 85), they argue that particular historical tasks cannot be assigned to any fundamental classes. In the democratic political flux which is circumscribed by power and contingency new identities and solidarities (chains of equivalence) are continuously formed to challenge relations of subordination. Their notion of pluralism restores social antagonism as a central category and the distinction of ‘we’ / ‘they’ as the part and parcel of democratic politics. No complete harmony or universal rational consensus is possible. All we can hope for are relative states of precarious equilibriums. ‘The prime task of democratic politics is not to eliminate passions, nor to relegate them to the private sphere in order to render rational consensus possible, but to mobilise these passions, and give them a democratic outlet’ (Mouffe 1994, 109). In this endeavour, the task is to convert enemies into adversaries and antagonism into agonism. An adversary, in contrast to an enemy, is a legitimate opponent who plays within the rules of the game (liberty and equality). Rather, he or she is a co-creator of the rules of the game and these rules are not settled once for all but rather are subject to constant reinterpretation, resistance, opposition and are constantly articulated by the hegemonic struggles between various adversaries. However, total indeterminacy and toleration would also mean the total disintegration of social fabric if it is not arrested at some point. Following this all democratic societies must necessarily be based on force and exclusion; the condition of possibility of democracy is also its condition of impossibility.

Following are some techniques/resources which are intended to be employed for data collection:

1. Historical Archive: The archives, particularly the colonial ones, involve various problems owing to the fact that they were developed for certain purposes of governmentality and are based on a very selective documentation. These problems are further aggravated by the researcher’s selective reading and the limits of his/her accessibility to them (Wilkins on and Bhandarkar 1984). I am aware of these limitations and, therefore, believe that this technique has to be supplemented by other methods.

2. Interview: The interview, as a specified form of conversation intended to generate research data, is commonly understood as a technique employed by the researcher to understand the subject’s world (Kvale 1996). As the subject is often located in a different temporality, it is difficult for the researcher to penetrate and grasp the subject’s world. Moreover, the very ontological existence of ‘interview
questions’ involves the problem of instrument’s impact on the field. These limitations can partially be overcome by adopting an ‘open interview’ that is not intended to reveal the subject’s world but the subject’s location in and contribution to the discursive field that the research problem wants to study. The number of interviews will be about 70-80, and interviewees will include some of the leaders and cadres of the movements that can be located under the broader category of Pasmanda and some other members of the population addressed by the movement as well as other players in the discursive field.

3. **The Pasmanda Archive:** A substantial part of the data will be provided by the ongoing project of the ‘pasmanda archive’ under the aegis of PPKP, India which comprises of the literature produced by and around the movement (pamphlets, journals, fiction, news-reports, speeches, websites, memorandums, autobiographies, diaries, letters etc.) [Link: http://pluralism.in/category/resources/pluralism-archives/caste-and-religion-archive/pasmanda-muslim-mahaz/]. In the past few years, Pasmanda articulation has found a decent space in print and electronic media. A content analysis of this literature will help in the articulation of many aspects of the argument carried forward in the study. This content analysis will be further substantiated by secondary reports available on some of the issues of Pasmanda politics.

4. **Focused Group Discussions:** They will supplement the data generated by above mentioned techniques.

**Anticipated Structure of the Thesis:**

**Introduction**

This section will introduce the research study through a gloss on the context and the problematisation. It will include a rigorous literature review and an in-depth discussion of the research methodology employed by the study.

- **Chapter 1: Naming Caste: Emergence of the Caste Discursive Space**

This chapter will map the emergence and consolidation of caste as a politicised category due to the colonial intervention in the form of enumerative technology, anthropology and archive and the opening up of a space by the articulations, contestations and negotiations by pre-Independence political leaders. This chapter will chiefly employ the colonial archive and other available and relevant texts.

- **Chapter 2: Caste and ‘Democracy to Come’: Transformation of Caste Discursive Space**

This chapter will focus on the processes that led to transformations of the discursive space of caste as well the forms it has taken from constitutional practises, Lohia’s polemics, Kanshi Ram’s political mobilisation, and the Mandal episode and the political imbrications of Islam with the caste discursive space in the form of the Pasmanda Movement. In particular, it will explore the strengths and limitations of the incremental process of democratic transformation ushered by the caste movements in general.

- **Chapter 3: Caste and Islam: Pasmanda Politics and Social Impact**

This chapter will reflect on the pasmanda polemics through the categories of ‘hegemony’ and ‘articulation’ and especially attempt to trace the impact it makes on the discourse of communalism in India.

- **Chapter 4: Rethinking Citizenship and Minority Rights**

This chapter will try to rethink the question of citizenship and minority rights from the vantage point of the Pasmanda Movement and will try to arrive at the general lessons that one can draw for analyzing and deepening the process of pluralist democracy in India.

**Conclusion**

7. **Research planning**
Provide an outline of the approximate timetable of the various stages of the proposed research (per year, steps in research, work load, output)

Though I will be based in New Delhi, I would require a flexible time schedule to travel between various sites and locations to get essential archival materials and narratives from the field. Specific division of my time schedule is given below:

<table>
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<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
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<tr>
<td>June-September 2010</td>
<td>Work towards finalising the research proposal and completion of the first draft of Chapter 3: ‘Caste and Islam: Pasmanda Politics and Social Impact’</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2010-March 2011</td>
<td>Field Work: Conducting the interviews, doing their transcriptions and collection of archival materials from the field. Finalise Chapter 3.</td>
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<td>April 2011-September 2011</td>
<td>Work and completion of Chapter 1: ‘Naming Caste: Emergence of the Caste Discursive Space’. This will include purely archival work in various archives and libraries (National Archives of India, Teen Murti Library, Central Secretariat Library and other libraries in New Delhi. Besides, I will make use of various other state archives and libraries as well).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2012-September 2012</td>
<td>Work and completion of Chapter 4: ‘Rethinking Citizenship and Minority Rights’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2012-March 2013</td>
<td>Work and completion of ‘Introduction’ and ‘Conclusion’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2013-May 2013</td>
<td>Final editing of the PhD thesis and submission.</td>
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8. Link with the Promoting Pluralism Knowledge Program / Kosmopolis Institute of the University for Humanistics Research Program

Please describe the link with the Promoting Pluralism Knowledge Program in the context of the regional program (India, Indonesia or Uganda) and the overall knowledge program.

Please describe the link with the Kosmopolis Institute- UvH research program

There is now a growing realization in India that the idea of ‘pluralism’ is seriously threatened by the monolithic and undifferentiated stereotypes of the religious other. The persistence of communal violence in the country and the serious limitations faced by the civil society organizations (CSO’s) in contesting it has led to interrogations of the idea of ‘civil society’ itself by the Indian academy.

It is often underlined that most of the civil society literature has come out of the west where class contradictions are the dominant model of contestation. Hence, these articulations have their limitations in travelling across to various non-western contexts where capitalism might not be ascendant or where ‘class’ is not the determining identity. Further, the understanding that the goal of civil society organizations is to be merely generation of influence and not capture of power is now questioned. Especially, since many right-wing religious organizations in India seem to complicate this neat dichotomy between ‘civil’ and ‘political’ organizations. Most of these organizations are glaringly active in both the sectors. They are able to deepen their hegemony by being active in civil society groups like research centres, media, youth groups et cetera, and by also aspiring to capture power through cadre-based political parties. The Indian discussion on these themes focuses on ‘democratic deepening’ or the extension of democracy to previously subordinated groups. Theorists have found it worthwhile to distinguish between ‘civil society’ and ‘political society’, where the former refers to self-organised
associations and social movements that were set up in the heydays of colonial modernity and are usually governed by the elite, and the latter refers to political parties and other contestants for power and is usually construed as a site of manoeuvre for the subaltern. Partha Chatterjee, in particular, identifies political society with democracy and civil society with modernization and contends that in the post-colonial states it is the former that will be the crucial site for social transformation.

Following this argument it seems that CSO’s in India will have to engage with the political society space if they are to be even remotely effective in meeting their stated objectives and concerns. At least, as far as the issue of religious violence and inter-group relations is concerned this seems most urgent. In this context, it becomes worthwhile to explore the various kinds of internal critique and resistance that emerge vis-à-vis ethno-religious monolithisation and intolerance. It is important to engage with socio-political movements in various religious communities that are reconfiguring and parochializing communal identities. Further, it will also be useful to document and understand the strategies that they adopt or employ in their struggle.

This proposed study especially seeks to explore the ground opened by one such movement in the political society, the Pasmanda Movement, in making sense of intolerance in society. While adding something new to the existing body of knowledge it is expected that it will also enrich the Promoting Pluralism Knowledge Programme (PPP) and Kosmopolis-UVH Programme by deepening and broadening the concept of ‘pluralism’ and ‘citizenship’ itself. The caste movements among minorities are a ‘missing link’ in the movements of social justice and social exclusion in India. It is expected that this study will supply these social movements and other civil society actors with an analytical thrust which may assist them in the struggle for ‘democratization’ of Indian society in a way that parochialises the forces of fundamentalism and intolerance.

9. Expected Academic Output, Strategic – and/or Practical significance of the study

(a) List the expected academic output (e.g. Doctoral thesis as a monograph and/or series of refereed articles, handbooks, conference papers etc)

Apart from the full text of the thesis (which could be subsequently published as a monograph) I will aspire to publish at least four papers in journals of repute (corresponding to the four chapters).

(b) Briefly discuss the expected strategic – and practical implications: How do you expect the results of the study to affect e.g. scholarly research, theory, practice, educational interventions, curricula, counselling, policy etc. within the Pluralism Knowledge Program and beyond?

The research will reflect on the three key concerns of the PKP: the negotiations of the citizens with power, the new sites of social transformation and the relation between knowledge and change. The products of the research will, in my view, help the CSO’s and various other stakeholders to frame their policies accordingly. As far as the site of academics is concerned it will enrich the contemporary debates on citizenship and minority rights, especially in relation with the concerns of pluralism.

c) Describe the anticipated output that is relevant for practitioners in the field, for example an article in popular media or a policy brief for NGO or a contribution to a web site etc. that has relevance for the Promoting Pluralism Knowledge Program

There will be an effort to publish various case studies, short articles, interviews, and interesting narratives in PKP website and other popular media. I also propose to manage a regular ‘blog’ in order to enable a regular conversation with all the stakeholders.
10. Bibliography

Attach a list of references to key articles and texts included in the application.


Appendixes

(a) Short CV of PhD Candidate .................................................................
(b) Certified copy of qualifying degree ....................................................
(c) Additional documentation ..................................................................

Please list possible appendixes in consultation with your supervisory committee

Statement of Approval by UvH Board of Professors

Names and signatures of Supervisory Committee:
(1) UvH Promoter
............................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................

(2) External Second – or Co-promoter (Promoting Pluralism Knowledge Program partner)
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(3) UvH Co-Promoter (Kosmopolis Institute)
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(4) PhD Candidate
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This research proposal was considered by the UvH Board of Professors on

................. ..................(date) and was ranked

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1: disapproved and not to be re-considered
2: To be reconsidered after major revision of the theory AND method section
3: To be reconsidered after major revision of the theory OR method section
4: Approved with minor adjustments
5: Approved

Date ......................... ...........................................................................

Name and Signature Chair UvH Board of Professors: