# Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Lakshmi Srikanta

Title: **India's Anti-Terrorism Legislation and the Reframing of Protests: A Discourse Analysis**

Programme/year: MAIN/2024

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/second reader): Dr. Ondrej Ditrych

| Criteria | Definition | Maximum | Points |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Major Criteria** | | | |
| | Research question, definition of objectives | **10** | 8 |
| | Theoretical/conceptual framework | **30** | 27 |
| | Methodology, analysis, argument | **40** | 28 |
| *Total* | | **80** | 63 |
| **Minor Criteria** | | | |
| | Sources | **10** | 10 |
| | Style | **5** | 3 |
| | Formal requirements | **5** | 5 |
| *Total* | | **20** | 18 |
| | | | |
| **TOTAL** | | **100** | 81 |

# Evaluation

**Major criteria:**

The thesis explores the discourse surrounding the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) in India mobilising the toolbox of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It covers political and media discourse to interrogate broader effects of the legislation that extends the ability of the state to act on sedition (including ambiguously defined "terrorism") on liberty and democracy. The introduction sets the scene and the RQs, focused on "underlying power dynamics and ideological assumptions" (p. 13) behind the legislation and its amendments. The literature review that follows could benefit from more clarity, organisation and focus – sometimes it ventures into reviewing theoretical/philosophical positions directly unrelated to the thesis which moreover one could take issue, as with the respective positions of Habermas and Foucault, while not seemlessly leading to designing the research protocol and the delimitation of the case study (including RQs). But clearly the author has perused an extensive amount of secondary literature on terrorism and political violence from critical perspectives and on close reading there are several relevant streams she follows, in particular overview of the application of CDA on this subject; and representation of protest and control of narrative by the state. The research protocol featured in the methodology chapter comprises clear steps for how the analysis is conducted. During the defence, I invite the author to explain how the archives for analysis were compiled, in particular the media articles from which samples were taken – and to describe those archives as well as to discuss the benefit of sampling over other research tactics to deal with a vast archives of statements for the purposes of her study / RQs. The following two chapters are dedicated to analysis which is sufficiently robust and detailed and includes both descriptive and interpretive dimensions (sometimes slightly overlapping). There is a conscious attempt to conduct the interpretation with the theoretical/methodological framework in mind even if more clarity in representation could have made this more immediately obvious – to that end, it would be useful to have a summary of findings in the conclusion.

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**Minor criteria:**

The thesis meets formal requirements. It draws on a considerable amount of empirical material for analysis and secondary literature. While the basic structure of the argument is sound, the presentation could benefit from clearer writing at times as well as careful editing (see e.g. minor repetitions in the concluding chapter).

**Assessment of plagiarism:**

No indication upon subjective assessment.

**Overall evaluation:**

I recommend the thesis to be defended. The research is based on a sound design drawing on a fine understanding of CDA and the basic wagers of the approach to the study of discourse, power and society. At times, writing could benefit from more clarity and the individual elements of the argument could be better tied together. But on careful reading, there is a clear a line in the argument supported by a meticulous study of the compiled archives and guided by concerns related to democracy, exception, othering and the law that does not protect against the exercise of arbitrary power.

**Suggested grade: B**

**Signature:**