

PROTEST IN UZBEKISTAN: WHERE ARE THE GOVERNMENTAL LIMITS?

By
Ivana Wlachovska

Submitted to
Central European University
Department of Political Science

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Supervisor: Matteo Fumagalli, PhD.

Budapest, Hungary

2009

Abstract

In Uzbekistan, despite high centralization and concentration of power at the national level, the government does not hold the country tight in its hands, as it often proclaims. There are important factors that hinder president's plans for running the country and these factors are the consequences of his own policy-making strategies. The government's restricted scope of choices is clearly seen in the way how it reacts to protests that take place all over the country. Through the examination of the government's reactions to protest, the character of Uzbek state-society relations as well as the most important weaknesses of the Uzbek regime can be effectively identified.

Acknowledgements

For the overall guidance connected with the creation of the thesis, I would like to thank to Matteo Fumagalli.

Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	The State of the Field.....	8
2.1	Social Protest.....	8
2.1.1	Social Protest in Uzbekistan.....	9
2.2	Approaches to the State and Repression.....	11
2.2.1	Theoretical Approaches.....	12
2.2.2	Conceptual Issues of State Repression.....	14
2.2.3	Repression in Uzbekistan.....	16
3	New Social Movements Theory (NSMT) Approach.....	19
3.1	Research Aims and Their Connection to NSMT.....	19
3.2	New Social Movements Theoretical Framework.....	23
3.3	Operationalization.....	26
3.3.1	The First Phase.....	27
3.3.2	The Second Phase.....	28
3.3.3	The Third Phase.....	29
3.4	Limits.....	31
4	Methodology and Methods.....	33
4.1	Empirical Puzzle.....	33
4.2	Case Selection.....	34
4.3	Research Strategy.....	35
4.4	Research Design.....	36
4.5	Data and Its Selection.....	36
4.5.1	Dataset Comprising Social Protest Events.....	37
4.6	Research Methods.....	40

4.7	Limits.....	41
5	Uzbekistan and Its State-society Relations	43
5.1	Contextual Background – the Making of Uzbekistan	43
5.2	The Role of the State	45
5.2.1	How It Works In Uzbekistan - Formally	45
5.2.2	How It Works In Uzbekistan – Informally	47
5.3	The Role of Regional Elites.....	49
5.3.1	Uzbekistani Regional Elites vis-à-vis the Government	49
5.3.2	Uzbekistani Regional Elites vis-à-vis the Society	51
5.4	Implications	53
6	Conclusion	56
7	Appendix.....	60
8	Bibliography	61

1 Introduction

In liberal democracies, social protest is one of the regular ways how collective actors may express their dissatisfaction with the state's policy-making. People protest against plenty of issues that have a direct or indirect impact on their lives. Such an expression of a discontent with particular policies is a legitimate and usually also a successful way to make the societal voice to be heard. The "rules" of protesting are usually set by the state, in accordance with the protection of the citizens' civil and political rights. The state's procedural restrictions of a protest as well as its policing are frequently scrutinized by various NGOs. These non-state actors "guard" the decision-makers and in a sense secure the citizens' right to protest.

When speaking about non-democratic states, the opportunities for protesting usually rapidly increase whereas the environmental conditions for a protest decrease. Moreover, general impression about the low possibility of protesting in authoritarian regimes is strengthened by the claim that protesting activities go hand in hand with the protection of human rights. These tend to be frequently abandoned by authoritarian rulers. Surprisingly, people do protest also in closed authoritarian regimes, however in a slightly different way than it is usual in democratic countries. What might distinguish protests in autocracies from those in democracies is their "additional dimension". To be more precise, in autocracies, the state indiscriminately labels protesters as terrorists, extremists or radicals. The state's actions demonize the protesters by connecting them to groups with completely different goals and practices.

As far as repression in autocracies is concerned, scientific discourse is usually aimed either on large countries such as China or former colonies in Africa. In the case of Asia, the Middle Eastern autocracies account for remarkable attention as well. Alongside all these countries, little attention has been paid to Central Asian countries and especially to

Uzbekistan. In general, this country does not enjoy frequent publicity. Nevertheless, it holds an important role within the Central Asian region as the most densely populated country that comprises a relatively large number of practicing Muslims. The presence of Islamism in the country has brought Uzbekistan to the center of international attention after the US launch of the War against Terrorism, identifying Uzbekistan as a potential partner in this "fight".

There have been two main reasons that have significantly contributed to the establishment of such a partnership: (1) Uzbekistan's proclaimed intentions to fight against Islamic fundamentalists and (2) its geographical location. Uzbekistan shares borders with Tajikistan and Afghanistan – two failed states affected by the war of fighting Islamic militants. The third reason was the US assumption of the effectiveness of the partnership. The incorporation of Uzbekistan into the US sphere of influence might have shifted the balance of powers in Central Asia¹; enable to use its territory to fight the Islamist militants in Uzbekistan and at the same time gradually democratize the country. Neither of these has been the case. On the contrary, Uzbekistan's most "famous" protest suppression has brought the ultimate end of the Uzbek- US strategic partnership (Fumagalli, 2007).

The critical event which took place in Andijon may be regarded as a perfect illustrative example of the autocratic regime's behavior towards protesters. This middle-size city located in the Ferghana Valley, the most densely populated place in Uzbekistan. On 13 May 2005, the Uzbek security forces suppressed a protest demonstration held as the follow-up of the actions from the previous night, when according to the Uzbek government, a group of armed men had assaulted the local prison and freed prisoners suspected from the proliferation of Islamist militancy in the country. This suppression had been exercised against civilians in an extraordinary brutal way and caused many civilian casualties. Afterwards, in order to restore order in the city, severe security measures were taken into action (Fumagalli, 2006).

¹ The region has been clearly dominated by Russia and China.

What has not been mentioned in the official statement issued by the Uzbek government was the joint enterprise of the alleged prisoners and its positive impact on the rise of employment in the province. In fact, the prisoners were relatively successful businessmen who established a self-help community called Akromiyja. Through this community, the businessmen tried to incorporate their employees in need and helped them to solve their existential problems. The abrupt arrestment of the businessmen may have been more connected to the growing popularity of Akromiyja rather than to the Islamic militancy of its members (Karagiannis, 2006). After their arrestment, former employees came to support the businessmen to the court trial. After the governmental restrictions of the public access to the trial, people gathered on the main Andijon square began spontaneously protesting and at night, they managed to free the prisoners. The rest of the "story" escalated into the already mentioned suppression, causing hundreds of human casualties and mass arrests.

One may ask what is so special about the brutal suppression of protest in such an autocratic regime. It seems logical that the ruler feels threatened by the protesting crowd which may enlarge and distort the artificial regime stability. What might not seem that logical is the mere presence of regular protests in a politically closed regime, especially if it seems that neither the protest actions nor the interventions from abroad contribute to its opening. Since independence in 1991, the character of the regime in Uzbekistan has not liberalized at all, quite the contrary. The protests, however, still take place and surprisingly, they are not always suppressed. Some of them might be denoted as completely "ignored", whereas in other ones (like Andijon events); the state's suppression is remarkably brutal.

Why does the Uzbek government react in such a non-uniform manner to rather consistent behavior of protesters? The identification of possible factors of the government's behavior is closely connected to the web of relations between the state and society. Taking protest as its extreme form, what impact does the variation of governmental protest

suppression have on the complex relations between the state and society? The reason why I would like to have a closer look at this particular issue is my belief that examining the interplay between the state and society in critical situations can tell us a lot about the character of the authoritarian regime itself, especially if it is known for its harsh practices. Moreover, an opportunity to describe a mechanism for the identification of the regime's strengths and weaknesses that determine the state's contentious politics might help to look at the regime in terms of a strong or a weak state from a new perspective.

In my thesis, I am going to focus on the governmental reaction to social protest in Uzbekistan as the specific instance of "a state's listening to the voice of society" in the state-society relations. More particularly, I am going to identify the main determinants of the governmental interventions against protesters. The variation in the occurrence of interventions might indicate that the high centralization and the concentration of power in the President's hands do not assure him the total dominancy over the country. Through the analysis of the Uzbek government's reactions to social protest, I am going to show, that there are important factors that hinder the President's plans for running the country and I am also going to point out that these factors are the direct consequences of the President's policy-making strategies. As a result, the Uzbek government might not have the society under its control, as it often proclaims. This can be clearly seen in the way how the Uzbek government reacts to protests that take place all over the country. Through the examination of the government's reactions to protest, I am going to identify the most important weaknesses of the Uzbek regime.

For the determination of the factors that influence the occurrence of the repression during a protest, I am going to use a theoretical model based on the New Social Movement Theory² (Wiktorowicz, 2004). Using the NSMT is not the conventional way of determining

² The New Social Movement Theory is in fact a set of three theories that provide an effective way how to analyze the behavior of Middle Eastern activists. The name containing the word "theory" may be misleading, since it in fact denotes a theoretical framework for analysis.

the government's behavior in any aspect of state-society relations. The reason why I have chosen the NSMT is the fact that, unlike the traditional theories, the NSMT accounts for the state's contextual specificity. In Uzbekistan, culture and historical development have a significant impact on the state-society relations. The country is standing on the edge of two mixing socio-political legacies – (1) the Middle Eastern, founding the pre-modern Muslim traditions in the societal discourse and (2) the Soviet, reshaping the country's development during long 70 years of "colonization", being responsible for the reshuffle of the power sharing.

As a result, studying the Uzbek state's reaction to social protest without any reference to this particular contextual background would severely distort the explanatory value of the whole research. Wiktorowicz located the NSMT into the environment of Islamic authoritarian states, which perfectly fits with the initial contextual conditions that prevail in Uzbekistan. In other words, the theory can be used for the explanation of the behavior of a social actor in authoritarian regimes, which has not been the case of the theories that have been dealing with the state repression so far.³ Furthermore, Uzbekistan's shared cultural features with the Middle Eastern countries (at least in the sense of the faith and a cultural heritage) fill in the contextual gap and enable to effectively approach the analysis of the state's behavior towards protesters through the NSMT.

The framework (Wiktorowicz, 2004) is thus the fundamental base of my theoretical model. The model is organized around three basic dimensions that constitute three distinct phases of the resistance-suppression mechanism and three levels of the state's "behavioral pyramid". Each of the dimensions accounts for one phase of the governmental decision-making and will be described by a separate causal mechanism. The separate causal mechanisms serve for the identification of certain conditions on each of the phases (levels of

³ for collective action – Tarrow, 1994, for policing the protest – Della Porta, 1998

the pyramid) which have to be fulfilled in order to make the governmental protest suppression possible.

The first dimension comprises the Resource Mobilization Theory and identifies the requirements for the state's general capability to suppress the protest. The "state's capability" includes the possession of necessary material resources for a protest suppression as well as the ability to mobilize them. The identification of conditions under which the Uzbek government fulfills the first dimension's requirements will lead to the model's second dimension. The second dimension focuses on the framing strategies of respective actors involved in protest and the resonance this framing has on the governmental level. The third dimension, Opportunities and Constraints, incorporates the impact of the environment in which the actors are embedded.

As far as methodology is concerned, to answer the main research question of the thesis, I have chosen abduction as the main research strategy. The main reason of this decision was my intention to investigate the type of social relations that has not been extensively researched within the Uzbek territory. This means that my work will require predominantly explorative work that will be partly based on previous research conducted in the field. Moreover, since I regard Uzbekistan as a critical research case, I also suppose that its state-society interactions in protest are distinct from those that have been examined so far. The research cases that have been in the centre of the scientific discourse before have been located predominantly in Western liberal democracies (Della Porta, 1998).

Following the logic of the research strategy, I consider case study as the most suitable form of the thesis's research design. My decision to deal with the relatively narrow part of the state-society relations that is located in an exclusionist political environment of the Uzbek authoritarian regime has been the main determinant of this choice. The lack of previously conducted research in the selected area and territory as well as the limited availability of data

and unexplored causal relations only contributed to my intention. Moreover, since my primary goal is to explore the logic of the governmental protest repression just in Uzbekistan and in no other country, my conclusions will not need to be generalized. Taking all these facts into consideration, case study appears to me as the best research design option.

To follow the simple and comprehensible logical path, the thesis will be constituted in the following order: The first chapter will comprise the conceptualization of both social protest and state repression. I am going to cover the existing state of the field, focusing on the definition of protest, its distinction from the other forms of political violence as well as the contemporary approaches to state's repression, with the emphasis on the protest suppression. In the second chapter, I am going to introduce the New Social Movement Theory as the suitable framework for the thesis's analysis. After the description of its three basic dimensions, I am going to use this framework for the operationalization of the research inquiry in a theoretical model.

The third chapter will be focused methodology, especially in terms of the justification of the selection of the research strategy of the thesis, its research design and the methods used. I am also going to deal with the case selection strategies. In the end; the data and its collection will follow. The last chapter will cover the empirical evidence, describing the state-society relations in Uzbekistan. The chapter will be aimed to the roles of respective actors in the country's social structure, their mutual connections and interactions. The chapter will be concluded with the map of the Uzbek state-society relations and their implications for the country's further development. At the very end, I am going to summarize the findings and the limits of my research inquiry in the conclusion.

2 The State of the Field

In this chapter, I am going to introduce two fundamental concepts which compose the base of my thesis: (1) social protest and (2) state repression. In the first part, I am going to have a closer look on social protest in general terms, recognizing its types and distinguishing it from other types of political violence. Then I am going to concentrate on the patterns of protest in Uzbekistan. In the second part, I am going to proceed with the concept of the state repression and the existent theoretical and conceptual approaches to its investigation. I am going to proceed with the character of the state repression in Uzbekistan. In the last part of the chapter, I am going to focus on the drawbacks of both social protest and the state repression approach.

2.1 Social Protest

Before having a look at the cases of social protest in Uzbekistan, it is essential to clarify what "social protest" means as well as to narrow down the range of actions that can be denoted as protest. Starting with Turner's definition, *social protest* as a subject of analysis is serious in the feeling of grievance that moves it to intent to provoke ameliorate action (Turner, 1969):

Social protest includes the following elements: the action expresses a grievance, a conviction of wrong or injustice, the protestors are unable to correct the condition directly by their own efforts, the action is intended to draw attention to the grievances, the action is further meant to provoke ameliorative steps by some target group and the protestors depend upon some combination of sympathy and fear to move the target group in their behalf (Turner, 1969, p. 816).

Turner's definition comprises the elementary features of a protest *per se*, without distinguishing it from violence, rebellion or revolution. However, the context in which Uzbekistan is located requires the definition to be narrowed down. What is also important, protest has to be clearly distinguished from rebellion and revolution. The main distinction of

protest from rebellion and revolution is in the ultimate goal and means of its expression. Both rebellion and revolution⁴ can be understood as a direct action, with an ultimate goal to destroy current ruling authority. Neither rebellion nor revolution expresses a generally understandable grievance (Turner, 1969). As Turner asserts:

The principal indicators of a protest definition are concerned with identifying the grievances as the disturbance and the belief that the main treatment indicated is to ameliorate the unjust conditions. [...] One of the most important consequences is probably that a protest definition spurs efforts to make legitimate and nonviolent methods for promoting reform more available than they had been previously, while other definitions are followed by even more restricted access to legitimate means for promoting change (Turner, 1969, p.816-817).

Social protest in Uzbekistan does not necessarily call for the regime change. The primary goal of a protest is to communicate a problem and to reach its potential solution within the conditions the regime has set.

2.1.1 Social Protest in Uzbekistan

Within the Uzbek context, there are three reasons why it is very important to make a clear distinction line between protest and rebellion: Firstly, protest and rebellion stem from different reasons for action. In practice, a protest event usually looks like a gathering of a few dozen of people who are holding various posters in their demands, trying to talk about their grievances to the deputies of the local administration. The goal of such public gathering is to solve an unpleasant situation or at least to point to its existence. Protests are usually conducted as the consequence of the state's failure which decreased the population's living conditions to an unbearable level. The requirements of the protesters are thus very specific and many times also possible to reach through the negotiation with the local authorities.

⁴ As far as the modern history of Uzbekistan is concerned, no revolution has ever occurred in the country. The regime closeness hardly enables episodic protest to occur. I am not going to deal with the concept of revolution further since its relevance in this particular context might not be sufficient.

Rebellion on the Uzbek territory is labeled as the main tool of the Islamic militants⁵ to achieve the complete reconstruction of the country into an Islamic state. These requests are understood as some kind of proclamation rather than the offer of a viable regime alternative that would assure the fulfillment of actual needs of the country's population. Militants confirm their participation in the rebellion only after the conduction of the act *per se* (suicide bombing, skirmish with the power structures, sabotage, etc.) and they rarely communicate specific demands negotiable with the administration deputies. Their primary aim is to catch overall attention, many times regardless the tools and consequences (the use of violence causing human casualties). This feature is completely absent in the case of a social protest because of the protesters' rare use of violence.

There is a difference in terms of the agency behind the rulers' and protesters' actions. In Uzbekistan, rebels are framed by the government as the religious extremists almost by definition. This very much differs from the participants of a demonstration, which usually means human rights activists, the Uzbek population (very frequently women with children, workers, and traders) as well as the elites excluded from decision-making. Thus, direct rebellion is restricted to a very narrow group of people (narrower than the group of people prone for protesting), who operate in illegality with a little intention to publicly demand their requirements before the very act of rebellion (Naumkin, 2005). As empirical evidence shows, despite the fact that the space for the freedom of expression is severely limited in Uzbekistan, it still does provide some opportunities for people to raise voice. This might mean that either the extremists do not really intend to protest or they use distinct forms of protest, not compatible with the definition of a social protest used in my thesis.

What is also important, the consequences emanating from protest and rebellion diverge. Rebellion, especially in the form of suicide bombing attacks brings human casualties and

⁵ For more information, see Khalid (2003), Naumkin (2005), Rashid (2002), and Olcott (2007).

serious property damages. The occurrence of such actions provides a sufficient justification for the government to the use of repression against society. Rebels can afford violent actions because they are not a part of the Uzbek society. In the past, they had been forced to leave the country and these days, Islamic militants prepare their actions from abroad (usually from Uzbekistan or Tajikistan) (Rashid, 2002). Rebellion is thus difficult to prevent and to punish. Consequently, the aggrieved society becomes the target of even harsher governmental repression.

To sum up, the distinction of a protest from rebellion enables me to focus on the primary aim of the thesis (variation on state-society relations), eliminating the external subjects that on the one hand influence the strength of governmental repression but on the other hand, they do not bear the consequences. It is protesters (as the members of the Uzbek society) who are directly hit by the governmental actions. Harsh living conditions caused by constant restrictions are one of the reasons of their grievances and consequent protest actions. Unlike Islamic militants, their scope of protest is strictly limited by the regime and their own call for survival.

2.2 Approaches to the State and Repression

The governmental intervention in protest actions is closely connected with the state repression in general. Going hand in hand with social protest, the research of state repression comprises a remarkable scope and depth. Starting from the very beginning, according to Goldstein, the basic definition of repression

Involves the actual or threatened use of physical sanctions against an individual or organization, within the territorial jurisdiction of the state, for the purpose of imposing a cost on the target as well as deterring specific activities and/or beliefs perceived to be challenging to government personnel, practices or institutions (Goldstein 1978, pp. xxx-xxxi).[...] Repressive behavior relies on threats and intimidation to compel targets, but it does not concern itself with all coercive applications. Rather, it deals with applications of state power that violate First Amendment-type

rights⁶, due to process in the enforcement and adjudication of law, personal security and integrity (Davenport, 2007, p.2)

The scope of state repression is broad and incorporates the large scale of state interventions, ranging from petty restrictions to violent assaults, leaving hundreds of thousands of human casualties behind. The research on state repression attempts to explain the type of employed activity, the frequency of its use and the magnitude or scope of its application (Davenport, 2007). All this is analyzed on various levels - examining the development in one particular state over time or the being focused on the large number of states in a given year - and through various theoretical approaches. Restricting the focus of the field just on state intervention in protest thus requires a brief examination of the theoretical and conceptual approaches and their compatibility with the thesis's core question.

2.2.1 Theoretical Approaches

In general, the research on state repression struggles with two fundamental difficulties: (1) diffused levels of analysis (macro-, meso- and micro- level point of view) and (2) the structure-action dichotomy. There are three main research streams, each of them offering different solution to the above-mentioned issues. In table 1, the three "metanarratives of resistance to power" (Lichbach, 1998, p. 405)) – Rationalism, Culturalism and Structuralism – are stated according to their recognition of challengers as well as authorities in the resistance-repression mechanism:

⁶ The First Amendment-type right include: (1) Freedom of speech, assembly and travel. Freedom of press up to a very narrowly defined "clear and present danger" point, regardless of the views communicated, (2) Freedom of association and belief without governmental reprisal, obloquy or investigation unless clearly connected with possible violations of existing laws. (3) The general freedoms to boycott, peacefully picket, or strike without suffering criminal or civil penalties (Goldstein, 1978, pp. Xxx-xxxi).

Table 1 Metanarratives of resistance to power

Metanarrative	Challengers	Authorities
Rationalist	Collective action Strategic interaction	Interest group (rent-seeking) Leviathan (bureaucracy) State's dilemma
Culturalist	Collective behavior Relative deprivation	Hegemony Cultural functionalists
Structuralist	Resource mobilization	Pluralism Marxism Statism Political process

Source: Lichbach, 1998, p. 405

It is apparent that the respective metanarratives work either with the structure or agency character of the authority (e.g. state) and authority challengers (e.g. protesters). Since 1960s, the study of contentious politics has been clustered around two most influential approaches – structuralist Synthetic Political Opportunity Theory (SPOT) (Tarrow, 1994, McAdam et al. 1996, 1997) and rationalist Collective Action Research Program (CARP) (Lichbach, 1992, Lichbach 1995, and Moore 1995). Since both approaches specialize on different subjects' attributes, there has been an ongoing debate about bringing these two theories together.

SPOT incorporates three main concepts: (1) political opportunities, based on political processes, institutions and alignments which set the context for the movement-state interaction, (2) mobilizing structures including communities and associations rooted in civil societies and (3) cultural frames structured by shared meanings, symbols and discourses (Lichbach, 1988). On the contrary, CARP contains three rational-action oriented dimensions that are connected to the map of collective action through (1) its description, (2) the explaining of the variation and (3) the recognition of possible solutions, usually defined through equilibria. Via CARP it is thus possible to identify the sources of mobilization as well as the causes and consequences of the basic properties of collective dissent (Lichbach, 1998).

Lichbach's primary premise – to reveal the state capacity for repression through the scrutiny of the authority-resistance mechanism - brings the opportunity to identify the regime capacity through theoretical approaches originally used for the analysis of the capacity of subjects standing at the opposite side of this relation. As Lichbach reasons, this might be possible because the state is an active part of all the processes comprised in authority-resistance mechanism (Lichbach, 1998). The determination of the behavioral patterns of the authority agent from the resistance agent's perspective would maintain the level of analysis and unite the analysis criteria, diverging just in their sub-dimensions and covering the different nature and the capabilities of actors.

2.2.2 Conceptual Issues of State Repression

Conceptual issues comprise the isolation of a particular type of repression from the whole concept of repression and its closer examination according to case's contextual requirements. Contemporary research have been clustered around two core findings: Firstly, the Law of Coercive Responsiveness deals with political conflict in general, looking at two aspects: (1) different time periods and countries and (2) the wide variety of measurements of both political conflict and repression, treating the state repression as a reaction to the challenging of the existing status quo. This approach incorporates both democracies and autocracies, being focused more on the choice of particular form of repression and its consequences rather than its motivational background. Secondly, Domestic Democratic Peace compares the levels of state repression across countries' regimes, distinguishing between democracies, semi-democracies and autocracies (Davenport, 2007).

Stemming from contextual background, governmental response to protest in Uzbekistan needs to be analyzed in terms of the Law of Coercive Responsiveness and requires another narrowing down. For denoting the factors of governmental repression, two research sub-branches are especially crucial: (1) the research of repression in authoritarian states and (2)

focus on policing the protest as the type of state repression. Looking at these two aspects leads to an identification of already answered questions in the field as well as to the examination of the possibilities to make analogies from already existing research inquiries.

State repression in authoritarian states had been for a long period of time considered as some kind of pathological behavior, deriving the violent actions from the non-democratic nature of the regime and its systemic deficiencies. The character of a regime was thus automatically assigned to a ruling individual, focusing on human failures, paranoia and other issues which have in the end been shown rather marginal. This approach has been substituted by a more conceptual model which concentrates on distinct actors and subsequent interest divisions within the state apparatus. According to the model, the rulers decide for the repression only after a careful evaluation of all the costs and benefits of their actions (Davenport, 2007).

Since the autocratic regime usually shares both personal rule and patronage, both rational and irrational aspects of the state action need to be taken into consideration. Mixed state behavior is apparent in the case of the use of force for protest suppression, when the number of police corps multiple times outmatches the number of protesters, risking thus a rapid slip into a massacre. This pattern has been experienced in many countries, from Tiananmen Square protests in China, through the operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe to Andijon events in Uzbekistan. On the one hand, the variation of the state repression points to certain cost-benefit calculations in the governmental background, on the other hand, the frequent overestimation of protesters' resistance potential implies some kind of irrationality in the government's action⁷.

Policing the protest has been extensively researched by Donatella Della Porta (1998, 2006, and 2008). Grounding her research of protest actions in Italy and Germany in the post-

⁷ For more details, see Zimbabwe case-study (Bratton and Masunungure, 2006).

war era, she regards "the police handing protest events (sic) a more neutral description of what protesters refer to as "repression" and the state as "law and order" (Della Porta, 2006, p. 55). Policing protest is a narrow research concept, solely focused on the role of the police in protests and its direct impact on protesters. Protest policing thus can be viewed as a "derivate" of political opportunities, thus being a barometer and expression of the degree of openness or receptivity on the part of the state (Della Porta, 2006, p. 54). Besides the stable factors of political opportunity of protest policing (assigned by the institutional arrangements), there is a more volatile analytical level – the configuration of power⁸.

2.2.3 Repression in Uzbekistan

The character of the state repression in Uzbekistan does not significantly differ from that of any other authoritarian regime. Repression practices used by the power structures are similar than elsewhere in the world of authoritarian regimes and the prosecution of the enemies of the regime do not derivate from traditional authoritarian patterns. The regime primarily focuses its repression against the opposition – Islamist militants, the ethnic nationalists and local human rights organizations⁹. Since the representatives of the both types of the opposition have been forced out of the country, there is a tendency to shift the repression from selective towards indiscriminate and thus search for the regime's enemies in the society. This means that in case of protest the Uzbek government does not suppress just those organized by the opposition, though the post hoc framing of the repression follows this pattern, but suppresses also protests that have nothing in common with political opposition.

⁸ According to the mixture of stable and volatile aspects of political opportunity, the character of protest may be clustered around following dichotomies: repressive vs. Tolerant, selective vs. Diffuse, preventive vs. Reactive, hard vs. Soft and dirty vs. lawful (Della Porta, 2006, p. 58).

⁹ The repression against the members of human rights organization is usually framed as the intervention against the Islamic militants, thus the officially reported level of repression against this type of organizations appears to be marginal. This might also be the case due to the governmental restrictive policies in terms of the establishment of non-governmental organizations (Ilkhamov, 2005).

Since the Uzbek national government holds the monopoly over the power structures in the country, the police (or military) intervention is a clear sign of the engagement of the national level government in the elimination of a protest event. An intervention in a protest event is in the responsibility of the police, directly liable to the Ministry of Interior. The command for an intervention is also under patronage of the Ministry, leaving out regional hokims from decision-making. In practice, protest suppression usually comes very quickly, predominantly relying on the large number of policemen who transport the protesters either to the police station or to some remote place outside the city (Lewis, 2008).

All in all, from the clearly procedural point of view, the Uzbek state's repression does not account for any anomalies from the general patterns of repression. What, however, might be seen as an anomaly, is the perceived inconsistency of repression's usage in protests. In the authoritarian country like Uzbekistan, social protest is a rare occasion which is limited to a tiny the number of cases. The cases of social protest in Uzbekistan are rather rare events and their occurrence signals more than just a set of individual actions.

The Uzbek inhabitants usually decide to protest when all other options for resolving their grievances have failed. Protesting is thus a signal of peoples' helplessness and misery, especially when they are aware of the absence of the connection between them and the national government. In other words, the Uzbek people protest to tell to their rulers that they have difficulties with bare surviving. Usually it means that through the protest, they ask the government to simply let them live and to stop deteriorating their living conditions.

The theories of protest as well as the theories of the state repression rarely look beyond the mere protest procedure. On the one hand, leaving out the context which informs about the conditions from which a protest emerges maintains the theory universally applicable. On the other hand, the type of regime which suppresses the protest as well as the type of protest

matter (Regan and Henderson, 2002). Often it is necessary to go far beyond the basic protests' and repression's attributes to effectively search for the factors hidden behind these processes.

3 New Social Movements Theory (NSMT) Approach

This chapter will be devoted to the theoretical framework I have chosen to answer my research question. In the first part of the chapter, I will briefly go through my research aims and connect them to the chosen theoretical framework. As the most important connection I regard Uzbekistan's contextual specificity and its closeness to the Middle Eastern cultural patterns which are the basis of NSMT. In the second part, I am going to introduce the framework's three dimensions and apply them to my research case. In the last part, I am going to operationalize the whole research topic and identify its drawbacks.

3.1 Research Aims and Their Connection to NSMT

By answering my research question, I would like to focus on two important issues: Firstly, I would like to examine whether it is possible to account for the limits of the governmental reaction through the prisms provided by Wiktorowicz's New Social Movements Theory. My belief that the theory is able to cover the state protest repression agenda more effectively than the traditional state repression theoretical approaches resides in its strong contextual orientation. The role cultural context plays in Uzbekistan is much more important than the level of institutionalization or the actors' sole interests. Despite the fact that the NSM is agency-oriented, structural background has also an important role in the framework (Wiktorowicz, 2004).

Secondly, I would like to show that the Uzbek government's proclaimed strength is often illusive. The regime's weakness ought to be demonstrated through the government's inability to act in critical situations because of the limits posed by other actors within the state system. To reach this aim, I will have a closer look at the system of intrastate relations in Uzbekistan. Since the primary analysis of intrastate relations is difficult because of its

informal nature, I am going to examine the phenomenon through the state-society protest interactions.

The main focus of NSMT is Islamic activism. This fact seems to bring two important challenges into discussion: (1) the theory is social movement-oriented and thus has limited scope of application and (2) the absence of activism in such a closed authoritarian regime as Uzbekistan eliminates the opportunity to examine the intra-state relations through the state-society relations. With their definitions, both Bayat¹⁰ and Wiktorowicz provided a brilliant answer to both objections. Bayat's and Wiktorowicz's research in the Middle Eastern countries had been focused on non-traditional character of social activism that had been fueled by the fear of incumbents' loss of control over the country. As a reaction to the high level of state repression, social movements in authoritarian regimes do not emerge as distinct actors that are publicly known and have clear goals, agenda and institutionalized internal organizational structure.

Bayat treats social activism in an inclusive manner, as "any kind of human activity, individual or collective, institutional or informal, that aims to engender change in people's lives (Bayat, 2002, p.3)" and Wiktorowicz has chosen similar strategy:

The variety of contention that frequently emerges under the banner of "Islam", including propagation movements, terrorist groups, collective action rooted in Islamic symbols and identities, explicitly political movements that seek to establish an Islamic state, and inward-looking groups that promote Islamic spirituality through collective efforts (Wiktorowicz, 2004, p. 2).

Consequently, the scope of opportunities to observe social activism in repressive regimes has been broadened immediately.

¹⁰ In his book "Making Islam Democratic" (2007), Bayat analyzes social activism in Egypt and Iran, examining its forms as well as the success of their state-challenging strategies.

The unique character of the Middle Eastern social non-movements significantly diverges from the traditional movements¹¹ in many aspects, starting with the formation of a movement, its organizational structure, recruitment of new members, goals and the tools through which the goals are reached. The non-movements are formed on an informal basis, relying on the personal connections of their members. Usually, the people active in this type of movements gather around self-help organizations, neighborhoods, charity or trade unions and enjoy the connection of similar grievances or a struggle for a decent life in harsh living conditions. The member base of social non-movements is not necessarily stable and continual; it rather forms and dissolves with the reappearance or disappearance of shared grievances. The structure of these groupings is also very loose, with multiple centers of operation, without any dominant leader and ideology (Bayat, 2002).

Despite of the fact that in the large part of cases, the sole connection of the community closeness or a shared grievance is not a sufficient condition for mobilization, in case of the abrupt erosion of living conditions it may be enough¹². Since the shared grievance is specific, urgent and connected to the human survival, the protest actions it evokes are rather episodic (albeit regular) and focused primarily on the solution of that particular problem rather than on systemic protesting. Moreover, within the structure of a country ruled by an authoritarian ruler, social movements accounting for some level of institutionalization are either incorporated into the ruling state apparatus or eliminated outside the country, to be prevented from threatening the fragile stability of the regime.

¹¹ As traditional social movements, I consider the social movements observed in Western liberal democracies. These entities are legally registered, publicly known and based on abstract principles, continually searching for corresponding agenda. These social movements are frequently mentioned in Della Porta's study of social protest in Germany and Italy (Della Porta, 1998).

¹² Here I refer to situations such as the Iranian regime repression of bazaar in 1975-77 (Mazaheri, 2006) or the episodic demonstrations in Bahrain (Lawson, 2004).

As far as the character of the state is concerned, it resembles more Migdal's "State in society" than "Society in the state"¹³. Despite the fact that the state might appear strong because of its decision-making dominance and the monopoly over coercion, its actual weakness is revealed in a poor policy implementation ability and generally low performance of the implemented policies in practice. As a result, authoritarian regimes are stuck in vicious cycles, being unable to effectively implement their policies and constantly increasing the level of authoritarian practices. In the end, the whole strength of such regimes accounts just for repression because the large part of other spheres of influence will find its way to bypass the authority.

When focusing on the second NSMT foundational feature – the Islamic character of a social actor – despite its negative attitude towards Islamic militants, the Uzbek government meets this criterion. The Uzbek government cannot afford to completely abandon Islam, since it has constituted a vital part of the Uzbek cultural heritage since ever. Together with the Uzbek language, Islamic traditions represent a foundation of the Uzbek national identity (Sengupta, 2003). On the one hand, it is apparent that the Uzbek government is not very keen to recognize the religious aspects of Islam as the part of the official state institutions. On the other hand, the lack of common denominators of the Uzbek nationhood does not provide the space for its complete elimination. The Uzbek government has thus created "a generic form of Islam that is culturally enticing but ultimately politically neutered. The rhetorical value is more important than the actual value of the faith as far as the leaders are concerned" (Kangas, 2006, P. 198).

¹³ In "State in Society" approach the state is treated as one actor among many, all of them being embedded in a web-like structure constituted by the country's overall population. As one among several actors, the state has to use its capacity to gain social control over the society which is rarely the case. Usually, the social structure incorporates the capacities of several individual actors and at the same time it serves as an environment of conflicts over the implementation of conflicting actors' strategies (Migdal, 1988)

All in all, in the Middle Eastern countries and also in Uzbekistan, neither social movements nor the state enjoy their traditionally assigned functions. In practice, the movement's institutionalization means its incorporation to the state apparatus or its voluntary decision to leave the country and to operate from abroad. The state institutionalization means the increase of policies incorporated into a country's legal framework but not their implementation and effective functioning. As a result, traditionally understood state and social movements are not the right inputs for the analysis of protesting society and the state's divergent behavior against the protesters. I argue that to account for an effective analysis of the state's reaction based on the protesters' action, it is necessary to treat both groups as collective actors, avoiding the inclusion of their "antagonistic" functions into analysis. Additionally, the government's partial recognition of Islam as a source of national cultural heritage seems to be enough to meet the second Wiktorowicz's criterion and thus enables the use of the theory for the analysis of the governmental protest repression actions.

3.2 New Social Movements Theoretical Framework

In NSMT, Quintan Wiktorowicz analyzes three phenomena: (1) the use of violence and contention, (2) the influence of informal networks on collective action and (3) the framing aspects of collective action. The system in fact contains several existing theories that have been broadly used for the analysis of both the social movements' actions as well as for the analysis of the dynamics of the states' repression. The new perspective of the NSMT approach resides in the combination of three particular elements where each of them captures the different aspect of action, providing thus a complex picture of the behavior of a social actor within Islamic context.

The first dimension of this theoretical framework is grounded in the *Theory of Resource Mobilization* (McCarthy and Zald 1973, 1977; Oberschall 1973). The essence of the theory is the identification of the main factors of a successful mobilization, e.g. the possession of

sufficient resources and the ability to transfer the resources into mobilizing action. As far as the mobilization resources are concerned, they can be divided into material (e.g. what or whom to mobilize) and organizational (e.g. how to mobilize). Out of these two, Wiktorowicz emphasizes organizational resources¹⁴, assuming the existence of some formally approved institution through which an Islamic non-movement gains new members and frames grievances (e.g. official mosque, professional or student associations) (Wiktorowicz, 2004, p. 10-11). Besides the formal institutions, Wiktorowicz emphasizes the need to incorporate also the informal institutions since personal connections and kinship belong to the main tools of the people's discourse in Islamic authoritarian regimes.

The second dimension represents a social-psychological process of framing. In other words, it is also important to know how the collective processes of interpretation and social construction mediate between the opportunity and action. The way how a collective actor frames its actions (or the actions of other actors) determines "what is relevant, important and away from exogenous items in the field of view" (Noakes and Johnston, 2005). Wiktorowicz emphasizes the procedural character of framing, with three distinct stages: (1) an actor constructs frames that diagnose a condition as a problem in need to redress, (2) later on, an actor offers a solution to the problem and (3) provides a rationale to motivate support (Wiktorowicz, 2004).

Another important framing component is the frame resonance¹⁵ which success is dependent on two elements: (1) the consistency of the constructed frame with cultural narratives and (2) the reputation of the actor responsible for the creation of a frame (Wiktorowicz, 2004). A frame will resonate if potential constituents find its interpretation and the expressions of grievances compelling (Noakes and Johnston, 2005). A frame usually

¹⁴ Since Wiktorowicz's main research aim were social non-movements, "the question whom to mobilize" has been already answered.

¹⁵ The original definition describes framing as "a relation between a collective action frame, the aggrieved community and the broader culture" (Noakes and Johnston, 2005)

identifies previously undetected threats, an actor responsible for the threat, actors who are at risk and the solution the state offers to solve the problem (Noakes, 2005). In other words, the successful frame resonance is reached, when people understand and interpret political and social problems in the country according to the way the "ruling actor" frames them. Actors frame both their own actions as well as the actions of other actors, in order to reach justification or to uphold legitimacy.

The distinct framing of a protest action constructs so called *perceived opportunity*. This type of opportunities is independent from "the real" structural opportunities (Noakes, 2005). The emergence of a perceived opportunity is mainly dependent on the frame resonance which then transfers the organizational resources of the government into action. To identify the effective resonance of a frame, it is essential to know the beliefs and values of its potential constituents (Noakes and Johnston, 2005) which determine the way the frames are perceived. Going back to the primary goals of the Uzbek government – the preservation of the regime (e.g. the internal stability of the country) - the identification of frames which are capable to harm these goals will probably serve as a very strong impetus for intervention.

The last dimension, called "Opportunities and Constraints" focuses on the dynamics of actor's behavior, constrained by the environment in which it is embedded: "collective actors are both limited and empowered by exogenous factors, which often delimit movement viability and the menu of tactics, actions, and choices. Such understandings conceptualize collective action by incorporating the influence of external factors and concomitant structures of opportunity and constraint "(Wiktorowicz, 2004, p. 13). This dimension reflects the awareness that the actors do not operate in vacuum and takes the restricted scope of choices according to the choices made by other actors active within a common structure (e.g. country, societal system, etc.) into consideration. The state-movement relations are thus constituted by

the infinite chain of action-reaction mechanisms. Either a non-movement or the state evaluate the moves of opponents and adjust their next strategy accordingly.

3.3 Operationalization

The main aim of this sub-section is to explain the variation in the governmental response to protest events. To reach my research aim, I am going to construct a model, using the New Social movements Theory approach. In the operationalization will reflect the governmental repression will be treated as a reaction to protest and thus the governmental side of the "societal resistance-governmental repression" relationship will be examined.

In the model, I am going to account for the occurrence or non-occurrence of the governmental protest intervention in three phases which are ranked as three distinct levels of the state's "behavioral pyramid". This means that all the three dimensions account for the explanations in a pre-defined order, starting from the dimension which explains the broadest range of the cases of protest repression and finishing with the dimension which explains the most specific group of protest intervention.

Each phase (or the level of a pyramid) will be described by a separate causal mechanism, embedded in one of the NSMT's three dimensions. In the first phase (using the resource mobilization theory), I am going to determine how the Uzbek government reaches¹⁶ the capability of a protest interference. In the second phase (using Framing), I am going to identify the primary determinants of the governmental protest suppression and in the third phase (using Opportunities and Constraints) I am going to identify the secondary determinants of the governmental protest suppression.

¹⁶ Since the maintenance and the loss of suppressing capabilities go hand in hand, with the determination of the conditions when the Uzbek government reaches the capability to intervene, I am also going to determine the conditions when these capabilities will be lost.

3.3.1 The First Phase

The first phase of resistance-suppression mechanism constitutes the foundation for the governmental suppression of the protest. The occurrence of an intervention presupposes the government's possession of required resources (in this case it means the sufficient number of the police corps) as well as the ability to mobilize them (the police corps have to be ready intervene). In Uzbekistan, the state has the monopoly over coercion. Since the political power is highly concentrate on the national level, the police¹⁷ falls under the direct responsibility of the Ministry of Interior (Luong, 2004). The Uzbek government thus constantly possesses the resources required for the enforcement of a protest intervention. Moreover, the direct command of the Ministry of Interior assures the constant governmental ability to mobilize them. Besides the exclusive control of the power structures, the constant resource mobilization ability of the government accounts for the regular and relatively high investments to their maintenance.

The only reason why the government is constantly able to suppress the protest is it exclusive control over the power structures. The intervention thus might become impossible in case the government loses control over the country's power structures. Such a loss can occur directly or indirectly. Under the direct determinants, I mean the direct challenge of the regime, the change of the power balance within the government and the sudden fallout of governmental revenues. The occurrence of the first option would mean the end of a current regime. The second option might mean that the power structures (both the police and the army) would be transferred under the control of new ministers, non-loyal to the current President. The third option encompasses the sudden breakdown of the state's economy.

¹⁷ The Uzbek government controls also the Uzbek army but the army is usually not used for the protest suppression. That is also the reason why I do not consider the army as the primary resource of the governmental repression.

All the three options can be aggregated under the label "emergency cases" because neither of them is probable to happen, at least until Islam Karimov fully controls the decision-making process within the country. However, all the three options have direct implications for the model. In other words, if the protest occurs and is left without any intervention, the least likely reason for the governmental inaction will be to find out whether the country is going through the regime change or through the critical financial crisis. If the financial crisis approached gradually, the first sign of the decrease of the control over the power structures would be the decrease of the number of employees¹⁸, especially those who are used in action. Considering both options very improbable, the third option is to look into the government to see, whether both the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Defense have been replaced. If such an action took place, then it would be necessary to examine whether these two Ministers belong to a clan which is not loyal to the Uzbek president.

3.3.2 The Second Phase

After the determination of the governmental protest interference dispositions, the second phase follows. It comprises the analysis of individual protest actions. Through the protesters' framing of respective protest events, I am going to determine what type of protest results to the governmental intervention. Unlike in the previous phase, here I am going to focus on the protesters' framing of protest actions, rather than on those of the Uzbek government. The governmental framing of a protest action is of a post hoc matter, constructed with the only goal – to justify its actions (it thus carries distorted explanatory value). However, the Uzbek government will be not left out from the mechanism, since it is the only recipient of the frame resonance and thus an arbiter of the resonance's "success".

¹⁸ The power structures are very effective disciplinary tools that is why autocracies rarely decrease the level of investments into them. For more details about these practices in Uzbekistan, see Burnashev and Chernykh, (2007).

Following authoritarian logic again; the government is supposed to react on the frames which are meant to threaten its sovereignty. Since the government does not control the issues connected with the practical issues of everyday life, there is little probability of the interference when protesters come up with a particular demand, connected to a specific issue, usually of a temporary character (the repeated reconstruction of a bazaar, restricted access to water supply, temporary food supply shortages). This type of issues is possible to mitigate, moreover, persisting difficulties may serve as a good pretence for the President to make another cadre reshuffle.

Completely different reaction follows in case the protesters have political demands (releasing of political prisoners, the change of particular policies, asking for the replacement of a particular minister). Political demands, although specific, are based on principles hardly compatible with the governmental ones. Moreover, political demands from the side of the Uzbek society may be easily reframed by the government to the signs of Islamic radicalism, providing a reasonable justification for the protest interference. In other words, the Uzbek government will decide for protest suppression in case the protesters frame their demands in political manner. Since the frame resonance is the most important factor of the intervention (e.g. the frame evokes the feeling of threat, regardless the protesters' intentions), through the protesters' framing, the governmental perception of threat is measured.

3.3.3 The Third Phase

The third phase deals with those protest events that have not been perceived by the Uzbek government as political. In this final phase, I am going to use the "Opportunities and Constraints" dimension of NSMT. I argue that the sole occurrence of a protest might be regarded by the Uzbek government as an opportunity to interfere because each public gathering of people might at certain point spontaneously transfer into an event threatening the regime's very existence. The governmental non-interference in a protest action might thus

lead to two assumptions: the government has not detected the opportunity in the sense of (1) either not knowing about the protest or (2) by being somehow constrained from the protest suppression.

At the first impression, both claims seem to be illogical because of the assumptions of the government's tight control over the whole Uzbek territory as well as the inability of the societal actors to constrain the governmental actions. However, the close examination of intrastate and the state-society relations might lead to different conclusions. As I have claimed in the previous chapter, the connection between the government and the society is very weak¹⁹. As a result, when speaking about the state's connection with society, out of the whole state apparatus, provincial administrations appear to be the most experienced ones. Since the police is under the responsibility of the national government, in order to interfere, the national level is dependent on the regional hokim's information about a protest and its riskiness.

The fact that regional hokims may or may not inform the Ministry of Interior about a protest in their province gives them also the power to decide in which manner will be the protest resolved. The last assertion leads to the assumption that since there is no intervention in a protest, the reasons of the state's non-action are rooted in the decision of the regional hokim. By his decision to resolve the protest by himself and thus non-reporting its occurrence, he is constraining the governmental scope of actions (e.g. the power to decide about the suppression). I argue that the suppression of a protest that is framed in a non-political manner will occur just in case the regional hokim himself will fail to resolve the protest in a peaceful manner.

The regional hokim's ability to resolve the protest without an intervention is dependent on the quality of his connection with the society. If there is no such connection (or the connection is of a low quality), negotiations with the protesters will probably fail. The loss of

¹⁹ In fact, in terms of contact with the society, regional administrations heavily substitute the role of the national government.

the hokim's connection with the society is one of the government's policies consequences –the President frequently changes and reshuffles his appointees, hokims have little chance to appeal to the society because of the shortness of their time in office, because of their place of origin that diverges from the territory of their administration or because of their clan affiliation which differs from that one of the society.

All in all, when looking at the variation in governmental protest intervention through the New Social Movement theoretical framework, the state-society relation in critical situations can be described through the three following hypotheses²⁰:

1. *The Uzbek government will be able to suppress the protest, if it has complete and exclusive control over its power structures.*
2. *The Uzbek government will suppress the protest, if it evaluates the protesters' demands as political.*
3. *The Uzbek government will suppress a non-politically framed protest, if the regional hokim is not able to resolve it in a peaceful manner. The reasons of the failure of the hokim are following: either he has been newly appointed or he originally stems from another province than that of his administration or his clan affiliation differs from that of the province's population.*

3.4 Limits

Despite the fact that the proposed research design offers a new perspective on the state-society interactions in critical situation, there are several important limits which might decrease its explanatory power. Firstly, the overall analysis does not take the local level into consideration, mainly because of a presupposition that in the case of the failure of a local

²⁰ The operationalization summary of the factors of governmental use of repression in protest can be found in the table in the Appendix.

hokim, the protest would escalate onto regional level, falling into the responsibility of a regional hokim anyways. The framework thus stands on an assumption that the Uzbek government does not repress protests on the local level.

Secondly, the framework does not take the factors of the Uzbek government's behavior caused by the actors located outside the country into consideration. Foreign policy strategic partners, international organizations or transnational enterprises might also have a significant impact on the government's use of repression. Despite the fact that the external factor is also important, the large number of actors with unexamined impact extent would be difficult to incorporate into the model. Moreover, the incoherent character of Uzbekistan's foreign policy would even more increase the overall complexity of the empirical puzzle, accounting for the construction of a new analytical model.

4 Methodology and Methods

In this chapter, I am going to focus on methodological aspects of the thesis. Firstly, I am going to introduce the overall empirical puzzle and its connection to the main thesis research question. Afterwards, I am going to examine the suitability of the respective traditional research strategies for my research and focusing on case-study as the most feasible one. Later on, the type of data and its gathering will follow. Last but not least, I am going to conclude with challenges that might limit the scope of the thesis.

4.1 *Empirical Puzzle*

When speaking about political violence or conflict between the state and society, in contemporary scientific discourse, there is a research asymmetry in favor of the research of societal part of the relation. The state and its role and actions within the state-society relations are more or less taken for granted, since the pattern, forms and course of state political violence (or simply repression) follow similar pattern. Especially in authoritarian regimes, the connection of state and repression has been regarded obvious. Following the primary goal of each authoritarian ruler – to maintain the regime as long as possible – the frequent usage of repression might appear logical, at least at the first sight.

When looking into one of the most repressive and long-lasting authoritarian regimes in the world – Uzbekistan - the frequent usage of repression does not seem to be the main tool of the regime's preservation. The Uzbek government uses various types of repression but in an inconsistent manner. The best example of its inconsistency can be seen in the suppression of social protests – in some cases, the suppression caused hundreds of human casualties, in other cases, the protest remained literally unnoticed. I consider such an empirical puzzle sufficient input for interesting research and that is also why I have chosen the reasons of variation in the governmental protest repression in Uzbekistan as the main inquiry of my thesis.

Territorial as well as contextual specificity of Uzbekistan, influenced both by Russian and Middle Eastern legacies, poses several challenges to traditional state repression theoretical approaches. The need to reasonably combine both structure and agency components to account for the fundamental determinants of governmental behavior leaves both structuralist and rationalist streams of research helpless. Focusing thus on context, Wiktorowicz designed his New Social Movement theory designed exactly for Middle Eastern countries. Through the connection to a country's context, he seems to have found the essential determinants of then social actors' behavior within a country's structure.

Transferring the narrative into more methodological language, through the resistance-repression causal mechanism, I am going to identify the determinants of the Uzbek government's usage of the repression of protest, considering these determinants as my independent variables and the occurrence (or non-occurrence) of repression as my dependent variable. For the determination of the dependent variables, I am going to operationalize them by the means of the New Social Movement theoretical framework.

4.2 Case Selection

There are three main reasons why I consider Uzbekistan as a proper case for my research inquiry. Firstly, and most importantly, the complex web of the state-society relations serves as a huge source of empirical evidence, accounting for all the types of actors, actions and mutual interconnections. Moreover, the system of these interrelations is of both formal and informal character. Secondly, Uzbekistan is located at the point where the Middle Eastern, Russian and Central Asian legacies meet. As a result, historical, national as well as the cultural heritage of Uzbekistan has been exposed to the influence of all the three regions. Putting it altogether, this contextual specificity makes from Uzbekistan a unique research case as well as an opportunity to examine its impact of the above mentioned regions on the country's social relations. Last but not least, the protest aspect of social relations in

Uzbekistan has not been extensively researched so far, creating thus a gap in the contemporary scientific discourse and thus offering an interesting research opportunity.

4.3 Research Strategy

The choice of an appropriate research strategy is aimed on the achievement of the best procedures for dealing with a research topic and thus to answer the research question (Blaikie, 2000). My choice of the research strategy has been strongly influenced by the conceptual background of my thesis. The thesis emanates from the state-society relations and accounts for the search of motives of the social actor's actions. The main research inquiry utilizes from everyday social practices and primarily seeks to explain the rationale behind them. Focusing on the social interconnections thus means to work with subjective meanings of empirical reality, heavily relying on the foundations of Interpretivism. The final goal of such a work is to introduce a construct understandable not only for researchers but also for the object of the inquiry (Blaikie, 2000).

Out of the four fundamental research strategies²¹, abduction is the only one which has been solely designed to be applied to empirical puzzles of everyday social affairs. Moreover, abduction uses the exploration of everyday knowledge as a starting point for research, proceeding with the construction of models based on the interpretation of the phenomenon of investigation and finishing with the hypothesis generation. In comparison with other three research strategies, abduction accounts for the non-existence of a neutral way of establishing truth (Blaikie, 2000), incorporating relativist ontological assumptions into the inquiry. Since my research is has been based on both protesters' and government's interpretation of protest events, I regard the basis of my research interpretivist.

²¹ Induction, deduction, retroduction, abduction (Blaikie, 2000).

4.4 Research Design

The choice of a suitable research design that might help me to successfully answer the main research question of the thesis is closely connected to the type of the chosen research strategy. As I have chosen abduction as the main strategy on the research inquiry and my aim is to account for the variation of a single phenomenon (government's reaction to social protest) in one particular authoritarian regime (Uzbekistan under the rule of Islam Karimov) in particular period of time (since 2000 until now), case study appears to me as the most suitable research design.

Besides effectively incorporating abduction, case study is an effective tool for analysis when there is the restricted number of cases available, or in case a researcher struggles with the lack of previous research of the field in the selected territory (Yin, 2003). Together with the insufficient amount of available data and high contextual specificity of the researched topic, these are the challenges my inquiry entails. Since the large part of my thesis has been based on very incomplete data, my work is rather exploratory. My primary intention is thus to explain the selected phenomenon rather than going beyond Uzbekistan and trying to generalize the main findings.

4.5 Data and Its Selection

For the identification of factors of governmental protest intervention, specific data are needed. Following the research design outlined in the previous part of this chapter, the primary focus on data selection are separate protest events that have occurred since 2000 until now and their dynamics. The secondary focus requires data comprising regional hokims and their ability to settle the conflicts with society. Since the flow of information in this country is strongly regulated, the access to any primary data concerning both social protest events and hokims is difficult to reach.

4.5.1 Dataset Comprising Social Protest Events

The limited scope of previous research, the lack of official data caused by high censorship in the country, low access to the information from outside Uzbekistan and a tendency to underreport the social unrest by the Uzbek national media led me to two aspects that influenced my further research: (1) I restricted the analysis of protest events just on those which occurred since January 1, 2000 until now and (2) the search for an alternative way of the protest monitoring is needed. Instead of searching for the data capturing the sole social protest activities, I am going to focus on the reports about these actions in selected media. To decrease the probability of the underreporting of the events and the propaganda of the Uzbek government, I exclude the official Uzbek media from the monitoring and focus on cross-check the articles.

To gain the information about protest events, I would choose web sites focused on regional news coverage, either collecting the information from local media or being capable to monitor the development in Uzbekistan through their own journalists. For data gathering, I prefer the servers founded by an international organization, an NGO that is active outside Uzbekistan, escaping thus the country's internal censorship and national media bias. The reputation of the institution is also important because it (at least to some extent) guaranties the quality of published information²². Moreover, independent news working inside Uzbekistan and reachable from abroad have very short duration – either they are banned by the government or they are not able to gather enough resources for their functioning²³. All the websites ought to be able to provide the news press releases since 2000 until now, in order to cover the whole research period.

²² As the potential sources of news, I would suggest following web sites (or similar): web site of the Radio Free Europe, the web site of The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, eurasianet.org (financed by the open Society Institute), or uznews.org (partnership with the German government)

²³ E.g. the fate of uzland.info – a non-governmental website that had been functional since 1998 until 2005.

When searching through the news, I would concentrate on the cases of social protest in general. These can be identified through two fundamental criteria: (1) the definition of protest, stated in the conceptual part of the thesis (primarily, I would include every event that labeled as protest, unrest, rally or disturbance) and (2) cross-checking (the coverage of a protest event by at least two thirds of the news servers used for the data gathering). There are two reasons why it is reasonable to use such an inclusive approach: Firstly, there has not been any extensive research of separate protest events done in Uzbekistan yet. Consequently, there is no suitable dataset appropriate for the data analysis that would match the research goals of the thesis. Thus, it will be necessary to start from the very beginning, trying to gather as much data as possible. Secondly, since the possibilities to protest in Uzbekistan are very limited, preliminary "skimming" was an effective way to examine the character of empirical evidence and thus adjust the secondary criteria for the more precise data analysis.

After going through the news and gaining the basic dataset of protest events, I would sort them with reference to time and place. These two elementary criteria provide the basic overview about the distinct periods in time, when the protests occurred (and did not occur) and the places that protesters usually used for their protesting. To account for the higher relevance of gathered data, another criterion has to be added. I find the approximate number of participants a reasonable criterion, pointing to the multitude of people choosing protest as potentially useful tool for reaching their demands. I chose the number of fifty participants as the threshold for the protest event to be included in the dataset. The last criterion delimitating social protest is connected with the place of occurrence. I am going to focus only on protests that have happened within the Uzbek territory and related to purely domestic issues.

Again, because my objective is to gain the highest possible number of the protest events, the threshold is set on a relatively low level which brings certain advantages as well as disadvantages. On the one hand, with such a low threshold, there is a high probability that the

cases of protest will be broadly dispersed, with the number of protesters ranging from fifty up to several thousands. On the other hand, in such an autocratic country as Uzbekistan, even few dozen of protesters taking part on a demonstration may mean a successful public gathering. Low threshold ought to decrease the probability of omitting the important protest event just because the low number of protesters took part.

So far, I have set the foundational criteria for the creation of a dataset. As the second step, criteria that enable the testing of the first hypothesis have to be designed. According to the dependent and independent variable set in the research design, the type of protest and the police intervention need to be examined. As far as the indicator of the type of protest is concerned, the protesters' main requests are not difficult to detect. This type of information usually constitutes one of the main parts of a news report. After finding out the exact protesters' demands, the "political-non-political demands" criterion will be applied, keeping the independent variable dichotomous. Moving to the police intervention, Della Porta's *Policing Protest* definition (Della Porta, 1998) considers every police activity towards the protesters as an intervention. The occurrence of intervention might thus account for beating up the protesters, forcing them to leave the protest place, organizing forced transport out of the city or the mass arresting of protesters. Again, after the collection of necessary data, the values sought will be treated dichotomous, e.g. "the occurrence or non-occurrence of intervention".

The rest of the dataset accounts for other than political protests. In order to identify the factors of the intervention (dependent variables from the second hypothesis), information about regional hokims are needed. Again, following the second hypothesis, the dataset has to contain four types of information (1) the name of hokim, and then the indicators of the three dependent variables: (2) the date of his appointment to the office as well as the date of his

abrogation (in the form of a time interval), (3) his province of origin and (4) his clan affiliation.

Probably the easiest way of gathering the required data is from the websites of respective Uzbek provinces and cities as well as from the politicians' professional resumes. The higher reliability of data for regional hokims is possible to reach through matching the information from the regional web-sites and press-releases that are issues after the very session of the parliament and account for the replacement of regional hokims.

4.6 Research Methods

The use of research methods in my thesis is restricted to the proposal on the research design. In the research design, I am going to propose the means how to identify the main determinant for the variation of governmental use of repression when dealing with protest actions. Since the thesis is a theoretical part of a potential research, the recommendation of potential research methods restricts on preliminary data gathering. Nevertheless, the outlined methods are of a qualitative nature, accounting mainly for the content analysis of various secondary resources rich on primary information – news, press releases, journalistic articles focused of protests as well as various official state documents (appointment abrogation decrees of hokims), governmental press releases, memoranda from the national parliament sessions.

For the data analysis, the interpretive techniques are recommended to use. The interpretation will comprise the identification of an event as a protest, on the basis of the information stated in the secondary resources and consequent search for information such as the place of the protest happening, the number of people and the reason of protesting. Afterwards, subsequent coding will follow. The coding will encompass the division of the gained data into separate groups and its disposition according to one of date of happening, the

data accounting for the dependent and independent variables being coded in a simple dichotomous manner (YES/NO). In the end, the data evaluation will follow.

4.7 Limits

To conclude the methodological part of my thesis, I am going to concentrate on its most important limits. The first limit emanates from the choice of my research strategy. Since abduction is closely connected with Interpretivism and the subjective vision of empirical realities, my thesis is based on the subjective actors' interpretations of protest events. This fact makes the gathered information unverifiable, thus non-testable and consequently irrefutable. Moreover, the consequent operationalization of concepts will struggle with the interpretive aspect, posing difficulties to find reliable and valid measurements. However, this is a general difficulty with all the hypothesis-generating works, requiring the making of preferences from a reader.

The second drawback is connected to the character of case study research design. In general, the findings gathered from a case study are difficult to replicate, since the case is constantly evolving and thus potentially also changing. Moreover, researchers conducting the longitudinal studies have to always account for the risk of the occurrence of significant change that might distort the whole research. As I have already mentioned, the findings from a case study are difficult to generalize which might restrict the scope of the future research.

The third drawback is connected to the data gathering. The narrow scope of research in an authoritarian regime as well as questionable reliability of data resources presupposes the incompleteness of the dataset as well as the partial information provided by the sources. Missing cases can be easily connected with the inability of the resources I used to report all the cases of social protest meeting my relevancy criteria. Moreover, media in general tend to over-report or underreport the occurrences of social protest. Furthermore, the media coverage of the Uzbek territory is limited, increasing the probability that the part of important social

protests remained unreported because the reporters had not been able to cover the event. Last but not least, my lack of knowledge of the languages broadly used in Uzbekistan (Russian and Uzbek) limits me to use the English versions of the news, risking not only difficulties with inaccurate translation but preventing me from the access to the information.

Fourthly, as far as the analysis of the cases is concerned, it is necessary to distinguish between spontaneous and planned protests because each of the two carries a distinct message. Spontaneous protests may indicate peoples' overall dissatisfaction with the development in the country, resulting to protest as the last viable option for potential improvement. Organized protests may bring a new dimension into the process – a single agency pursuing its own interests by the manipulation of masses. This interest does not necessary have anything to do with the miserable situation in the country; it is rather connected to individual interests of the organizer.

Besides the limited possibility to distinguish these two types of protest, there is also a connection among individual cases, pointing to vertical and horizontal path-dependency which might indirectly question the treating of the protests as independent cases. It is natural that a protest action may spread into other cities as well as in the case of not reaching an acceptable result; it tends to escalate through several levels, from the local to the national one. It is thus necessary to critically examine the individual cases of protest and to treat them within the contextual development.

5 Uzbekistan and Its State-society Relations

Connecting the governmental intervention and the activities of social non-movements leads to the broader context of the state-society relations. The occurrence of episodic but regular protests and diverging reactions to them from the side of the government requires the examination of the internal connections between the Uzbek government and Uzbek society. The character of connections determines also the mechanisms of communication in direction "the Uzbek government - society" and vice versa. Having a closer look on these mechanisms brings the clarification of the role of both entities within the system and outlines the implications of the intra-country interconnections.

Starting from the very beginning, firstly I am going to provide the basic contextual background about Uzbekistan, briefly mentioning the most important cases of governmental protest repression. Secondly, I am going to describe the intrastate relations within the state structure. Later on, I am going to briefly examine the role of the Uzbek government as an individual actor vis-à-vis the state apparatus as well as the Uzbek society. Thirdly, I am going to describe the mechanisms of communication between the state and the society, identify the intermediaries in this relation and finally, conclude with resulting implications.

5.1 Contextual Background – the Making of Uzbekistan

As an independent state, Uzbekistan came into being in 1991, after the total dissolution of the Soviet Union. Unlike the Eastern European states, Uzbekistan (together with his three central Asian neighbors) did not fight for it. Enjoying the role of a Soviet's main cotton reservoir and being totally dependent on the system of centrally planned economy and generous financial subsidies, Uzbekistan has not been particularly prepared to take the responsibility for its own functioning. Since 1989, Uzbekistan has been ruled by its tough leader - Islam Karimov. Neither the fall of the Iron curtain nor the overall misery into which

has he managed to lead the country prevented him from maintaining power. As a result, after 18 years of independence, the country does not seem to have made any significant effort to depart from its former colonial past and to proceed towards better tomorrows.

Besides economical backwardness and constant dependence on Russia, Uzbekistan caught the international attention after 9/11, both as one of the Afghanistan's neighboring states and a country with a rich pre-Islamic tradition. Both elements remarkably contributed to the governmental decision to strengthen authoritarian practices in the country. Andijon events are probably the most internationally known protest that has taken on the Uzbek territory. The main reason for such a negative publicity was the massive repression the Uzbek government used to its elimination. This suppression had been exercised so brutally that it caused hundreds of civilian casualties. Afterwards, in order to restore order in the city, severe security measures were taken into action (Fumagalli, 2006).

After the events, the Uzbek government refused to provide any information about the whole action, keeping the real number of casualties in secret. Andijon was also the last drop of the short Uzbek-US strategic partnership, motivating the United States to rather withdraw from this risky cooperation. Neither action has motivated the regime to deplete its searching for enemies, by the constant threatening of the Uzbek population. The country has cut off almost all of its international connections, not permitting the representatives of international NGOs to operate on its territory and refusing the distribution of humanitarian aid among the population. Benefiting from the global fear from Islamic fundamentalism and struggling world powers, Uzbekistan seems to further sustain its authoritarian face.

5.2 *The Role of the State*

5.2.1 How It Works In Uzbekistan - Formally

As every possible aspect of everyday life in the country, Uzbek state-society relations have been heavily affected by the specificity of socio-historical context (Jones Luong, 2002). Seventy years of the Soviet rule, non-voluntary independence in 1991 and the continuity of the ruling elites not only presuppose the extreme addiction of Uzbekistan on Moscow but indicate the ruling elites' affiliation towards the previously attested system of government. One can consider state institutions, policies and societal dynamics in Central Asia very similar to those of the former Soviet Union (Luong, 2004). Besides the institutions and procedures, Uzbekistani national elites adopted the Soviet approach to nation-building as well as the regime legitimation.

Both the nation-building and the regime legitimation are extremely important for relations in the Uzbek society. During the Soviet era, the nation-building excluded the development of religious as well as ethnic identities and heavily relied on regionalism. Since the territory of Central Asia had been artificially divided into five states, the focus on ethnic identity would have undermined the stability of the region. Religious identities were suppressed mainly because of atheistic character of the Communist doctrine. Regionalism ought to highlight diversity of the Soviet republics, imposing the feeling of their respective uniqueness and diminishing the regional ties developed in the pre-colonial era. Moreover, regional specificities were partly connected to religious specificities as well, thus the solution to pursue regionalism as the main state identity partly incorporated the omitted religious identities.

After the independence in 1991, president Islam Karimov further developed these two "Soviet" strategies. The difference was just in the shift of roles of the main center from Moscow to Tashkent and the perceived periphery from the Soviet republics to Uzbekistani

provinces. The state institutions were adjusted in such a way they could assure permanent link between the national government and regional representatives, increase the governmental control over regional resources distribution as well as gain more control over the society. All in all, keeping regionalism as the main identity and continuing in the exclusion of ethnic and religious ones was primarily aimed on the centralization of power which had been in favor of the national government.

Similarly as in the Soviet era²⁴, focusing on regionalism proved to be a double-edged sword. The concentration of power in the hands of Islam Karimov proceeded to a phase when regional elites had to give up some of their traditionally entrenched responsibilities in governmental favor²⁵. The deprivation from power and profit-sharing, however, did not mean the decrease of the regional leaders' duties. Hokims remained responsible (but not rewarded) for the fulfillments of the cotton supply quotas. The shift of power-sharing and shrinking "resource pie" were the important factors of growing resistance among the regional elites towards the national government (Ilkhamov, 2004).

As far as the control over society is concerned, since the Soviet era it has been executed in rather indirect manner. The regime contestation was very limited and the masses were used just to the ex post legitimation of governmental decisions (Luong, 2004). Besides internal security issues, there were little incentives to keep the society in direct touch with the national government. Karimov's approach towards the society has been slightly different from the Soviet one. He (unlike the Soviets) has been seeking for two goals: (1) the domination over the society and (2) decreasing or eventually bypassing the influence of regional elites. Important is the one-way character of the relation – it enables the imposition of control on the society but does not allow any feedback.

²⁴ The cotton scandal - for more information see Ilkhamov in Jones Luong, 2004

²⁵ For example, the appointment of provincial hokims or the elimination of regional elites from the cotton business.

5.2.2 How It Works In Uzbekistan – Informally

It is apparent that the Uzbek president effectively manages to use all the formal means available to prevent the regional elites from the decision-making. What he cannot effectively eliminate are the deeply rooted informal relations in form of clans, patronage and clientelism. These pre-modern organizations (or better said interconnections) have constituted the vital part of people's relations in Central Asia since ever and have persisted in more-or-less the same nature until today.

The clan affiliation is characteristic for every "native" inhabitant of the country and usually accompanies him for the rest of his life. Before the Soviet colonization of Central Asia, when the Uzbek state had not existed as a single entity, nomadic people had been connected through identity networks based on kinship or fictive kin bonds. These informal networks had been the useful tool of keeping the societal connections, since these people frequently changed their place of living. Clans enabled them to belong to a certain community which would help them to solve their potential existential problems in change for their respect and support of the clan leaders (Collins, 2004). After the colonization, the Soviets developed remarkable effort to eliminate the informal connections within the whole region, however without any remarkable success. Despite the fact that the influence of clans had been suppressed for some time, after the independence in 1991 they became important again in all the five Central Asian countries (Carlisle, 2001).

Stemming from the diverse character and nature of the "original" inhabitants of Uzbekistan, the clan relations have evolved alongside the Uzbekistani historical regions. Each region has its own clan which through the informal relations with the state apparatus pursues the interests of its members. Such practices are possible mainly due to three reasons: Firstly, the administrative delimitation of the country mostly copies the historical regional delimitation and thus established clan structures. Secondly, Karimov's preference to cut the

society from the contact with the national government limits the making of changes within the regional structure. He needs the clans and their representatives to settle the local issues and disturbances. Thirdly, even Karimov himself has a clan affiliation (he belongs to the Samarkand clan), moreover, his appointment to the presidential office was possible just because of the support of the influential Uzbekistani clans (besides the one from Samarkand, Karimov has had a remarkable support of the Tashkent clan as well) (Luong, 2002).

The clan affiliation of regional leaders presupposes loyalty primarily to the clan, and secondarily to the regime (Collins, 2006). Such recognition brings a new dimension into the intra-state relations, incorporating an important interfering actor. The best example of its interfering power are the President's limited actions in further centralization of power and decision-making, as well as the exploitation of the country's resources. Despite that Karimov has the exclusive right to appoint and dismiss all the crucial regional representatives, all the potential candidates for these positions have strong ties to their clans. With every representative, a clan gains an access to the state's resources and claims its share, in the form of material things or long-term patronage.

When looking at Karimov's policy advisors, ministers and the national elites in general, each of them is supported by a particular clan. Currently, members of Samarkand, Bukhara and Tashkent clans clearly prevail (Carlisle, 2001, Collins, 2004, Luong, 2002), sharing the most important ministerial and advisory posts.²⁶ In the past, the representatives of Ferghana clan used to belong to the President's close circle which does not seem to be the case anymore. On the contrary, the representatives of less influential Karakalpakistani clan have recently gained a couple of additional ministerial posts (Carlisle, 2001).

In fact, the reshuffling of elites is one of Karimov's few tools to regulate the clans' influence in the state apparatus. The substitution of one representative by another one

²⁶ For more information, see Carlisle, 2001 or Luong, 2002.

(preferably from the same clan) prevents the representatives from the accommodation of their practices in the office and at the same time maintains the absolute influence of the clan over the respective sector. After 2000, there has been a vivid shift in the preference of individual clans from the side of the Uzbek president. All the clans lost their influence at the expense of the Samarkand clan which started occupying the larger portion of the national administration than it did before (Luong, 2002).

The maintenance of the fractional balance of powers among the informal actors within the state system is especially important because its asymmetry may distort the overall balance of powers within the country and in the end it may lead to the decrease of the country's internal stability. The excessive preference of one clan may easily mean the withdrawal of the other clans' support and thus not only cause potential difficulties with the society but also decrease of the financial resources available for the regime. Moreover, Karimov's presidency itself may not succeed in the running of the country without the support of regional clans, implicitly pointing to the fact that Karimov's regime is not that centralized and consolidated as it might seem at the first glance.

5.3 The Role of Regional Elites

5.3.1 Uzbekistani Regional Elites vis-à-vis the Government

In the context of both formal and informal relations within the Uzbekistani state apparatus, the position of regional elites vis-à-vis Karimov's government is twofold. On the one hand, the national government tries to decrease the influence of regional elites as much as possible, depriving them from the access to resources and decreasing their capacity to retain the social control. On the other hand, the protectionist moves of the government towards the society as well as its dependence on the execution and implementation of the large part of its policies strengthen the position of the regional representatives (Kandiyoti, 2007). Moreover,

governmental decision to base the Uzbek national identity mainly on regional principle and the incorporation of these elites into the further state apparatus has made the regional elites the only viable and semi-allowed opposition in the country (Ilkhamov, 2004).

The interplay between the government and regional elites over social control and resources distribution is based on mutual strength rather than weakness. This fact is connected to their interdependence and also to an incentive to not to eliminate each other. Besides that, neither the rule of the national government, nor the regional elites has ever been effectively challenged (Luong, 2002). Quickly negotiated pacted stability that had been reached after the independence is an example of the government-regional elites' cooperation, although based rather on desire to maintain respective positions rather than on the convergence of interests.

Divergence in governmental and regional elites' strategies is apparent in two crucial conflicts: (1) the struggle for cotton and (2) the struggle for parliament. In both cases, Karimov deprived the elites from their traditional spheres of influence – he denied the elites the access to the business with cotton - establishing the central agency as the only one allowed selling the cotton abroad. He also imposed reforms in the organization of parliament in a way hokims would lose the majority (Ilkhamov, 2004).

The deprivation of the regional elites from their share in the business with cotton did not fulfill its presupposed goal. Quite the contrary – regional elites transmitted the part of the problem to the society by decreasing workers' wages and started searching for the alternative sources of revenue. As a consequence, larger portions of cotton aimed to black market, depriving the state from its tax as well as cotton production revenues. Karimov's attempt to control the parliament ended up in similarly awkward way – despite the establishment of the governmental party, hokims won the majority in parliament. This move also decreased the level of already fragile hokims' loyalty to the regime (Kandiyoti, 2007).

The dispute between the government and regional elites has its clear borders. As far as the security issues are concerned, the government is the only actor which has monopoly over the access to military power (Ilkhamov, 2004). It does not use it as a tool for maintaining the discipline vis-à-vis regional elites and in exchange, the regime's internal security has never been challenged by any of regional elites with the aim of regime change or simple elite replacement. What is even more interesting; it does not seem regional elites take a direct part on the prosecution of the enemies of the regime.

5.3.2 Uzbekistani Regional Elites vis-à-vis the Society

The multiple characters of the regional elites create multiple approaches towards the society. Despite the variety of interactions, regional elites have one important common function –protecting the government from the actions of society. Due to the very weak (if any) existence of a direct link of the society to the national government (Jones, Luong, 2004), regional elites represent the only point of the state-society contact.

The second important feature of regional elites vis-à-vis the Uzbekistani society is the exploitation of the population living in respective provinces. The exploitation is closely connected to acquiring access to the distribution of economic resources cut by the national government. The exploitation of "the household economy" (Ilkhamov, 2004) usually takes the form of increasing the cotton extraction fulfillment targets, non-paying for the harvest or other work local population provides to the state, introduction of new fines and fees for the services of local government. The state institutions are meant to simultaneously perform a regulatory function on behalf of the government as well as to represent the interest of their respective members (Kandiyoti, 2007).

The foundation of GONGOs²⁷ and the promotion of mahallas²⁸ was initially meant as an attempt for decentralization which ended up with these institutions taking over the agendas the national government wanted to withdraw from. This has been particularly the case in terms of social welfare – children and unemployment subsidies – where significant financial resources were needed. Transferring the responsibility for the agenda to a "non-state" actor has been a practical way the Uzbek national government coped with resource scarcities resulting from the collapse of the USSR and at the same time a good protection against the population and its feelings of injustice (Noori, 2006).

Besides the widening of the state control and freeing itself from the costly expense of service provision, the national government transferred the accountability for these services to the community itself. In other words, mahalla has not been introduced to better cope with community issues but to decrease the state support in this field (Stevens, 2005) and consequently to diminish the chances of the local population to complain. The over-taxation of mahalla and its lack of capacity to discharge its most basic obligations (Noori, 2006) led the society to another decrease of trust to the state institutions. Additionally, since the internationally financed NGOs present in Uzbekistan have failed to fulfill their fundamental missions, they also failed to attract people for participation in projects on volunteer basis. Despite that the NGOs and GONGOs have developed relatively solid base structure; they neither seem to have the capacity to incorporate the local people, nor to mobilize them. The high fragmentation and low cooperation among the NGOs themselves even more questions their role vis-à-vis the society (Ilkhamov, 2005).

²⁷ Governmental NGOs – institutionalized "non-state agencies" which support the regime's activities.

²⁸ Traditional community grouping that used to be in each village. Originally evolved to strengthen the local community, however, Karimov's regime started using it for its own goals (Noori, 2006).

5.4 Implications

In Uzbekistan, regional elites play a crucial role in both formal and informal state-society relations. The relations have been reflected in three distinct mechanisms: Firstly, regional elites represent an important tool of the national government to assure the effective and fast implementation of governmental policies. Moreover, they prevent the reverse gear of the state-society relations from running, by diminishing the access of the population to the national level state officials. This one-way character of the state-society relations leads to the protection of the government, since the citizens' claims rarely reach the national level. The government's evaluation of the regional elites' efficiency according to the overall stability of individual regions even strengthens the elites' incentives to diminish the population's connection to the national government.

As a by-product of this mechanism, the population adjusted its activities as well, by "withdrawing" from the state control. Knowledge that the state is neither going to engage in the communities' solving of problems, nor it wants to know about the problems increases the society's alienation towards the state. The bigger is the alienation, the fewer options there are for the state to manipulate the society. The Uzbek government's approach to the society poses an opportunity for the society to arrange the sensitive issues in their own way which may be more dangerous than the real decentralization. Moreover, since the regime needs the society to maintain its control over the country (the need of the current regime for the survival of the society might not be the case), despite the existing gap it is trying to broaden; the regime's dependence on the society is growing.

Regional elites play an important role in resources distribution. They transfer the governmental subsidies down to the population as well as they execute the projects aimed at the improvement of inhabitants' living standards. The regional elites also transfer the resources from the society to the national government – being responsible for the extraction as

well as for the collection of taxes. The direct access to resources and power leads to double exploitation. On the one hand, the regional elites exploit the population, by taking higher amounts of resources than required or providing just the fractions of subsidies from the state to the population. On the other hand, these elites exploit the national government, by the non-transparent transfers of resources from the population. The cumulated powers of regional elites as well as their regional clan affiliations enable them to manipulate the implementation of governmental policies which decreases the influence of the national government.

The structure and amount of regional elites is predetermined by the definition of the Uzbek national identity as well as by the limited access to resources. This leads to the exclusion of "unwanted" elites (religious and ethnic minorities) from the official decision-making (Grodsky, 2007) and later on to their suppression. Both exclusion and suppression force these elites to illegality. Interestingly, the state by its policies determines the space of the activities of the excluded elites – either they are active within the population (which is alienated to the state apparatus) or outside Uzbekistan (this might contribute to the alienation of certain states towards the current Uzbek regime). Both outcomes lead to the decreased capacity of the state to control and eliminate their perceived internal and external enemies.

All in all, the unique Uzbek relational structure significantly influences the roles of respective actors within the country. There are three most important mechanisms through which the national government consolidates its regime seem to have important side effects which work against the original goal. All the three are intensified by the powerful regional clans and their interests, not always converging with those of the regime. Insufficient control over the whole process of policy implementation forces the Uzbek government to incorporate the regional elites into the decision-making process and thus fractionalizes the power and spreads it to several directions.

As a result, the Uzbek government cannot be claimed as the dominant actor within the state structure since it relies on regional elites, both in supporting the regime and keeping the society away from decision-making. The regional elites are both exploited by the national government as well as granted important powers. Dependence on the power- and resource-sharing prevents them from the direct challenge of the regime and partial autonomy in terms of dealing with the society provides them opportunities for exploitation. The Uzbek society is thus exploited in twofold manner – by the national government and by the regional power structures. It is also prevented from decision-making and restricted from the full voice of its discontent, being pushed to the creation of its own parallel structures which even more contribute to the weakening of the state-society connection.

6 Conclusion

In my thesis, I primarily attempted to shed more light on the variation of the Uzbek government's behavior in terms of the usage of repression in protest. The choice of the topic reflected my intention to have a closer look at the ambiguous nature of the Uzbek regime's repression as well as on the complex structure of state-society relations in this harsh authoritarian regime. Through the examination of different governmental reactions to the very similar patterns of protests, I primarily questioned the coherency of the Uzbek regime, pointing to its weakness caused by the internal dynamics within the state apparatus.

To answer my research question, I set the resistance-repression mechanism as the primary research inquiry. Treating the governmental protest repression as a reaction to the protesters' action, I decided to equally examine both sides of the relation. My approach showed to be effective, mainly because of the general difficulties with researching repression without resistance. The theoretical basis of my thesis has been thus constituted from the contemporary theoretical as well as conceptual approaches to both social protest and the state repression.

As a result of my analysis, three hypothesized determinants of the government's reaction to protest emerged. Firstly, governmental exclusive control over the country's power structures determines its overall capability to interfere in the protest. Secondly, the governmental perception of threat influences its primary choice for the protest interferences. In practice it means that the protest framed in a political will always be suppressed. Thirdly, the government is constrained by the regional level of governance because of regional hokims' autonomy in the state-society agenda. Since the government is not directly connected to the society, the largest part of information it gets is from the regional hokims. Thus, in case

of conflict with society, the hokims have the chance to pursue their own solutions. Such activities severely restrict the government's possibilities to interfere.

Besides the three hypotheses that emerged from the research model, there are three much broader findings connected to my research inquiry. Firstly, from the analysis it is apparent that it is not the general parameters of protest²⁹ what determines the occurrence of the suppression. It is the actual performance of regional hokims what matters. Since the Uzbek government does not want to be directly connected to the society, regional hokims represent the highest possible instance of the state-society relations. The hokims' role accounts for a large autonomy within the state apparatus, making the Uzbek government's behavior towards society dependent on their decision-making. Such a relation has a significant impact on the shift of relative powers of the respective actors within the state apparatus, enabling the regional hokims to prevail in certain branches of the state's policy.

Secondly, such an imbalanced relation between the regional and national level of governance, especially in term of the state-society relations, clearly points to the government's serious weakness. In fact, the Uzbek society affairs are more or less out of control of the national government, mostly resting upon the loyalty of the hokims and their ability to successfully deal with all the emerging difficulties. Besides the lack of direct control over the society, the government's indirect control over the society is also remarkably low. This is, again, connected to the fact that the government does not have sufficient tools for "guarding the guardians" and thus has to believe to the information received from the regional hokims.

Last but not least, the state-society relations in Uzbekistan form an alternative structure to Migdal's "State in Society". Whereas Migdal connects the state's weakness with its embeddedness in the society, in Uzbekistan, this does not seem to be the case. The state and the society constitute two different structures that are just indirectly connected through the

²⁹ The number of protesters, the type of protest, the province where the protest takes place, the problem the society is communicating through protest.

regional level of administration. Regional hokims belong both to the state (because they are dependent on patronage as well as on the exploitation of resources) and to the society (because they depend on the society's ability to gather the resources for exploitation). Moreover, both the state and society have created their own structures that make them survive, completely bypassing each other.

To sum up, the Uzbek regional administration enjoys a critical role within the state system. Enjoying remarkable autonomy in terms of dealing with society, regional administration represents the weakest part of the Uzbek apparatus. Such weakness may be critical for the emergence of a new kind of the regime opposition, emerging from within the state and thus having a chance to reshape the overall structure of relations in the country. Since the Uzbek government has neither enough carrots nor enough sticks to maintain the regional hokim's full loyalty, there is high probability that the regional hokims will further distort the level of power concentration of the national level.

As far as the limits of the thesis are concerned, I consider its hypothesis-generating character as the main advantage as well as challenge. On the one hand hypothesis-generation enabled to bring new perspectives into the research of the state-society relations by exploring new research problems and imposing alternative forms of analysis. On the other hand, I am aware of the fact that only the testing of a hypothesis can successfully prove or disprove its credibility.

The lack of empirical data and the difficulties with its gathering pose another hindrance to the further development of the concept. Still, Uzbekistan is an authoritarian regime where people seem to protest on regular basis but the frequency of protests has not reached the level necessary for the completion of a dataset suitable for statistical analysis. Moreover, the very process of the data gathering might be very limited, due to the low informational permeability

of the regime as well as the over-reporting and underreporting of the protest events in the media.

Last but not least, since my analysis of the governmental social protest suppression is based on Interpretivist methods, it will be difficult to account for the model's internal validity. Some of the variables indicators (e.g. the governmental perception of the political framing of protest) not only will be difficult to measure but even to identify. The eventual decrease of the impact of the mentioned drawbacks will require more precise operationalization as well as sufficient empirical data.

As far as the future research opportunities are concerned, the examination of both social protests as well as the state-society relations sheds a different light on the political situation in Uzbekistan. The interest divergences inside the state apparatus point to the possible sources of future resistance. While the government keeps controlling the society, nobody "controls the controllers". The research of regional elites as a potential source of the governmental opposition thus seems to be a plausible next step in the examination of the Uzbeks state-society relations. As a result, the current scientific discourse about the state-society relations would be deepened through the knowledge about the subject per se.

The case study restriction to one case does not particularly support the potential broadening of the research inquiry to neighboring countries. Besides the methodological difficulties, countries located in Central Asia are not as similar as one might expect. The impact of multiple actors and environments on the countries' development may have caused diverging tendencies also in terms of the state-society relations. However, making a comparison of the countries' state-society relations development in the form of multiple case-studies might be another interesting future research challenge.

7 Appendix

Table 1 the Factors of the Governmental Protest Suppression or Non-suppression in Uzbekistan			
Phase	Factors of intervention	Factors of non intervention	Indicators
1	Governmental control over power structures		Both the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Interior are loyal to the President
1		Direct regime challenge	Civil war, uprising, Coup d'état
1		Harsh financial Crisis	Overall economical breakdown
1		Gradual financial crisis	The decrease of the amount of people working for the power structures
1		Personal reshuffle on the power Ministerial posts	Both ministers are the members of a clan that is not loyal to the President
2	Protesters' frames make the Uzbek government feel threatened		Political demands from the side of protesters
2		Protesters' frames of protest do not evoke the feeling of threat inside the Uzbek government	Everyday-life demands of temporary character
3	Hokim's failure to peacefully resolve the protest		Hokim's different place of origin that the territory of his administration
			Hokim's clan affiliation diverging from that of the society
			Hokim's limited term of office (appointed lately)
3		Hokim's success in the peaceful resolving of a protest	

8 Bibliography

Adcock R., Collier D., Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 95, No. 3 (September 2001), pp. 529-546

Bayat A., *Making Islam Democratic*, Stanford University Press, 2007

Blaikie N., *Designing Social Research*, Polity Press, 2000

Bratton M., Masunungure E., Popular Reactions to State Repression: Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe, *African Affairs*, Vol. 106, No. 422 (September 2006), pp. 21-45

Burnashev R., Chernykh I., Changes in Uzbekistan's Military Policy after the Andijan Events, *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2007), pp. 67-73

Collins K., *Clan Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia*, Cambridge University Press, 2006

Davenport Ch., State Repression and political Order, *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 10 (2007), pp. 1-23

Della Porta D., Reiter H., The Policing of Protest in Western Democracies in *Policing Protest: The Control of Mass Demonstrations in Western Democracies*, edited by Donatella Della Porta and Herbert Reiter, University of Minnesota Press, 1998, pp. 1-32

Della Porta D., *Social Movements, Political Violence and the State*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 1-14, 55-57, 187-209

Della Porta D., Research on Social Movements and Political Violence, *Qual Sociol*, Vol. 31, published online on 15.July 2008, pp. 221-230

Fumagalli M., Alignments and Realignments in Central Asia: The Rationale and Implications of Uzbekistan's Rapprochement with Russia, *International political Science Review*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (2007), pp. 253-271

Fumagalli M., State Violence and Popular Resistance in Uzbekistan, Society and the State, *ISIM Review* 18, Autumn 2006

Grodsky B., Resource Dependency and Political Opportunity: Explaining the Transformation from Excluded Political Parties to Human Rights Organizations in Post-Communist Uzbekistan, Government and Opposition, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2007), pp. 96 - 120

Ilkhamov A., Neopatrimonialism, Interest Groups and patronage Networks: the Impasses of the Governance System in Uzbekistan, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (March 2007), pp. 65-84

Ilkhamov A., The Thorny Path of Civil Society in Uzbekistan, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (September 2005), pp. 297-317

Ilkhamov A., The limits of Centralization: Regional Challenges in Uzbekistan in the *Transformation of Central Asia: States and Societies from Soviet Rule to Independence*, edited by Pauline Jones Luong, Cornell University Press, 2004, pp. 159-182

Kandiyoti D., Post-Soviet Institutional Design and the Paradoxes of the “Uzbek Path”, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 26, No.1 (March 2007), pp. 31-48

Karragiannis E., Political Islam in Uzbekistan: Hiz ut-Tahrir al-Islami, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 58, No.2 (March 2006), pp. 261-280

Kangas R., Domestic Politics, Bureaucratic Strategies and Culture in Central Asia in *The Limits of Culture: Islam and Foreign Policy* edited by Brenda Shaffer, Cambridge University Press, 2006

Khalid A., *Islam after Communism*, University of California Press, 2007

Khalid A., A Secular Islam: Nation, State, and Religion in Uzbekistan, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 35, No.4 (2003)

Lewis, D., *the Temptations of Tyranny in Central Asia*, Hurst & Company, London 2008

Lichbach M.I., Contending Theories of Contentious Politics and the Structure-Action Problem of Social Order, *Annual Review of political Science*, Vol. 1(1998), pp. 401-424

Luong P.J., *the Transformation of Central Asia: States and Societies from Soviet Rule to Independence*, Cornell University Press, 2004, pp. 1-29, 271-283

Luong P.J., *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 1-156

Markowitz L. P., Local Elites, Prokurators and Extraction in Rural Uzbekistan, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (March 2008), pp. 1.14

Mazaheri N., State Repression in the Iranian Bazaar, 1975-77: The Anti-profiteering Campaign and an Impending Revolution, *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (September 2006), pp. 401-414

McCarthy J. D. and Zald M. N, 1973, *The Trend of Social Movements*, General Learning Press, 1973

McGlinchey E., the Making of Militants: The State and Political Islam in Central Asia, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (2005b), pp. 554-566

Megoran N., Framing Andijon Narrating the Nation: Islam Karimov's Account of the Events on 13 May 2005, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 27, No. 10 (2008), pp. 15-31

Migdal J.S., *State in Society*, Cambridge University Press, 2001

Migdal J. S., Kohli A., Shue V., *State Power and Social Forces*, Cambridge University Press, 1994

Migdal J.S., *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*, Princeton University Press, c1988, pp. 3-93, 177-207

Naumkin V.V., *Radical Islam in Central Asia: Between Pen and Rifle*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2005

Nettl J.P., The State as a Conceptual Variable, *World Politics*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (July 1968), pp. 559-592

Neumann W.L., *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Allyn and Bacon, 2000

Noakes H., Johnston J.A., *Frames of Protest: Social Movements and the Framing Perspective*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2005

Noori N., Expanding State Authority, Cutting Back Local Services: Decentralization and Its Contradictions in Uzbekistan, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (December 2006), pp. 533-549

Oberschall A., *Social Conflict and Social Movements*, Prentice- Hall, 1973

Olcott M.B., Roots of Radical Islam in Central Asia, Carnegie Paper No. 77, January 2007, available at http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/cp_77_olcott_roots_final.pdf

Ondetti G., Repression, Opportunity and Protest: Explaining the Takeoff of Brazil's Landless Movement, *Latin American Politics and Society*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (Summer 2006), pp. 61-94

Rashid A., *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*, Yale University Press, 2002

Regan P. M. & Errol A. Henderson, Democracy, Threats and Political Repression in Developing Countries: Are Democracies Internally Less Violent?, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (2002), pp. 119-136

Roy O., The Predicament of “Civil Society” in Central Asia and “the Greater Middle East”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 5 (2005), pp. 1001 - 1012

Sanchez-Cuenga I. and Luis de la Calle, Domestic Terrorism: The Hidden Side of Political Violence, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2009, pp. 31-49

Sapper M., Weichsel V., Huterer A., *Machtmosaik Zentralasien: Traditionen, Restriktionen, Aspirationen*, Osteuropa, 2007

Sengupta A., The Formation of the Uzbek Nation-State: A Study in Transition, Rowmann and Littlefield Publishing Group, 2003

Schmitter, P. C., The Design of Social and Political Research, available at http://web.ceu.hu/polsci/syllabi/0708/PHD/fall/soc_research.pdf

Seale C., *The Quality of Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications, 1999

Skocpol T., Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research in *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Theda Skocpol, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 3-37

Stevens D., NGO-Mahalla Partnerships: Exploring the Potential for State-Society Synergy in Uzbekistan, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (September 2005), pp. 281-296

Stevens D., Political Society and Civil Society in Uzbekistan – Never the Twain Shall Meet?, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2007), pp. 49-64

Stevens, E.P., Protest Movement in an Authoritarian Regime: The Mexican Case, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (April 1975), pp. 361-382

Turner R. H., The Public Perception of Protest, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 34, No. 6 (December, 1969), pp. 815-831

Wallerstein I., *The Capitalist World-Economy: Essays by Immanuel Wallerstein*, Cambridge University Press & Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 1980, pp. 1-65, 222-230, 283-293

Wegerich K., "A Little Help from My Friend?" Analysis of Network links on the Meso Level in Uzbekistan, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 25, No. 1-2 (March-June 2006), pp.115-128

Wiktorowicz, Q., *Islamic Activism: a Social Movement Theory Approach*, Indiana University press, 2004

Yin R.K., *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, SAGE Publications, 2003