

# **Cash crops and State repression?**

A qualitative case study on state repression and cash crops

Marcus Ekman

17-03-2025

Bachelor Thesis

Department of Peace and Conflict

Uppsala University

Course convenor: Desirée Nilsson

## **Abstract**

This thesis will seek to test whether a causal relationship can be established between export dependencies on cash crops and state repression. A theory will be developed based on previous research on the topic of natural resources and state repression. Furthermore, this paper will examine whether a causal relationship exists between a dependence on the export of cash crops and state repression, while developing a hypothesis to test this relationship. Furthermore, this paper will also look closely into the legacy of colonialism and cash crops, which will serve as a basis for the theoretical arguments. However, much of the previous research has mainly focused on natural resources like oil and minerals. A research gap can therefore be observed when it comes to cash crops and state repression. Furthermore, state repression has previously been explained by the level of democracy and the presence of a potential civil war. This paper aims to take a different approach in order to test whether this new theory is applicable or not. The research question for this paper will be: “How does a country’s dependence on cash crop exports affect its willingness to engage in state repression?” The research of this paper will be conducted using qualitative methods in combination with Mill’s method of agreement. The findings of this paper indicate that support for the hypothesis could not be established.

**Table of Contents:**

- 1. Introduction.....4**
- 2. Theory.....5**
  - 2.1 Literature Review.....5**
  - 2.2 Independent Variable.....10**
  - 2.3 Dependent Variable.....11**
  - 2.4 Theory.....11**
  - 2.5 Hypothesis.....13**
- 3. Research Design.....14**
  - 3.1 Method of Analysis.....14**
  - 3.2 Scope conditions.....15**
  - 3.3 Case Selection.....15**
    - 3.3.1 Control Variables.....15
    - 3.3.2 Method of Case Selection.....16
  - 3.4 Measurements and Data.....19**
    - 3.4.1 Independent Variable.....19
    - 3.4.2 Dependent Variable.....20
    - 3.4.3 Control Variables.....22
    - 3.4.4 Source Criticism.....23
- 4. Result and Analysis.....24**
  - 4.1 Background.....24**
    - 4.1.1 Guina-Bissau.....24
    - 4.1.2 Uzbekistan.....24
  - 4.2 Guinea-Bissau.....24**
  - 4.3 Uzbekistan.....27**
  - 4.4 Comparison and Analysis.....28**
  - 4.5 Alternative Explanations.....30**
- 5. Summary and Conclusion.....31**
- 6. References.....32**

## 1. Introduction

Cash crops differentiate themselves from other agricultural products by being grown with the sole intent to sell and make a profit, while other crops may be grown both for the purpose of one's own sustenance and to be sold. Crops that are often regarded as cash crops include: coffee beans, different types of nuts, cotton, tobacco, sugar and vegetables (EEA, 2024).

These cash crops are often used as raw materials in food products or other commercial goods, such as clothing.

The practice of growing cash crops was something that was favoured by colonial powers, as large cash crop plantations would provide great access to resources that were not available in the home country. Especially after the abolishment of the slave trade in Africa during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the African economies became more oriented towards resource extraction. In regions where no valuable minerals were found, the growing of cash crops was seen as an ideal alternative. Many of the colonial economies were heavily oriented around the growth and selling of cash crops and this often continued after decolonisation. Still to this day, many post-colonial countries are largely dependent on the export of cash crops for their economy (Roessler et. al. 2022).

Because of the large effects of orienting most of the economy around a single crop has on the economy (Ibid.), it would therefore be most interesting to look at what other effects it has on governance and in particular state repression. This interest stems from the effects other types of resources have on encouraging state repression, most notably oil (Carey et. al. 2022).

State repression can take many forms, but what it all has in common is that it is perpetrated by a state actor against its population, in order to make the population more obedient. It can take the form of harassment, surveillance or even go so far as murder and genocide. However, it may not always be an agent of the state holding the gun; it could be groups and organisations acting by proxy on behalf of the state, to achieve its goals (Davenport, 2007).

Based on this, a research question can be formulated as: "How does a country's dependence

on cash crop exports affect its willingness to engage in state repression?”

This is because this thesis seeks to better understand the causes of state repression and how it may take form, especially as it relates to natural resources. However, while much research has been done on state repression and political violence in relation to natural resources such as oil or minerals, less attention has been given to cash crops. Furthermore, it could be argued that the cash crop industry has the same goal as oil and mineral extraction, selling and making a profit (Carey et. al. 2022). Therefore, this thesis will examine whether the similar economic goals of cash crop production and natural resource extraction result in similar effects on state repression. This thesis seeks to establish if a link exists between a country’s dependence on the export of cash crops and state repression.

While there has been some previous research on what effect an economy focused around cash crops has; those effects have mainly been economic and on what effects it has on the population (Roessler et. al. 2022), not so much on governance. Furthermore, there has been some research on how natural resources affects the level of state repression. This research has mainly focused on natural resources such as oil and minerals (Carey et. al. 2022). Therefore, it could be argued that there exists a research gap when it comes to the effect of a dependence on the export of cash crops and state repression.

## **2. Theory**

### **2.1 Literature Review**

The *resource curse* is a concept that describes the negative consequences the discovery of natural resources may have on a country. However, this challenges the initial assumption that an abundance of natural resources would help a country develop. It actually argues that an abundance of natural resources can be a curse, since the state becomes increasingly dependent on the profits from the sale of these natural resources (Ross, 1999).

Furthermore, the discovery of a natural resource effectively creates an entirely new source of income for the state. Therefore, the government will be rather incentivised to start extracting those resources, leading to large investments in this new industry. Because of this investment, the economy will gradually become more and more oriented around that natural resource (Ibid.). If that natural resource is profitable in its raw state and does not need to be refined to

be sold at a profit, the state will be less incentivised to make it into a refined product, rather it will desire to just sell it. This will be especially desired in countries that may be struggling economically and therefore, the chance of making a fast profit will be seen as preferable compared to further developing the economic chain and making a larger profit down the line. This will have the effect that refinery industries may not even at all be developed in the country and rather the country will just be extracting natural resources and selling them in its raw state. The natural resources may in turn be refined in another country with an already established refinery industry (Liou and Musgrave, 2013).

Furthermore, with this new source of income for the state, it will be less dependent on previous sources of income, most notably taxes from the population. This will mean that the state is less dependent on the population and their desires. Previously, if the population was dissatisfied, the government was at risk of losing large parts of its income, because the population may go on strike, emigrate or resist in other ways. Now that is less of a concern for the government because it will instead generate income from its new extraction industry (Ross, 1999).

Phillipe Le Billion (2001) looked into how the concept of the *resource curse* relates to the occurrence of intra state conflicts and other forms of action against the current ruling government. He argued that depending on the geography of the natural resource, a rebellion may look different. In his analysis he divides the natural resources into if they are *distant* or *proximate*, how close they are to the government's seat of power, and if they are *point* or *diffuse*, if the natural resources exist at only one point or if they are spread out across the country. Depending on this, Le Billion argues that rebel factions may employ different strategies, depending on the type of natural resources, in order to gain control over them. This is because rebel groups may not always be interested in taking over the entire country, instead they may be secessionist or just want to gain control over the natural resources in order to acquire wealth. It is something that may be preferable for some rebel groups, because then they do not have to bother with governing but can still reap the monetary benefits. Therefore, it could also be argued that the existence of natural resources is something that may actually invite rebellion, as some may see it as a way of gaining personal wealth, while not really fighting for a political cause. This does however require that the rebel groups can rather easily extract the natural resource (Le Billion, 2001), and this is often why rebels may prefer natural resources over taking control over a factory. Because then they are less dependent on an economic chain that they may not entirely control.

Because of this, governments may fear that since they have access to natural resources and are gaining quite some wealth, others may want to take control over those resources. Based on this, governments may choose to proactively be more repressive, in order to hinder any creation of a rebellious group (Carey et. al. 2022).

While state repression often occurs as a response to such events like civil war, it can also occur proactively. Research has been done on how recent oil discoveries relate to state repression and whether governments proactively engage in state repression, out of fear that their new source of income could become threatened. States dependent on the export of oil are generally more repressive, as they are less dependent on the population. However, some evidence suggests that they can become repressive even before they start earning money from it (Ibid.). This can be interpreted that the government may predict future income and could already want to move away from its dependence on the population, or as a way of protecting the recent oil discoveries and ensuring they have control over them (Ibid.).

While *Dutch disease* is a concept that is somewhat related to this paper, it will not be entirely applicable here. This is because the concept is based on the natural gas industry in the Netherlands during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and how its growth came at the expense of the entire Dutch economy. Since this concept is based on the experiences of a rather rich and well-developed economy (Ross, 1999), the circumstances will be somewhat different for this thesis. However, some general concepts can still be relied upon for this thesis, because some core principles are still applicable in most circumstances. Looking specifically at unstable states largely dependent on mineral export, evidence can be found that because this industry is so profitable, more of the economy is arranged around it. Infrastructure may only be developed to facilitate the extraction and export of the minerals, while other parts of the country do not at all get the same level of investment. Furthermore, in unstable states, the security situation may be so that the government's security forces, or private security forces are more focused on ensuring the continued export of the minerals. This means that less focus is given to guarding the civilian population (Lopez-Calix, 2020).

Because of the general focus on the extraction industry from the government's perspective, it will also become more difficult to run a business in other parts of the country, because of a worse level of infrastructure and security. Because of this, less and less economic growth will be generated from other parts of the country and more will come from the extraction of

minerals (Ibid.).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century large parts of the African continent and other parts of the world were colonised by European powers. One of the main goals of this was for the European powers to achieve economic growth, by gaining access to new or a larger abundance of natural resources. As a result, many colonies were focused mainly on resource extraction. Where no minerals were found, growing cash crops were favoured. These were often crops that could not be grown in Europe, because of the colder climate. Many of these crops were cash crops and included coffee beans, various types of nuts or bananas (Roessler et. al. 2022).

These colonial regimes were often quite repressive, mainly focusing on the colony's profitability. As a result, many colonial governments were quite ruthless and repressive in trying to achieve this goal. The workers in the mines or on the plantations were often worked hard and could often expect punishments if their overseers were not satisfied. This rather exploitative economic system that was established during the colonial era would through time cement itself and become more normalised. These economic dynamics would often outlast the colonial governments and even after independence these colonial *legacies* would remain. This is because, while the former colonies gained political independence, they retained the same colonial economic system, now with a different elite. Changing a country's economic system can often be hard and even harder if that system benefits the ruling elites (Austin, 2010).

Because of this, even after decolonisation in the 1960s many of these economic systems were kept and still to this day many African countries are still mainly reliant on the export of a few natural resources. This has in many cases, especially when it comes to cash crops, helped bring in investment and facilitated economic growth. There has rarely been general growth and development across the country, rather more has been invested in just those sectors concerned with the growth and export of the specific cash crop. Because of this, the economic inequalities have often grown as a result of a greater dependence on cash crops and some communities may actually be worse off because of the focus on cash crops (Roessler et. al. 2022).

Looking at the country of Côte d'Ivoire or the Ivory Coast, it was for a long period of time during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries a French colony. During this period, the plantation economy began and throughout time cocoa became the most prominent farmed crop. This was because of the large international demand for cocoa beans and by the time of independence in the



1960s, the cocoa industry was expanding and this helped Félix Houphouët-Boigny come to power. He would come to rule the Ivory Coast for several decades and he heavily expanded the cocoa plantations. The Ivory Coast was often hailed as an African success story, due to the large economic growth, mainly coming from the ever-expanding cocoa plantations. However, the Houphouët-Boigny regime was rather authoritarian and quite repressive and often used force to suppress dissent (Woods, 2003).

During the 1980s the prices for cocoa beans decreased and this together with the fact that the Ivory Coast had nearly run out of land to grow cocoa beans on, meant that the country would suffer immensely for the coming years. This led to political instability in the 1990s and anti-immigrant sentiment. Many of the immigrants had come to work on the plantations and had by now become a sizable minority, numbering about a quarter of the population. Immigrant communities who had previously enjoyed a similar level of freedom as native Ivorians, now found themselves being more of second-class citizens and more repressed. This together with the political instability would eventually culminate in the first Ivorian civil war in 2002 (Ibid.).

Galtung (1969) broadened the definitions and concepts of violence and peace. Violence was now personal or structural and peace could be divided into negative and positive peace. These were rather new ideas for the time, since then they have become quite central to the overall peace and conflict research field. Because violence was no longer just physical, it could take so many different shapes and forms. It could be argued that this research was some of the first to properly capture all forms of state repression. State repression being the act of the government using violent means against its citizens.

While state repression may take different forms, it has the same goal of suppressing the population to have a more favourable view of the government or at least be fearful enough to not dare resist. State repression is most often carried out by the government, but it can also employ other organisations to do its work, but with the same goal, to intimidate the population. Most often, state repression occurs in autocracies or in countries with a flawed democracy, this is because the concept of state repression runs contrary to the idea of democracy. A true democracy should not have any repression at all, neither from state actors nor any other actors (Davenport, 2007). Therefore, all cases with state repression should be viewed by default as less democratic, compared to situations where state repression did not

occur.

What motivates state repression can be different and also under which circumstances it occurs, it may sometimes be in relation to an election or in the context of a civil war (Ibid.). Oil and mineral extraction may serve as one explanation for state repression (Carey et. al. 2022). Research has also found that political instability and especially when it gets to its extreme, civil war, has an effect of increasing the level of state repression (Hill and Jones, 2014). Furthermore, the level of democracy also seems to have a strong correlation to the level of state repression. The more autocratic the government is the more likely it is to engage in state repression. However, this becomes somewhat paradoxical, since a government that engages in state repression is now less democratic. So, in this case it could be argued that state repression causes a lower level of democracy, while a lower level of democracy leads to more state repression (Ibid.).

Furthermore, the country's economic capabilities as it relates to GDP also seem to have somewhat of an effect on how repressive the regime is (Davenport, 2007). This can be because a country with fewer economic resources does not have access or cannot afford to use more efficient means of repressing the population. Due to this, a poorer country would have to engage in more state repression to achieve the same level as a richer country, which has access to more options. However, this has a less significant effect on the level of state repression compared to the level of democracy and civil war (Hill and Jones, 2014).

## **2.2 Independent Variable**

The independent variable for this thesis will be “a country's dependence on the export of cash crops”. While it may seem rather straightforward what this variable entails, it should be looked into more closely. Dependence is a rather broad term and in this thesis the focus will be on the economic aspects, how the export of a specific cash crop is necessary to provide economic revenue for a specific country. What is also important for this variable is generally how this dependence is shown in terms of infrastructure investments and overall share of employment.

Cash crops are crops that are grown primarily for an economic purpose, unlike other agricultural crops which may be grown for the purpose of sustenance. The term cash crop includes crops such as coffee beans, different types of nuts, cotton, tobacco, sugar, and vegetables (EEA, 2024). While some of these crops may be grown for the individual's own sustenance, what is of interest for this thesis is when those crops are sold and exported.

## **2.3 Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable for this thesis will be “state repression”. State repression can take many forms and torture, murder, mass arrests, genocide, the outlawing of political organizations, book banning, and domestic spying are often seen as examples of state repression (Davenport, 2007). Indeed, these acts are not all physical in their nature (i.e. hurting people physically). State repression can often be carried out by means that may not hurt the individual physically, while still having the same desired outcome, being a suppressed population. It will therefore be important to look at all such aspects of state repression. This is because it may still have the same effect as more prominent forms of state repression, like murder or genocide (Ibid.).

## **2.4 Theory**

Drawing from this, a theory can be developed and this theory will be the basis of this thesis. Because of the inherent difficulty of changing a country’s economic system away from an economy focused primarily on exporting cash crops, it is rarely done unless the country experiences serious economic hardship as a result of it. Furthermore, the country will become more and more oriented around the growth and export of cash crops, and this will make changing the economic situation even harder. Exporting cash crops will also offer other incentives for the government and elites, and therefore, they will want to continue with the current arrangement (Liou and Musgrave, 2013).

Here it could be argued that the colonial legacies played an especially important role, as that is often the reason cash crops are grown in a country to begin with. Furthermore, the legacy of power dynamics which were created during colonial times would still remain because the same economic system is still in place. However, now it would be local elites rather than foreign ones. As a result, many of the old colonial methods of repression may still be favoured, as the entire system still revolves around a rather repressive form of governance. Because elites want to keep the old ways of making money, they will also favour the old way of keeping the population in check. This is due to those methods having been established over a long period of time. Therefore, it may be seen as foreign to many elites to use other methods of governance and more violent and repressive methods will still be favoured (Austin, 2010). Furthermore, because the state will be heavily oriented around the export of cash crops and

the government will view it as necessary for their current position and economic growth, to further help cement their grip on power. Furthermore, because more income comes from the cash crop industry, the government will not be as dependent on the population and will view their desires as less important. Because of this, the government will no longer feel as dependent on the population and view them as less important and the state can act more freely against the population, making the decision to engage in state repression more likely (Ross, 1999).

While cash crop industries are quite labour intensive, requiring a lot of workers (Roessler et. al. 2022), especially compared with oil or mineral extraction (Carey et. al. 2022). Therefore, it could be argued that countries dependent on the export of cash crops should be more dependent on their population, because quite a large number of them work in the industries. However, what should be noted is that the majority of labour required is cheap and easily replaceable. Often it revolves around simple tasks such as picking or harvesting, sowing and weeding. Because of this, the vast majority of tasks require no previous education or training, making the employees easily replaceable (Roessler et. al. 2022). When the cash crop plantations expand, they often do so at the expense of local farms (Ibid.). This results in many local farmers becoming unemployed and since the industry does not require specialised labour, it makes the employees quite powerless. Because a large pool of replacements exists, so if any employee would make a show of power (e.g. demand better working conditions), they would be replaced by a worker that would fall in line. Therefore, while the cash crop industry can be rather labour intensive, it is not as dependent on its workers as other industries. Because they are more easily replaceable, and the expansion of cash crop plantations creates an even larger pool of replacements.

Additionally, because the state views the cash crop industry as more important, it will invest more into necessary infrastructure (Lopez-Calix, 2020) but also be more proactive in defending it (Carey et. al. 2022). Regional inequalities will also grow as a result of the disproportionate investment, while some will become richer as a result of investments into the cash crop sector, others will become poorer because less business will be going to their region and to their businesses (Roessler et. al. 2022). Furthermore, cash crops and other natural resources are rather easy to earn money from compared with other industries, such as manufacturing or services. This is because to earn money it is only necessary to have control

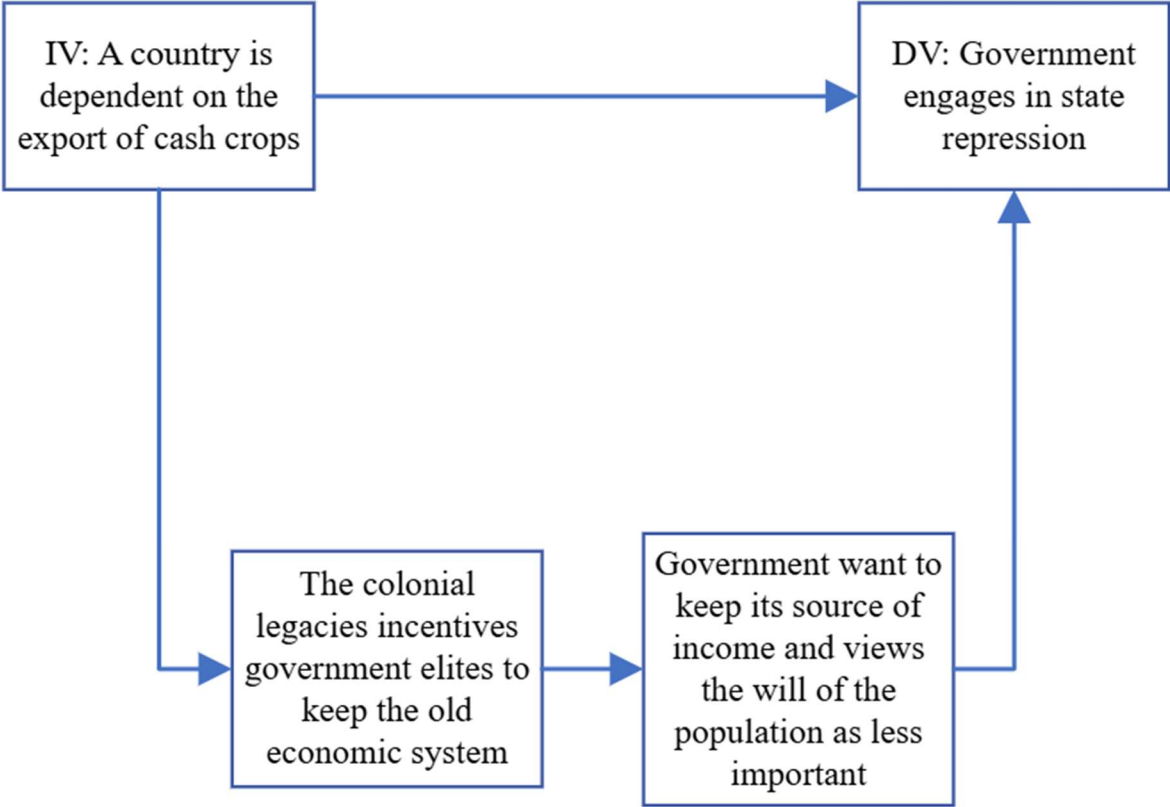
over the area where the cash crops are being grown, control over the workers and then a way of selling, either by legal means or illegal smuggling. This process is much easier for a non-state actor and is often a favoured way of making money (Le Billion, 2001).

This will create a more precarious situation: the population may choose to express their unhappiness with the current system, and/or the government may proactively choose to become more repressive to protect its income. This is because it fears that it may lose control over its source of revenue (Carey et. al. 2022).

### 2.5 Hypothesis

Based on this a hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

H1: When a country is dependent on the export of a specific cash crop, the government will be more incentivised to engage in state repression.



### **3. Research Design**

#### **3.1 Method of Analysis**

This thesis will use a qualitative approach and that is because that method better explains why something occurs, in this case state repression. In contrast, a quantitative approach would use a lot more cases and based on the overall result from all the cases come to a conclusion.

Rather, a qualitative approach dives deeper into a fewer number of cases, to better understand the mechanisms that cause the variable of interest. While it is generally favoured to start off with quantitative research and then based on the findings focus on a few cases of interest and explain why the result ended up like it did (Brancati, 2018, 99-118).

However, for this thesis the need to understand why state repression occurs is rather important. A quantitative analysis, would be able to establish if the same occurs when it comes to cash crops and oil. In this case a qualitative approach will be favoured, as to better capture the uniqueness of cash crops and the causal chain, compared to oil and other minerals. Therefore, while a quantitative approach might also work for this research topic, it would not be able to fully test the theory under these circumstances.

Furthermore, by using a qualitative approach it will not only enable an analysis and evaluation of the causal mechanism, but by looking more in-depth into the cases, it will also be possible to test for time order., By getting a better understanding of the cases, it will be possible to understand what happened first and what caused what. While a quantitative analysis would somewhat struggle and in this case and only be able to establish an eventual correlation and covariation (Brancati, 2018, 99-118).

This thesis will be a structured-focused comparison and will thereby analyse a few cases, in this paper two, with the same set of variables and standardised questions. Because of this, it will be possible to do an in-depth analysis within each case and it will allow for a cross-sectional analysis. This involves examining multiple cases, instead of just one over a period of time. This will help offer a higher external validity, so that the findings are applicable across a wide range of cases (Jankauskas, Eckhard and Ege, 2023, 301-307).

This will also help counteract some of the shortcomings of a qualitative analysis, compared to a quantitative analysis, since it uses more cases, it will generally have a higher external validity. Compared to a qualitative analysis that only uses a few cases (Brancati, 2018, 99-118).

The unit of analysis for this thesis will be a country, and this paper will do a cross-case

analysis comparing two countries, chosen according to Mill's method of agreement.

### **3.2 Scope Conditions**

Because state repression by its nature is undemocratic, it can never really occur in a full democracy and if it were to occur, at least at a level necessary for this analysis, it would probably at best be considered a flawed democracy. Therefore, state repression can only occur in autocracies or flawed democracies (Davenport, 2007). A scope condition for this thesis will be that the findings will only be applicable to cases that are not full democracies or close to it. Furthermore, because this is a qualitative analysis and using a smaller number of cases, this may also somewhat limit under what conditions the findings are applicable, based on the cases analysed in this paper. This is due to qualitative research generally has a lower external validity. However, it should not be assumed that the findings of this thesis will only apply to conditions being the same as the cases. Though, it will have a somewhat more limited external validity compared to quantitative research (Brancati, 2018, 99-118).

Furthermore, because the theory of this paper and how cash crop dependencies relate to state repression, is based on the colonial legacy of that country (Austin, 2010), this should be viewed as a scope condition. Since cases will be selected to be able to prove or disprove the theory and therefore to test the theory and hypothesis, cases will have to be selected accordingly. Therefore, it should be argued that the findings of this paper will only be applicable in colonial and especially in post-colonial settings. Therefore, the findings of this paper will mainly only be applicable in countries which are currently experiencing or have experienced colonial repression or something similar. That is what the theory outlines and while it is possible that cash crop dependencies could lead to state repression through other causal chains. That will not be possible to fully evaluate in this thesis and should therefore be viewed as a limitation of where the findings are applicable and a scope condition (Brancati, 2018, 99-118).

### **3.3 Case selection**

#### **3.3.1 Control variables:**

Control variables are necessary, because they control for other variables that may have an effect on the dependent variable. This is necessary in order to isolate the effect the independent variable has on the dependent variable. Control variables should therefore be

variables that have an effect on the dependent variable.

Looking at previous research, one notable cause of state repression for this thesis is the level of export of oil and minerals (Carey et. al. 2022). To not properly account for the effect on state repression caused by oil and minerals, would not only be a failure of accounting for other possible causes. But it would also be a failure of the uniqueness of this research. This paper would in that case not really be testing for something new. Furthermore, if no regard would be given to something that is known to cause state repression (Ibid.), the results of the findings could not be used to evaluate the hypothesis. It will not have tested the hypothesis, since it has not properly isolated alternative causes.

Furthermore, intra-state conflict or civil war is also something that has an effect of increasing the level and likelihood of state repression (Hill and Jones, 2014) and should therefore be considered a control variable, to ensure that all eventual causes of the dependent variable are controlled for. Otherwise the findings would not be able to test the hypothesis, because there could be alternative causes to the dependent variable and not controlling for them would mean that the independent variable and dependent variable could not be isolated.

The level of democracy is also something that has an effect on state repression and should therefore be accounted for. Less democratic states tend to generally be more repressive (Ibid.). Although it does not have the same level of effect as the previous variables (Hill and Jones, 2014), it should still be included as a control variable, because it has an effect. However, it should not be viewed equally as important compared to the other control variables.

### **3.3.2 Method of Case Selection**

Because this thesis will be based on a qualitative approach, the cases will not be selected randomly. Rather, the two cases will be selected for the purpose of this thesis. However, this becomes somewhat problematic due to selection bias that comes with self-selection (Brancati, 2018, 119-132). While the cases have been selected non-randomly, they have been selected with the purpose of best fitting the variables and the chosen method. The cases were therefore selected strategically and purposefully. This made it so that these cases should be the best for testing the theory.

The cases have been selected based on the independent variable as well as the control variables, keeping the dependent variable unknown. It may often be favoured to do it the other way around, selecting on the dependent variable and keeping the independent variable unknown. It was not done so, mainly because the control variables will serve as alternative



explanations for the dependent variable. Because of this, one rather relevant variable for this thesis would be the level of export of oil or other minerals as described in the theory, this can cause state repression (Carey et. al. 2022). However, when looking at sources to evaluate this control variable, one would also find information on other exports, including those relevant for the independent variable, cash crops. Because of this, it would be impossible to keep both the dependent variable and the independent variable unknown, if the case selection was made based on the dependent variable. Having both variables of interest be known before is problematic because then cases could be selected based on the outcome and this would seriously compromise how scientific the results would be (Brancati, 2018, 119-132). However, it could also be argued that the variable controlling for the level of democracy in each case can be somewhat revealing of the dependent variable of state repression. This is because a government engaging in state repression would automatically have a lower level of democracy. On the other hand, this argument fails to account for the other aspects that may lead to a lower level of democracy. While the level of state repression may play a part in the level of democracy in a country, it is unlikely to be the only thing affecting it. Therefore, a lower level of democracy does not directly mean that it is a higher level of state repression in that country (Hill and Jones, 2014), it can and to a large extent is another factor affecting the level of democracy.

The method for this thesis will be Mill's method of agreement or most different method. This means that the variable selected for, here the independent variable, will be as similar in both cases as possible, while keeping the control variables as different from each other as possible. There will only be one similar independent variable, the independent variable of interest, across the two cases. It means that if the dependent variable is similar in the two cases, it can only have been caused by the one thing remaining the same across the two cases, being the independent variable of interest (Brancati, 2018, 199-214).

This method was favoured because it will help establish isolation, meaning that it is possible to look into if the independent variable causes the dependent variable, without other variables affecting the dependent variable. The control variables, or what could otherwise cause the dependent variable, will be different across the two cases. The effects can be measured when certain control variables are present and when others are not. By comparing the findings from both cases together, it will be possible to observe how the dependent variable was affected under different circumstances, with the same independent variable. If everything was done correctly, the dependent variable across both cases should have the same value. However, this

does not mean that the hypothesis was correct. Rather, that the independent variable has an effect on the dependent variable, but perhaps not the effect which was hypothesised (Ibid.). Furthermore, this method will also account for covariation, meaning that it is possible to test if when the independent variable changes, so should the dependent variable. Perhaps not as clearly as Mill's method of difference, where it will be very obvious if any covariation has occurred. Since one case will have a different value on the independent variable and therefore the dependent variable should change in that case. However, when looking at Mill's method of agreement, covariation is rather measured in the change of control variables. Because while the independent variable remains the same across the cases, the control variables change. Therefore, if they had any effect on the dependent variable, the dependent variable would also change, but if it does not change, even across these rather different cases. It can be concluded that it is affected by the independent variable and covariation can be established (Ibid.). Mill's method of difference has some advantages when it comes to counterfactual cases, i.e. cases where both the IV and DV are false. Therefore, proving covariation, as in the other case both variables are true (Ibid.). However, Mill's method of difference is only as good as the selection of control variables, because it could instead be a hidden variable that causes the covariation across the cases. Furthermore, because there is really only one case proving the hypothesis, i.e. having the IV and DV true, the external validity will suffer. Because the counterfactual case may never have been able to cause the DV and the other case may have been the only possible case where the hypothesis is possible (Ibid.). Because this thesis already suffers lower external validity due to being qualitative, the method of agreement was selected to increase the external validity of any findings.

Based on all of this, the selected cases are Guinea-Bissau in 2015 and Uzbekistan in the year 2000. These two specific years were chosen because those were some of the highest noted years of export of the specific cash crop for each country (OEC, 2025), i.e. the IV was at some of its highest value. This was important because it would offer the strongest possible indicator into if the theory is correct or not. A higher level of cash crop exports should according to the arguments made by the theory, lead to more state repression. Furthermore, it was also made sure that cash crop exports had been at a high level in the previous years, because then the effects would be most prominent, according to the theory. Because of this, these two years in these two countries would be the best for the purpose of testing the theory.

Because of the scope conditions and since the theory is based on and relies on the concept of colonial legacy and how that is a driving force for state repression, it is necessary to look at

cases that either are colonies or former colonies. In this regard, Guinea-Bissau might be seen as one of the clearest examples of a former colony, being a country that had been a Portuguese colony for several centuries (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2024). However, Uzbekistan might not be the first country that comes to mind when thinking about a former colony. In this case it very much is, because in this thesis when looking at colonial legacy, it is important to look at two aspects. The first aspect is that it was ruled by a repressive foreign power, in this case the Soviet Union (Zubov, 1994), and that the foreign power started or heavily accelerated the process of growing cash crops. This is something the Soviet Union did, when it started growing cotton in Uzbekistan during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Djanibekov and Finger, 2018). While it might not be the typical case of a post-colonial country, the same mechanisms can be observed and because these two cases are rather different, this will make the paper have an even stronger external validity (Jankauskas, Eckhard and Ege, 2023, 301-307).

### **3.4 Measurements and Data**

#### **3.4.1 Independent Variable**

The independent variable, “a country’s dependence on the export of cash crops”, will be operationalised by mainly looking at the economic aspects of it. In this thesis it will be operationalised by looking at percentages of export, but also how much of the overall GDP of the country is because of the cash crop industry. Furthermore, it will also be important to look at how much is invested into the infrastructure related to the cash crop industry. Because this will help indicate how importantly the government values the cash crop industry. Finally, it will also be important to look at the environmental impact of the cash crop industry. If the government perceives itself to be dependent on the cash crop industry, it will value it as more important than other aspects. As a result, the desire to protect the cash crop industry will come before any other priority and environmental protection will be viewed as less important.

Based on this, three questions can be formalised to measure the independent variable:

- a) How economically important is the cash crop industry in the given country, looking at percentage of export and GDP?
  
- b) How is infrastructure related to the cash crop industry prioritised?

c) What environmental impacts can be observed as a result of the cash crop industry?

This will be measured by looking at a wide range of sources, mainly qualitative but also quantitative datasets to provide a better overall picture. The first operationalisation question will primarily be measured through the data provided by the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC). Data regarding how much a country imports and exports of a given product and to and from where, is provided. Furthermore, the OEC also provides data regarding percentages of total export and import, so one can understand how important a specific product is for the country (OEC, 2025). In this case this variable will be measured in terms of percentage of export.

However, just this will provide a very quantitative picture and therefore, to measure all operationalisation questions more thorough research article will be used. Among those selected are: Expansion of Cashew Cultivation and its Environmental and Economic Impacts on Guinea-Bissau, by Seca, A. I., Pereira, H. D. S., & Silva, S. C. P. da. (2021), Insights into the cashew production system in Guinea-Bissau: implications for agroecosystem sustainability by Sierra-Baquero, P., Catarino, S., Costa, G. J., Barai, A., Correia, Z., Ferreira, M. R., Varón-Devia, E., Romeiras, M. M., Catarino, L., Duarte, M. C., & Monteiro, F. (2024), Effects of water saving technology application on growth, development, and yield of cotton in Uzbekistan by Isaev, S., Khasanov, S., Ashirov, Y., Gafurov, A., Karabaeva, T., Uvarova, S., & Breskich, V. (2021) and Agricultural risks and farm land consolidation process in transition countries: The case of cotton production in Uzbekistan by Djanibekov, U., & Finger, R. (2018). All articles were selected with the purpose of best being able to provide the most through understand of the relevant area.

### **3.4.2 Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable of state repression is a concept that is divided into several parts, based on the different ways in which a government can engage in state repression (Davenport, 2007). Because of this it will be important to look at both how the government may choose to repress democratic institutions, but also how the government may use forceful means of state repression. Examining the different forms of state repression: torture, murder, mass arrests, genocide, the outlawing of political organizations, book banning, and domestic spying (Ibid.), it will provide the most accurate picture. Furthermore, it will also be important to look at

under which circumstances state repression occurs. Because merely looking at if state repression occurs or not, would only be able to establish an eventual correlation. It would not prove or disprove a causal relationship, which is the goal of this qualitative thesis. To properly understand an eventual instance of state repression and if it was caused by the dependent variable, it will be important to look into why state repression occurs at the observed level and under what circumstances. Therefore, three questions can be formulated as such:

- a) Are democratic institutions being repressed by the state?
- b) Is the state by force repressing the population?
- c) Under what circumstances is any eventual state repression occurring?

Through these questions, state repression was divided into two parts, the repression of democratic institutions and more forceful direct repression, e.g. murder, torture, genocide etc. (Davenport, 2007). This distinction was made because both means have the same goal of cementing the state's control. They differ however in the way they are being carried out because repression of democratic institutions can often be done through non-violent means, e.g. passing a law which outlaws any political opposition or critical journalism. While more forceful and violent means may involve the military and/or paramilitary units loyal to the government, committing violent acts against the population. Furthermore, by dissecting state repression in this manner, it would offer a clearer picture into how state repression occurs in the selected case. Otherwise lumping all forms of state repression into one measurement would limit the depth of any analysis.

What should also be noted in this operationalisation is that when looking at the suppression of democratic institutions, it will primarily look at what actions state actors take against those democratic institutions. This is therefore different from the control variable looking at the level of democracy, because that looks at an overall picture of democracy in a selected country. While this operationalisation is about how state repression manifests itself in democratic institutions. Though that is something that will affect the overall level of democracy, but as discussed in the scope conditions section, this thesis is not looking at states with high levels of democracy, because in those cases state repression does not occur (Davenport, 2007).

To answer and measure these questions a number of sources will be used. To do this, mainly qualitative sources will be used but also some quantitative datasets, to give a more general understanding. The reports by the US State Department (2001; 2016) on human rights across different countries were especially helpful for measuring the dependent variable. Because to some extent these reports helped answer all operationalisation questions in combination with other qualitative sources. Among the datasets used as a complement to the qualitative sources were the CSO repression index, describing how repressed civil society is within the country, from 0 to 4 and means no repression (V-Dem, 2024), and Freedom House (2024) to provide a general overview of the level of repression in a country.

### **3.4.3 Control Variables**

To gain an understanding of how dependent a country is on exporting other natural resources than cash crops, such as oil or minerals, it would be helpful to look at the statistics provided by the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC). Data regarding how much a country imports and exports of a given product and to and from where, is provided. Furthermore, the OEC also provides data regarding percentages of total export and import, so one can understand how important a specific product is for the country (OEC, 2025). In this case, this control variable will be measured in terms of percentage of export.

Looking at the level of intra state conflict or civil war, this will be operationalised by observing the number of deaths on the UDCP data base. This will provide a clear indication if there is any armed intra state conflict in the country during the time of interest. Furthermore, it will also offer information about at what level of intensity any eventual fighting is at, by looking at the number of deaths (UCDP, 2024).

The democracy variable will be operationalised and measured by looking at the *electoral democracy index* on the Varieties of democracy data base. There a rating between 0 and 1 is given, based on how democratic a country is in a given year, where 1 is the highest level of democracy (V-Dem, 2024). This specific index was chosen because looking at any other democracy indexes would have based too much on state repression. Since that is the dependent variable, it would be rather problematic if that also influenced a control variable. Finally, the control variable of GDP will be measured by looking at the world bank's data base, where data on countries' GDP is available for different years (World Bank, 2024).

#### **3.4.4 Source criticism**

The sources selected for this paper were selected because those would be the best for its given purpose. A large number of sources selected were scientific in their nature, often research articles, datasets or reports. These are sources that can generally be trusted with the information they provide, because they are not biased. The goal of scientific papers are to provide truthful information and preferable new. Therefore, articles that are heavily biased, will be heavily criticised and might not even be published or if they are, the bias will be clear in the way the article is written, especially when looking at the way the author comes to the conclusion.

Because most of the sources are scientific papers, their reliability is good, because their findings have been established through proper scientific means. Furthermore, to improve the reliability of this paper several sources were used to measure one single operationalisation question. This was done so the paper would not rely on just a few paper's findings. Because just looking at one source could give an inaccurate picture of the situation, while more sources would together be the best way of getting to the truth. Because of this, several different types of sources were used for measuring the variables, not just research articles but also datasets and reports. Since then, all those different types would provide the most thorough picture of the variables.

Sources were also selected based on their validity, how accurately they measure the concept they are supposed to measure. While research articles can in this case be rather easily evaluated, because they are relevant if they discuss the desired concept and if they do not, they are not necessary. However, when trying to select relevant datasets, this was somewhat more difficult, because many of those datasets are simplifications of reality into numbers. Therefore, it is most important to understand what and how a dataset is measuring something, for it to be used accurately. Because of this, this was something that was heavily considered when choosing a dataset (Brancati, 2018). Furthermore, it should be noted that datasets were primarily used as a complement to the more qualitative sources.

## **4. Results and Analysis**

### **4.1 Background**

#### **4.1.1 Guinea-Bissau**

Guinea-Bissau was for a long time a Portuguese colony and it was during this time the cashew plantations were introduced (Catarino, Menezes, and Sardinha, 2015). However, during the period of decolonisation during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Portugal tried to hold on to its colonies for as long as possible. This led to an armed conflict being fought between 1963 and 1974, which eventually resulted in independence for Guinea-Bissau in 1974. While a brief intra-state war was waged in the 1990s (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2024), the country has since then been rather peaceful (UCDP, 2024). The country is rather small, located in western Africa. It is also considered to be among the poorest nations (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2024).

#### **4.1.2 Uzbekistan**

Uzbekistan, located in the middle of Central Asia, has for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century been a part of the Soviet Union. Cotton was the main crop grown during this period and would remain so even after independence (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025). After the break-up of the Soviet Union most former Soviet republics tried to break with the old system and modernise. However, in some countries it was different, for example in Uzbekistan. Here the agricultural system continued to be run in the same way even after independence with the government owning most agricultural land. Especially when it comes to cotton, the state retained its control over the farms (Djanibekov and Finger, 2018).

### **4.2 Guinea-Bissau**

Looking at the control variables, Guinea-Bissau did not export any large amounts of minerals or oil, especially compared with what they mainly exported, which was cashew nuts (OEC, 2024). While Guinea-Bissau experienced some level of violence in the 1990s, by the year of 1999 it had subsided. Since then, up until the year of interest 2015, no deaths had been reported on UCDP (2024). Because of this, Guinea-Bissau cannot be considered to be in a state of civil war. When it comes to democracy, Guinea-Bissau receives a rating of 0,5 in the electoral democracy index, exactly in the middle (V-Dem, 2024). This can be interpreted as Guinea-Bissau being a mix of both democracy and autocracy. That indicates there is a



democratic system, though it is somewhat flawed and does not always work as it should. Finally, looking at the overall GDP it was about 1,15 billion USD in 2015 (World Bank, 2024). This is in a global context rather low.

When it comes to evaluating the independent variable for Guinea-Bissau, it would initially be best to look at the economic aspect of the dependence on cashew nuts. In this regard the cashew nuts have for quite a long period of time made up a large portion of the total exports of Guinea-Bissau. In 2015 it made up around 80-90 percent of the total exports (Sierra-Baquero et. al. 2024). Furthermore, it has been estimated that around 9 % of the total GDP came directly from the export of cashew nuts (Seca, Pereira and Silva 2021). While 9 percent might not sound like much, the fact that a single product has such a large share of the overall GDP is quite significant. Furthermore, what could also be noted, Guinea-Bissau was the fifth largest producer of cashew nuts in the world and almost all grown cashews went to export (Ibid.). Cashew nuts are a large share of both export and GDP, in combination with the fact that cashews are almost entirely grown for export. Therefore, Guinea-Bissau can be interpreted as rather dependent on the export of cash crops for economic purposes.

In regard to infrastructure, it is in a quite poor state and only a few roads outside the main cities are paved. The roads have often been neglected as it is not as necessary for the cashew export (Catarino, Menezes and Sardinha, 2015). Rather an extensive network of ferries and smaller airports exists (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2024).

Looking at the environmental impact of the cashew industry, most cashew plantations are often quite small, and family owned (Sierra-Baquero et. al. 2024). Around a third of the total agricultural land in Guinea-Bissau is allocated for cashew trees. Furthermore, deforestation has been increasing as a result of ever-expanding agricultural production and it often is because of increased production of cashew nuts (Seca, Pereira and Silva 2021).

The dependent variable, state repression, is something that has been affected because of multiple regime changes during the years since independence. Looking back Guinea-Bissau has previously been ruled under military regime. While it became a democracy in the 1990s, it has been argued that the heritage from time under military rule and the previous colonial era has had its effects on the overall level of freedom and state repression. This is most notably with the coup in 2012 and how this was seen as a reaction to previous governance and that some parts of the more dictatorial period still lingered (Jalo, 2023).

Looking at which rate democratic institutions are being repressed by the state, some evidence

can be found. While most international election observers concluded that the previous 2014 presidential election were mainly free and fair (US Department of State, 2016), some criticism has been levied against this claim. The critics argues that most international election observers in Guinea-Bissau failed to look at the most important districts (Jalo, 2023).

There is also some evidence of the media being somewhat suppressed, while it is generally allowed to operate freely. Furthermore, while Guinea-Bissau holds elections and is democratic in that regard, politicians have a tendency to act in a rather authoritarian manner (Ibid.), which could be argued to undermine the democratic institutions. Ever since the 2012 coup the powers of the presidency have been expanded, and this can be interpreted as somewhat threatening to the democratic institutions. This authoritarian tendency is something that is heavily tied to the country's history, in regard to the military dictatorship and colonial rule (Ibid.).

In previous years there have been some instances of political assassinations (Ibid.), while in 2015 none of any such acts by the government were reported (US Department of State, 2016). Therefore, it can be understood that while Guinea-Bissau holds elections and they are generally considered free and fair (Ibid.), some undermining of democratic institutions is occurring (Jalo, 2023).

Furthermore, there is some evidence that torture and otherwise poor conditions in prisons occurs. However, there is little evidence that this is a cause of direct government order, while the government has failed in hindering such occurrences (US Department of State, 2016). Government corruption is also quite prevalent, and this is especially tied to the suspected involvement of government employees in the illegal drug trade, which has led to more crime and violence (Ibid.). However, this can probably not be regarded as state repression, while government employees are suspected of facilitating violence, it is not as a result of government policy. State repression is most often top-down (Davenport, 2007), and in this case it is employees further down suspected of participating in the drug trade (US Department of State, 2016).

What should be noted by looking at other datasets is that it generally argues for a position that Guinea-Bissau experiences some state repression, but not a very high level (Freedom House, 2024). While the CSO repression index, describing how repressed civil society is within the country, gives Guinea-Bissau a rating of three. This should be considered rather low since the

maximum is 4 and means no repression (V-Dem, 2024). Because of this it can be concluded that while Guinea-Bissau experiences some state repression, it is at a rather low level.

### **4.3 Uzbekistan**

When it comes to the control variables for Uzbekistan, in the year 2000 it exported a large amount of minerals and petroleum products. It is still small in comparison to the cotton export and spread out over a few natural resources, mainly gold and petroleum products. This should still be interpreted as that Uzbekistan was rather dependent on the export of minerals and petroleum products (OEC, 2024). During this period there was an intra state conflict going on in Uzbekistan, with the government fighting against the Taliban-affiliated group known as IMU and in the year 2000, 471 deaths were recorded in the UCDP data base (UCDP, 2024). In terms of democracy in 2000 Uzbekistan scored 0,15 which is rather low and based on that Uzbekistan should be considered a full autocracy (V-Dem, 2024). The Uzbek GDP in the year 2000 was 13,76 billion USD, while it is somewhat low in a global context, it is not in the lowest bracket (World Bank, 2024).

When it comes to the dependence on cash crop, or in this case cotton it makes up around 13 per cent of GDP (Djanibekov and Finger, 2018). Furthermore, in the year 2000 raw cotton numbered around 41 percent of all exports (OEC, 2025). Therefore, because cotton was the largest export by a rather large margin and it is making up such a large portion of GDP it should be perceived that in the year 2000, the Uzbek economy was very dependent on the export of cotton.

In terms of infrastructure, Uzbekistan is rather heavily oriented around the cotton industry. This is most evident when looking at the level of infrastructure around the country, it has been more extensively developed in areas necessary for the cotton industry. While most other parts of the country are underdeveloped in terms of infrastructure (Djanibekov and Finger, 2018). The environmental impact of cotton, no matter where it is grown, is quite large. This is mainly due to the large amount of water required to grow cotton, which makes it extra challenging in the rather dry climate in -Central Asia. This has meant that historically water has often been diverted to the cotton fields, often to the detriment of the nearby environment (Isaev et. al. 2021). Because of this it can generally be assumed that the cotton industry has been rather highly prioritised, with water and infrastructure investment often facilitating its further growth. While it comes at the cost of other parts of the country being less hospitable, with

worse infrastructure and less water.

Uzbekistan is a country that experienced quite a large amount of state repression, and even the concept of mass killing is something that occasionally occurred. The government has ever since independence taken a rather harsh approach towards what it considers religious extremism (US Department of State, 2001). This is a term the government uses quite frequently towards those it disagreed with. Protests are often met with a harsh and violent response from the government, and this has sometimes led to protestors being shot. Prisoners risk being tortured and so does their families. By the year 2000, the country has only had one president since independence and cannot really be considered democratic (Edel and Josua, 2018). Freedom of speech, opposition parties and any form of criticism against the government is outlawed. Any infractions are met with harsh government crackdowns and the government does not shy away from imprisoning and torturing its population. Many of these harsh laws allowing the government to imprison people quite freely, remain from the Soviet Union. Any democratic institutions are just there as a sham to legitimise the rule of the president and further secure his grip on power (US Department of State, 2001). Furthermore, complementing this data with quantitative sources, Uzbekistan was considered not free in 2000 (Freedom House, 2024). Uzbekistan received a rating of 0,59 in the CSO repression index, measuring the state repression of civil society. Because of all of this data, it can be concluded that the government of Uzbekistan engaged quite freely in state repression in 2000.

#### **4.4 Comparison and Analysis**

Based on the chosen method of agreement, the control variables should be as different as possible. This was mainly achieved, especially in regard to the export dependency on oil or minerals, civil war/intra state conflict and the level of democracy. In these cases, the differences were, as great as possible, while cases could have been found with greater differences on individual control variables (V-Dem, 2024), no other cases would have offered such a great difference across all control variables. What should be noted is that the difference in GDP (World Bank, 2024) was perhaps not as great in nominal terms. However, it should rather be considered in percentage terms, because that shows how many more times wealthier Uzbekistan (Ibid.) was and how many more times Uzbekistan would be capable of state repression methods.

Comparing the independent variables, both cases have a rather high degree of dependence on the export of cash crops (OEC, 2025), which is what it should be according to the selected method.

However, the findings become rather unexpected, or what was not theorised, when looking at the dependent variable. Because, while Uzbekistan experienced a very high level of state repression (Edel and Josua, 2018), the same could not be said for Guinea-Bissau (US Department of State, 2016). Due to the chosen method, in order to prove the hypothesis correct it would be necessary for the level of state repression to be high in both cases (Brancati, 2018). However, it is not, looking specifically at the case of Guinea-Bissau many of the control variables there had a value that would not cause state repression. So, based on that it would have had to be the independent variable that could have caused state repression. To a large extent it did not. It could be argued the small level of state repression that was present there was mainly linked to the country's previous governance history (Jalo, 2023). The argument is mainly based on the colonial legacy and how the system of cash crop plantation was established then (Seca, Pereira and Silva 2021). However, this is really stretching the argument to its limit. Because while the independent variables were largely similar across the cases, the value of the dependent variables were not. Based on that this thesis has not found evidence for the hypothesis.

Furthermore, what should also be discussed is the concept of colonial legacy, which played an important part in the theoretical argument and both cases had experienced colonial rule. However, according to the theory this should help facilitate a continuation of state repressions. But it did not, in the case of Guinea-Bissau, since there the level of state repression had decreased since becoming a democracy. While some evidence indicated that some of the state repression had links to its colonial legacy (Jalo, 2023), this was at such a small level that it cannot be regarded as enough to confirm this theory. In the case of Uzbekistan some evidence indicates that much of the old Soviet means of repression are still in use (US Department of State, 2001). However, because of the high level of many of the control variables, those could probably be assumed to have had more of an impact on the level of state repression, because previous research has proven such a link. Therefore, when evaluating the causal chain, it is difficult to find any support for the theory.

Looking at the case of Uzbekistan, here it could be argued that the dependent variable got the value it should have (Edel and Josua, 2018). However, it will be difficult to motivate causality between the independent variable and the dependent variable just based on this case, mainly because it is only one case. Furthermore, that case also had its control variables at such a level that they should cause state repression, as described in the previous literature. Therefore, it cannot be said that evidence was found to prove the hypothesis.

#### **4.5 Alternative Explanations**

It is therefore of most interest to look at alternative explanations as to why the results ended up this way. In this case the qualitative nature of this paper helps provide a better picture of the overall situation (Brancati, 2018, 99-118). Especially because this paper also looked at the circumstances in which state repression occurred and therefore, these findings may be used to identify alternative explanations.

Guinea-Bissau, experienced low levels of state repression, even though it had a high level of cash crop dependence. While it has a colonial legacy that may lead to higher levels of state repression and authoritarian rule, this is mainly present in lower levels of the government and by individual civil servants. Furthermore, much of these repressive actions may partially be explained by the illegal drug trade prevalent in the country (US Department of State, 2016). Therefore, this may better explain these findings. Furthermore, the low level of state repression in Guinea-Bissau is very much in line with the control variables, because they are also low across the board. Therefore, while the large cash crop dependency had little effect in increasing the level of state repression, the low level of the control variables may be what kept state repression low.

Furthermore, this can also be evident in the case of Uzbekistan which had high levels of cash crop dependency and state repression, but also had the control variables at a level that would cause state repression. Because of this it could be argued that the high level of state repression in Uzbekistan was not caused by a cash crop dependency, but rather all or some control variables causing the state repression (US Department of State, 2001). Because previous research has shown that those variables, chosen as controls, influence the level of state repression and that is why they were chosen. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to assume that they played a large role in causing the high levels of state repression.

## **5. Summary and conclusion**

To conclude, this paper aimed to examine whether cash crops had the same effect on the level of state repression as other natural resources. A theory and a hypothesis were established that a dependence on the export of cash crops would lead to a high level of state repression. By using a qualitative approach looking at the two cases of Uzbekistan and Guinea-Bissau this theory was tested. Furthermore, the method of agreement was selected and thereby, the independent variable and dependent variable in the two cases should be as similar as possible to prove a causal link, while the control variables were as different from each other as possible. However, while the independent variable had a similar value in both cases, the dependent variable, state repression was not at such a high level as theorised and expected for the case of Guinea-Bissau. Therefore, this paper failed to find support for the hypothesis. Rather it was deemed more likely that the previously proven control variables had a larger impact in causing or not causing state repression. Because in the case the control variables were at a level to cause state repression, state repression could be observed. While in the other case where the control variables were at level to not cause state repression, state repression was only observed at low level. On the other hand, cash crop dependencies were present at a high level in both cases, which should have caused state repression in both cases, but it did not. Therefore, these findings indicate little support for the hypothesis and should be regarded as unsupported. However, much still remains to be researched when it comes to how cash crops and state repression interact with each other. Therefore, future research could use different methods to ensure the findings of this study are correct or not. To do this it might help to select a different approach, e.g. a quantitative approach.

## 6. References

Allworth, E. , Sinor, . Denis , Hambly, . Gavin R.G. and Smith, . David Roger (2025, January 11). *Uzbekistan*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Uzbekistan> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

Austin, G. (2010). African Economic Development and Colonial Legacies. *Revue Internationale de Politique de Développement*, 1(1), 11–32. <https://doi.org/10.4000/poldev.78> (Accessed 2025-03-12).

Brancati, D. (2018). *Social Scientific Research*. Sage. London.

Carey, P.; Bell, C.; Hencken Ritter, E.; Wolford, S. (2022). Oil discoveries, civil war, and preventive state repression. *Journal of Peace Research* 59(5): 648-662. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.its.uu.se/10.1177/00223433211047365> (Accessed 2025-01-08).

Catarino, L., Menezes, Y., & Sardinha, R. (2015). Cashew cultivation in Guinea-Bissau – risks and challenges of the success of a cash crop. *Scientia Agricola*, 72(5), 459–467. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0103-9016-2014-0369> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

Davenport, C. (2007). State repression and political order. *Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 1-23. [doi: 10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.101405.143216](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.101405.143216)  
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.101405.143216>  
[=1736179578&id=id&accname=ar-251870&checksum=180920B43FEDA909A2E921D35DC28DD4](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.101405.143216) (Accessed 2025-01-08).

Djanibekov, U., & Finger, R. (2018). Agricultural risks and farm land consolidation process in transition countries: The case of cotton production in Uzbekistan. *Agricultural Systems*, 164, 223–235. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agsy.2018.03.009> (Accessed 2025-01-12).



Edel, M., & Josua, M. (2018). How authoritarian rulers seek to legitimize repression: framing mass killings in Egypt and Uzbekistan. *Democratization*, 25(5), 882–900. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2018.1439021> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

European Environment Agency (EEA) (2024). *Cash crops*. <https://www.eea.europa.eu/help/glossary/gemet-environmental-thesaurus/cash-crop> (Accessed 2025-01-08).

Freedom House (2024). *Publication Archives* [Dataset]. <https://freedomhouse.org/reports/publication-archives> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167–191. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336900600301> (Accessed 2025-03-15).

Hill, D. W., & Jones, Z. M. (2014). An Empirical Evaluation of Explanations for State Repression. *The American Political Science Review*, 108(3), 661–687. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055414000306> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

Isaev, S., Khasanov, S., Ashirov, Y., Gafurov, A., Karabaeva, T., Uvarova, S., & Breskich, V. (2021). Effects of water saving technology application on growth, development, and yield of cotton in Uzbekistan. *E3S Web of Conferences*, 244, 2047-. <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202124402047> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

Jaló, S. (2023). Guinea-Bissau: 30 years of militarized democratization (1991–2021). *Frontiers in Political Science*, 5. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2023.1078771> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

Jankauskas, V., Eckhard, S., & Ege, J. (2023). Structured, Focused Comparison. In F. Badache, L. R. Kimber, & L. Maertens (Eds.), *International Organizations and Research Methods: An Introduction* (pp. 301–307). University of Michigan Press.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.11685289.62> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

Le Billon, P. (2001). The political ecology of war: natural resources and armed conflicts. *Political Geography*, 20(5), 561–584. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0962-6298\(01\)00015-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0962-6298(01)00015-4) (Accessed 2025-01-10).

Liou, Y.-M., & Musgrave, P. (2014). Refining the Oil Curse: Country-Level Evidence From Exogenous Variations in Resource Income. *Comparative Political Studies*, 47(11), 1584–1610. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414013512607> (Accessed 2025-01-11)

Lopez-Calix, J. R. (2020). *Leveraging Export Diversification in Fragile Countries*. World Bank, Washington, DC.

OECD (2025). *Guinea-Bissau* [Dataset].  
<https://oec.world/en/profile/country/gnb?yearSelector1=2020> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

OECD (2025). *Uzbekistan* [Dataset].  
<https://oec.world/en/profile/country/gnb?yearSelector1=2020> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

Seca, A. I., Pereira, H. D. S., & Silva, S. C. P. da. (2021). Expansion of Cashew Cultivation and its Environmental and Economic Impacts on Guinea-Bissau. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Ambientais (Online)*, 56(3), 385–397. <https://doi.org/10.5327/Z21769478950> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

Sierra-Baquero, P., Catarino, S., Costa, G. J., Barai, A., Correia, Z., Ferreira, M. R., Varón-Devia, E., Romeiras, M. M., Catarino, L., Duarte, M. C., & Monteiro, F. (2024). Insights into the cashew production system in Guinea-Bissau: implications for agroecosystem sustainability. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*, 8.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2024.1439820> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

Pélissier, R. , Lobban, . Richard Andrew , Galli, . Rosemary Elizabeth and Birmingham, . David (2024, December 31). *Guinea-Bissau*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Guinea-Bissau> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

Ross ML. (1999). The Political Economy of the Resource Curse. *World Politics*, 51(2):297-322. doi:10.1017/S0043887100008200 (Accessed 2025-01-11).

Roessler, P.; Pengl, Y.; Marty, R.; Sorlie Titlow, K.; van de Walle, N. (2022). The cash crop revolution, colonialism and economic reorganization in Africa, *World Development*, Volume 158, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2022.105934>. (Accessed 2025-01-04).

Woods, D. (2003). The tragedy of the cocoa pod: rent-seeking, land and ethnic conflict in Ivory Coast. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41(4), 641–655.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X03004427> (Accessed 2025-01-11).

UCDP (2024). *Guinea-Bissau* [Dataset]. <https://ucdp.uu.se/country/404> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

UCDP (2024). *Uzbekistan* [Dataset]. <https://ucdp.uu.se/country/704> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

US Department of State (2001). *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2000 – Uzbekistan*.

<https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/eoir/legacy/2013/06/07/hrp00uzbekistan.pdf>

(Accessed 2025-03-15).

US Department of State (2016). *GUINEA-BISSAU 2015 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT*.

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/252903.pdf> (Accessed 2025-03-15).

V-Dem (2024). *Variable Graph* [Dataset]. [https://v-dem.net/data\\_analysis/VariableGraph/](https://v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/)

(Accessed 2025-01-12).

World Bank (2024). *GDP* [Dataset].

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=GW-UZ> (Accessed 2025-01-12).

Zubov, A. B. (1994). The Soviet Union: From an Empire into Nothing? *Russian Politics and Law*, 32(1), 6–36. <https://doi.org/10.2753/RUP1061-194032016>