

Measuring and Analysing Socio-Political Unrest and Political Instability in Venezuela: 1980-2000

Rafael Muñoz

**Andrés Bello Catholic University
Caracas, Venezuela
March, 2009**

Abstract: We built a political protest events database for Venezuela during the period 1980-2000 from domestic newspaper sources using a methodology designed to maximise the level of validity and reliability of the data contained in it. This database was our source of data for building indicators of socio-political unrest (SPU) and political instability (PI) for the period 1980-2000 in Venezuela. We first approached the behaviour of SPU in this period through indicators of political protest. These indicators clearly suggest that SPU was much higher in the period 1989-2000 than in the period 1980-1988. Second, we analysed the behaviour of SPU by means of a set of SPU indices constructed from political protest events data. These indices also indicate a relevant increase of SPU in Venezuela between the periods 1980-1988 and 1989-2000. Moreover, they are notably correlated with key social and economic variables during the period of study. Using the data contained in our political protest event database and other key political variables for the period 1980-2000 we built indices of PI. They show a notable increase of PI in Venezuela since 1989. Both the behaviour of SPU and PI are consistent with the Venezuelan political and economic evolution during the period of study. Finally, in spite of its limitations (which, in most of the cases, it shares with the majority of political events databases whose sources of data are newspapers), the political protest events database we constructed constitutes, in our opinion, a very useful source of data on political protest for carrying out research on an ample variety of topics within the different fields of social sciences, for the case of Venezuela and for comparing the latter with the cases of other countries or regions.

Resumen: En este trabajo construimos una base de datos de eventos de protesta política para Venezuela en el período 1980-2000 usando como fuente la prensa nacional y aplicando una metodología designada para maximizar el nivel de validez y fiabilidad de la información contenida en ella. Esta base de datos fue nuestra fuente de datos para elaborar indicadores de conflictividad socio-política (CSP) e inestabilidad política (IP) para el período 1980-2000 en Venezuela. Primero abordamos el comportamiento de la CSP en este periodo a través de indicadores de protesta política. Estos indicadores claramente sugieren que la CSP fue mucho mayor en el periodo 1989-2000 que en el periodo 1980-1988. Luego analizamos el comportamiento de la CSP mediante un conjunto de índices construidos a partir de datos sobre eventos de protesta política. Estos índices también indican un relevante incremento de la CSP Venezuela entre los periodos 1980-1988 y 1989-2000. Más aún, los índices de CSP calculados muestran una relevante correlación con variables económicas y sociales en el periodo de estudio. Utilizando la información contenida en nuestra base de datos sobre eventos de protesta política y otro conjunto de variables políticas claves en periodo 1980-2000 construimos índices de IP. Éstos muestran un notable incremento de la IP en Venezuela desde 1989. Tanto el comportamiento de la CSP como de la IP son consistentes con la evolución política y económica de Venezuela en el periodo estudiado. Finalmente, a pesar de sus limitaciones (las cuales en su mayoría comparte con las otras bases de datos sobre eventos políticos que utilizan como fuente la prensa escrita), la base de datos sobre eventos de protesta política que hemos elaborado constituye, en nuestra opinión, una fuente de información sobre la protesta política en Venezuela muy útil para la investigación sobre una gran variedad de temas dentro de los diferentes campos de las ciencias sociales, centradas en el caso Venezolano y para comparar a éste con los casos de otros países o regiones.

JEL Classification: P16, P26, P37

Key Words: Socio-political Unrest, Political Instability, Political Protest, Political Protest Database, Political Protest Indicators, Venezuela.

Rafael Muñoz: Economic Consultant. Professor of Macroeconomic at the Graduate Program on Applied Economics at the Andrés Bello Catholic University (Venezuela). Ph.D. in Economics (University of Essex, UK). MA in Economics (State University of New York at Albany, USA). Economist (Central University of Venezuela, Venezuela).

Correspondence address: rmunozj@gmail.com

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 2 Definition and classification of political protest | 2 |
| 3 The Political Protest Event Database (PPED) | 5 |
| 3.1 Sources of data | 6 |
| 3.1.1 Newspapers as a source of data on political protest | 6 |
| 3.1.2 The CENDES newspaper report database on protests in Venezuela | 9 |
| 3.2 Methodology | 11 |
| 3.2.1 Sampling the data | 11 |
| 3.2.1.1 The need and the advantages of sampling | 11 |
| 3.2.1.2 Sampling criteria | 13 |
| 3.2.1.3 Sample selection procedure | 15 |
| 3.2.2 Coding the data: The Political Protest Event Database Protocol | 17 |
| 3.3 Data reliability | 25 |
| 4 Indicators of Political Protest | 30 |
| 5 Indices of Socio-Political Unrest and Political Instability | 40 |
| 5.1 The Principal Components Method | 41 |
| 5.2 The Socio-Political Unrest Indices | 41 |
| 5.3 The Political Instability Indices | 46 |
| 6 Conclusions | 51 |
| Appendix | 53 |
| Bibliographic References | 56 |

1. Introduction¹

The year 1989 has been identified as a turning point in the history of Venezuelan democracy, after which followed a period of political instability (PI), institutional decline, and profound political crisis. Among the different factors determining the high level of political instability during this period, a high degree of socio-political unrest (SPU) has played a relevant role.

The objective of this work is twofold. Our first objective is constructing a measure and analysing the behaviour of both SPU and PI during the period 1980-2000, contrasting them with the evolution of Venezuelan politics and the economy during this period. By accomplishing this objective we make available measurements of SPU and PI for carrying out, social, political and economic research on Venezuela using these indicators, which is our second objective. Moreover, because *political protest* is one of the most important forms of political participation through which SPU is expressed and no complete nor reliable data on political protest variables is available in Venezuela, we had to construct a political protest events database for Venezuela using domestic newspaper data for the period 1980-2000 (which we denote by PPED). Thus, we describe here the process of construction and the main characteristics of this database, which is, to the best of our knowledge, the first of this type built for Venezuela.

The rest of this paper is organised as follows. In section 2 we present and discuss our definition and classification of political protest. In section 3 we present the most important characteristics of the PPED. In section 4, using the data contained in the PPED, we build political protest indicators to analyse the behaviour of these variables within the period 1980-2000, connecting it to the evolution of Venezuelan politics and the economy during the democratic period. Here we also show the most relevant characteristics of political protest in Venezuela within the period of study (as political protest is deemed to be the most relevant dimension of socio-political unrest in the literature). In section 5 we construct indices of SPU with the data contained in the PPED and analyse their behaviour within the period considered. Finally, in this section, in addition to the data provided by the PPED, we use data on political variables expressing other dimensions of political instability for the case of Venezuela to build political instability indices and analyse their behaviour.

¹ This working paper is based on part of my research done for and published in my PhD thesis “Political Uncertainty and Macroeconomic Outcomes: Theoretical and Empirical Essays” (particularly, chapter 6), presented at the Department of Economics of the University of Essex, U.K., in 2006.

2 Definition and classification of political protest

Tarrow (1989a) defines protest as “disruptive [collective] action on behalf of collective interests, in which claims are made against some other group, elites, institutions, or authorities” (p. 359).² Within the context of this general concept we define *political protest* as direct, overt, and disruptive collective action aimed at political institutions and/or political authorities with the purpose of modifying their policies and actions. Several aspects of our definition of political protest are important to be noted:

1. We are concerned with *collective* actions as opposed to individual actions. Thus, individual efforts to persuade public officials forward or away from certain courses of action are not considered political protest. In contrast, “the interest lies in measuring and explaining the overt behaviour of groups in the political system that are attempting to influence state policy”. (Jodice and Taylor 1983: 17).
2. In contrast to hidden or clandestine activities, these actions are *overt* and notorious.
3. It is *direct* collective actions that interest us, so, in contrast to representative collective actions, the authors of such activities reject institutional mediation (Tarrow 1989a: 14).
4. The actions undertaken are *disruptive*, that is, they are “intended to cause interference with the lives, routines, interests, or benefits of elites, public authorities, or other groups or are organized to plan such actions”. (Tarrow 1989a: 68).
5. Only actions whose targets are the institutions and/or the rulers of the political system are included. This criterion is what distinguishes political protest from protest in general. Tarrow (1989a) distinguishes between the *source* and the *target* of a protest. The source refers to “those whom people hold responsible for their problems” and the target refers to “those from whom they demand a response” (p. 101). Thus, this criterion implies that even if the institutions and/or the rulers of the political system are not deemed to be the cause of the problem protesters are complaining about, as long as the protesters demand an action from them the protest is considered to be political.

In their influential contribution, Huntington and Nelson (1976) define political participation —of which political protest is a particular form— as an “activity by private citizens designed to influence governmental

² Tarrow (1989a, 1994) gives more restrictive boundaries to collective action in his concept of protest than the concept of *contention* proposed by Tilly (1986: chap. 1), who defines the latter as any contentious collective action. Thus, non-disruptive contentious collective actions (e.g., legal actions, petitions, letters to authorities, participation in hearings, press conferences, and advertisements) are included in the concept of contention but they are not considered protest actions.

decision-making” (p.5). When commenting on this definition, they emphasize that “such activity is focused on public authorities, those generally recognized as having the final legitimate decision on the authoritative allocation of values within society” (p.5). Thus, within the context of this definition, because political protest is a particular form of political participation, it has to be aimed at the governmental institutions and/or leaders.

6. It is the target rather than the nature of the grievance of a protest event what gives it its political character. Thus, as long as the actions have as a target institutions and/or rulers of the political system the protest event is considered a political protest event, even if the issue that motivates the protest is not political in nature (e.g., economic in nature).³
7. No restriction is imposed with regard to either the level or branch of the institutions of power or the rank of the political rulers that are targeted.
8. The ultimate goal of political protest is to provoke changes in the political system. Within this context, it may seek to cause the discontinuation or modification of government policies or actions, or the adoption of new policies or actions (Jodice and Taylor 1983: 19).

Political protest may take many different forms. These forms may be classified following the same criteria used in the literature for the classification of protest forms in general. Thus, we adopt the following classification:

Figure 1: Political Protest Forms

-
- 1. Violent = Riots**
 - 2. Non-Violent**
 - a. Conventional**
 - (i) Strikes**
 - (ii) Demonstrations**
 - b. Non-Conventional**
-

³ Some researchers seem to be more restrictive in this regard. For example, in their political events database, which contains political protest events, Jodice and Taylor (1983) do not include “actions that are essentially economic. Thus, labour union strikes in the pursuit of higher wages or better working conditions, even if the employer were a state enterprise, were not coded” (p.8).

Protest events are violent if they involve physical damages to persons or property. In particular, we consider any violent protest as a *riot* and, following Jodice and Taylor (1983), we operationally define it as “a demonstration or disturbance that becomes violent” (p. 29). According to this definition, the presence of violence automatically makes a protest event a riot, regardless of the original intention of the organizers or who initiated the violent behaviour.

Following the concept of convention proposed by Tarrow (1989a, 1994), we classify non-violent protest events in conventional and non-conventional. The former are forms of protest completely accepted and assimilated by society. They have been “learned, experimented with, reacted to, and absorbed by opponents and elites” (Tarrow 1994: 109). The most notorious conventional forms of protest are strikes and demonstrations.

A *strike* is a withholding of labour or produce in producing institutions or, in the case of non-producing institutions (such as academic organisations), non-cooperation in the functioning of them (Tarrow 1989a, 1994; Jodice and Taylor 1983: 21). On the other hand, a *demonstration* is simply a non-violent gathering of people organised with the purpose of protesting (Jodice and Taylor 1983: 19). It may involve the displacement of people (e.g., a protest march) or not.

Non-violent, non-conventional protest forms are those still not completely admitted nor absorbed by society. They are newer in the repertory of protest actions, so the lack of experience in dealing with them provokes disruption (Tarrow 1994: 107-110). Examples of non-conventional protest forms are hunger strikes, sit-ins, and street-blocking. In most of the cases, these protest forms are not regulated and involve illegal actions. The line dividing conventional and non-conventional forms of protest is somewhat difficult to draw. It may change from one society to another and over time. For example, both strikes and demonstrations began as non-conventional forms of protest, but in modern societies they are by now probably the best known and understood forms of protest in the political culture (Tarrow 1994:105 – 107). One of the main characteristics of these protest forms is their relatively high level of novelty. However, as the new —successful— protest forms are more frequently used, society gains experience in dealing with them, thereby gradually losing their capacity to provoke disruption. Nevertheless, this process normally takes some time and new —innovative— protest forms are constantly added to the stock of protest actions.

To sum up, we classify political protest forms in four groups: riots, strikes, demonstrations, and non-conventional (non-violent) forms. Next, we describe the sources of data and methodology we used to build a political protest database for the case of Venezuela following this classification.

3 The Political Protest Event Database (PPED)

Having established our definition and classification of political protest, in this section we proceed to explain the most important characteristics of the political protest events database that we constructed for Venezuela for the period 1980-2000 (i.e. the PPED). We describe three main elements of the PPED: a) the sources of data used, b) the methodology employed to build it, and c) the reliability of the data it contains.

Before we proceed to describe the main elements of the PPED it is important to note that, to the best of our knowledge, there are two similar political databases containing data on political protest events for Venezuela: The World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators (published by David A. Jodice and Charles L. Taylor) and Cross National Time Series Data Archive (published by Arthur Banks). Both databases contain cross-country information on a vast number of political variables for an ample sample of countries and use international (foreign) press as a source of information on political protest variables (The New York Times Index complemented with the Keesing's Contemporary Archives in the first case and the daily files of The New York Times in the second). We did not use these databases in our research because of two main reasons.. First, the use of international press (with ample world coverage) as a source of data on political protest variables has important limitations to cover and classify political protest events in individual countries. These limitations are particularly important in the case of time series analysis for individual countries, especially for developing countries. The most important of these limitations are: a) international press coverage of particular countries may considerably vary over time. As Jodice and Taylor (1983) argue, there may be a threshold effect in international press coverage of individual Third World countries. For example, when the level of social unrest in an individual developing country (which normally is not well covered by the international press) is sufficient to capture the attention of the leaders of the international community, it also receives greater attention from the international press. Therefore, as the level of social unrest reaches a certain level of significance, international press reports increase the quantification of socio-political conflict events already existing in the individual country. The threshold effect means that in the initial phases of a socio-political conflict some political protest events and other socio-political unrest events go unreported; b) restricted by limited resources, even large international newspapers cannot cover all countries all the time nor can they cover all types of political protest events within a country on which they report; c) international press is biased to make mistakes in classifying events, basically due to the limited perspective and time available to those who are recording the events; d) international press is also biased to report those political protest events that editors believe will be of interest to their primary —foreign— audience,

possibly leaving out important political protest events for the individual country being covered.⁴ Using domestic newspapers as a source of data on political protest events (as we do in our research) avoids to a quite relevant extent all these limitations. Second, both databases do not include Non-conventional forms of political protest events, which (as we will show below) are very important in the case of Venezuela.

3.1 Sources of data

3.1.1 Newspapers as a source of data on political protest

The task of quantifying political protest raises the problem of finding reliable sources of data. With the partial exception of strikes, official and independent data on protest events are normally scarce and incomplete, and when they exist, their criteria of selection and classification are frequently imprecise and change over time (Kriesi et. al. 1995). This is particularly the case in Venezuela, where official data on strikes is not only incomplete but unreliable, and official records on other forms of protest are non-existent. This lack of data sources has lead recent social scientists who study collective action to the more intense and systematic use of newspapers as a source of information.⁵ However, “newspapers can hardly be seen as superior sources of information on protest in any absolute sense; rather, it is the poverty of the alternatives that makes newspapers so attractive” (Kriesi et. al. 1995: 253).

The main problem of using newspapers as a source of data on protest events is that the validity of this source may be questionable. The general concept of *validity* “refers to the extent to which an indicator measures an abstract concept” (Franzosi 1987: 6). Within this broad definition, the literature provides many different dimensions of validity.⁶ In our case, the distinction between logical validity and empirical validity adopted by Rucht and Ohlemacher (1992) is helpful. *Logical validity* refers to the extent to which an indicator is in line with the

⁴ For a detailed discussion of the disadvantages of using international press with ample world coverage as a source of cross-country political data see Jodice and Taylor (1983).

⁵ Social scientists in Venezuela are not an exception. In fact, the Venezuelan non-government organization Program of Education-Action on Human Rights (PROVEA, Spanish acronym) has built and maintained a database on protest events for Venezuela since 1989 until present using basically newspaper data as a source. Although this database is useful for the purpose of this institution, it lacks certain important characteristics for its use as a source of information for obtaining appropriate quantitative and qualitative data on political protest in Venezuela. Amongst these elements it is worth mentioning: a) it does not include information on strikes, one of the most important forms of protest; b) it contains almost only quantitative information on protests, which makes it impossible to distinguish political protest from protests in general and to obtain information regarding the qualitative evolution of protests on time; c) it has not been built using the same newspapers as sources systematically (furthermore some times radio broadcast news and telephone calls are used as sources), which makes the problem of empirical validity (explained below) of the protest data this way gathered a very important one.; and d) it contains information since October of 1989, and 1989 is considered to be a turning point regarding SPU and PI in Venezuela, therefore researchers are quite interested in comparing the evolution of these variables before and after 1989, which with this database cannot be done.

⁶ For an extensive discussion of the concept and dimensions of validity within the context of social sciences see Zeller and Carmines (1980).

theoretical definition of the concept that is being measured (Rucht and Ohlemacher 1992: 78, footnote 8). Within the context of our research, logical validity refers to the extent to which the different forms of political protest discussed above (i.e., riots, strikes, demonstrations, and non-conventional forms of protest) provide a good measure of political discontent. At a more concrete level, *empirical validity* refers to the extent to which there is no systematic error inherent to the measurement (Rucht and Ohlemacher 1992: 78, footnote 8). Thus, having accepted these forms of political protest as (logically) valid measures of political discontent, empirical validity refers to the extent to which newspapers data provide a non-biased quantification and qualification of political protest. In this sense, there are at least two types of bias in the information provided by newspapers that have been stressed. The first type refers to “the extent to which news derived data measure reporting practices instead of the desired population of events” (Snyder and Kelly 1977: 106). That is, the extent to which the whole population of events is reported. This type of bias affects empirical validity in a quantitative sense. The second type of bias has to do with “inaccurate reporting and unbalanced interpretation of events” (Snyder and Kelly 1977: 106). In this case empirical validity is affected in a more qualitative sense, since, although the number of events may be accurately reported, information about their characteristics is distorted.

We may assume that the different forms of political protest are (logically) valid measures of political discontent. However, problems of empirical validity in the newspaper information on protest events are potentially relevant. Nevertheless, it is agreed that “among the possible sources of quantitative data on protest development, newspapers are clearly the best choice” (Kriesi et al. 1995: 254). First, as mentioned above, they frequently are the only available source of information on protest events. Furthermore, when other sources are available, the number of variables recorded is very limited (Kriesi et al. 1995). Second, the alternative data sources are not free of error, including official statistics. In the absence of comparative validation, there is no a priori reason to believe that the empirical validity of the information on protest events is lower in the case of newspapers than in the case of other possible sources (Franzosi, 1987). Third, the type of bias likely to occur in newspapers data on protest events consists more of suppression and emphasis rather than absolute false information (Franzosi, 1987). Thus, “by using the press as a source of historical data (...) we risk collecting insufficient, rather than faulty, information.” (Franzosi 1987:7). Fourth, because newspapers are in competition with each other and need to maintain a high level of credibility as reliable news sources (particularly those with an educated readership), they are forced to report relevant events with some degree of accuracy (Kriesi et al. 1995). Fifth, as we explain in more detail below, the probability that a protest event is reported in newspapers sources can always be increased by raising the minimum threshold level of its “quantifiable” characteristics that qualifies it for registration (Snyder and Kelly, 1977). Finally, even accepting that empirical validity problems are not possible to be completely

solved when using the press as a source of information on protest events, the resulting bias is not always a real problem, as long as it is systematic and we are not interested in the absolute “level” of protest but in its trends (Kriesi et al. 1995).

Another relevant problem of the use of newspapers as a source of data on protest events is its reliability. A commonly used definition of reliability is provided by Nunnally (1967): “Reliability concerns the extent to which measurements are repeatable —by the same individual using different measures of the same attribute or by different persons using the same measure of an attribute” (p.172). Thus, reliability is inversely related to the magnitude of the random error involved in the measurement process, in contrast to validity, which is inversely related to the systematic error.⁷

Although clearly relevant, many social scientists consider that “validity is more important than reliability. It is more important to have a set of indicators that corresponds to the concept for which one wants to obtain an empirical representation than it is to have a set of indicators that corresponds to some unspecified and theoretically uninteresting phenomenon” (Zeller and Carmines 1980:7). Furthermore, in the case of data collection from newspapers, “...errors due to problems of validity are likely to overshadow those due to problems of reliability” (Franzosi, 1987:9). However, “if a set of indicators does not represent anything systematic, it certainly cannot represent what it is intended to represent” (Zeller and Carmines 1980:7), therefore it is not valid. Thus, reliability is a necessary —but not sufficient— condition for validity.

Franzosi (1987) distinguishes two main sources of reliability problems (random errors) involved in the process of data collection from newspapers, which are associated to the recording of the data: a) coding errors, which occur when coders erroneously interpret one or more items of information contained in a newspaper article, and b) data-entry errors, which happen when coders mistakenly record the information found in a newspaper. Careful design of the coding scheme (e.g., the sampling criteria and the coding protocol) and cautious selection of the newspapers to be used as data sources and the frequency of their reading play a relevant role in minimising these two fundamental types of reliability errors.⁸

In order to check for the dimension of the problem of reliability in the construction of databases on social and political events using as a source newspaper data, researchers have performed ad hoc statistical —normally

⁷ For a detailed discussion of the concept and types of reliability, as well as its relationship with the concept of validity, within the context of social sciences, see Zeller and Carmines (1980).

⁸ For a detailed treatment of these two types of reliability errors and ways to minimise them, see Franzosi (1987).

simple— tests, whose specifications depend on the particular methodology and sources employed.⁹ Thus, there is not any standard set of statistical tests to be performed in these cases. We will report the tests we carried out for the reliability of the PPED in section 3.2.3.

3.1.2 The CENDES newspaper report database on protests in Venezuela

The Centre for Studies on Development (CENDES, Spanish acronym), at the Central University of Venezuela, has been engaged in the construction of a computerised newspaper-report database on protest events in Venezuela (hereafter the CENDES database¹⁰). Although the final goal of the project is to gather and classify data on protest events in Venezuela during the twentieth century, data from this source is already available for some shorter periods. In particular, this database covers most of the period 1980-2000, so we use it as our main source of information to build our database on political protest events in Venezuela within this period. The main characteristics of the CENDES database are the following:

1. Each record corresponds to a newspaper report on one or more protest events.
2. The data comes primarily from the daily issues of the —domestic— newspaper El Nacional. However, for some —very short— periods the —domestic— newspaper El Universal was used. Both El Nacional and El Universal meet all important criteria for choosing newspaper sources of data on protest, namely: a) they are politically independent;¹¹ b) they have nationwide coverage; c) they are the two most prestigious and oldest (still in circulation) newspapers in the country;¹² and) they are among the newspapers with the highest level of circulation.
3. Each daily newspaper edition was thoroughly reviewed.
4. Each record includes: a) a field containing a summary of all the information included in the report;¹³ b) a group of fields containing information about the source (i.e., newspaper's name, date, heading of the report,

⁹ The design of these tests depend, for example, on whether or not: more than one coder have covered the whole period included in the database, more than one newspaper have been used as a source, each newspapers edition have been thoroughly reviewed (instead of only particular sections), newspapers editions have been examined on a daily basis, and newspapers indices (like The New York Time Index) have been used instead of the papers themselves.

¹⁰ The researchers in charge of building this database named it “Bravo Pueblo” (Brave People).

¹¹ Although during certain periods these newspapers may have shown clear political inclinations they have never been controlled by a single party or movement, during the period of study.

¹² El Nacional was founded in 1943 and El Universal in 1913.

¹³ Some reports, specially the relatively short ones, are entirely quoted in this field.

and page); and c) a group of fields classifying the records according to the characteristics of the protest events reported (such as actor or protester, form of action, geographic location, etc.).¹⁴

Because the CENDES database does not cover some intervals of the period 1980-2000, we gathered information on protest events directly from the newspaper El Universal for those sub-periods not included. Specifically, we collected information for the following sub-periods: October 1980 - December 1980, January 1982 – December 1982, January 1991 – September 1991, and January 2000 – December 2000. For the first three sub-periods we used the printed (microfilmed) edition of El Universal and for the year 2000 we used the on-line edition of this newspaper.¹⁵ In order to keep consistency, for selecting and classifying the information we followed the same guidelines used in the construction of the CENDES database.¹⁶ In total we thoroughly reviewed 1,098 daily issues of El Universal, from which we created 730 records of news reports on protest events. By joining this information with that in the CENDES database from 1980 to 2000 we made available to us a newspaper-report database on protest events in Venezuela for the period 1980-2000 containing 4,258 records, which we call the Completed CENDES database (hereafter the CCENDES). For the construction of the CCENDES we not only added the 730 records of news reports on protest events obtained from the 1,098 daily issues of El Universal reviewed, but we also redesigned the CENDES database by incorporating new fields into it, which was necessary for the “conversion” of the CCENDES into the PPED. This task required reviewing and classifying (according to the classification of the coding categories incorporated) the 3,528 original records of the CENDES database and the new 730 records we added.¹⁷

¹⁴ For a detailed description of the characteristics of the CENDES database, including the definitions and criteria used to select and classify the information, see Lander et al. (2000).

¹⁵ The staff of El Universal informed us that all news reports published in the printed edition of this newspaper are included in its on-line edition. Thus, using the on-line version instead of the printed edition of this newspaper does not make any difference in terms of the information we have access to. However, it makes the process of collecting the data much easier, saving an important amount of time and effort. An additional advantage of using the on-line version of El Universal for year 2000 is that we were able to include the whole news report in each record instead of a summary, which reduces the risk of not registering relevant information about the protest events reported. We used El Universal to complete the CENDES database because El Nacional was not available, neither on-line or in microfilms, for the sub-periods required.

¹⁶ For this purpose, apart from familiarising with the CENDES database and consulting the methodological guidelines used to build it (contained in Lander et al. 2000), we held interviews with Dr. Margarita López and Dr. Luis Lander, who are currently in charge of this project.

¹⁷ For example, we included a coding category specifying the type of news report on protest events, which we classified as follows: *Beginning*, when the article reports the actual beginning of one or more events; *Imminent*, when the article reports the imminent occurrence of one or more events (e.g., “Public employees of the Ministry of Education will march tomorrow...”); *Possible*, when the article reports the possible occurrence of one or more events (e.g., “The Federation of Unions of Venezuela calls for a national march in two weeks...”); *Monitoring*, when the article provides information about one or more events that already started but have not finished; and *Finish*, when the article reports the end of one or more events. Events for which only news reports of the type Imminent and/or Possible were available were not selected for the PPED.

3.2 Methodology

After we built the CCENDES, we needed to transform this news reports on protest events database into a political protest events database, that is, into the PPED. In this section we describe the most important elements of the methodology we used to this end.

3.2.1 Sampling the data

3.2.1.1 The need and the advantages of sampling

In order to build the PPED we used the CCENDES as a source of data on political protest events in Venezuela. Instead of coding all political protest events contained in the 4,258 newspaper reports registered in the CCENDES we decided to sample them. The reasons leading us to sample are the following:

a) Although time and resource constraints forced our decision to sample to an important extent, the need to maximise the empirical validity of our indicators of political protest was the most important reason for sampling.¹⁸ In this respect, we focused on the quantitative dimension of empirical validity.¹⁹ That is, by sampling we attempted to maximise the probability that the political protest events we chose to study (i.e., our units of analysis) were reported in our newspaper sources (and consequently, registered in the CCENDES).

Snyder and Kelly (1977) propose that the probability of a protest event being reported in a particular newspaper depends on two factors: the intensity of the event and the newspaper's sensitivity with regard to protest events. *Intensity* refers to the capacity of a protest event to raise public interest and generate concerns to authorities, derived from its intrinsic characteristics.²⁰ Important determinants of intensity (i.e., intrinsic characteristics of the event that have relevant effects on intensity) are size, violence, duration (Snyder and Kelly 1977), novelty (Kriesi

¹⁸ Of course, we could also have coded all political protest events contained in the CCENDES and then construct sub-samples using criteria that increased their validity, but, time and resource constraints kept us from proceeding this way.

¹⁹ As we mentioned above, in the case of protest events, substantial underreporting seems to be a larger component of error in newspaper-based measures than it is bias in the reports themselves (Snyder and Kelly 1977, Franzosi 1987). Hence, most studies building indicators of protest using newspaper data focus on the quantitative dimension of empirical validity. In fact, the term validity is some times used to refer only to this type of bias (e.g., Snyder and Kelly 1977).

²⁰ Snyder and Kelly (1977) do not give an explicit theoretical definition of intensity. Instead, they operationally define it as "three measurable characteristics of any conflict event: size (total number of persons ever participating), violence (extent of physical damage to persons and/or property) and duration." (p. 110). Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge there is no such an explicit definition in the literature. The conceptual definition we adopt here makes emphasis on the (intrinsic) characteristics of a protest event as determinants of its effectiveness in calling the attention of the public and the authorities, which plays an important role in determining its newsworthiness. This is in line with the central point proved by Snyder and Kelly (1977), namely that protest events –intrinsic– characteristics are important in determining their reporting probabilities. It is also worth noticing that this definition differs from (although is closely related to) the *power* of a protest event, which refers to the capacity of a protest event to provoke responses from those who are targeted. The higher the intensity of a protest event the higher its power. (Kriesi et al. 1995: ch. 5, Tarrow 1989b, Rochon 1990).

et al. 1995) —associated to non-conventional and non-violent disruption of social life—, and, as we argue in the next section, the extent of the constituency of the protest event (a term we will define below). On the other hand, *media sensitivity* refers to the proclivity of a newspaper (and in general any kind of media) to report different types of protest events. Among the main factors determining media sensitivity of a newspaper we have: the newspaper's editorial policy, the newspaper's relative capacity to cover protest events within its coverage area, and the degree of governmental censorship on the media. Contextual characteristics of the protest events themselves are also considered as determinants of media sensitivity. Among them we have, for example, the frequency of the event type, the proximity of the location of the event to media sources, and the involvement of coercive forces (Snyder and Kelly 1977).

Thus, from the above discussion we have that for a given level of media sensitivity the reporting probability of a protest event increases with its intensity. Therefore, *we decided to build an intensity-driven sample of protest events in order to maximise the empirical validity of our political protest indicators.*

It is worth noticing that empirical validity is affected not only by lack of reporting in newspapers but also by errors in the coding process. For a protest event to be coded it is not only necessary that it be reported by the newspaper (newspapers) inspected but also it is necessary that it be noticed by coders. The problem with the latter condition is that selecting news reports containing information on protest events from the inspection of newspapers is a process subject to errors. Although there is a random component of this source of error which only affects reliability, there is also a systematic component affecting empirical validity. This systematic component is given by the fact that low intensity protest events are more likely to be “poorly” reported, and consequently more likely to be missed by coders. Thus, by sampling relatively high intensity protest events we increase empirical validity not only by increasing the likelihood of the type of protest events considered for analysis being reported but also by reducing the chance of those events being missed by coders when reading the newspaper.²¹

b) Another reason to sample based on intensity is that high-intensity protest events are more likely to actually influence policy decisions and provoke government and institutional changes, and therefore are more relevant as determinant factors of political instability. That is, high-intensity protest events are also events with high power (as the term was defined in footnote 18: the capacity of a protest event to provoke responses from those who are

²¹ In many cases, for example, we found information on low intensity protest events within news articles whose headings did not suggest they contained information on protest events. Being the heading probably the main element to guide coders in the search for information on protest events, in these cases the coders are likely to be misled and disregard those news articles. Also, even when the articles headings indicate that they contain information on protest events, our experience indicates that low intensity events are reported in relatively small news articles which are more likely to be missed by coders.

targeted). Because we cannot —easily— weight events we need to apply a minimum filter to them in order to reduce the mixing of events of clearly dissimilar relevance.

c) By sampling we save an important amount of time and resources. This consideration was particularly pertinent in our case, as time and resource constraints were notably relevant.

3.2.1.2 Sampling criteria

Having decided to sample protest events from the CCENDES using intensity as the selection criterion, we need to specify which elements of intensity to use and what specific rules to apply.

There is no standard set of rules or procedure established in the literature in this respect. To an important extent, these decisions are made according to the coverage and quality of the information about protest events available as well as to the type of research the data is collected and processed for. Furthermore, as Kriesi et al. (1995) point out, the different determinants of intensity cannot be clearly related to each other in any meaningful way. For example, if we decide to include demonstrations only if their size exceeds a certain minimum, lets say one hundred participants, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to establish objectively an equivalent of such a size in terms of violence or novelty. Thus, any sampling rule that combines elements of intensity has some degree of arbitrariness.

Size, duration, and violence are the elements of intensity most commonly used as selection criteria in intensity-driven samples of protest events.²² Kriesi et al (1995) incorporated novelty as a relevant determinant of intensity. New forms of protest actions generate uncertainty and confusion among the general population and the authorities about the limits and consequences of protests (Tarrow 1989a). Thus, novelty increases the capacity of a protest event to capture public interest and generate concerns to authorities. Moreover, “novelty gives protesters a strategic advantage —authorities are unprepared for new strategies, political actors, and themes.” (Kriesi et al 1995: 134). In consequence, following the standard procedure in the construction of intensity-driven samples of protest events and incorporating the view of Kriesi et al (1995) regarding novelty and intensity, we included size, violence, and novelty in the set of determinants of intensity used for sampling.²³

²² For example, Tilly (1978) includes only violent events with at least fifty participants in his general sample and only events involving at least one thousand people-days in his intensive sub-sample, Tarrow (1989a) includes protest events involving at least twenty people or in which violence occurs, and Jodice and Taylor (1983) code riots only if at least one hundred people participate.

²³ Because in too many cases the information provided by the CCENDES was not sufficient to determine with enough precision the time protest events lasted (which reflects the fact that this characteristic of protest events is not generally well reported by the newspapers employed as sources), we did not included duration in the set of determinants of intensity used for sampling.

We also included as a relevant element of intensity —and therefore as a criterion for sampling— the *extent of the constituency* of the protest event, which, following Tarrow (1989a), we define as the segment of the population “whose interests would have been served if the protest were successful” (p.117). These constituencies range from the people directly involved in the protest event (e.g., teachers at a particular elementary school), to the categorical interest group they belong to (e.g., all elementary school teachers), to a general interest group they identify with (e.g., all teachers), to people other than the protesters or their associates (e.g., the oppressed people of Haiti), to universal beneficiaries (e.g., all Venezuelans). Additionally, these constituencies can be delimited by geopolitical-administrative boundaries (e.g., all school teachers of the Metropolitan District; all inhabitants of a particular city, state, or region, etc.).

The higher the extent of the constituency (*constituency*, for short) of a protest event the more capable it is to raise public attention and produce concerns to authorities. In other words, there is a positive relationship between the extent of the constituency of a protest event and its intensity. Protest events with larger constituencies are more likely to induce authorities’ reactions as they have larger potential effects on their political supporters, on the one hand, and they are more likely to call the interest and be supported by larger portions of the population as the issues involved affect a larger number of people, on the other. Empirical evidence seems to support this theoretical connection, thus, for the case of Italy (between 1965 and 1975), Tarrow (1989a) finds that “the disruptiveness of the protests was generally highest when the breadth of the potential beneficiaries was greatest: that is, the narrower the constituency, the less likely was the protest to disrupt the public, other groups, or authorities” (p.119).²⁴

By including the constituency of a protest event as a determinant of intensity (and therefore using it as a sampling criterion) we not only increase the empirical validity of the indicators we want to build but also we restrict ourselves to events of higher political relevance, which are more likely to induce political and institutional changes, and thus are more closely related to political instability.

In sum, we used intensity as a sampling criterion in the construction on the PPED and included as its elements: size, violence, novelty, and constituency.

Finally, since the CCENDES includes political and non-political protest events, we needed to discard the latter in order to build the PPED. Therefore, in concordance with our definition of political protest, we focused only on

²⁴ To the best of our knowledge Tarrow (1989a) is the only empirical study about socio-political protest that explicitly deals with this issue.

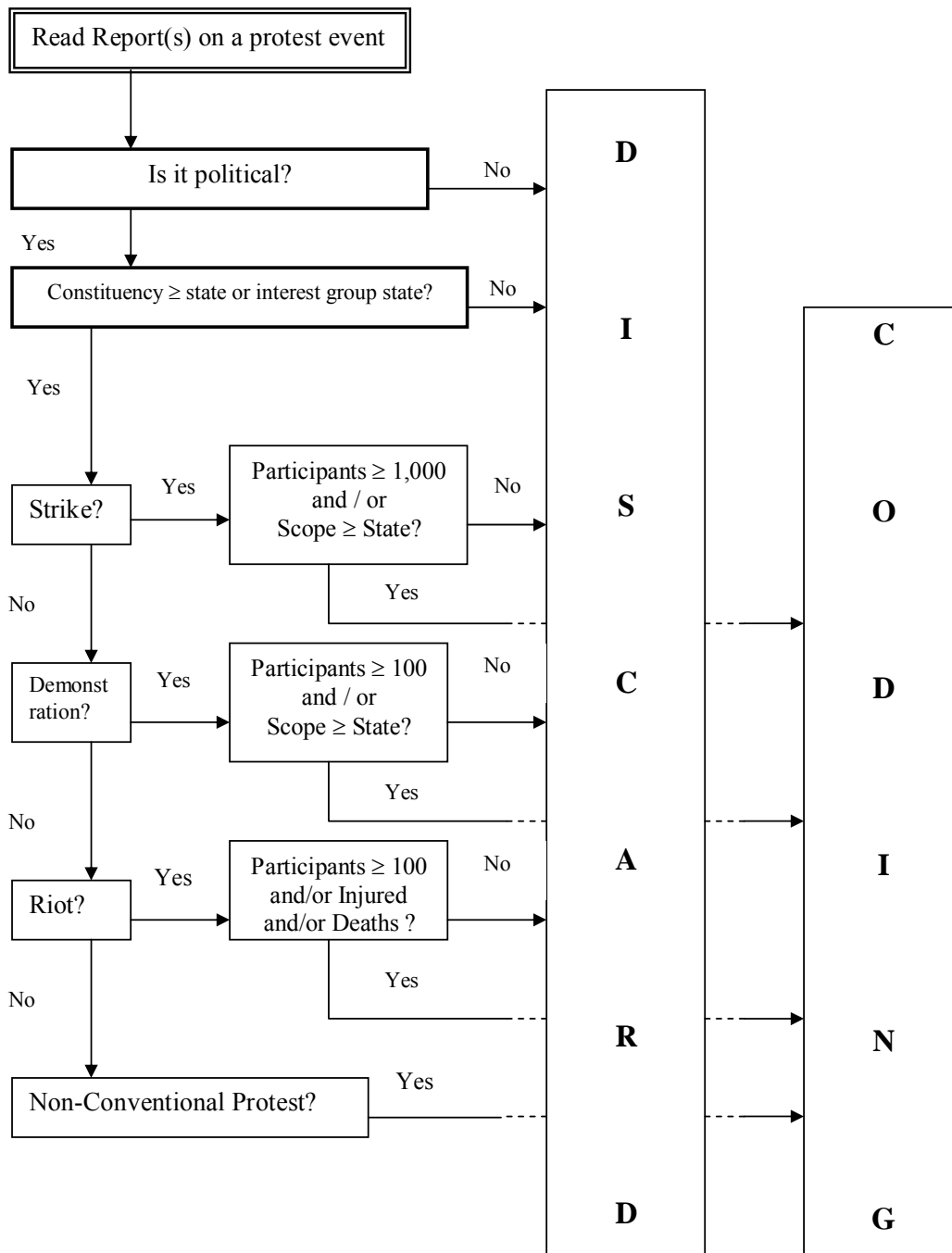
anti-governmental protests, that is, those aimed at the institutions and/or authorities of the prevailing political system with the purpose of changing their policies and actions.²⁵

3.2.1.3 Sample selection procedure

Once established the set of variables to be used as sampling criteria, we require to specify the rules to apply in the sampling process, that is, our sampling selection procedure. Figure 2 summarizes this procedure, which we briefly describe as follows:

²⁵ We did not included the so called “pro-governmental protests”, since, in contrast to political protest events, whose ultimate goal — according to our definition of this type of political participation— is to provoke changes in the political system, they are actually — direct, overt and disruptive— activities whose purpose is bringing support to policies and actions implemented by governmental institutions and authorities.

Figure 2 Sample Selection Procedure



After reading the newspaper report(s) from the CCENDES containing information on a particular protest event, we include in the sample *only* those protest events which are political and anti-governmental and whose

constituency is equal or larger than either the total population of a state (e.g., all inhabitants of the State of Zulia, one of the 24 states of Venezuela) or the total population of an interest group belonging to a state (e.g., all teachers of the State of Zulia).²⁶ Then, we catalogue the event according to our classification of the political protest forms (see Figure 1), which reduces to four types: strikes, demonstrations, riots, and non-conventional protests. If the protest event is a strike, we include it in the sample *only* if the number of participants is equal or higher than one thousand and/or the scope the event reaches a state or a higher level (i.e., widespread or national level).²⁷ If the protest event is a demonstration, we incorporate it into the sample *only* if the number of participants is equal or higher than one hundred and/or the scope the event reaches a state or a higher level. If the protest event is a riot we code it *only* if the number of participants is equal or higher than one hundred and/or people is reported injured and/or killed. Finally, if the protest event is a non-conventional protest we include — directly— it in the sample.²⁸

3.2.2 Coding the data: The Political Protest Event Database Protocol

After a protest event has been selected to be included in the PPEd, we proceed to code it. In this section we succinctly describe the coding protocol we used for this purpose.²⁹

To an important extent we follow the criteria used in the literature on socio-political protest and social movements (and, in general, on collective contentious actions) to construct socio-political protest events databases. In particular, we adopted many —similar— coding criteria and definitions of coding categories from

²⁶ By imposing a minimum dimension to the extent of its constituency for a protest event to be coded, we avoid including in our sample protest events whose grievance concerns only a very small number of people (e.g., students of a council high school demanding the local government to enhance the eating facilities within the premises of their educational institution), which —*ceteris paribus*— implies that these events are of very low intensity. When more than one issue motivate a protest event we include or discard the event according to the largest constituency associated to these issues. In the next section we briefly describe our protest event coding protocol, there we explain the way we measured the extent of the constituency of a protest event.

²⁷ The scope of a protest event refers to its geographical-administrative extent and it ranges from local to national level. We use it as an alternative measurement of the size of a protest event to the number of participants not only because it is a valid proxy to this variable by itself (specially in the case of strikes and demonstrations) but also because for many protest events the number of participants was not clearly reported (or not reported at all) in the corresponding newspaper articles of the CCENDES. In the next section we explain the way we measured this characteristic of protest events.

²⁸ We do not impose any further restrictions on non-conventional political —anti-governmental— protests events for them to be coded (other than those related to its constituency) because they are all of a relatively high level of novelty —and disruption—, which gives them a relatively high level of intensity. After controlling by their constituency, using their size as a second dimension of intensity in our sampling criteria may be misleading in the case of this form of —non-violent— political protest events since it is —in particular— their novelty —and disruption— and not their size what gives them relevance and newsworthiness. For example, one person walking naked in the middle of an official ceremony demanding the elimination of imposed obstacles to the freedom of speech is very likely to be notorious and reported by newspapers, even more so than a march of one hundred people organized with the same purpose.

²⁹ It is available on request to the interested reader a more detailed description of our political protest event protocol (including particular rules associated to the singularities of the Venezuelan case). However, a definite document with this content is not completely finished yet.

Jodice and Taylor (1983, 1988), Banks (1971, 1994), Tarrow (1989a), Tilly (1978), Kriesi et al. (1995), and Foweraker and Landman (1997). However, there is not a completely unified coding procedure within this literature, since each study designs its coding process according to the objectives of the research to be done, the characteristic of the data sources available, and the cultural and institutional characteristics of the societies being studied. Therefore, taking into account: a) that a fundamental objective of building the PPED is to obtain data on elements of socio-political unrest relevant to construct a measure and analysing the behaviour of both SPU and PI during the period 1980-2000 b) the characteristics of the CCENDES (which in much reflect the characteristics of the newspapers used as sources), and c) the social, cultural and institutional characteristics of the Venezuelan society; we adapted the concepts and coding rules of these contributions to the Venezuelan case. Nevertheless, the coding protocol we employ makes of the PPED a set of organized data on political protest events in Venezuela to a relevant extent comparable with the data contained in other similar databases for other countries and useful for many different purposes and types of research, especially within the fields of social sciences.

Figure 3 summarizes the protest event coding protocol, whose coding categories and their respective classifications we succinctly define and describe next.

Figure 3: Protest Event Coding Protocol

| | Coding Category | Classification |
|----------|--|--|
| 1 | Event coding number | |
| 2 | Source | El Nacional El Universal |
| 3 | Newspaper article(s) reporting the event | |
| 4 | Date of the event | |
| 5 | Quarter of the event | |
| 6 | Year of the event | |
| 7 | Duration | 1: (Hours) 2: (Full day) 3: (2 – 6 days) 4: (1 – 2 weeks) 5: (over 2 weeks) ITJ |
| 8 | Short description | |
| 9 | Form of action | Strike Demonstration Riot Non-conventional |

| | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| 10 | Actor groups present | Youth [yes / no] Workers [yes / no] Public employees [yes / no] Educated middle class [yes / no] Independent middle class [yes / no] Agricultural and Fishing [yes / no] S.S. beneficiaries and unemployed [yes / no] Underground sector [yes / no] Territorial Groups [yes / no] Other groups [yes / no] General population [yes / no] |
| 11 | Number of actor groups involved | 1 2 3 4 5+ |
| 12 | Number of participants | 1: (01 - 99) 2: (100 - 999) 3: (1,000 +) 4: ITJ |
| 13 | Specific number of participants directly estimated by sources | |
| 14 | Number of participants estimated by descriptive words | Descriptive words |
| 15 | Sector | Public sector Private sector Public and private sector None ITJ |
| 16 | Types of grievance | Economic Conditions [yes / no] Branch of Economic Contract [yes / no] Political [yes / no] Material [yes / no] |
| 17 | Main grievance | Economic Conditions [yes / no] Branch of Economic Contract [yes / no] Political [yes / no] Material [yes / no] |
| 18 | Scope | Local State Widespread Regional National |
| 19 | Constituency (extent of) | State Regional Widespread National Interest Group - State Interest Group - Regional Interest Group - Widespread Interest Group - National |

| | | |
|-----------|-------------------|---|
| 20 | Location | Capital Non-capital General |
| 21 | Urban location | Urban [yes / no] Rural [yes / no] Both [yes / no] |
| 22 | Number of deaths | |
| 23 | Number of injured | 1: (1 -20) 2: (20 - 100) 3: (101 - 200) 4: (201 - 500) 5: (500 +) |
| 24 | Physical damage | None Minor Major |
| 25 | Comments | |

I. Event identification: categories 1 to 8

1. Event coding number: Refers to the unique code number assigned to each selected political protest event. It is structured as follows: year-month-date-number. The last element of the code (“number”) refers to the number (1 or higher) assigned to the event after specifying the date in which it started (i.e., after the corresponding year-month-date are established). For example, if two events that occurred on January 12th 1992 are sampled, then they will be assigned the codes 1992-01-12-1 and 1992-01-12-2 respectively.

2. Source: Although for most of the period the source is the newspaper “El Nacional”, for some intervals of time the newspaper “El Universal” is used as a source. Thus, this category specifies the source used.

3. Newspapers article(s) reporting the event: In this field, for each political protest event selected in the PPED the codes of the articles in the CCENDES related to it are included (i.e., the codes of all articles containing information on the event). This coding category establishes a direct link between the PPED and the CCENDES. Thus, for example, the user of the PPED can always go to the CCENDES to obtain further information on the event that might not be included in the PPED or that is not given in detail in it. It also makes much easier any future check of the database and/or a re-codification of the political protest events contained in it.

4. Date of the event: Refers to the date on which the event occurred or began. When no date is given by the source (because the article(s) does(do) not provide this piece of information neither explicitly nor implicitly) the date of the earliest report on the event is used. If the information given by the source is not enough to determine

the exact date of occurrence or beginning of the event but it is enough to allow for a reasonable guess, the event is dated according to this guess.

5. Quarter of the event: Refers to the quarter in which the event occurred or began.

6. Year of the event: Refers to the year in which the event occurred or began.

7. Duration: Refers to the estimated span of time the event lasted. It is measured according to the following ordinal scale: 1 = hours, 2 = full day, 3 = 2 to 6 days, 4 = 1 to 2 weeks, 5 = over 2 weeks. If the information available was not enough to determine or have a reasonable guess of the duration of the event according to this ordinal scale, this category was coded as Impossible to Judge (ITJ).

8. Short description: Provides a short description or title of the event.

II. Event type and actors: categories 9 to 15

9. Form of action: Refers to the form chosen by the protesters to manifest their discontent or make their demands. Four main categories were considered: strikes, demonstrations, riots, and non-conventional forms. We already gave a precise conceptual and operational definition of these categories in section 2 of this chapter.

10. Actor groups present: Refers to the socio-economic-political groups participating in the protest event. This is a yes or no field, in which yes indicates the participation of the respective group in the event. The categories used (basically following Tarrow 1989a) are as follows:

- a. *Youth:* Includes young people and students (including high school and university students).
- b. *Workers:* Includes workers in industry (public or private).
- c. *Public employees:* (Part of the middle class sector.) Includes higher civil servants, public white collar workers at all levels of government (communication, transportation, judicial system, public welfare, etc.), public-school teachers, and municipal and state service workers.
- d. *Educated middle class:* (Part of the middle class sector.) Includes professionals (doctors, university teachers, journalists, etc.), semi-professionals (technicians, etc.), private sector white collar employees (bank employees, managers, etc.), and intellectuals and artists.

- e. *Independent middle class:* (Part of the middle class sector) Includes artisans and small business owners and employees (shopkeepers in the retail sector, kiosk owners, taxi and minibus drivers, hotelkeepers, restaurant owners, etc.).
- f. *Agricultural and fishing:* Includes farmers and farm workers, as well as fishermen (owners and workers).
- g. *Social Security (SS) beneficiaries and unemployed:* Includes welfare clients, pensioners and unemployed.
- h. *Underground sector:* Includes owners and employees of small businesses not incorporated to the formal (legally established) sector of the economy.
- i. *Territorial groups:* Includes regional and state groups, as well as neighbourhood movements. It is not the fact of being an inhabitant of a geographic-administrative area what makes a person part of a territorial group, rather it is his/her membership to organizations or movements whose element of cohesion is the concern of their members about matters related to a particular geographic-administrative area.
- j. *Other groups:* Includes non-government organizations, women, ethnic minorities, religious groups, and any other group.
- k. *General population:* Includes heterogeneous groups of people belonging to many different actor groups that are not possible to distinguish.

11. Number of actor groups involved: Refers to the number of socio-economic-political groups that took part on the protest event.

12. Number of participants: Refers to the estimated number of people who physically took part in the protest event. It is measured according to the following ordinal scale: 1: (01 - 99), 2: (100 – 999), 3: (1,000 +). If the information available is not enough to determine or have a reasonable guess of the number of participants according to this scale, this category is coded as impossible to judge (ITJ).

13. Specific number of participants directly estimated by sources: Refers to the number of participants that the source reports. If the source reports the estimates made by the protesters and by government representatives, the estimation of the protesters is taken.

14. Number of participants estimated by verbal descriptive words and context: When news reports did not provide specific estimates of the number of participants but verbal descriptions were given, such as “many”, “several”, “scores”, etc., numerical equivalences for the most common verbal descriptive words were employed. The words

used and their numerical equivalence according to the coding category (12) are presented in the Appendix. When news reports did not provide specific estimates of the number of participants but contextual information allowed us to estimate this figure in terms of the ordinal scale of coding category (12) with reasonable accuracy, the word “context” is written in this field. This and the previous coding category were used to fill out category (12).

15. Sector: Refers to whether actor groups present belong to the private or public sectors. This category only applies to people employed. The underground sector is considered as private sector.

III. Scope, grievance (issue), and concern 16 to 19

16. Type of grievances: Refers to the nature of the issues that motivate the protest event. This category is classified in *economic* and *political* grievances. Economic grievances are divided into two sub-categories. On the one hand, *economic condition* grievances, which are those grievances related to the economic situation of the constituencies associated to the protest event (e.g., level of wages, working conditions, economic terms of contracts between public entities and their suppliers). These types of grievances normally lead to economic demands to public entities, including public enterprises, aimed at improving the economic conditions of the constituencies of the protest event (e.g., demands for higher wages, for better working conditions, and for better economic contractual conditions for suppliers of the public sector). On the other hand, *branch of economic contract* grievances, which are those grievances related to the failure to abide economic contractual regulations and/or agreements on the part of public entities, including public enterprises (e.g., failure to pay salaries on time, failure to comply with wage rises decreed by the Executive, failure to meet the economic terms of public contracts with governmental suppliers). Political grievances are simply those not classified as economic grievances. A sub-category of political grievances is *material* grievances, which are those related to the failure of public entities to provide (directly or indirectly) public services in appropriate quantity or quality (e.g., potable water, electricity, public roads).

17. Type of main Grievance: Refers to the nature of the main issue that motivates the protest event.

18. Scope: Refers to the geographic-administrative extent of the protest event. The classification for this category is as follows. *Local:* events that take place in a single city and/or town, or whose participants belong to a single city and/or town but the event takes place in a different location. *State:* events that take place in two or more cities and/or towns in a single state, or whose participants belong to two or more cities and/or town of a single state but the event takes place in a particular location, or whose participants constitute at least fifty percent of the totality of members or the totality of a particular type of members of a state —public or private— entity or of a

state-branch of a national —public or private— entity. *Regional*: events that take place in two or more cities and/or towns in different states of a single administrative region, or whose participants belong to two or more cities and/or towns of different states of a single administrative region but the event takes place in a particular location, or whose participants constitute at least fifty percent of the totality of members or the totality of a particular type of members of a regional —public or private— entity or of a regional-branch of a national —public or private— entity. *Widespread*: events that take place in two or more cities and/or towns and at least two of them are part of different regions, or whose participants belong to two or more cities and/or towns and at least two of them are part of different regions but the event takes place in a particular location. *National*: events that take place in ten or more cities and/or towns in different states, or whose participants belong to ten or more cities of different states but the event takes place in a particular location, or whose participants constitute at least fifty percent of the totality of members or the totality of a particular type of members of a national —public or private— entity.

19. Constituency (extent of): Refers to the extent of the largest constituency (as this term is defined in section 3.2.1.2) associated to the protest event. The classification of this category is as follows. *State*: constituencies composed by all —or most of— the inhabitants of a single state. *Regional*: constituencies composed by all —or most of— the inhabitants of two or more states of a single administrative region. *Widespread*: constituencies composed by all —or most of— the inhabitants of two or more states and at least two of them are part of different regions. *National*: constituencies composed by all —or most of— the inhabitants of the whole nation. *Interest group – state*: constituencies composed by all —or most of— the members of an interest group whose activities are delimited to a single state (e.g., all physicians of public hospitals of the state of Zulia). *Interest group – regional*: constituencies composed by all —or most of— the members of an interest group whose activities are delimited to a single region (e.g., all physicians of public hospitals of the North-West region). *Interest group – widespread*: constituencies composed by all —or most of— the members of an interest group whose activities are delimited to two or more states and at least two of them are part of different regions (all physicians of public hospitals of the states of Mérida, Táchira, and Trujillo —region of Los Andes— as well as the state of Zulia —North-West region). *Interest group – national*: constituencies composed by all —or most of— the members of an interest group whose activities are delimited to the whole nation (e.g., all physicians of public hospitals of the whole nation).

IV. Location and violence 20 to 25

20. Location: Refers to the geographic location of the protest event. The classification for this category is as follows: Capital, Non-capital, and General. General refers to the cases in which the event took place in both inside and outside the capital city. (“This variable provides a simple measure of the proximity of protest events to the governing elite”, Jodice and Taylor 1983).

21. Urban location: Refers to condition of the participants of a protest event in terms of living in urban or rural areas. Three possibilities are included: urban, rural, and both.

22. Number of deaths: Refers to the number of deaths occurred in violent events (riots) reported by the source. When more than one news report is available for a violent event in which violent deaths occurred, the information of the latest report is used.

23. Number of injured: Refers to the number of injured occurred in violent events (riots) reported by the source. Because the information given by the reports about the number of injured tends to be less accurate than that about the deaths, this category was coded using an ordinal scale. (“It is more likely that the number of fatalities be accurately observed by newsmen and their contacts than the number of participants or injured”, Jodice and Taylor 1983.) The ordinal scale is as follows: 1: (1 -20), 2: (20 - 100), 3: (101 - 200), 4: (201 - 500), 5: (500 +).

24. Physical damage: Refers to the damage made to properties in violent events (riots) reported by the source. The classification of this category is as follows: None, Minor (burning of ballot boxes or cars, vandal acts such as spraying walls and windows, destroying paper records, etc.), and Major (use of bombs or fire to destroy as much as possible of buildings or other public facilities, massive destruction of shops and other facilities). When the newspaper article(s) does(do) not report any physical damage it is taken as evidence of no destruction rather than as missing data.

25. Comments: In this field the coder provides additional information in those cases where the codification of the protest event presents some elements worth being mentioned and/or particular difficulties and the way these difficulties were solved.

3.3 Data reliability

The PPED was built in two main phases, namely: a) the creation of the CCENDES (which includes, among other things, the “original” collection of news reports on protest events from the newspaper El Nacional for the building of the CENDES database and the “new” collection of news reports on protest events from the newspaper

El Universal to fill in the gaps of the CENDES database within the period 1980-2000), and b) the selection and codification of political protest events (following our sample selection procedure and coding protocol) from the CCENDES. These two phases are subject to the two main sources of reliability problems mentioned in section 3.1.1, namely: coding errors and data-entry errors. In order to assess the measurement of the dimension of the problem of reliability in the two phases we designed two tests, adapted from similar tests carried out by Jodice and Taylor (1983), who, in turn, follow Rummel (1966) in this regard.

Rummel (1966) purposed a measure of agreement between different coders consulting the same sources, during the same periods, and using the same selecting and coding procedures. His coefficient of agreement, which we denote by RC, is defined as the number of cases on which two coders agree relative to the total opportunities for agreement (i.e., agreements plus disagreements). Disagreements may result from both coding errors and data-entry errors. RC is given as

$$RC = \frac{a}{a + b + (c - b), \text{ iff } c > b} \quad (6.1)$$

where a is the number of cases of agreement, b is the number of cases coded by the j th coder but missed by the i th coder, and c is the number of cases coded by the i th coder but missed by j th coder (Jodice and Taylor 1983).

We first calculated RC to check reliability in the creation of the CCENDES.³⁰ To this end we randomly chose four consecutive dates for each year of the total period covered by the CCENDES, read completely the corresponding daily (microfilmed or on-line) issues of the respective newspapers used as a source, and selected the news reports on protest events following the sampling procedure of the CENDES database. This procedure added a second coder (who is the author of this paper) for the randomly chosen sample of newspapers editions (84 in total, 1.1% of total daily issues), thereby making possible the calculation of RC³¹. The results of this procedure are presented in table 1. RC is equal to 88.04%, which can be considered as an indicator of a high level agreement on what types of news reports should be included in the CCENDES.

³⁰ Unfortunately, no test of reliability for the CENDES database is available yet.

³¹ For those periods filled in by us to complete the CENDES database we asked a person different from the author of this paper to read and sample the respective daily issues of the newspaper El Universal. This was only the case of years 1982 and 2000 (8 daily issues in total), which were years filled in by us totally. For the years partially filled in by us (1980 and 1991) the random selection of the four consecutive dates was restricted to the period already covered by the CENDES database.

Table 1: Rummel Coefficient of Agreement (RC) for CCENDES database

| Chosen | Daily Issues Reviewed by a Second Coder | News Reports in CCENDES database and Recorded by a Second Coder | News Reports only in CCENDES database | News Reports only Recorded by a Second Coder |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| | | [a] | [b] | [c] |
| 12/03/1980 - 15/03/1980 | 4 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| 02/07/1981 - 05/07/1981 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 2 |
| 18/11/1982 - 21/11/1982 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 27/01/1983 - 30/01/1983 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 17/10/1984 - 20/10/1984 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 26/09/1985 - 29/09/1985 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| 13/04/1986 - 16/04/1986 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 21/05/1987 - 24/05/1987 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 06/01/1988 - 09/01/1988 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| 01/09/1989 - 04/09/1989 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 07/03/1990 - 10/03/1990 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 0 |
| 09/12/1991 - 12/12/1991 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 07/08/1991 - 10/08/1992 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 12/03/1993 - 15/03/1993 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 11/02/1994 - 14/02/1994 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| 21/02/1995 - 24/02/1995 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| 26/10/1996 - 29/10/1996 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| 17/04/1997 - 20/04/1997 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 02/10/1998 - 05/10/1998 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 03/05/1999 - 06/05/1999 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| 20/09/2000 - 23/09/2000 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 84 | 81 | 11 | 7 |
| Rummel Coefficient of Agreement (RC) | | | 88.04% | |
| RC = a/[(a+b+(c-b, iff c > b)] | | | | |
| Source: Own Calculations | | | | |

Second, we calculated RC to check reliability in the construction of the PPED. In this case, we randomly chose one quarter for each year of the total period covered by the CCENDES, asked a person different from the author (who was the unique coder for the PPED) to read the records (news reports, usually summarized) contained in the corresponding quarters in the CCENDES, and select the political protest events according to the sample selection procedure of the PPED. As in the previous case, this procedure added a second coder for the randomly chosen sample of records of the CCENDES (1,072 in total, 25.2% of total records). The results of this process are shown in table 2. RC is equal to 90.3%, which can also be considered as an indicator of a high level agreement on what types of protest events should be included in the PPED. This and the previous value of RC suggest that the

problem of reliability of the PPED (at least with regard of the sample selection procedure) seems to be of quite low importance.

Table 2: Rummel Coefficient of Agreement (RC) for the PPED

| Quarter | Number of News Reports Reviewed by a Second Coder | Number of Protest Events in PPED and Recorded by a Second Coder | Number of Protest Events only in PPED | Number of Protest Events only Recorded by a Second Coder |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| | | [a] | [b] | [c] |
| 1980Q1 | 99 | 17 | 2 | 1 |
| 1981Q3 | 124 | 15 | 0 | 3 |
| 1982Q3 | 29 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 1983Q2 | 46 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 1984Q2 | 72 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| 1985Q2 | 35 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 1986Q1 | 13 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 1987Q2 | 23 | 15 | 8 | 0 |
| 1988Q3 | 13 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| 1989Q3 | 43 | 9 | 1 | 2 |
| 1990Q2 | 32 | 31 | 4 | 2 |
| 1991Q1 | 79 | 18 | 2 | 3 |
| 1992Q3 | 31 | 9 | 0 | 1 |
| 1993Q3 | 25 | 15 | 2 | 0 |
| 1994Q3 | 36 | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| 1995Q1 | 54 | 22 | 1 | 3 |
| 1996Q4 | 61 | 25 | 0 | 2 |
| 1997Q1 | 39 | 19 | 0 | 2 |
| 1998Q2 | 39 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| 1999Q4 | 112 | 31 | 6 | 5 |
| 2000Q2 | 67 | 24 | 3 | 4 |
| | 1072 | 298 | 32 | 30 |
| Rummel Coefficient of Agreement (RC) | | | 90.30% | |

$$RC = a/[a+b+(c-b, \text{ iff } c > b)]$$

Source: Own Calculations

Jodice and Taylor (1983) discuss a problem closely related to reliability, which they call “source reliability” and refers to quality of the sources of socio-political data. In our case source reliability concerns the quality of the newspapers used as sources of political protest events data.

We have already said, in section 3.1.2, that the two newspapers used as sources for the CCENDES meet all important criteria for choosing newspapers sources of data on protest events. Furthermore, as we mentioned

earlier, the use of local newspapers —rather than the international press or publications specialised on gathering and summarising news from particular regions—, on the one hand, and the complete reading of all their daily editions —rather than a sample of issues per period or the newspapers indices—, on the other hand, provide the CCENDES (and consequently the PPED) with more reliable data.

However, because we filled in the gaps of the CENDES database using the newspaper El Universal instead of El Nacional —which was used for practically all dates covered by the CENDES database—, we adapted the Rummel test of agreement to the case of these two newspapers. In particular, since the digital version of El Nacional for year 2000 became available —after the CCENDES was completed, we reviewed the daily issues of this newspaper for this period, collected the news reports on protest events, and finally compared them with the news reports collected from El Universal —which were those included in the CCENDES. With this information we calculated: a) the percentage of total news reports on particular protest events that were published in both newspapers over the total news reports on particular protest events collected in both newspapers, and b) the RC coefficient. The results are presented in table 3. Both indicators show that there is a high level of agreement between the two sources used, which suggest that the problem of source reliability derived from the use of a different newspaper for some —relatively— short intervals of time in the period 1980-2000 is of low relevance.

Table 3: Agreement between El Nacional and El Universal with regard to news reports on protest events published – Year 2000

| | Number of News Reports | Percentage of Total News Reports |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
| News Reports on Particular Protest Events Published in Both Newspapers [a] | 216 | 89.3% |
| News Reports on Particular Protest Events Published Only in El Nacional [b] | 11 | 4.5% |
| News Reports on Particular Protest Events Published Only in El Universal [c] | 15 | 6.2% |
| Total | 242 | 100.0% |
| Rummel Coefficiente of Agreement (RC) | | 93.5% |
| $RC = a / [(a+b)+(c-b, \text{ iff } c > b)]$ | | |
| Source: Own Calculations | | |

Finally, it is worth mentioning that because only one coder (the author of this paper) was involved in the sample selection and codification of the news reports contained in the CCENDES, the so-called problem of inter-coder

reliability (i.e., the level of agreement among different coders) does not directly arise in the PPED.³² This is normally a relevant problem in this type of projects, because “even with stringent training (...) it is easy for individual coders to develop their own implicit definitions and coding conventions” (Jodice and Taylor 1983:188).³³

4 Indicators of Political Protest

It is possible to distinguish various political periods of the Venezuelan democracy during the period of study. In particular, we can establish that after a long period of stability, 1989 marks the beginning of a period of instability, institutional decline, crisis, and collapse. Moreover, among the relevant particular elements characterising the Venezuelan political system between 1989 and 2000 we have: a) a weaker, more decentralized, and more exclusive state; b) a divided elite; and c) a pronounced shifting of political alignments³⁴. In the literature on contentious collective political participation these elements are considered to be important dimensions of political opportunity, which is defined as “consistent —but not necessarily formal or permanent— dimensions of the political environment that provides incentives for collective action by affecting people’s expectations for success or failure” (Tarrow 1998: 76). In our case, in the period 1989-2000, these elements operated in the direction of encouraging contentious political collective actions, which along with the presence of high levels of economic, material and social dissatisfaction (related to an important extent to the increase of poverty levels, deterioration of living standards, and worsening of income distribution, that started to become significant since the 1980’s), leads us to formulate the hypothesis that, within the period 1980-2000, the level of socio-political unrest was higher in the period 1989-2000 than in the period 1980-1988.³⁵ In this section we use the data

³² The PPED indirectly suffers from this problem because in the construction of the CENDES database different coders covered different periods. Unfortunately, no test of inter-coder reliability for this database is available yet. However, the Rummel test we performed for the CCENDES reported in table 1, which is a test of inter-coder reliability between a second coder (the author of this paper) and all the coders involved in the CENDES database and between another second coder (a third coder if you like) and the coder of the filled in gaps in the CENDES database (the author of this paper), could be interpreted as an indirect test of inter-coder reliability for the CENDES database. As we mentioned above, the results of this test was quite satisfactory.

³³ In particular, “coders may differ in whether or not they code a particular report as an event; they may also differ with regard to the assignment of events and events attributes to categories” (Jodice and Taylor 1983:188).

³⁴ For a more detailed analysis of the Venezuelan political and economic evolution along its democratic era (up to 2005), see Muñoz (2006, chapter 5).

³⁵ For a detailed treatment of political opportunities and constraints for political collective contentious participation see Tarrow (1998, chap. 5), Gamson and Meyer (1996), and Kriesi et al. (1995, chap. 1). One important idea highlighted by most of the social movements modern theorists is that it is not a sufficient condition for political collective contentious actions to take place that potential participants have strong grievances but it is also necessary that political opportunities emerge. Even further, Tarrow (1998) argues that “contention is more closely related to opportunities for – and limited by constraints upon – collective action than by the persistent social or economic factors that people experience” (p. 71). Thus, in our case, relevant political, economic, and social grievances were basically present during the 1980-1988 period but it was not until 1989 that political opportunities materialised and, even more importantly, became more clearly visible.

gathered in the PPED in order to build political protest indicators to check whether the behaviour of these variables is consistent with this hypothesis and, in general, to show the most relevant characteristics of the political protest in Venezuela within the period of study.

Figure 4 reveals that the evolution of the total number of political protest events is consistent with the hypothesis we formulated above. Thus, the annual average of total events in period 1989-2000 more than doubled the annual average in period 1980-1988 (83.8 vs. 41.2 respectively). Furthermore, for all years of the period 1989-2000 the number of events remained high (with a minimum of 52 in 1998 vs. a minimum of 11 in 1986 within the period 1980-1988) and for most years they were higher than the highest record in the period 1980-1988 (i.e., 75 events in 1981). As table 4 shows, this increase in the total number of political protest events between these two periods is experienced by all forms of protest actions, in particular by riots and non-conventional forms (hereafter NCF) whose annual average number of events more than tripled in both cases (8.6 in 1980-1988 vs. 29.6 in 1989-2000 and 4.2 in 1980-1988 vs. 12.8 in 1989-2000, respectively).

Figure.4: Total Number of Political Protest Events

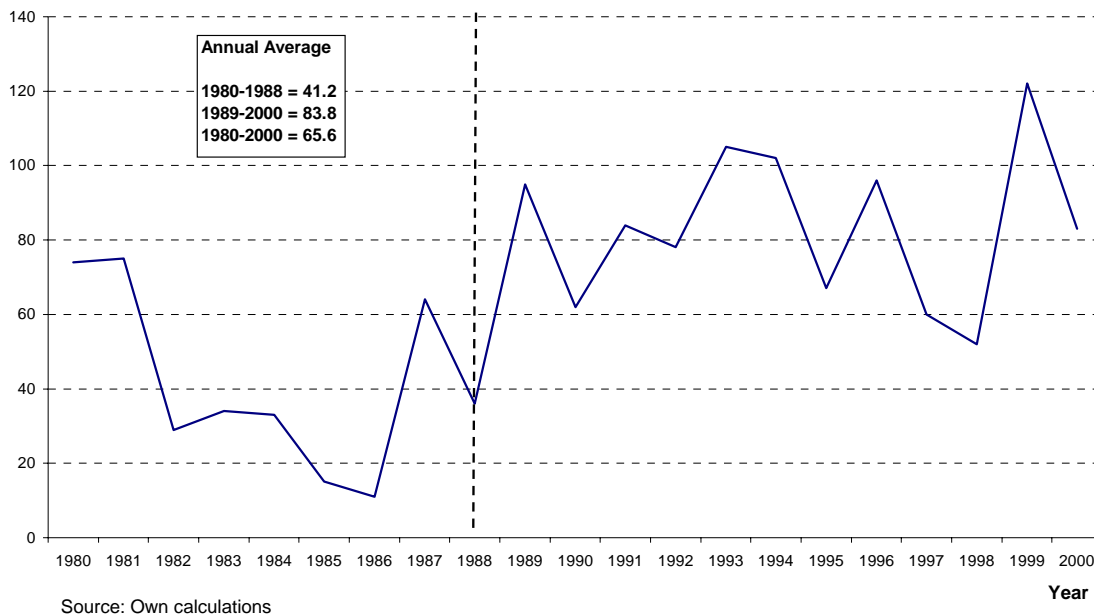


Table 4: Distribution of Protest Events by Form of Action

| Form of Action | 1980 - 2000 | | | 1980 - 1988 | | | 1989 - 2000 | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| | Number of events | Annual Average | % of total events | Number of events | Annual Average | % of total events | Number of events | Annual Average | % of total events |
| Strikes | 445 | 21.2 | 32.3% | 178 | 19.8 | 48.0% | 267 | 22.3 | 26.5% |
| Demonstrations | 308 | 14.7 | 22.4% | 78 | 8.7 | 21.0% | 230 | 19.2 | 22.9% |
| NCF | 192 | 9.1 | 13.9% | 38 | 4.2 | 10.2% | 154 | 12.8 | 15.3% |
| Riots | 432 | 20.6 | 31.4% | 77 | 8.6 | 20.8% | 355 | 29.6 | 35.3% |
| Total | 1377 | | 100.0% | 371 | | 100.0% | 1006 | | 100.0% |

Source: Own calculations

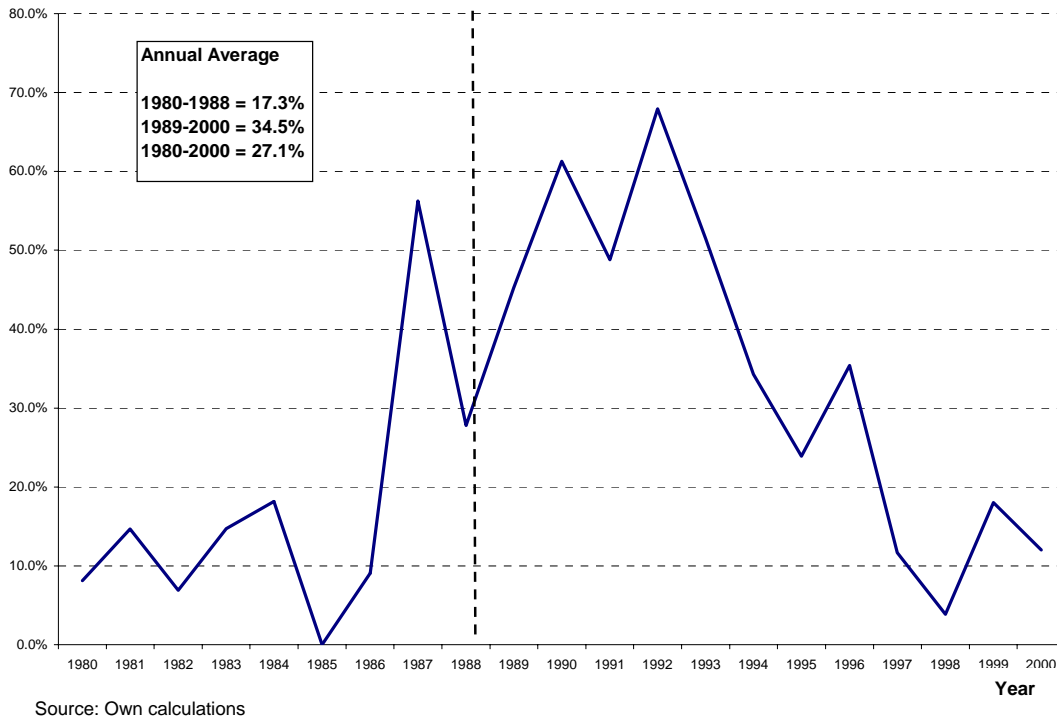
The distribution of political protest events by category reflects that in the period 1989-2000 socio-political unrest was not only higher but was also expressed in a more violent manner. Although —compared to the 1980-1988 period— violent political protest events remained being a lower portion of total events than non-violent political protest events, they increased their percentage of the total considerably from 20.8% to 35.3% (see table 5). Furthermore, the annual average of violent political protests taken from the total doubled between the periods 1980-1988 and 1989-2000 (17.3% vs. 34.5% respectively, see figure 5). Nevertheless, the distribution of violent political protest events as a portion of the total over the period 1989-2000 shows that these forms of protest action are concentrated between 1989 and 1994, an interval of time that displayed an ample range and a large number of political disturbances, signalling the increasing weakness of the political system (see figure 5).

Table 5: Distribution of Political Protest Events by Category

| Category | 1980 - 2000 | | | 1980 - 1988 | | | 1989 - 2000 | | |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| | Number of events | Annual Average | % of total events | Number of events | Annual Average | % of total events | Number of events | Annual Average | % of total events |
| Violent | 432 | 20.6 | 31.4% | 77 | 8.6 | 20.8% | 355 | 29.6 | 35.3% |
| Non-Violent | 945 | 45.0 | 68.6% | 294 | 32.7 | 79.2% | 651 | 54.3 | 64.7% |
| of which | | | | | | | | | |
| Conventional | 753 | 35.9 | 79.7% | 256 | 28.4 | 87.1% | 497 | 41.4 | 76.3% |
| of which Non- | | | | | | | | | |
| Conventional | 192 | 9.1 | 20.3% | 38 | 4.2 | 12.9% | 154 | 12.8 | 23.7% |
| Total | 1377 | | 100.0% | 371 | | 100.0% | 1006 | | 100.0% |

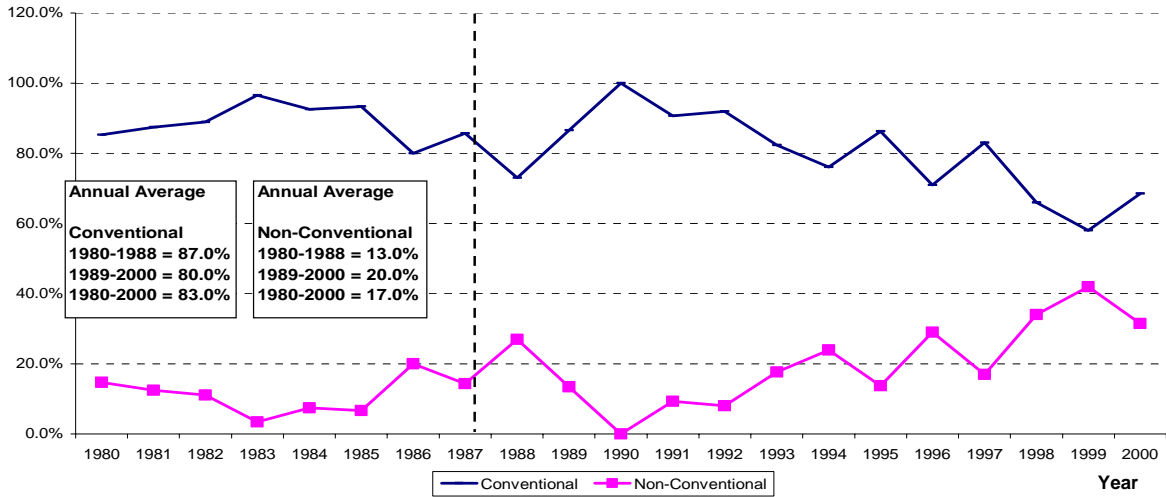
Source: Own calculations

Figure 5: Weight of Violent Political Protest Events within Total



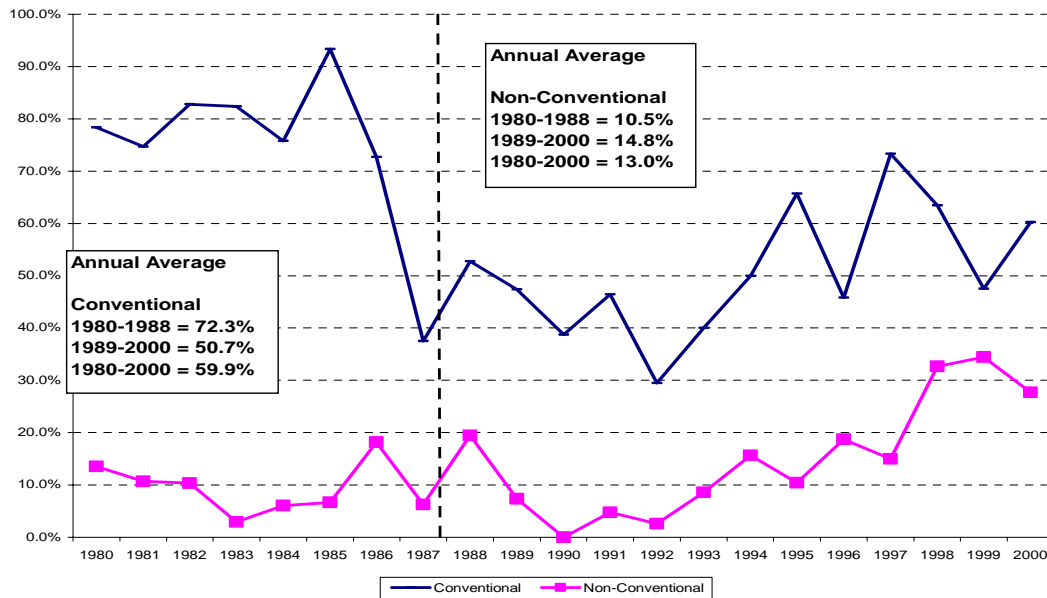
The composition of non-violent political protest events also experienced a relevant change between the periods 1980-1988 and 1989-2000. Thus, NCFs showed an important increase in their participation in the total non-violent protests, moving from an annual average of 13.0% in the period 1980-1988 to 20.0% in the period 1989-2000 (see figure 6), and constituting 12.9% of total non-violent political protests in the former period versus 23.7% in the latter (see table 5). As a consequence, the participation of NCFs in the total political protest events rose between these two periods, as reflected by the increase of its annual average percentage of total events from 10.5% to 14.8% (see figure 7), which contrasts with the opposing fall in the annual average percentage of conventional political protests forms over total political protests from 72.3% to 50.7% (see figure 7).

Figure 6: Distribution of Conventional and Non-Conventional Political Protest events within Total Non-Violent Political Protests



Source: Own calculations

Figure 7: Distribution of Conventional and Non-Conventional Political Protest events within the Total

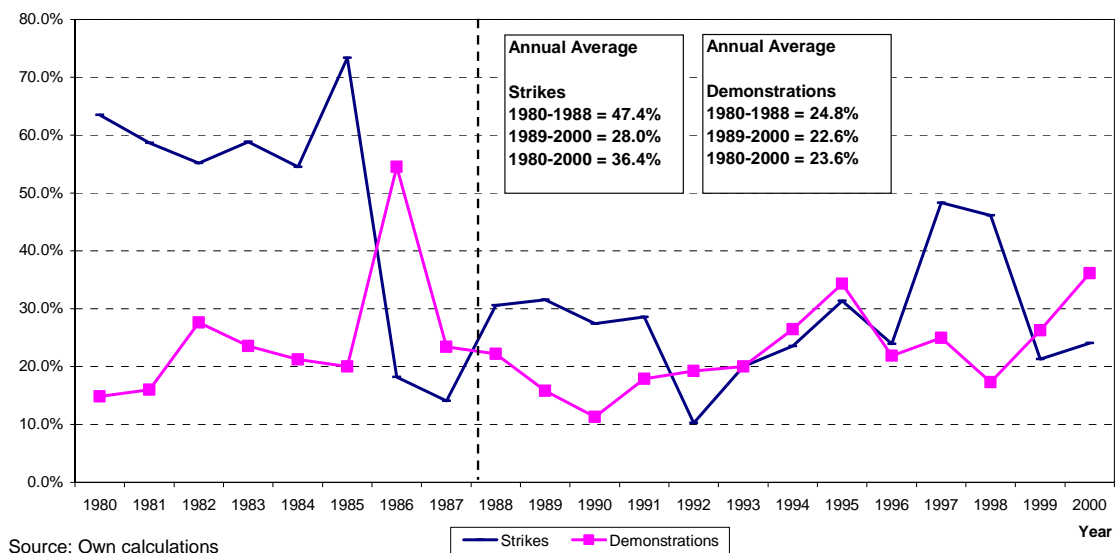


The increase in the importance of NCFs of political protests in the period 1989-2000 might reflect the deterioration of the capacity of the traditional political leadership —particularly political parties, unions, and professional organizations— to channel conflicts among interest groups and between these groups and the

different bodies of the state, as well as the appearance and growth of new political groups on the scene. As this leadership deteriorates, conventional political protest forms tend to become less frequently used, since the latter are fundamentally associated to traditional —institutionalised— political parties and groups (Tarrow 1989a, 1998). Moreover, emerging political groups (normally small in size and lacking resources and organizational skills) tend to favour NCFs of political protest —as well as violent protests— since they are normally less demanding in terms of size, duration, and constituencies, in order to be successful in achieving their goals, and therefore less exigent in terms of organization, time, and resources, as it is novelty —and disruption— what give them intensity and thereby power (Tarrow 1989a, 1998).

Within conventional forms of political protest, strikes experienced the most substantial fall, which is consistent with the fact that this form of political protest is —in general— the most institutionalised. In fact, it has become “a virtual part of the institutions of collective bargaining, with its own jurisprudence, rituals, and expectations among both challengers and opponents” (Tarrow 1998:99). Thus, while the annual average number of demonstrations over the total political protest events slightly fell from 24.8% to 22.6% between the periods 1980-1988 and 1989-2000, the annual average number of strikes fell drastically from 47.4% to 28.0% between the same periods (see figure 8). Furthermore, strikes moved from being by far the predominant form of political protest in the period 1980-1988 (48.0% of total events) to occupy the second place in the period 1989-2000 (26.5% of total events), far from the first place, held by riots (35.3% of total events) (see table 4).

Figure 8: Weight of Strikes and Demonstration within total Political Protest Events



With regard to the scope of the political protest events, local protests gained important terrain between the two periods we analyse, rising from 44.7% to 53.4% between 1980-1988 and 1989-2000 (see table 6). This is consistent with the increase in the participation of riots and NCFs of political protests in the total of events above mentioned, since these types of protests normally take place in one particular location. It is worth noticing that political protests of national scope also expanded their participation in the total, although modestly (from 18.3% to 21.0%) (see table 6). This suggests that conventional protests—which exclude riots and NCFs—were more frequently of higher magnitude (as scope is a dimension of size) and therefore of higher intensity and power.

Table 6: Distribution of Political Protest Events by Scope

| Scope | 1980 - 2000 | | 1980 - 1988 | | 1989 - 2000 | |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | Number of events | % of total events | Number of events | % of total events | Number of events | % of total events |
| Local | 703 | 51.1% | 166 | 44.7% | 537 | 53.4% |
| State | 312 | 22.7% | 115 | 31.0% | 197 | 19.6% |
| Widespread(*) | 83 | 6.0% | 22 | 5.9% | 61 | 6.1% |
| National | 279 | 20.3% | 68 | 18.3% | 211 | 21.0% |
| Total | 1377 | 100% | 371 | 100% | 1006 | 100% |

(*) Includes Regional Scope Protest Events

Source: Own Calculations

Similarly to the behaviour of political protest events regarding their scope, the distribution of these events by constituency suggests a more frequent occurrence of political protests with larger constituencies—and therefore higher intensity and power—in the period 1989-2000 than in the period 1980-1988. In particular, political protests of national constituency increased their participation from 16.4% to 29.9% between the latter and the former period (see table 7). Also, the participation in the total number of political protests with interest-group national constituencies rose between these two periods, although moderately (from 45.3% to 47.4%).

Table 7: Distribution of Political Protest Events by Constituency

| Constituency | 1980 - 2000 | | 1980 - 1988 | | 1989 - 2000 | |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | Number of events | % of total events | Number of events | % of total events | Number of events | % of total events |
| State | 64 | 4.6% | 18 | 4.9% | 46 | 4.6% |
| Widespread | 8 | 0.6% | 2 | 0.5% | 6 | 0.6% |
| National | 362 | 26.3% | 61 | 16.4% | 301 | 29.9% |
| Estate Interest Group | 264 | 19.2% | 108 | 29.1% | 156 | 15.5% |
| Widespread Interest Group | 34 | 2.5% | 14 | 3.8% | 20 | 2.0% |
| National Interest Group | 645 | 46.8% | 168 | 45.3% | 477 | 47.4% |
| Total | 1377 | 100% | 371 | 100% | 1006 | 100% |

Source: Own Calculations

The composition of political protests with regard to their main grievance clearly changed between the 1980-1988 period and the 1989-2000 period. While the weight of protests whose main grievance was economic markedly decreased from one period to the other (from 39.4% to 25.5%) the weight of those protests whose main grievance was political substantially rose (from 60.6% to 74.5%) (see table 8). Thus, compared to the period 1980-1988, in the period 1989-2000 people were more mobilised by issues not immediately related to their specific economic circumstances but by issues more closely related to their dissatisfaction with the political system (nevertheless, these issues include dissatisfaction with the economic policy). However, within the political protests motivated by economic issues, those whose main grievance is related to economic demands considerably increased their weight between the two periods of our analysis (from 32.9% to 49.4%), in contrast to the fall in the weight of those whose main grievance is related to the branch of economic contracts (from 67.1% to 50.6%) (see table 8). This suggests that deteriorated economic conditions continued to be a relevant motive of dissatisfaction with the political system in the period 1989-2000. In addition, this is consistent with the higher participation of people from the private sector and, particularly, from out of the labour force and the unemployed in the total of political protest events, and the consequent fall of participants from the public sector only (see table 9), since, in the case of Venezuela, it is in the public sector that the failure to comply with economic contracts with employees and suppliers is more —and particularly— frequent.

Table 8: Distribution of Political Protest Events by Type of Main Grievance

| Main Grievance | 1980 - 2000 | | 1980 - 1988 | | 1989 - 2000 | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | Number of events | % of total events | Number of events | % of total events | Number of events | % of total events |
| Economic | 403 | 29.3% | 146 | 39.4% | 257 | 25.5% |
| of which Eco. Demands | 175 | 43.4% | 48 | 32.9% | 127 | 49.4% |
| of which Branch of Contract | 228 | 56.6% | 98 | 67.1% | 130 | 50.6% |
| Political | 974 | 70.7% | 225 | 60.6% | 749 | 74.5% |
| of which Material | 12 | 1.2% | 5 | 2.2% | 7 | 0.9% |
| Total | 1377 | 100% | 371 | 100% | 1006 | 100% |

Source: Own calculations

Table 9: Distribution of Political Protest Events by Sector where Participants are Employed

| Sector | 1980 - 2000 | | 1980 - 1988 | | 1989 - 2000 | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | Number of events | % of total events | Number of events | % of total events | Number of events | % of total events |
| Public sector only | 518 | 37.6% | 190 | 51.2% | 327 | 32.5% |
| Private sector only | 132 | 9.6% | 29 | 7.8% | 104 | 10.3% |
| Public and private sector | 296 | 21.5% | 73 | 19.7% | 223 | 22.2% |
| Out of labor force/unemployed | 431 | 31.3% | 79 | 21.3% | 352 | 35.0% |
| Total | 1377 | 100% | 371 | 100% | 1006 | 100% |

Source: Own calculations

The distribution of political protest events by actor groups (see table 10) is consistent with three of the elements we discussed above. First, the pronounced rise in the weight within the total of actor groups of the young and Social Security (SS) beneficiaries plus the unemployed between the 1980-1988 period and the 1989-2000 period (from 23.9% to 30.4% of total actor groups the former group and from 0.2% to 2.8% the latter) is in harmony with the higher participation of people from out of the labour force and the unemployed in the total number of political protest events. Second, the important fall in the weight of workers (from 17.3% to 10.1% of total groups) and public employees (from 23.4% to 18.2% of total groups) is in line with the strong reduction of the percentage of strikes in the total amount of political protest events, since this is a form of protest to a great extent associated with these two actor groups. Third, the fall of the participation of public employees in the total number of actor

groups is consistent with the mentioned reduction of the weight of political protests whose participants come from the public sector only in the total of political protests events.

Table 10: Actor Groups Active in Protest Events as a Percentage of Total Events and Total Actor Groups

| Actor Group Active | 1980 - 2000 | | | 1980 - 1988 | | | 1989 - 2000 | | |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Number of events | % of total events (*) | % of total actor groups | Number of events | % of total events (*) | % of total actor groups | Number of events | % of total events (*) | % of total actor groups |
| Youth | 571 | 41.5% | 28.5% | 141 | 38.0% | 23.9% | 430 | 42.7% | 30.4% |
| Workers | 245 | 17.8% | 12.2% | 102 | 27.5% | 17.3% | 143 | 14.2% | 10.1% |
| Public Employees | 395 | 28.7% | 19.7% | 138 | 37.2% | 23.4% | 257 | 25.5% | 18.2% |
| Educated Middle Class | 272 | 19.8% | 13.6% | 93 | 25.1% | 15.8% | 179 | 17.8% | 12.7% |
| Independent Middle Class | 115 | 8.4% | 5.7% | 28 | 7.5% | 4.8% | 87 | 8.6% | 6.2% |
| Agricultural and Fishing | 66 | 4.8% | 3.3% | 19 | 5.1% | 3.2% | 47 | 4.7% | 3.3% |
| Social Security Beneficiaries / Unemployed | 41 | 3.0% | 2.0% | 1 | 0.3% | 0.2% | 40 | 4.0% | 2.8% |
| Territorial Groups | 28 | 2.0% | 1.4% | 14 | 3.8% | 2.4% | 14 | 1.4% | 1.0% |
| Other Groups | 114 | 8.3% | 5.7% | 29 | 7.8% | 4.9% | 85 | 8.4% | 6.0% |
| General Population | 155 | 11.3% | 7.7% | 24 | 6.5% | 4.1% | 131 | 13.0% | 9.3% |
| Total | 2002 | | 100.0% | 589 | | 100.0% | 1413 | | 100.0% |

(*) This column adds up to over 100% because of multiple group participation in some events
Source: Own calculations

Finally, the distribution of political protest events by number of actor groups and by location did not experienced significant changes between the periods 1980-1988 and 1989-2000. For the whole period 1980-2000, tables 11 and 12 show that the majority of political protests participants come from a single actor group and most of the protests take place out of the capital (Caracas). However, the percentage of those protests taking place in the capital increased moderately between the 1980-1988 and 1989-2000 periods, which is generally interpreted as protest events occurring closer to the centre of political power in the latter period. The distribution of political protests regarding these two elements is similar to what has been reported by Jodice and Taylor (1983) from the processing of their dataset on political protests for a relevant number of countries.

Table 11: Distribution of Political Protest Events by Number of Actor Groups

| Number | 1980 - 2000 | | 1980 - 1988 | | 1989 - 2000 | |
|--------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | Number of events | % of total events | Number of events | % of total events | Number of events | % of total events |
| 1 | 1088 | 79.0% | 275 | 74.1% | 813 | 80.8% |
| 2 | 149 | 10.8% | 39 | 10.5% | 110 | 10.9% |
| 3 | 48 | 3.5% | 20 | 5.4% | 28 | 2.8% |
| 4 | 47 | 3.4% | 19 | 5.1% | 28 | 2.8% |
| 5+ | 45 | 3.3% | 18 | 4.9% | 27 | 2.7% |
| Total | 1377 | 100% | 371 | 100% | 1006 | 100% |

Source: Own Calculations

Table 12: Distribution of Political Protest Events by Location

| Location | 1980 - 2000 | | 1980 - 1988 | | 1989 - 2000 | |
|--------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | Number of events | % of total events | Number of events | % of total events | Number of events | % of total events |
| Capital | 411 | 29.8% | 102 | 27.5% | 309 | 30.7% |
| Non-capital | 694 | 50.4% | 193 | 52.0% | 501 | 49.8% |
| Both | 272 | 19.8% | 76 | 20.5% | 196 | 19.5% |
| Total | 1377 | 100% | 371 | 100% | 1006 | 100% |

Source: Own Calculations

5 Indices of Socio-Political Unrest and Political Instability

We have shown that the evolution of the number and the annual —simple— average number of political protests in Venezuela is consistent with the hypothesis that socio-political unrest (SPU) was higher in the period 1989-2000 than in the period 1980-1988. Furthermore, we showed that changes in the distribution of these protest events regarding some key categories seem to reflect important political changes which have occurred in Venezuela since 1989. In this section we further contrast this hypothesis by constructing SPU indices with the data contained in the PPED, using the methodology widely employed for this purpose in the empirical literature on SPU and political instability, namely the Principal Components Method.

Moreover, we use additional fundamental political data on other dimensions of political instability for the case of Venezuela within our whole period of study (1980-2000) to build —using the Principal Components Method— political instability indices, whose behaviour we also analyse. Before we show our results we briefly describe the Principal Components Method.

5.1 The Principal Components Method

The Method of Principal Components is a special case of the more general method of Factor Analysis, which is, in general, a useful technique for examining the similarities of data series, and in particular for discovering unobserved common factors in a set of empirical variables (e.g., socio-political unrest). The aim of the method of principal components is to construct out of a set of variables $X_j, j = 1, 2, \dots, k$, a —smaller— set of new technical variables $P_i, i = 1, 2, \dots, k$, called principal components, which are linear combinations of the original X_j 's. The new variables then take the following form:

$$\begin{aligned} P_1 &= l_{11}X_1 + l_{12}X_2 + \dots + l_{1k}X_k \\ P_2 &= l_{21}X_1 + l_{22}X_2 + \dots + l_{2k}X_k \\ &\dots \\ &\dots \\ P_k &= l_{k1}X_1 + l_{k2}X_2 + \dots + l_{kk}X_k \end{aligned}$$

where the l_{ik} 's are called *loadings* and are chosen so that the constructed P_i 's satisfy two conditions: a) they are uncorrelated (orthogonal), and b) the first principal component, P_1 , absorbs and accounts for the maximum possible proportion of the total variation in the set of all X_j 's, the second principal component absorbs the maximum of the remaining variation in the X_j 's (after allowing for the variation accounted for by the first principal component) and so on.

In econometric analysis it has been suggested that the method of principal components is appropriate in two particular cases: a) as a way to reduce the number of independent variables included in an equation, when the number of explanatory variables that should be included in it, on *a priori* grounds, is very large relative to the size of the sample, and b) as a solution to the problem of multicollinearity.³⁶

5.2 The Socio-Political Unrest Indices

In section 4 we used the total number and the annual —simple— average number of political protest events as an indicator of SPU, however it could be argued that the equal weight given to the different forms of political protest might be misleading, because it is not obvious that the different types of political protests actions are equivalent in terms of their socio-political impact (for example, it could be argued that, even assuming the same level of

³⁶ For textbook good and detailed expositions of the principal components method see Koutsoyiannis (1977) and Theil (1979).

intensity, violent political protests express higher SPU levels than strikes). The Principal Components Method offers an alternative approach to the construction of an indicator of SPU, consisting of using the first principal component built with the series of the four forms of political protests events we have considered (i.e., strikes, demonstrations, NCFs, and riots) as an SPU index. This procedure gives us an index that—as a result of the way its weights (loadings) are calculated—absorbs and accounts for the maximum possible proportion of the total variation in the set of all forms of political protest incorporated.

We used the Principal Components Method to construct indices of SPU employing five samples of annual data from the PPED. The two criteria used for building these samples are the extent of the constituencies and the type of the main grievance. Sample 1 includes all political protest events in the PPED (therefore, no constraints regarding constituencies and main grievance are imposed). Sample 2 includes only political protest events whose constituency is *larger* than state, interest group state, regional or interest group regional (i.e., only political protest events whose constituencies are widespread, interest group widespread, national or interest group national). Sample 3 includes only political protest events whose type of main grievance is political. Sample 4 includes only political protest events whose constituency is *larger* than state, interest group estate, regional or interest group regional and whose type of main grievance is political. Finally, sample 5 includes only political protest events whose constituency is national or interest group national and whose type of main grievance is political.

The reasons for building our five samples of political protest events on the basis of the extent of the constituency and the type of the main grievance are the following. First, our definition of political protest (section 2) is broad enough to include events whose grievance is economic in nature. However, some databases on political protest events frequently used in economic and political research (e.g., Taylor and Hudson 1972; Jodice and Taylor 1983, 1988; and Banks 1971, 1994) exclude from their samples protests whose—main—issue motivating the action is economic (i.e., their main grievance is economic). Excluding protest events whose main grievance is of economic nature (samples 3, 4, and 5) makes our results more comparable with those obtained in previous research in these fields. By the same token, restricting sample 5 to political protest events with national constituencies makes it possible to compare our results with previous studies in the mentioned areas, because databases on political protests frequently used in these studies focus exclusively on protest events of national constituencies (e.g., Jodice and Taylor (1983) state that for a protest event to be included in the database “the protest issues involved [have to be] perceived as significant at the national level, but within that framework, demonstrations [and in general protests] directed at all branches and levels of government are included”, p.19).

Second, controlling for the type of main grievance among the samples 1 and 2 (which imposes no restrictions regarding the type of main grievance, so they include both protests whose type of main grievance is economic and those whose type of main grievance is political) and among samples 3, 4, and 5 (which include only protests whose type of main grievance is political), by increasing the magnitude of the constituency within these two groups of samples (i.e., the first group composed by samples 1 and 2 and the second group composed by samples 3, 4, and 5), we “progressively” increase the intensity—and consequently the power— of the events included in each group of samples. By doing this: a) we “increasingly” avoid the problem of validity within these two groups of samples, and b) we “progressively” increase the power of the protest events included in them (i.e., the capacity of the protest events included to influence policy decisions and provoke government and institutional changes³⁷). The former allows us to “increasingly” avoid the problem of validity of the socio-political unrest indices we build out of these two groups of samples, and the latter allows us to control for the “relevance” —power— of the political protest events “encapsulated” in our indices.

The results of the calculations of the five versions of the SPU are summarised in tables 13 and 14. Table 13 presents the percentage of the total variation accounted for by each principal component for each of the samples. In all cases the first component absorbs and accounts for 50% or more of the total variation in the set of all forms of political protest included (with a maximum of 51%). Table 14 shows the loadings of the first principal component for each of the samples of political protests, which we used as our SPU indices. We denoted the corresponding indices as $SPUI_k$, where $k = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5$. In constructing these indices we first standardised all variables included in them, so as to obtain comparable magnitudes of the effect of each variable.

³⁷ See footnote 20 for a definition of the power of a protest event and its relationship with its intensity.

Table 13: The Proportion of the Total Variation Accounted for by each Principal Component for each of the Samples – For SPUIs

| Principal Component | SAMPLE 1 | | SAMPLE 2 | | SAMPLE 3 | | SAMPLE 4 | | SAMPLE 5 | |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Proportion | Cumulative | Proportion | Cumulative | Proportion | Cumulative | Proportion | Cumulative | Proportion | Cumulative |
| PC 1 | 0.496 | 0.496 | 0.506 | 0.506 | 0.5130 | 0.513 | 0.506 | 0.506 | 0.501 | 0.501 |
| PC 2 | 0.284 | 0.78 | 0.257 | 0.763 | 0.284 | 0.797 | 0.253 | 0.758 | 0.258 | 0.759 |
| PC 3 | 0.186 | 0.966 | 0.197 | 0.96 | 0.168 | 0.965 | 0.199 | 0.958 | 0.194 | 0.952 |
| PC 4 | 0.034 | 1.0000 | 0.04 | 1.0000 | 0.035 | 1.0000 | 0.042 | 1.0000 | 0.048 | 1.0000 |

Source: Own calculations

Table 14: Loadings of the first Principal Component for each of the Samples of Political Protests – for SPUIs

| Variables | SAMPLE 1 | SAMPLE 2 | SAMPLE 3 | SAMPLE 4 | SAMPLE 5 |
|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | (SPUI 1) | (SPUI 2) | (SPUI 3) | (SPUI 4) | (SPUI 5) |
| STRIKE | 0.32868 | 0.39892 * | 0.4432 * | 0.41808 * | 0.40262 * |
| DEMONSTRATIONS | 0.66255 ** | 0.62894 ** | 0.63092 ** | 0.62891 ** | 0.63024 ** |
| NCF | 0.62446 ** | 0.60014 ** | 0.59473 ** | 0.54436 ** | 0.52914 ** |
| RIOTS | 0.25109 | 0.29178 | 0.22757 | 0.36518 | 0.40088 * |

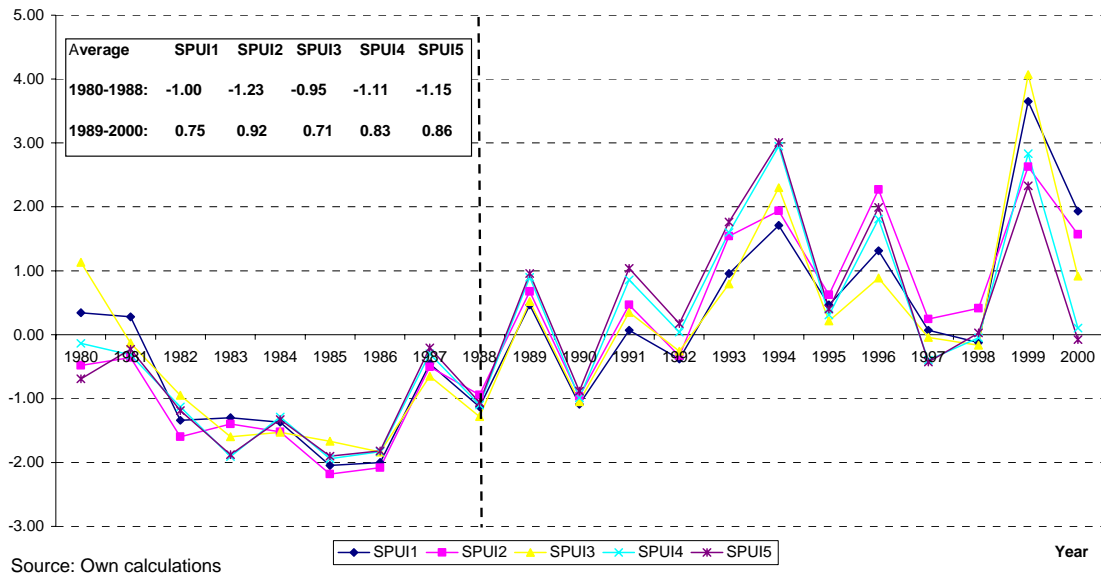
Note: * and ** denote statistical significance at 5% level and 1% level respectively. Critical values from Koutsouyiannis (1977)

Source: Own calculations

Figure 9 shows the evolution over time of the five SPU indices constructed. It is clear that their paths over the whole period 1980-2000 are quite similar³⁸, all of them visibly reflecting lower levels of SPU in the period 1980-1988 than in the period 1989-2000. In fact, the annual average level of each index is significantly lower in the former period than in the latter (see figure 9). For example, the annual average level of the $SPUI_1$ in the period 1980-1988 is -1.00 while it is 0.75 in the period 1989-2000. Therefore, these results clearly support the hypothesis that SPU was higher in the period 1989-2000 than in the period 1980-1988.

³⁸ This is consistent with the fact that the SPU indices are highly correlated, which is reflected by the high values of their correlation coefficients. The correlation matrix of these indices is shown in the Appendix.

Figure 9: Socio-Political Unrest Indices



In order to explore the relationship between our SPU indices and some key socio-economic variables that are expected to be associated with SPU we calculated the correlation coefficient between each of the SPU indices and these variables. The results are shown in table 15. All correlation coefficients between each SPU index and the socio-economic variables included have the expected —theoretical— sign. Furthermore, with the exception of the rate of unemployment —particularly in the instances of *SPUI₄* and *SPUI₅*, the correlation coefficients are rather high and in the vast majority of cases they are statistically significant, at least at 10% (73.3% of the coefficients) and in the majority of the cases at 5% (53.3% of the coefficients).

Table 15: Estimated Correlation Coefficients between SPU Indices and Key Socio-Economics Variables

| | SPUI 1 | SPUI 2 | SPUI 3 | SPUI 4 | SPUI 5 |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| XGDPNO | -0,4840 ** | -0,4316 * | -0,5119 ** | -0,4624 ** | -0,4166 * |
| XGDPT | -0,3493 | -0,2558 | -0,3833 * | -0,2986 | -0,248 |
| INFLATION | 0,4022 * | 0,6046 ** | 0,3735 * | 0,5946 ** | 0,6446 ** |
| POVERTY LEVEL | 0,3868 * | 0,5995 ** | 0,3137 | 0,5049 ** | 0,5664 ** |
| CRITICAL POVERTY LEVEL | 0,4522 ** | 0,658 ** | 0,3866 * | 0,5584 ** | 0,6095 ** |
| UNEMPLOYMENT | 0,2198 | 0,1899 | 0,1578 | 0,0472 | 0,0197 |
| RIE | -0,5870 ** | -0,7513 ** | -0,5052 ** | -0,6261 ** | -0,6599 ** |
| RAIH | -0,3803 * | -0,5864 ** | -0,3008 | -0,4939 ** | -0,5578 ** |

Notes: 1) ** and * denote statistical significance at 5% level and 10% level respectively. Critical values from Koutsouyiannis (1977). 2) XGDPNO= Growth Rate of Non-Oil GDP. 3) XGDPT= Growth Rate of Total GDP. 4) RIE= Real Income per Employed. 5) RAIH = Real Average Income per Household. 6) Poverty Level and Critical Poverty Level refer to the percentage of households in poverty and critical poverty. Definitions of Poverty Level and Critical Poverty Level are provided in Muñoz (2006, chapter 5, footnote 28)

Source: Central Bank of Venezuela, Institute of National Statistics, and Own Calculations.

5.3 The Political Instability Indices

Many empirical studies on the effect of political instability on other (social, economic, and political variables) have used the method of principal components to construct indices of SPU and political instability (PI). In most of the cases, rather than the gains in terms of degrees of freedom in the econometric analysis carried out in these studies, what has lead researchers to construct and use these indices is the fact that most of the different — operational— variables available to measure these two phenomena are correlated, which gives rise to relevant problems of multicollinearity.³⁹

We used the Principal Components Method to construct indices of political instability employing the same five samples of section 5.2 but with quarterly data. To this end, in addition to the political protest variables we used in the construction of the SPU indices we incorporated important political variables on other dimensions of political instability for the case of Venezuela. The purpose here is two fold. On the one hand, we want to examine the behaviour of the PI indices within the two socio-political periods we have distinguished within the whole period

³⁹ These problems arise even if the variables used to measure socio-political unrest and political instability express different dimensions of these two concepts.

1980-2000. On the other hand, we seek to make available to us indicators of PI to be used in further research on the relationship between PI and economic activity in Venezuela in the period of study.⁴⁰

Table 16 presents the names and definitions of the political variables we included in the construction of the PI indices.

Table 16: Variables Included in the Construction of the Political Instability Indices

| Variable Name | Definition | Source |
|----------------------|--|------------------|
| Strike | Number of strikes, as defined in section 2 | PPED |
| Dem | Number of demonstrations, as defined in section 2 | PPED |
| NCF | Number of Non-conventional forms of protests, as defined in section 2 | PPED |
| Riot | Number of Riots, as defined in section 2 | PPED |
| Regime | Dummy variable that takes the number 1 on those quarters when a change in the office national executive from one ruling group to another that is accomplished through conventional legal or customary procedures took place, and zero otherwise. | |
| Election | Dummy variable that takes the number 1 on those quarters when general elections took place, and zero otherwise. It includes all types of national elections: presidential, parliamentary and regional. | CNE ^a |
| Provisional | Dummy variable that takes the number 1 on those quarters when a provisional —not elected— government was in power, and zero otherwise. | |
| Coup | Dummy variable that takes the number 1 on those quarters when a coup d'etat attempt took place, and zero otherwise. | |

⁴⁰ We actually undertook this research, whose results have been published in Muñoz (2006, chapter 7) and Muñoz (2009). The reason for using quarterly data in the building of these indices is that this research on PI and economic activity in Venezuela is based on quarterly data.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Referendum | Dummy variable that takes the number 1 on the quarters when a political referendum took place, and zero otherwise. | |
| Caracazo | Dummy variable that takes the number 1 on the quarter when the so-called “Caracazo” (two consecutive days of generalised, nationally widespread, and highly violent riots) took place, and zero otherwise. | |
| Impeachment | Dummy variable that takes the number 1 on the quarter when the impeachment process to the president Carlos Andrés Pérez took place, and zero otherwise. | |
| CEA | Change of Economic Authorities: number of changes of heads of key public economic institutions. Simple redistribution of authorities among the same individuals does not constitute a CEA. Someone must be moved into or out of the group of key economic institutions. (This variable is similarly defined with the name of “executive adjustments” by Jodice and Taylor 1983:p.95). The list of Venezuelan economic institutions included is presented in Appendix. | Institutions included in the list of key public economic institutions (See Appendix) |
| (a) National Electoral Council (CNE Spanish acronym) | | |

Among the political variables added to the political protest variables in order to build the PI indices, provisional, coup, referendum, Caracazo, and impeachment are related to the Venezuelan political history in our particular period of study (1980-2000).⁴¹ These variables and the other three added political variables (i.e., regime, election, and CEA) constitute relevant determinants of the probability of changes in different dimensions of the political system in our period of analysis, and therefore relevant determinants of PI, which we formally define as *the propensity to a change in the political system of a country, where the latter includes the prevailing political institutions and legal system, the present political group in power, and the set of policies in place.*

As in the case of the SPU indices, we summarise the results of the calculations of the five versions of the PI indices in two tables. Table 17 presents the percentage of the total variation accounted for by each principal

⁴¹ As mentioned above, a brief description and analysis of the evolution of the Venezuelan Polity and economy during its democratic era can be found in Muñoz (2006, chapter 5).

component for each of the samples. For the first principal components these percentages range from 21.9% (sample 1) to 24.5% (sample 5). Although these percentages of the total variation are not relatively high, they are in line with the results with regard to this matter reported by many studies in the empirical literature on PI (e.g., Alesina and Perotti (1996) report 27.1% and Asteriou and Siriopoulos (2000) report 26.0%). Table 18 shows the loadings of the first principal component for each of the samples utilized, which we used as our PI indices. We denoted the corresponding indices as PII_k , where $k = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5$. As in the case of the SPU indices, in constructing these indices we first standardised all variables included in them, so as to obtain comparable magnitudes of the effect of each variable

Table 17: Proportion of the Total Variation Accounted for by each Principal Component for each set of the variables (differentiated by the five samples of political protest) used to build the PII_k

| Principal Component | SAMPLE 1 | | SAMPLE 2 | | SAMPLE 3 | | SAMPLE 4 | | SAMPLE 5 | |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Proportion | Cumulative | Proportion | Cumulative | Proportion | Cumulative | Proportion | Cumulative | Proportion | Cumulative |
| PC 1 | 0.2193 | 0.2193 | 0.2303 | 0.2303 | 0.2265 | 0.2265 | 0.2423 | 0.2423 | 0.2447 | 0.2447 |
| PC 2 | 0.1291 | 0.3484 | 0.1341 | 0.3644 | 0.1268 | 0.3533 | 0.1309 | 0.3732 | 0.13 | 0.3747 |
| PC 3 | 0.1134 | 0.4618 | 0.1133 | 0.4777 | 0.1133 | 0.4665 | 0.1132 | 0.4864 | 0.1133 | 0.488 |
| PC 4 | 0.1024 | 0.5642 | 0.1000 | 0.5778 | 0.0985 | 0.5651 | 0.0981 | 0.5845 | 0.0991 | 0.5871 |
| PC 5 | 0.0953 | 0.6595 | 0.0909 | 0.6687 | 0.0909 | 0.6559 | 0.0891 | 0.6736 | 0.0901 | 0.6772 |
| PC 6 | 0.0819 | 0.7414 | 0.0831 | 0.7517 | 0.0822 | 0.7381 | 0.0821 | 0.7558 | 0.0825 | 0.7597 |
| PC 7 | 0.0717 | 0.8131 | 0.0695 | 0.8212 | 0.0753 | 0.8134 | 0.0674 | 0.8232 | 0.0675 | 0.8272 |
| PC 8 | 0.0592 | 0.8723 | 0.0557 | 0.8769 | 0.0578 | 0.8712 | 0.0553 | 0.8785 | 0.0541 | 0.8813 |
| PC 9 | 0.0511 | 0.9234 | 0.0468 | 0.9238 | 0.0469 | 0.9182 | 0.0492 | 0.9277 | 0.047 | 0.9283 |
| PC 10 | 0.0367 | 0.9601 | 0.0345 | 0.9583 | 0.0382 | 0.9564 | 0.0308 | 0.9585 | 0.0303 | 0.9586 |
| PC 11 | 0.0216 | 0.9816 | 0.0234 | 0.9816 | 0.0244 | 0.9807 | 0.024 | 0.9825 | 0.0241 | 0.9828 |
| PC 12 | 0.0184 | 1.0000 | 0.0184 | 1.0000 | 0.0193 | 1.0000 | 0.0175 | 1.0000 | 0.0172 | 1.0000 |

Source: Own Calculations

Table 18: Loadings of the First Principal Component for Each set of the variables (differentiated by the five samples of political protest) used to build the PII_k

| Variables | SAMPLE 1 | SAMPLE 2 | SAMPLE 3 | SAMPLE 4 | SAMPLE 5 |
|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| STRIKE | 0.15453 | 0.26091 * | 0.31259 ** | 0.36662 ** | 0.37881 ** |
| DEM | 0.50371 ** | 0.48515 ** | 0.47503 ** | 0.45773 ** | 0.44555 ** |
| NCF | 0.47866 ** | 0.47194 ** | 0.44277 ** | 0.42969 ** | 0.43154 ** |
| RIOT | 0.34064 ** | 0.33661 ** | 0.34300 ** | 0.35191 ** | 0.35404 |
| REGIME | 0.13762 | 0.09783 | 0.15772 | 0.10684 | 0.10413 |
| ELECTION | 0.12098 | 0.15824 | 0.11327 | 0.14971 | 0.15307 |
| PROVISIONAL | 0.11097 | 0.15457 | 0.1519 | 0.18519 | 0.18833 |
| COUP | 0.17694 | 0.21529 | 0.17668 | 0.21032 | 0.21348 |
| REFERENDUM | 0.22980 * | 0.11397 | 0.16273 | 0.06425 | 0.03466 |
| CARACAZO | 0.29775 * | 0.32712 ** | 0.33371 ** | 0.35176 ** | 0.35282 ** |
| IMPEACHMENT | 0.15086 | 0.16323 | 0.10098 | 0.09561 | 0.09532 |
| CEA | 0.36854 ** | 0.3302 ** | 0.35058 ** | 0.31342 ** | 0.31038 ** |

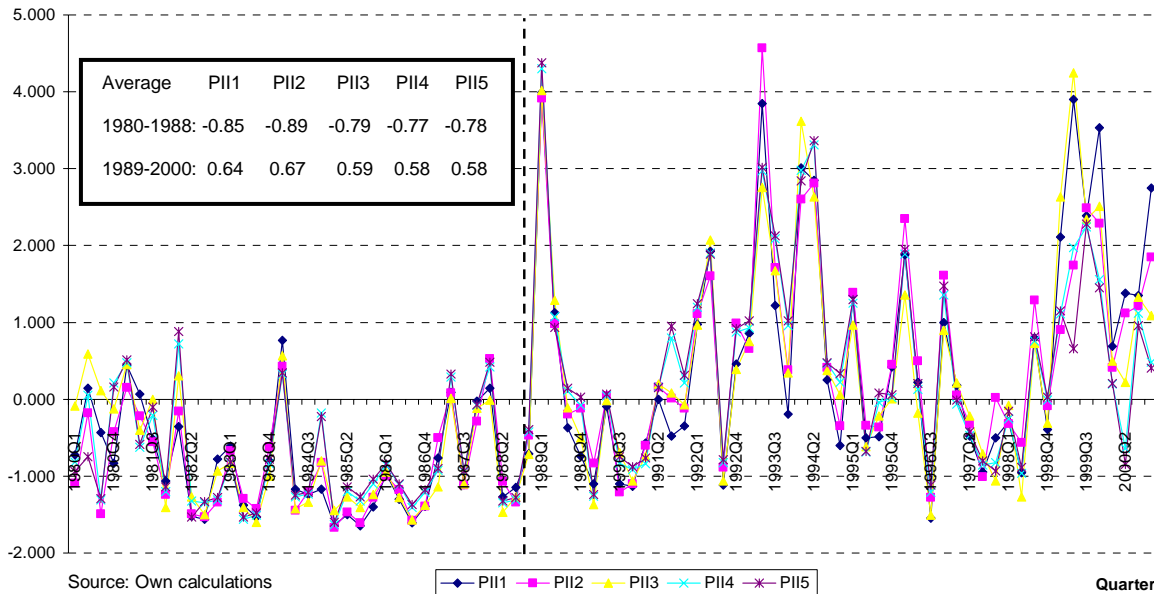
Note: * and ** denote statistical significance at 5% level and 1% level respectively. Critical values from Koutsouyiannis (1977: 432)

Source: PPED, Own Calculations

Figure 10 shows the behaviour of the five PI indices constructed. It is quite apparent that their paths over the whole period 1980-2000 are very similar⁴², as well as the fact that their levels are lower in the period 1980-1988 than in the period 1989-2000. As a matter of fact, the quarterly average level of each index is considerably lower in the former period than in the latter (see figure 10). For example, the quarterly average level of the PPI_t in the period 1980-1988 is -0.85 while it is 0.64 in the period 1989-2000. Therefore, these results suggest that PI was much higher in the period 1989-2000 than in the period 1980-1988, which is in line with the deep worsening of the political system and the unfavourable behaviour of some key socio-economic variables experienced in the former period.

⁴² As in the case of the SPU indices, this similarity is consistent with the fact that the PI indices are highly correlated, which is reflected by the high values of their correlation coefficients. The correlation matrix of the PI indices is shown in the Appendix.

Figure 10: Political Instability Indices



6 Conclusions

We built a political protest events database for Venezuela during the period 1980-2000 from domestic newspaper sources using a methodology designed to maximise the level of validity and reliability of the data contained in it. This process involved two main steps: the construction of a database of newspaper reports on protest events, the CCENDES (for which we used a previously existing but incomplete database of this kind, the CENDES database), and the transformation of this database (CCENDES) into the final political protest events database, denoted by PPED. The different test of reliability we performed on both the CCENDES and the PPED suggest that this problem was reasonably overcome.

The PPED was our source of data for building indicators of socio-political unrest (SPU) and political instability (PI) for the period 1980-2000 in Venezuela. We first approached the behaviour of SPU in this period through indicators of political protest. These indicators clearly suggest that SPU was much higher in the period 1989-2000 than in the period 1980-1988, which is expressed by a strong increase in the number of political protest events between these two periods and a change in the distribution of these protest events; in particular, protest events became more frequently violent, less frequently conventional, and more frequently motivated by issues that concern the whole nation.

Second, we analysed the behaviour of SPU by means of a set of SPU indices constructed from political protest events data in order to confirm the behaviour of SPU in the period 1980-2000 suggested by the previous indicators of political protest. These indices also indicate a relevant increase of SPU in Venezuela between the periods 1980-1988 and 1989-2000. Moreover, they are notably correlated with key social and economic variables during the period of study.

Using the data contained the PPED and other key political variables for the period 1980-2000 we built indices of PI. They show a notable increase of PI in Venezuela since 1989. This finding and the behaviour of SPU in Venezuela suggested by our indicators of political protest and our SPU indices during the period of analysis are consistent with the profound deterioration of the Venezuelan political system since 1989 and the adverse behaviour of some fundamental socio-economic variables in this country since the 1980s, particularly during the 1990s.

Finally, in spite of its limitations (which, in most of the cases, it shares with the majority of political events databases whose sources of data are newspapers), the PPED constitutes, in our opinion, a very useful source of data on political protest for carrying out research on an ample variety of topics within the different fields of social sciences, for the case of Venezuela and for comparing the latter with the cases of other countries or regions. Further work on this database, in order to update it and improve its characteristics is a task worth to be done, specially taking into account the fact that the period spanning the end of 2001 until the beginning of 2009 has been one of the most socially and politically turbulent episodes of Venezuelan democracy.

Appendix

A.1 Descriptive Words used for Numerical equivalence according to the Category 12 of the Protest Event Coding Protocol

Table A.1: Descriptive Words from Newspapers Reports referring to number of participants in Political Protest Events

| Number of Participants according to Category 12 | Descriptive Words (Spanish) |
|---|--|
| 1-99 | concurrida/o confluida considerable diversos/as llena/o muchos/as muchedumbre nutrida regular tumulto varios |
| 100-1.000 | abultada abundante amplia copiosa cuantiosa extensa gran (cantidad / afluencia / magnitud) multitud numerosas profusa (asistencia / representación) |
| 1.000 + | desbordante desmedida enorme excesiva gigantesca ilimitada incontable incuantificable inmedible innumerable multitudinaria |

A.2 Correlation Coefficients between the Socio-Political Unrest Indices

Table A.2: Estimated Correlation Coefficients Matrix – Socio-Political Unrest Indices (SPUI)
Annual data (1980-2000)

| | SPUI1 | SPUI2 | SPUI3 | SPUI4 | SPUI5 |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| SPUI1 | 1.000 | | | | |
| SPUI2 | 0.946* | 1.000 | | | |
| SPUI3 | 0.960* | 0.886* | 1.000 | | |
| SPUI4 | 0.893* | 0.934* | 0.916* | 1.000 | |
| SPUI5 | 0.847* | 0.924* | 0.857* | 0.991* | 1.000 |

Note:* denotes 5% statistical significance.

Source: Own Calculations

A.3 Correlation Coefficients between the Political Instability Indices

Table A.3: Estimated Correlation Coefficients Matrix – Political Instability Indices

| | PII1 | PII2 | PII3 | PII4 | PII5 |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| PII1 | 1.000 | | | | |
| PII2 | 0.951* | 1.000 | | | |
| PII3 | 0.958 | 0.905* | 1.000 | | |
| PII4 | 0.898 | 0.942 | 0.936* | 1.000 | |
| PII5 | 0.859 | 0.929 | 0.893 | 0.989* | 1.000 |

Note:* denotes 5% statistical significance.

Source: Own Calculations

A.4 List of Key Public Economic Institutions used for the calculation of the Variable CEA (Changes of Economics Authorities), used in the construction of Political Instability Indices

Table A.4: Public Economic Institution included in the calculation of the variable CEA for the construction of Political Instability Indices

| Institution (Spanish) | Institution (English) |
|--|---|
| Ministerio de Infraestructura | Minstry of Infraestructure |
| Ministerio de Finanzas | Ministry of Finance |
| Ministerio de Agricultura y Cría | Ministry of Agriculture |
| Ministerio de Producción y Comercio | Ministry of Trade and Production |
| Ministerio del Trabajo | Ministry of Labour |
| Fondo de Inversiones de Venezuela | Venezuelan Investment Fund |
| Fondo de Garantías y Depósitos | Deposit Guarantee Fund |
| Banco Central de Venezuela | Central Bank of Venezuela |
| Superintendencia de Bancos | Banking System Regulator Office |
| Petróleos de Venezuela S.A. | Venezuelan Petroleum Oil Company |
| Ministerio de Planificación y Desarrollo | Ministry of Planification and Development |
| Ministerio de Energía y Minas | Ministry of Energy and Mines |

Bibliographic References

- Alesina, A. and Perotti, R. (1996b) Income distribution, political instability, and investment. *European Economic Review* **40**, 1203-1228.
- Asterious, D. and Siriopoulos, C. (2000) The role of political instability in stock market development and economic growth: The case of Greece. *Economic Notes* **29**, 355-374.
- Banks, A.S. (1994) *A Political Handbook of the world*, edn. Binghamton: CSA Publications.
- Banks, A.S. (1971) *Cross-polity time series data*, London, UK: MIT Press.
- Foweraker, J. and Landman, T. (1997) *Citizenship rights and social movements: A comparative and statistical analysis*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Franzosi, R. (1987) The press as a source of socio-historical data: issues in the methodology of data collection from newspapers. *Historical Methods* **20**, 5-16.
- Gamson, W. and Meyer, D. (1996) The framing of political opportunity. In: McAdam, D., McCarthy, J. and Zald, M., (Eds.) *Comparative perspectives on social movements: political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings.*, pp. 275-90. Cambridge University Press]
- Gurr, T.R. (1980) A conceptual system of political indicators. In: Taylor, C.L., (Ed.) *Indicator systems for political, economic, and social analysis*, Cambridge, MA: Oelgeschlager, Gunn and Hain, Publishers, Inc]
- Huntington, S. and Nelson, J. (1976) No easy choice: political participation in developing countries, (Ed.) Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA: Harvard University Press.
- Jodice, D.A. and Taylor, C.L. (1988) *World handbook of political and social indicators*, Fourth edn. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Jodice, D.A. and Taylor, C.L. (1983) *World handbook of political and social indicators*, Third edn. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Koutsoyiannis, A. (1977) *Theory of econometrics: an introductory exposition of econometric methods*. London: The Macmillan Press LTD.
- Kriesi, H., Koopmans, R., Duyvendak, J.W. and Giugni, M.G. (1995) *New social movements in Western Europe: A comparative analysis*, First edn. London, UK: UCL Press.
- Lander, L., López, M. and Salamanca, L. (2000) Manual del usuario y glosario de descriptores de la base de datos El Bravo Pueblo. *Universidad Central de Venezuela*. Mimeo
- Muñoz, R (2006) *Political Uncertainty and Macroeconomic Outcomes: Theoretical and Empirical Essays*. University of Essex. Department of Economics. PhD Thesis.
- Muñoz, R (2009) *Political Instability and Growth: the case of Venezuela (1983 – 2000)*. Mercantil Bank.

Economic Research Unit. Working Papers Series: Year 9, Number 2.

- Nunnally, J. (1967) *Psychometric theory*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Rochon, T.R. (1990) The west european peace movement and the theory of new social movements. In: Dalton, R.J. and Kuchler, M., (Eds.) *Challenging the political order: new social and political movements in western democracies*, Cambridge, U.K.:
- Rucht, D. and Ohlemacher, T. (1992) Protest event data: collection, uses and perspectives. In: Diani, M. and Eyerman, R., (Eds.) *Studying collective action*, London, UK: SAGE Publications]
- Rummel, R. (1966) A foreign conflict code sheet. *World Politics* **18**, 283-96.
- Snyder, D. and Kely, W. (1977) Conflict intensity, media sensitivity and the validity of newspaper data. *American Sociological Review* **42**, 105-123.
- Snyder, D. and Kelly, W. (1975) Industrial violence in Italy, 1878-1903. *American Journal of Sociology* **82**, 131-162.
- Snyder, D. and Tilly, C. (1972) Hardship and collective violence in France, 1830 to 1960. *American Sociological Review* **37**, 520-532.
- Tanter, R. (1966) Dimensions of conflict behaviour within and between nations, 1958-1960. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* **X**, 41-64.
- Tarrow, S. (1998) *Power in movement: social movements and contentious politics*. 2nd. edn Cambridge. U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Tarrow, S. (1994) *Power in movement. Social movements, collective action and politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tarrow, S. (1989a) *Democracy and disorder: protest and politics in Italy 1965 - 1975*, Oxford, U.K.: Clarendon Press.
- Tarrow, S. (1989b) *Struggle, politics, and reform: social movements and policy change during cycles of protest*. Ithaca, New York: Cronell University, Westerns Societies Program, Occasional Paper 21.
- Taylor, C.L. and Hudson, M. (1972) *Word handbook of political and social indicators*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Theil, H. (1979) *Principles of Econometrics*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Tilly, C. (1978) *From mobilization to revolution*, Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.
- Tintner, G. (1952) *Econometrics*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, INC.
- Zeller, R.A. and Carmines, E.G. (1980) *Measurement in the social sciences: The link between theory and data*, Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.