

### Appendix III: Contentious Event Analysis

The operationalization of the repression and contention variables in this study relied heavily on “contentious event” data gathered via a detailed examination of the newspaper content in the Spanish daily *El País*. Contentious event (CE) analysis is essentially a subset of event analysis<sup>1</sup> that has its inspiration in the works of Charles Tilly, who has often taken as a fundamental analytical tool the notion of a contentious gathering: “an occasion in which 10 or more people gathered in a publicly accessible place and visibly made claims that, if realized, would affect the interests of some person(s) outside the group,” such as riots, protests, disturbances, strikes, demonstrations, and, by extension, rebellious activities (Tilly, 1978: 76).

This type of event analysis is tailor-made for the examination of “contentious politics,” insofar as it permits the measurement of the full range of nationalist actions—whether large or small, whether violent or non-violent—that fall under the rubric of collective action and political and social movements. Since these actions can then be statistically linked to a variety of political, social, and economic variables, the technique is uniquely situated for an analysis of the connections among structure, politics, and action.

The best sources for analyzing the full range of ethnonationalist contentious events in Spain are Spanish newspapers.<sup>2</sup> The *New York Times* would be a more accessible source, but it is doubtful that this would contain much information on petitioning in Valencia, on public rallies in Galicia, or on sit-ins in the Basque Country—on anything, that is, but the most violent of actions. The best Spanish source, furthermore, would be country-wide in scope and located in the geographic *center* of the country (i.e., not based in one of the regions with a salient ethno-nationalist movement). Only two newspapers—the center-right *ABC* and the center-left *El País*—satisfy these criteria. Since *ABC* was too closely associated with the Franco regime before and during the Transition, the choice between the two was relatively simple.

The exact data-gathering technique was the non-sampled investigation of the index of *El País*.<sup>3</sup> The annual indices contain categorized summary reports of all articles appearing in the print version; each summary report includes sufficient information on the time, place, actions, actors, and incidents surrounding each episode to permit a valid operationalization of the event.<sup>4</sup> The resultant data set is highly valuable. The raw data alone amount to an excellent resource for future investigations into the nature of Spanish ethnonationalist contentious politics.

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<sup>1</sup> For an extended discussion of the varieties of event analyses, see Olzak (1989). For “contentious event” analysis in particular, Tarrow (1996) provides a useful introduction.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the relative benefits of newspapers vs. police sources, etc., please refer to Kriesi et al. (1995). Overall, Kriesi argues, and McAdam concurs, that “...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 1995: 253; see also McAdam 1982: 235). Kriesi also discusses therein the benefits of the quantification of protest.

<sup>3</sup> As of 2000, the index to *El País* was available annually from mid-1976 (when the newspaper was founded) until the end of 1996.

<sup>4</sup> This data-gathering technique has thus far been used primarily with the *New York Times* (e.g., McAdam, 1982, and the countless studies using Taylor & Jodice’s *World Handbook* data). Another primary technique is to use a sample of full-length newspaper articles (e.g., Kriesi et al. 1995). There are trade-offs associated with each method, which are discussed at length in Kriesi et al. (1995). An increasingly popular technique, not normally feasible for historical or foreign-language presses, is the automated coding of electronic sources (Schrodt & Gerner, 1997).

## References

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