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**Documentation and Analysis of Protest Events
in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1949-90 (Prodat)
- Research Design and Discussion of Methodology -**

by

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**Paper to be presented at the
European Consortium for Political Research
Joint Sessions of Workshops, Bochum 2-7 April, 1990
Workshop: "Methodological Issues in the Study of
Contemporary Political Activism"**

Introduction

Since the early 1980s, particularly in Western Europe, there has been a growing interest in empirically oriented research on social and political protest. A large body of literature on these phenomena has been published in the last decade, ranging from broad theories on the macro-level to very detailed work on specific conflicts. In terms of methodology and methods, however, the study of social and political protest is clearly underdeveloped in Europe.¹ An indicator of this situation is the fact that hardly any articles, not to speak of books, can be found which are devoted to a broader discussion of methodology and methods in this field. In part, this gap may be due to the assumption that methods that have been developed and discussed in other contexts can be easily applied to social movements and related phenomena of protest. As a matter of fact, methods such as case studies, opinion surveys, in-depth interviews, participant observation, content analysis, etc. have often been adopted to the study of social movements without much discussion, and without any major modifications. Secondly, there are also studies which explicitly focus on one particular "conventional" method, and apply it in a reflexive way, taking into account some specificities of the research object. Finally, authors such as Alain Touraine (1981) and Alberto Melucci (1989) have developed specific methods, claiming that these are particularly suitable to the study of social movements. Nevertheless, the general impression holds that these various methodological approaches are rarely discussed in a comparative perspective so as to assess their relative strengths and weaknesses for the field in general, or with respect to particular aspects and questions under investigation.

As a rule, methods depend on the research question and the nature of the empirical object. Such an object, however, has always various aspects, which cannot be seen from every point of view. As for protest groups and social movements, one can roughly distinguish between an internal and an external perspective. Many of the groups' activities remain invisible for the broad public. Most of these internal activities, like collecting information, attracting and integrating new members, selecting leaders, formulating programs, discussing various tactics, training specialists, etc., enable to more effectively pursue outward-directed activities. Among these, the most important is protest directed toward the public at large and/or opponents.

¹ In contrast to Europe, scholars in the U.S. were more concerned with a reflection on methods in this field. For an early example, see Tilly 1969.

Accordingly, protest can be seen as the outcome of a complex process in which collective identities have to be formed, organizations and networks created, and people convinced and mobilized for action. Of course, protest is a resource which is not exclusively used by social and political movements. Pressure groups, political parties, or neighborhood communities may also use protest as a means to pursue their interests. For political and social movements, however, protest is the most important medium, the "currency" which is decisive for their existence, identity and outcome. Consequently, much energy is devoted to both the "production" and "distribution" of protest. Obviously, in mass societies, where many protest groups no longer focus mainly on local issues, not only the "production" but also the "distribution" of protest has become a crucial factor. For the broader public, protest activities exist only to the extent that they are reported by mass media. Therefore, protest groups usually devote much energy to agenda-setting and media coverage, although these attempts are not or only partly successful in many cases.

If we are interested in political and social movements, protest is certainly a key aspect. An analysis of protest events can tell us a lot about the concerns of the people protesting, their capacities for mobilization, the social characteristics of activists, etc. In looking at large movements or even movement sectors as a whole in relatively large areas over long periods, it is usually only necessary to focus on protests as the external side of these movements, and not so much on their internal activities. But how can access be gained to protest events? See one method to be particularly suited to cover large numbers of protest events: content analysis of daily newspapers.

In the following sections we will present a research project designed to collect data and to analyse protest events in West Germany ("Prodat"). The aim of this project is to cover the whole range of protests reported in national newspapers during the last four decades. Moreover, we want to go beyond that and examine the sources in order to test their validity and reliability on the basis of other sources and data.

As usual, such a project profits heavily from the reflections and the work done by other scholars, in sociology of conflict and social movements in general, and, specifically, in protest event analysis based on newspaper data. Thus, before presenting the overall project design and focusing on methodological aspects (Section II to IV), which are the main concerns of

this paper, we want to discuss briefly the state of the art in this field (Section I).

I. Protest Event Data Analysis

In an overall view, social science research into protest events in the Federal Republic of Germany has been unsystematic and subjective. Although there is a growing body of literature focusing on political and social protest, mainly those protests carried out by the so-called new social movements, there is still the need for a more systematic data base. The literature on special campaigns and movements (Brand, Büsser, Rucht 1983; 1986; Roth and Rucht 1989; Wasmuth 1989) or even the whole history of protest in West Germany (Rolke 1986) is inadequate when it comes to the reliability and validity of the underlying data base. Although some attempts have been made to create lists of significant protest events (Krotz 1988; Kraushaar 1988; Rucht 1989), all of them are based on crude and unsystematic selection criteria.

For this reason, previous research into protest events brought up more questions than it was actually able to answer. These are, e.g., questions regarding the rise and fall in the number of aggregated protests, the various aims and forms of action, their spatial distribution, and the correlation of protests with other societal features like political reforms, economic cycles or the public awareness of various problems.

An attempt to create a broader data base of protest events covering the entire history of both the Federal Republic's and the German Democratic Republic's is being made at the Hamburg Institute of Social Science Research (Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung). Wolfgang Kraushaar is preparing a detailed "protest chronicle" which is to be published in stages. It will provide the broadest collection of information about protest in Germany after the Second World War. His data collection has two major inadequacies, however: First, the data collection is not systematic. Its basically qualitative and heuristic method of bringing together information from different sources does not adhere to a precisely identifiable set of rules. Second, as they are only documented as written files and not coded according to a general scheme, the data are not appropriate for computer-based analysis.

Another research project initiated by Roland Roth from the Free University of Berlin is focussing on the protest history of three districts in West Germany. Here the emphasis is on local protest organizations and networks. This project will provide interesting information on the development and changes of local organizations and networks of protest. Such a qualitatively oriented in-depth study has its price, however. This includes not only its concentration on three localities, but also a restriction of the time period and political spectrum investigated. The period selected starts in the mid-sixties; the sector of protest is limited to the left-libertarian groups and the new social movements.

Detailed quantitative analysis of protest events has not been applied in the Federal Republic of Germany, although international social science research has developed a rich methodology in this field. The socio-historically oriented studies of Charles Tilly on collective violence (Shorter and Tilly 1974; Tilly 1986) have obviously had a pionieering effect. These studies dealt with France and England and were mainly based on newspaper reports and material from archives. The method of collecting data using these kind of sources proved to be fruitful. It was also advanced and elaborated by other authors who were, in part, inspired by Tilly's methodological approach. Newspaper reports were the most commonly used data source in this research, as they provided easy access and were indispensable in several cases. This is true for the work of S. Lieberman and A. Silverman (1965), B. Downes (1968) and S. Spilerman (1970) in regard to race riots, P. Eisinger (1973) looking into urban protest, Jeffrey Paige's study on agrarian revolutions (1975) and Doug McAdam's writings on the civil rights movement (1982).

Aggregating protest event data using newspapers as a source proved to be superior to many other methods of data collection. Even the use of official strike statistics was recently called into question, and it was suggested that these be qualified by event data based on newspaper reports (Franzosi 1987). This approach is advantageous in that it provides the possibility of gathering valid data on events over a longer period and covering a more extensive spatial area by using research resources economically. It also allows for the creation of data sets containing reliable data generated systematically which are open to control by other researchers. "The use of newspaper reports constitutes the generally accepted mode for gathering data on protest and socially disruptive events." (Lehmann-Wilzig and Ungar 1985:65)

Some projects which were more concerned with recent history have been carried out independently of Tilly's work. These encompass the search for "indicators of political protest" (Russett et al. 1964; Taylor and Hudson 1972; Taylor and Jodice 1983). These studies, whose results were reported in various editions of the "World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators", include a time series over three decades (1948-77) and cover 136 countries in the meantime. Of course, the broad scope of this data set -- without doubt useful in some respects for comparative analysis -- comes at the cost of a reduced intensity and richness in detail. As the main key for data selection the authors used the New York Times Index, adding specific information for most of countries studied from other sources. In regard to West Germany, some additional archives and newspapers were used, only for short time periods, however, and without any recognizable systematic approach. Another fundamental deficit is the inadequate coding scheme. Some basic variables are totally missing (e.g., number of participants, spatial distribution), others are coded without sophistication (e.g., allowing the issue of protest to be coded into six categories only). The lack of a coherent data base (at least for the German case), the omission of important variables and the absence of detailed categories produce a data file which is basically unreliable and not very useful for further analysis at least in regard to forms of non-violent protest activities such as demonstrations.² Lehmann-Wilzig and Ungar drew the same conclusion after scrutinizing the World Handbook data on Israel. They summarized "... that only after several in-depth national studies are undertaken (...) can one say anything meaningful about crossnational patterns of protest and their causes." (1985:66)

The second project we consider important in this field of study is a quantitative documentation and analysis of protest events in Switzerland (Tschopp 1981; Kriesi 1985). Covering the post war period up to 1978 the authors identified about 6.000 protest events by using newspapers, archives, year books, newsletters, etc. as data sources. Although more elaborate in regard to data gathering and the coding of the data than previous studies -- and therefore enriching the process of developing a reliable instrument -- the study still had the disadvantage of using an unsystematic data base which, for example, covered some regions better than others.

² E.g. the World Handbook claims that 17 demonstrations had taken place in West Germany during the whole of 1976 and 1977. The Ministry of the Interior counted 5.843 such events for the same time period.

One of the Swiss authors, Hanspeter Kriesi, has started a project together with a Dutch group of young scientists in the meantime. The team is concentrating on four countries (The Netherlands, Switzerland, France and the Federal Republic of Germany) and the time period from 1975 to 1988. The project is mainly designed for comparative analysis. In that respect it will certainly offer rich data and new insights. On the other hand, the project suffers from several restrictions for pragmatic reasons. First, each country is represented by only one newspaper as a data source. Second, the data are based on Monday issues only. Third, the comparative perspective induced a relatively simple coding scheme, which does not seem to be adequate for in-depth studies concentrating on a single country. Fourth, a restrictive definition for protest events has been chosen: The event "... must be constituted by grass-root activities". The study therefore excludes a wide variety of protest events of other types (e.g. activities of environmental organizations). However, apart from its comparative design, the project also contains a major contribution to the research on protest by adding the idea of protest campaigns as a second unit of analysis in addition to protest events.

Up to now, the most impressive study close to our intentions was carried out by the US political scientist Sidney Tarrow (Tarrow 1983; 1989). His work has been instructive and fruitful for the project we have envisioned. The empirical data refer to Italy in the years between 1966 to 1973. Roughly 5.000 protest events were analysed on the basis of nearly 20.000 newspaper reports, mainly from the "Corriere della Sera". Other sources of data complete the data set, thus providing the possibility of analyzing cycles of protest in correlation with e.g. reform politics in Italy in the years studied. In addition to previous studies in the field, the use of alternative data sources enabled the author also to study the selectivity of newspapers. Among other things, Tarrow's elaborated coding scheme served as a solid basis for the creation of our own instrument.

In summary, there is only a small foundation to build on as far as previous work is concerned. Nevertheless, the experience which has been made is very useful, in terms both of the strengths and weaknesses of this research. Looking over it, one crucial problem can be pinpointed, namely the selectivity and validity of the data concerned. Rather than maximizing the reliability of the data set, more emphasis should be given to the status and systematic bias of the data source. In order to measure the distortion of the data provided by the source chosen, Franzosi's recommendation should be

followed. Summarizing quantitative research on protest events, he argues that at "... the very minimum (...) parallel collections of 'control' data, even if only for a subset of the total sample, geographical distribution, and types of events of interest...", should be conducted (Franzosi 1987:8).

II. Scrutinizing and Selecting Sources for Data Collection

In principle, many sources can be used for protest event analysis. These range from police records to television news. Not by accident, many researchers have chosen newspapers.

A. Why Daily Newspapers?

Numerous protest events have occurred in West Germany's forty years of existence. However, whatever our method of data collection, there is no way to produce a perfect data set which includes virtually all protest events have been taken place since 1949. Social science research interested in creating rich and systematic protest event data coming close to reality is therefore forced to compromise between its ambition and the available resources.

A major question in optimizing means and ends is the selection of the source from which data are derived. Whatever the source -- it should fulfill certain criteria. First, there must be continuity. The source has to cover the entire time period to be analyzed. Second, the source should reflect a steady interest in the units analyzed. A break or change in formal or informal rules for collecting information about protests must be avoided. Third, the data source should provide a sample of protest events big enough both to include the whole range of issues and forms of protest and to provide variance which allows for a valid analysis. Therefore the filter inherent to the source should not be too selective. Fourth, easy access to the source should be attainable.

In applying these four criteria to different kinds of potential data sources one finds that most sources exhibit enormous inadequacies: Private archives are prone to discontinuities and subjective preferences. Even official statistics like those compiled by the Ministry of the Interior on violent and non-violent demonstrations do not follow a systematic approach. This results for incoherent criteria of selection, e.g. due to shifting political interests in gathering and classifying data. A secondary analysis of

previous scientific studies which had paid attention to various conflicts and campaigns would also end up with an unsystematic sample of protest events. Moreover, many issues have not been studied at all. Soon, the point is reached where mass media as a source have to be discussed.

Television, radio and print media each have different advantages and disadvantages. Television does not cover the whole time period under discussion. Moreover, it is highly selective. The same is true for radio news reports. These, in addition, are difficult to get hold of, and there is no radio station covering the whole of West Germany without having a filter which is too coarse to obtain a sample sufficient for analysis. Only print media meet most of the criteria established above: There are currently newspapers in West Germany which were founded shortly after the Second World War. Therefore the coverage of the period under investigation will be guaranteed. Some of the papers have soon developed a professional and political identity, which has remained more or less stable over the last four decades. Accordingly, a continuity of attention seems to be provided. Some of these papers are distributed in the whole country, and a few of them have reached a generally accepted status of "seriousness" in providing reliable information. This status is the basis for their importance as the most prominent sources of information for the so-called "established public" ("etablierte" oder "bürgerliche" Öffentlichkeit) on a nation-wide³ level. Additionally, their day-to-day business of offering a great number of news articles enables even protest events of less "attractiveness" to appear. A category of events which, e.g. would not show up in a weekly newspaper or magazine due to its higher threshold of attention, is covered and reported by these major papers. This is, however, not to say that newspapers are not selective at all (see above).

Still, there remains the point of accessibility which is crucial for the process of data collection. Major newspapers usually employ people who classify articles according to certain topics and key words, file them and add them to the paper's archive which serves as an information pool for producing further articles. Nevertheless, our project's definition of protest event, issues and areas of interest is not necessarily the one used by the papers themselves. Even if the newspapers' archives work with an index covering four decades, there would be some doubts regarding this way of gathering information. One could not be sure that all articles were correctly registered, that the selection of key words did not change over time, and

³ By the term nation-wide we refer only to the FRG, although we are aware that the German nation includes also the GDR.

that all the people working in the archive did their job thoroughly. All of the disadvantages mentioned also apply to archives of news agencies.⁴ Moreover, in this case we would multiply the sheer quantity of information as compared to newspapers, thus raising the problem of a restrictive sampling procedure. We concluded from these considerations that newspapers came the closest to our criteria. Nevertheless, the selection of the newspapers and articles on protest events would have to be undertaken personally.

B. Which Newspapers to Select?

The pool of significant, nation-wide daily papers supplying the "established public" in West Germany comprises four newspapers:

- "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" (FAZ)
- "Frankfurter Rundschau" (FR)
- "Die Süddeutsche Zeitung" (SZ)
- "Die Welt" (WELT)

Each of these papers favors a different political point of view. Whereas the WELT followed an unsteady, but basically conservative course, the FAZ adds to its basic conservatism an element of liberalism. The SZ can be called liberal, and the FR is considered to combine a liberal with a moderate left position. All these papers were founded in the beginning years of the FRG or even earlier.

Discussing daily newspapers published in the country as a whole the left-libertarian "tageszeitung" (TAZ) also has to be mentioned. The TAZ does not target the "established public". Rather the paper defines itself as part of the so-called "alternative public". An essential element of the paper's identity is to provide news and special background informations not published or allegedly distorted by the other papers. The problem of using this paper as a data source for our project is its late starting point in time: The TAZ was firstly published in May 1979. Regarding the aforementioned criteria of continuity, the TAZ therefore can only serve as a complementary source for the period after its inception.

⁴ The material provided by news agencies like dpa, Reuter, etc. were discussed as a data source alternative to newspapers, but our investigation found that either no archive on protest existed (Reuter) or that only "major" events (dpa) were filed.

Having the newspapers' different political points of view in mind, one could argue that this determines the papers selectivity when looking at political protest. A left-wing paper could dramatize protest on the right by publishing each protest event even if it is small in number of participants and of local importance only. However, the opposite can be true as well. A conservative paper could deliberately publish numerous articles about protest events on the right, e.g., in order attract right-wing readers, to emphasize the significance of right-wing concerns, or to support right-wing politics. Hence there are good reasons to assume that the best way to deal with such uncertainties is to include papers with contrasting political viewpoints in order to get a unbiased data set.

Analyzing four papers over a forty-year period would, however, simply require too many resources. A research design which optimized the ratio of costs and benefits had to be developed. The first task was to reduce the number of papers to be examined. We had to answer the question how many and which papers would have to be used as a data base to ensure that most of the protest events mentioned in the four of them were included by the sample. Tentatively, we also looked at the TAZ as a kind of "control source". We identified the data base necessary to produce valid results in three steps.

In a first pretest we covered one week in January 1989. On the basis of a preliminary definition of protest events we tried to pick out all relevant articles. Although there were some clear impressions as far as the number of reported events and the quality of information are concerned, we agreed to analyze the four papers over a longer period of time. The interval of one week had been too short and the definition too sketchy to produce a valid basis for a well-founded decision.

The second pretest encompassed an analysis of one month. We examined the news coverage of the five papers in April 1989. Using a more sophisticated definition of protest events we were looking through the papers in search for articles. In this we explicitly excluded those sections dealing with regional affairs. Some of the results relevant to our further work will be presented in the following account.

Including the TAZ, 130 protest events were reported by the five papers during the month observed. 38 events were only covered in the TAZ; the papers of the "established public" reported 92 protest events.

**Table 1: Protest Events per Newspaper
(Five Papers)**

	SZ	FR	FAZ	WELT	TAZ
percent	49.2	44.6	17.7	12.3	55.4
(N=130)	(64)	(58)	(23)	(16)	(72)

Looking at the other four papers while neglecting the TAZ, we made some interesting findings. FAZ and WELT were not only at the lower end when it came to sheer quantity (23/16 events compared to 64[SZ] and 58[FR]) but also in terms of exclusivity: there were just 3 protest events published by FAZ or WELT only. 89 events or 96.7% were published either in SZ or FR. In other words, if we had ignored the FAZ und the WELT we would only have missed 3.3% of all the protest events reported by the four newspapers.

**Table 2: Protest Events per Newspaper(s)
(Four Papers only)**

	SZ	FR	SZ/FR	FAZ	WELT
percent	69.6	63.0	96.7	25.0	17.4
(N=92)	(64)	(58)	(89)	(23)	(16)

Comparing FR and SZ for further differentiation of our results we found that the events reported by both newspapers made up about one half of the events reported by one the two papers alone. Thus there was a significant number of events that were exclusively reported either by the FR or the SZ. With respect to the political concerns of the reported protests, the only difference worth mentioning was the higher degree of attention which the FR gives to right-wing radicalism. In conclusion, we had to accept that by using only one paper as data base would fail to record of approximately one fourth (FR), or one third (SZ) of the events reported by the four newspapers.

Table 3: Shared and Exclusive Coverage of Protest Events
(Two Papers only)

	SZ/FR	SZ	FR
percent	38.2	33.7	28.1
(N=89)	(34)	(30)	(25)

In accordance with this result, we included both papers, FR and SZ, in a third pretest. In addition to other objectives, like checking the best access to newspapers, improving the coding instrument and coding procedure, and calculating the resources needed for the project, this pretest also intended to validate our decision to choose two instead of one paper. Being aware of the massive contribution made by the exclusive coverage of protest events by TAZ we also included this paper when we were dealing with the 1980s.

The pretest was based (a) on two specially selected weeks in the eighties with a presumed high density of protest events, (b) five randomly selected weeks in the same decade and (c) twelve randomly chosen Monday issues during each of the remaining decades. Overall we analyzed 312 individual newspaper editions in our pretest sample.

Although the conclusions reached in the second pretest of coverage of the FR and the SZ had to be qualified, we did not have to revise our preliminary choice. The pattern of mutually and exclusively reported protest events did not stick strictly to the ratio we found before. It varied among the subsamples from a high degree of common coverage to very low degrees. There were also differences in the sheer quantity of protest events published by the two papers in various subsamples. Nevertheless, neither of the two papers proved clearly superior to the other. Furthermore, the changing patterns of exclusiveness supported the finding of the second pretest indicating that the FR and SZ could be perceived as mutual complements.

The third pretest provided evidence for the fact that the TAZ adds a substantial quota of exclusively reported events to the FR/SZ-coverage. In some subsamples, the number of pretest events reported by the TAZ only was higher than the total number of events published by the FR and the SZ. Thus the TAZ can hardly be neglected when looking at protest in the 1980s.

Besides strengthening the results of the second pretest the third test brought about some other important results. Estimates based on the sample analysis indicated that we would be identifying about 32.000 protest events using the FR and the SZ as data base. In addition, the TAZ would add approximately 5.000 exclusively reported protest events since 1979.

Table 4: Estimation of Protest Events
(calculated after pretest including two papers)

1949 (May-Dec.)	approx. 250 events
1950-59	approx. 2.250 events
1960-69	approx. 3.500 events
1970-79	approx. 5.000 events
1980-89	approx. 21.000 events ⁵

sum	approx. 32.000 events

The pretest showed that a coder would need an average of 15 minutes per newspaper issue to identify articles which might contain informations about protest events. Another two minutes per article are necessary to sort out the articles referring to events which do not adhere to our definition of protest events. The coding procedure itself would last about 20 minutes all things considered (e.g. time reduction by the coders' routinization).

C. Qualifying the Bias of Data Base

Using newspapers as a data base, we have to be aware of the fact that daily print media reproduce just a small section of reality, i.e. of all protest events that took place. Mass media such as newspapers select information according to various factors. We already mentioned the overall political tendency of the paper. Its selectivity of protest events can also be influenced by personal interests of journalists, a special focus on towns or regions in the vicinity of the newspaper's home base, relevant events or circumstances to which protests refer, or simply by spectacular news event which marginalize protest events during a given period. Additionally, some forms of protest are more attractive than others. Large numbers of protesters increase the chance of the event being reported by the papers, so does the disruptive character of the protest (e.g. a sit-in on a busy street crossing).

⁵ The estimate for the 1980s has four times the number of protest events expected for the 1970s. This high number was generated even without including the weeks of presumed high protest intensity in our calculations.

Serious consequences like people being injured or killed almost guarantee the appearance in the papers.

Some of these selectivities can be controlled by using more than one paper. Our pretests have shown that the FR and the SZ -- even having a similar political inclinations -- cover nearly all the events published by the more conservative papers. Political leaning does not seem to influence the selectivity of major newspapers in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Nevertheless, although using a low biased sample of newspapers as data base, we had to get an idea of the quantity and quality of protest events we systematically miss by using newspapers as a data source. We decided to employ several ways of measuring the bias of selectivity inherent to the two papers considered. First, we will be including the TAZ in our sample for the 1980s. Second, we will be collecting information about protest events in one West German city during several time periods. In cooperation with the project at the Berlin Free University mentioned above we will use the local newspapers of a university city in Southern Germany (Freiburg⁶) and add information from alternative newsletters, archives and documents. Third, we will identify protest events related to three different kinds of protest issues. The protest issues were selected using the following criteria: (a) there had to be protests over a considerable period of time (at least since the sixties); (b) the issues had to differ on the left-right-scale (one being predominantly a left, one right, and one center); and (c) one or more central archives or organizations should facilitate our work by providing a more or less systematic collection of protest events. The selected protest issues are: Easter marches for peace, protest against aircraft noise (military and civil), and anti-jewish protests. The sources of this data set will include newspaper articles, lists of events, documents or any other files of information available.

These three ways of qualifying our core data base will enable us to find a measure of completeness and validity of the information on protest events published by FR and SZ. Further calculations based on these results will produce figures for the number and quality of protest events in West Germany which come closer to reality (at least for some type of regions and issues) than any previous study.

⁶ Freiburg was chosen because it is an active protest region and therefore provides sufficient material to scrutinize the selectivity inherent newspaper coverage of protests. Moreover, Roland Roth's project will provide background information of protest organizations and networks in the Freiburg area.

III. The Components and Samples of Prodat

As far as the coding and documentation of protest events is concerned, i.e. leaving out aspects of data analysis, Prodat consists of two major components. The first one, Prodat 1, relates to the so-called core data set based on the SZ and FR over forty years. The second, Prodat 2, serves as a means to complement and qualify the data generated in Prodat 1.

According to our calculation, a full coverage of all sources we are relying on would require to scrutinize roughly 40.000 newspaper issues (other sources not included) in order to code an estimated number of 38.000 protest events. This task would not only require an enormous amount of time and money but also produce problems in terms of project management, equipment, etc. For these reasons, we were forced to think about sampling procedures. The way we decided to proceed allowing to reduce the resources to less than half of those required for the full coverage of all materials without significant losses in terms of validity and representativity, however.

The sample of Prodat 1 will comprise firstly each Monday issue of the two papers selected (FR and FZ) since 1949. Secondly, we will cover the remaining days of every fourth week for both of the newspapers. This combination of subsamples allows for a continuous analysis over time having one week, represented by each Monday, as the smallest unit of time. Together with the three Mondays, the full coverage of every fourth week provides us with a more solid basis also to analyze protest events month by month. Two additional advantages of this combination of samples are worth mentioning. First, it provides an excellent control for the Monday bias, which may change over time. For instance, the deadlines of daily news production could have changed over the years due to technical progress and thus Monday issues could now include a larger share of protest events that happened the day before. Second, this way of sampling improves the chances to cover large protests, and protest campaigns lasting for one or several weeks. Major campaigns may not necessarily be reported in Monday issues, but the likelihood to notice them is certainly higher if we include at least every fourth week.

As already mentioned above, Prodat 2 consists of three segments. A sample was chosen for each of them too. The first sample refers to the TAZ and will exactly parallel the sample of Prodat 1 since 1979, when TAZ was first published. Sample two is based on a sample of the "Badische Zeitung (BZ)" (Freiburg) and the events which are reported in various other sources. In that case, the sample comprises the same weeks analysed in Prodat 1 since 1965⁷. Sample three includes the material of several archives referring to Easter marches for peace in the 1960s and 1980s, protests against aircraft noise and anti-jewish protests since 1949. In all these cases, the precise criteria for sampling have not been chosen because the quantity and quality of reports drawn from archives is not yet fully clarified.

The three subsamples of Prodat 2 will enable us to scrutinize the bias of the Prodat 1 sample by controlling various dimensions and filters. The following diagram gives an idea of the overall structure of Prodat and the filters to be controlled.

⁷ The focus on the time period since 1965 is due to our cooperation with the project at the Free University (Roland Roth). The project concentrates on the last 25 years of protest only.

Figure 1: Components of Prodat and their Correlation

Prodat 1	Prodat 2	Dimension of Control
SZ and FR (1949-89)	TAZ (1979-89)	alternative vs. established press
	BZ (1965-89)	local vs. nation-wide press
	other sources	press vs. other public
	archives on specific issues	local vs. nation-wide press vs. "issue public"
	-Easter marches 1960s, 1980s	
	-air traffic 1949-89	
	-antisemitism 1949-89	

IV. Units of Analysis and Coding Procedures

In this section we will provide information about the definition of protest events, the application of the definition and the coding of identified protest events.

A. Identifying Protest Events

The coders first task is to pick out those articles which at a first glance are likely to contain information about protest events. Having identified and copied these articles they have to read them more carefully in order to sort out those which do not deal with protest events according to our definition.

A protest event is defined by (a) the "action character" of the protest, (b) the actors' reference to a identifiable public good, an issue or political problem, to which they take a critical stance, (c) the action being situated in the public sphere, and (d) the non-governmental status of the collective actor. Of course, these criteria require further explication and specification (to be found in the code-book). To get an idea how these four criteria can be interpreted we will refer to several examples.

The protest event's "action character" must include activities such as demonstrations, boycotts, strikes, etc., activities which go beyond pure verbal protest. Apart from mere rhetoric, we also exclude routinized activities which are basically founded on verbal protest, although they require a certain organizational activity. Therefore, in some cases the same kind of protest can be considered a protest event or not, depending on the actor. For example, the first press conference of a newly established citizen initiative struggling against a communal waste disposal is considered to be a protest event, whereas a more or less regularly held press conference of a semi-professional environmental lobbying group is not included in our sample. On the other hand, although certain protest forms became routine actions for protest groups, they are not excluded, because their "action character" is not overruled by the routine use over long periods of time (e.g. spectacular actions by Greenpeace, union demonstrations on labour day).

The protest actors' reference to a political problem or the public good is essential for qualifying as a protest event. The public good can either be established by a positive or a negative orientation. Protest against nuclear power plants is also aiming at the public good, just like protest in favor of abortion does. The degree the "public good" is concretely defined is not decisive. Accordingly, a protest demonstration of youths criticising in a vague and diffuse way "the adult way of life" will be coded as well as a demonstration of young people to get more public funds for a local youth-center. The crucial point is the actors' reference to the public good. For example, a bank robbery by known terrorists will not be included in the sample without the terrorists having left leaflets or made explicit the political purpose of their action in another way.

The public character of a protest event refers to its public or semi-public place of action and/or to its target group, which has to be -- directly or indirectly -- the public. Therefore, a discussion in a rural commune mentioned in a report on alternative life-styles is not considered to be a

protest event (in addition, it does not go beyond pure talking, see "action character" above). However, a die-in taking place in the entrance hall of a chemical firm against the pollution of water would be coded, because the activists ignore the "privacy" of the locality and usually try to make public their action, e.g. by distributing leaflets or inviting journalists to attend the action.

Collectivity is defined by three persons or more being involved in the action. They have to act as citizens and not as representatives of local or central government. An exception to this rule will be made if a action of less than three persons is effecting other protest events in a profound way. Consequently, the suicide of a member of an antinuclear group who wants to point out the danger of a nuclear disaster by burning him-/herself would qualify as a protest event.

We think that combining the four elements of definition allows the coder in almost all cases to decide whether or not an event should be included in the sample of Prodat. In addition, regular discussions in the group of coders and guidance by a coding instructor should improve the standard of intersubjective agreement. Tests of interreliability will be applied during the entire coding process.

B. Coding Procedure

Information on protest events will be transferred into a detailed coding scheme according to a variety of variables and values. Among other things, these variables refer to the beginning and duration of the event, the area of mobilization, the number of participants, the characteristics of the actors (e.g. social base, number and names of groups and organizations involved, political leaning), the issue (e.g. the theme, the context of protest events, the object of protest, and the addressee), and the form and circumstances of the action (e.g. the type of action, the consequences like people being arrested, injured or killed, the immediate reactions, such as statements of politicians). Altogether, the data file will contain some 225 variables⁸.

Many questions and problems arose during the preparation and pretests of the project. A lot of them referred to the coding process. Only some of them,

⁸ This high number is caused by allowing the choice of several categories referring to one question. One question with, e.g., seven categories might therefore have seven variables.

and the way we intend to solve them, can be discussed in this paper. These were the problems with:

- how to transform "words to numbers" (Franzosi);
- how to deal with the coders' context knowledge either based on common sense or acquired through the experience of coding many events in a given period;
- how to connect single protest events to campaigns or other units of analysis.

As each research project involving the coding of written or spoken language, Prodat faces the problem of converting text material encompassing a variety of different expressions and descriptions into the few categories of the coding scheme. Many of the categories are easy to determine as they are guided by various hypotheses. Since Prodat, rather than being strictly guided by an explicit theory, is inspired by a broad range of questions and hypotheses related to many aspects of protest, our concern was to create a comprehensive and systematic data base. These data serve not only our own interests but should also offer material for future research carried out by social scientists' whose interests are not known at the moment.

Therefore we had to ensure a high degree of specification for the categories, so that future studies can recode them easily. In other words: the more categories we allow, the closer to the text we are going to code, the higher the degree of coding "hypothesis free" (Franzosi), the better the chances and opportunities for researchers using the Prodat data set in the years coming. Prodat will therefore provide a data set of high flexibility which can be analyzed from very different perspectives.

Nevertheless, elementary categories had to be chosen, "translations" have to be made. Open categories are sometimes helpful because they preserve rich information. Entries in some of these open categories will gradually allow for producing new "closed" categories, others still remain a open "waste paper basket". However, there are some specific problems left. Two will be pinpointed here.

The first is the accurate coding of the number of persons participating in protest events. Phrases like "a crowd of people", "a few protestors" or "several groups" are difficult to be transformed into numbers, or at least into intervals of numbers. We developed a few rules which formalize this process. First, the most important element is the basis of calculation (e.g. the "most of" the inhabitants of a "small" or a "big" town). Second, we transformed phrases into figures, e.g. "einige" (a few) = 3, "mehrere" (several) = 5, zahlreiche (many)= 10. Similar solutions apply to the number

of places of action and -- slightly different -- to the date or time intervals mentioned.

The second problem to be mentioned here is to identify the actor's political leaning in order to create a variable useful for analysis. We are attempting to solve the problem by placing the actors on a left-right-scale, constructing a seven-point-scale around a "center" category (4). The wings were made up by "left" (3) respective "right" (5), "radical" (2 and 6) and "terrorist" (1 and 7). Number 8 was reserved for "ambivalent" leanings. "Radical" according to our definition refers to the aims, whereas "terrorist" points to the deliberate use of violence against persons as a means of political action. We ask the coders for a type of "soft coding". For instance, a demonstration in favour of the imprisoned terrorists should be coded either "left" or "radical left" depending on the organisations organizing the demonstration. We enlarged our possibilities of further analysis by asking the coders to write down the name of the groups involved in order to have a list of groups and organizations which could be recoded with a high degree of flexibility afterwards.

Coding Scheme (Extract 1)

2.3 Political Tendency of the Actor

left-wing			right-wing			
terrorist	radical	left-wing	center	right-wing	radical	terrorist
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ambivalent = 8				no answer = 9		

description within the article :

description by coder :

agreeing with the article?
yes = 0, No =1-8 (see above)

The aforementioned problem -- placement on a scale of political leaning -- leads to another issue we would like to present: using the coders' knowledge of the political context. As each coder will be responsible for a certain time period (approx. several years) they will necessarily acquire a background knowledge on this period by reading hundreds of articles. Based on this knowledge, the coder can, for example, place an actor on the left-right-scale although the article being coding does not entail this information. We thought it would be too big a loss to go without exploiting this background knowledge. Additionally, even common sense can help the coder to provide information which the article itself does not explicitly give. Yet, we have to differentiate between information from the article and information deduced by the coder. Normally the coder's opinion is the "last resort", e.g., for the number of participants. As far as the political stance of the actors is concerned, however, we even allow the coder to state his/her own opinion

when it contrasts the journalist's description. Having included the source of information in the codesheet we can handle this data separately. We hope to improve the reliability of the coders' contributions in order to be able to fully integrate these parts of the data set.

Coding Scheme (Extract 2)

2.1 NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

[][][][][]

BASIS:

article	1	coder's judgement	5
police	2		
organizer	3		
average	4		[]

if average, calculated on which basis?

article	[][][][][]
organizer	[][][][][]
police	[][][][][]

further specification:

A third coding problem concerns connecting single protest events to larger units of analysis. Analyzing the development of protest makes it interesting to look at those events which are linked to each other. We thought of identifying and comparing enlarged clusters of protest (e.g. campaigns) in this way. To ensure that the coding of each protest event can be related to the coding of other protest events, we developed several ideas for possible linkage. The first is of course the identical coding as far as actors, aims, means, date, etc. are concerned. Second, we ask the coders to write down (at least one) connected protest events (to be identified by the so-called protest

event number). This allows to build networks and chains of protest events which can be analyzed on their own.

Coding Scheme (Extract 3)

 1.1 P E N (PROTEST EVENT NUMBER)

DATE OF BEGIN	SERIAL/CONSECUTIVE NUMBER
[][][][][][]	PER DAY
	[][]

3.1.4 CONTEXT EVENTS MENTIONED
 connected, previous or parallel events

PEN	place/form of action/connection
1. [][][][][][][][][]	_____
2. [][][][][][][][][]	_____
3. [][][][][][][][][]	_____

V. Opportunities for Data Analysis

The data generated by Prodat will contain a variety of possible foci of analysis. Basically we distinguish between two ways of analysis. First, the data can be analyzed "immanently", i.e. using the Prodat data only. Second, the Prodat data can be combined with independently created data sets.

A. Immanent Analysis

First of all, the "core data" provided by Prodat 1 on protest events can be analyzed in various ways to test numerous hypotheses. These will involve, e.g.,

- the number of aggregated protest events over time;
- the relevance of single issues, protest forms and actors at certain points of time;

- the spatial distribution of protest (to be analyzed by cities/countryside, university-/non-university-cities etc); and
- the comparison of various protest campaigns (e.g. importance of single protest events in the campaign as far as mobilization is concerned).

Second, comparing data from Prodat 1 to that of Prodat 2 allows for the analysis of the selection criteria and filters newspapers are applying with regard to the coverage of protest events. Thus we can find out, for instance, which kind of local events are or are not reported in local newspaper, and which of those reported in the local paper are even reported in a national newspaper. Comparing national newspapers, we can analyze their respective biases.

B. Connecting Prodat with other Sets of Data

The social sciences have already produced a rich body of empirically created data sets which could be correlated with Prodat. These data offer many opportunities to analyze how protest events are linked to other social and political phenomena. Another possibility is to undertake a cross-national comparison of protest events. In all of these cases, of course, we depend on the quality and quantity of other data. Given the longitudinal approach of Prodat, we are particularly interested in data sets which cover long periods. Among these data sets there are

- studies concerning attitudes towards and support for various forms of political participation and specific groups, such as the so-called new social movements (Eurobarometer, Election Studies in the Federal Republic of Germany etc.);
- surveys asking for priorities among political problems (undertaken by the Allensbach-Institute);
- data on "social indicators" (e.g. time series on unemployment, education, primary groups etc.).
- data on protests events in other countries (e.g. Italy, Switzerland, The Netherlands, France).

VI. Organizational and Technical Information about the Project

The project is located at the Science Center Berlin for Social Research ("Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung") within the research unit "The Public and the Social Movement" (Abteilung "Öffentlichkeit und

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