
INTERNATIONAL PRESS COVERAGE OF EAST GERMAN PROTEST EVENTS, 1989*

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Despite increasing international interest in the quantitative study of protest events, there has been no systematic attempt to test Snyder and Kelly's (1977) validity model for evaluating the newspaper data on which such analyses are based. Their model emphasizes the independent roles of media sensitivity (proximity to protest events and ideological bias) and event intensity (protest size, duration, and violence) in the enumeration of protest events. I expand their model to encompass issues raised in the context of international press reporting and test the expanded model using data from six international newspapers that covered the protest events in the former German Democratic Republic in 1989.

The study of protests and social movements has become increasingly international, and protest event analysis serves as the major technique for examining shifting patterns of collective action over time and space (Franzosi 1987; Olzak 1989; Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin 1995). This approach underlies recent comparative studies, such as those contrasting ethnic conflict and protest in the United States and South Africa (Olzak and Olivier 1994), patterns of protest and claims-making in the former Soviet bloc countries of Eastern Europe (Ekiert, Kubik, and Szabo 1994), as well as protests and campaigns in the Netherlands, Switzerland, France, and the former West Germany (Kriesi et al. 1995). Case studies also draw on event analysis to investigate patterns of collective action—for example the pioneering work of Spilerman (1970) on the 1960s racial disorders in the United States,

McAdam's (1982) political process analysis of the U.S. civil rights movement, Olzak's (1992) studies of ethnic conflict, Tarrow's (1989) analysis of an Italian cycle of protest, and the 40-year coverage of protest events in West Germany (Rucht and Ohlemacher 1992).

Despite its increasing use as a research tool in the international study of collective action, the validity of protest event analysis continues to be challenged because of its reliance on newspaper coverage—secondhand data that is dependent on the observations of reporters and editors committed to journalistic goals and standards rather than to the goals of the social sciences (Franzosi 1987; Olzak 1989). These challenges have led to criticisms of data validity in the international study of protest events (Rucht and Ohlemacher 1992). To further these investigations, I draw on a largely neglected model developed by Snyder and Kelly (1977) to test the validity of newspaper coverage of U.S. racial protests and disorders in the 1960s. I extend their model to the international study of protest by respecifying its key variables—media sensitivity and event intensity—in terms of the 1989 protest cycle in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) that precipitated the end of the Honecker regime.¹

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¹ A rough outline of the crescendo of events in 1989 is now familiar. At the beginning of the year, the GDR, under the leadership of Erich Honecker, was the most intransigent of all the

VALIDITY ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF PROTEST EVENTS

The quantitative study of collective action events has blossomed over the last 15 years as a new generation of scholars has refined various forms of event analysis to dissect the internal dynamics of protests and social movements (Olzak 1989).² Such analysis is essential when researchers' interests require measures that extend over time and space (Tarrow 1989; Koopmans 1993). Central to the success of event analysis is the quality of the newspaper data on which it is based. No other single data source possesses such continuity over time, accessibility, and consistency in procedures for assembling information (Tilly, Tilly, and Tilly 1975:16). Not only are newspapers superior to official statistics and archival records, but they are also frequently the only data source available (Paige 1975; McAdam 1982).

While the print media have been the major data source for the study of collective action events, they also have sustained significant criticism. In few other fields of the social sciences does the researcher have so little control over the data on which analysis depends.

Eastern European countries in its resistance to reforms sweeping the Soviet bloc. Although history, language, and boundary were shared with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG/West Germany), the option of leaving the GDR had been severely restricted by the Berlin Wall since 1961. The Wall remained a safety valve for the regime by exiling its most vocal dissidents in exchange for hard currency (Hirschman 1993). In 1989, a small group of reformers centered their activities around select Protestant churches, particularly the Nikolai Church in Leipzig, where Monday night prayer services served as a focal point for dissent. Under the pressure of mass emigrations in August and September, services swelled to tens of thousands, and crowds in the streets grew to hundreds of thousands before Honecker resigned and the regime began its precipitous disintegration (Pond 1993).

² The unit of analysis here is the collective action event, sometimes termed "protest" or "protest event." Following convention, a *collective action event* is defined as a nonroutine, collective, and public act for which claims are made on behalf of a larger collectivity. Such events combine into larger units over time as "protest cycles" (Tarrow 1989) and "social movements" (Tilly 1995).

The student of protest events relies largely on practitioners from another profession—the reporters, editors, publishers, and indexers—who make decisions on which version of experience will ultimately be available for research purposes. Media research over the last 15 years on ideological biases inherent in hegemonic coverage of collective action by the major Western presses adds weight to these criticisms.³

These issues first gained wide recognition in the mid-1970s when Danzger (1975) questioned whether students of racial disorder were investigating patterns of conflict or how news was gathered.⁴ Despite Snyder and Kelly's (1977) impressive response to Danzger, 10 years later Franzosi (1987) reintroduced the question of "whether we are analyzing patterns of historical events or patterns of news reporting" (p. 6).

As in other social science fields, measuring collective action is largely a matter of linking theoretically relevant concepts with observable indicators. The success of any measurement strategy is evaluated in terms of its reliability and validity (Zeller and Carmines 1980; Blalock 1982). Since the infancy of measurement theory in psychological testing and survey research, there has been general agreement on the central issue of *reliability*—random error or the degree to which measurements are consistent and repeatable over time, events, objects, or observers (Zeller and Carmines 1980). Based in the tradition of content analysis, quantitative protest research has also been concerned with reliability questions about coding practices that are addressed through the quality of coding instruments and coder training (Krippendorff 1980).

³ The ontological assumptions underlying this investigation parallel those of Bohman (1993) and Tudor (1995) who argue that it is possible to overcome such historic dualisms as society/individual, ideology/subject, text/reader, objectivism/subjectivism, structure/action. The acting reader in this context is the researcher who is capable of rejecting "preferred" (ideological) readings of the newspaper as text in favor of sorting information into theoretically meaningful categories.

⁴ Tilly (Mueller 1996) notes that concern about using newspapers as the data source for conflict listings emerged simultaneously with early event analyses in the 1960s.

In contrast, what is seen as necessary for validity differs markedly by disciplinary sub-field once we move beyond a general consensus that *validity* refers to systematic sources of error in the relationship between theoretical construct and measuring instrument. Experimental researchers evaluating educational testing distinguished originally between internal and external validity (Campbell and Stanley 1963). Internal validity refers to relationships between research operations or the degree to which generalizations about higher-order constructs can be made from research operations. This definition has become the exclusive meaning of validity in most of sociology and political science, and I will use it here.⁵

Most commentaries on the validity problem in protest event analysis have argued that the fundamental relationship between indicator and concept is addressed theoretically. Franzosi (1987), for instance, notes that strikes may represent an adequate measure of class conflict, but the listing of strikes from newspaper coverage of industrial conflict may be severely limited. The presence or absence of a protest event report is the central issue when creating a comprehensive listing of events. Ecological studies of the 1960s urban riots, for instance, are based on frequency distributions of riots derived from various newspaper sources; explanatory variables are measured by census and city data (Spilerman 1970; Danzger 1975). The key validity issue then becomes the completeness of event enumeration.⁶

The question remains of what status to give wide-ranging claims of biases in news reporting attributed to cultural hegemony, economic or political interests, the socialization and practices of journalists, and the social organization of both the newsroom and news reporting (Trew 1979; Van Dijk 1988a, 1988b). In previous event analyses, these sources of bias have not generally been re-

garded as threats to the validity of event enumeration because of reliance on Tuchman's (1978) distinction between "hard" and "soft" news. It has been assumed that "soft" news coverage, which is based on *interpretations* of protest events (e.g., journalistic accounts indicating sympathy or disapproval, news worthiness, or irrelevance), may indeed provide biased and invalid data (Gitlin 1980; Small 1994).

Yet it also has been argued that "hard" coverage on the who, what, when, and where of protest events are not subject to such bias (Danzger 1975:577; McAdam 1982:235). Recent research casts doubt on this assumption. In comparing applications for permits to hold demonstrations in Washington, D.C. with coverage by the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, McCarthy, McPhail, and Smith (1996) find that only the largest events were adequately covered. Their findings indicate that coverage by these two quality papers is systematically biased against small, less intense protests. Such findings suggest that protest event enumeration and other "hard" data are also subject to the biases of reporting practices as well as to biases of culture and ideology.

Put simply, the question of enumeration bias is, how complete or selective is the list of protest events? Danzger (1975) argues that newspaper reports of an event may be taken as valid, but the absence of such a report does not mean that an event did not occur. This conclusion rests on his finding that explanations of riot frequency based on the characteristics of cities were distorted by the news-gathering process. In his study, the presence or absence of a wire-service office (UPI/AP) significantly reduced the effects of independent variables.

THE SNYDER-KELLY MODEL

Danzger's (1975) study suggests the potential importance of validity issues for conclusions drawn from event data. As Snyder and Kelly (1977) acknowledge in their rejoinder, event-reporting probabilities are key to every study that relies on frequency data. Nevertheless, they argue that Danzger failed to consider two critical factors: the influence of event characteristics (*event intensity*), and additional contextual factors that might in-

⁵ Political scientists Zeller and Carmines (1980) note, for instance, that validity exists when "an instrument measures exactly what it is supposed to measure and nothing else" (p. 78).

⁶ Rucht and Ohlemacher (1992) distinguish between issues of validity (correspondence between indicator and concept) and issues of representation (event enumeration). The more inclusive meaning of validity is adopted here.

fluence media reporting (*media sensitivity*). In their proposed model, the probability of reporting an event is based on both factors. They argue that by emphasizing only media practices, Danzger ignores the common observation that the press is more likely to report protest events that are more violent, involve more people, and persist longer. The key event characteristics they identify are size, violence, and duration—collectively designated as *event intensity*. Each of these characteristics, they maintain, has partially independent, positive effects on reporting. The magnitude of effect declines from size to duration.

The second factor is *media sensitivity*. That is, “sensitive media sources have lower thresholds and report larger ranges of conflict behavior” (Snyder and Kelly 1977: 111). Media sensitivity is measured by two classes of data—*political climate* and *contextual characteristics* of events (p. 113). Political climate is essentially governmental suppression of the press or press censorship. The contextual characteristics they include are frequency of events, political significance of participants, and locational proximity of events to communication networks.

To test the model, Snyder and Kelly use two data sets that separately tap event populations at high and low ends of protest intensity. At high intensity, they use press reports of riots from 1965 through 1969 to predict riot frequency from city characteristics. To these equations they add data on presence or absence of an AP/UPI office to test whether the frequency of riots reported is a function of reporting practices or of city characteristics. Because AP/UPI presence is only marginally significant in predicting yearly riot frequency when compared to the effects of city characteristics, they conclude that reporting practices alone cannot explain substantive research questions. Snyder and Kelly’s first analysis, however, is inadequate for several reasons: It fails to discriminate between newspapers or to distinguish levels of event intensity—two of the intensity criteria (size and violence) are elements in the definition of a riot disorder; duration is ignored.

In their second analysis, Snyder and Kelly redress several of these weaknesses by comparing coverage from two specific news sources and by estimating the effects of all

three intensity indicators. Using Eisinger’s (1973) protest data from local newspaper coverage of largely nonviolent events from 43 U.S. cities in 1968, they compare 120 locally reported events with 22 that were covered in the daily *New York Times*. In this analysis, the effects of the three intensity measures are in the expected direction, but effects are more substantial for size and duration than for violence. Surprisingly, AP/UPI presence has a small negative effect. In a second equation, all coefficients are substantially reduced by the negative effect of Western region.

From these results, Snyder and Kelly (1977) conclude that their model specifies “clear guidelines for assessing the validity of past research and for designing future empirical analyses of conflict” (p. 121). Twenty years later, this optimism appears unfounded as there is little evidence that their model has had a significant influence on data collection for protest events.

The most relevant research since the Danzger/Snyder-Kelly exchange of the 1970s is the recent study by McCarthy et al. (1996). They compare official permit requests for 1982 and 1992 demonstrations in Washington, D.C. with press and television coverage. Although the study does not explicitly address validity issues, two of their key findings support the Snyder-Kelly model. For the print media, they report that the local paper—*Washington Post*—was twice as likely to cover events as was the *New York Times*. Both newspapers were also more likely to cover events if conflict was anticipated or many participants, or long duration was expected. Contrary findings have been reported, however, by Olzak and Olivier (1994) in their comparative study of ethnic conflict and protest in the United States and South Africa. Protest event enumeration was fairly constant for five daily newspapers in South Africa, but the level of detail declined with increased distance from the event. Similarly, they find no significant proximity differences between the *New York Times*, the *Atlanta Constitution*, and the *Miami Herald* in reporting the time, duration, size, participants’ ethnicity, or location for four Miami riots from the 1980s.

The discrepancies in these findings reinforce the importance of additional and more

systematic testing for validity biases, particularly as intensity accelerates over the course of a protest cycle. The increasing globalization of protest and social movement studies also offers an excellent opportunity for expanding our understanding of validity as these studies are also based primarily on newspaper data (see summary in Mueller 1996). The issues identified by Danzger (1975) and Snyder and Kelly (1977) are becoming increasingly salient in the expanding study of collective action.

VALIDITY ISSUES IN THE INTERNATIONAL STUDY OF PROTEST

In the context of international protests additional questions emerge related to global patterns of news reporting. *Media sensitivity* encompasses a new set of issues. Do the grievances and participants in a particular protest cycle reflect geopolitical interests that would differentially affect coverage? What is the meaning of locational proximity to the media in terms of *international* spheres of interests? To what extent does a country's political system permit open news coverage? What are the most accessible news sources for the researcher, and what are their biases? Given accessible and continuous news coverage for the relevant period by presses with known political biases, to what extent do *event intensity* factors influence the likelihood of event reporting, and do these probabilities change over the course of a protest cycle?

In-depth studies of national protests have focused on countries at the center of world press attention in either existing or developing democracies with high quality national presses. Outside this select orbit, media sensitivity is directly influenced by the practice of giving news coverage to geographic areas in direct proportion to their positions in the international political economy. This pattern is found in the quality presses and the international wire services, although the rank of any specific country may change over time (Taylor and Jodice 1983:178). An examination of the four major wire services (UPI, AP, Reuters, and Agence France-Presse) reports similar criteria for regional variation in coverage (Fenby 1986). Such geopolitical bias suggests that any given protest cycle, particularly during its formative stage, will have a

different chance of coverage by the international press depending on its importance to major power centers.

My area of concern, Eastern Europe, had not been a major focus of world press attention, yet the 1989 events marking the demise of Soviet hegemony played on center stage. The question of coverage for these protest events reflects the interaction of media sensitivity and event intensity: When did the unfolding revolution in East Germany become significant for the world press, and how much of the protest cycle was covered?

Snyder and Kelly's (1977) model argues in favor of local newspapers as the most likely source of coverage for low intensity events, but in the GDR of 1989, local newspaper coverage was tightly censored by the Honecker regime.⁷ With a censored press in the country under study what levels of intensity would be covered by the world press? Protests in previous years had been timed and located to coincide with major events that brought the international press corps to East Germany, such as the International Trade Fair held twice each year in Leipzig (Philipsen 1993:49). The expulsion of leading dissidents brought TV coverage from the FRG that was received almost everywhere in the GDR. Such periodic access to the Western media is one reason that protests centered in Leipzig and East Berlin.

All this suggests the critical importance to media coverage of event intensity as a protest cycle accelerates. A study of the international wire services notes:

Agencies like big numbers. A demonstration of 1,000 people would not get onto the wire. A demonstration of 10,000 might merit a paragraph or two, if the protest were about something interesting internationally. A demonstration of 100,000 would merit a full study, whatever the cause of their protest. (Fenby 1986:94)

⁷ In the former GDR, the 1968 Constitution guaranteed a free press. Nevertheless, all papers were sponsored by parties or nongovernmental organizations controlled by the state (*Europa Yearbook* 1989:1114). Although there was no official censorship, editors were personally responsible for making content reflect the social and political system of the GDR and the Socialist Unity Party (SED). Despite Constitutional guarantees, censorship in the media of the GDR was notorious, even for Eastern Europe.

Because of large distances and a scarcity of resources for covering them, event intensity should matter more for international events than for domestic events.

Ideological biases favoring political stability over protest (Gitlin 1980; Small 1994) would argue for greater coverage by a left-leaning quality press than a centrist press in cases in which protests threaten the regime (Trew 1979; van Dijk 1988b). Yet capitalist elites rejoiced in the protest events that led to the demise of the Soviet-bloc regimes of Eastern Europe (Ponds 1993), and greater coverage by centrist rather than left-leaning presses would be expected for this anti-GDR, anti-Honecker protest cycle. The question becomes: How does event intensity differ in its impact on news reporting given varying media sensitivity to protest events? The protest event researcher is interested in finding newspaper sources that are *least* subject to the distortions of event intensity and media sensitivity when compiling events listings.

HYPOTHESES

Expansion of the Snyder-Kelly model in the context of international press coverage of the 1989 protest events in the GDR leads to two sets of expectations for presses in three countries with major political interests in the future of the GDR.

Media Sensitivity

H_{1a}: The number of protest events reported will increase as the proximity of the press to the location of events increases.

H_{1b}: Within each country, centrist newspapers will report a greater number of events than will left-leaning papers.

It is expected that event intensity will have a direct effect on reporting probabilities. It was not possible, however, to construct a list of events independent of those reported in the six presses. Thus, tests for the effects of violence, number of participants, and duration—the components of event intensity—require a research strategy in which their effects are tested at varying levels of proximity and ideological bias—the components of media sensitivity.

Event Intensity and Media Sensitivity Combined

H_{2a}: The closer the newspaper's country of origin to the GDR, the less effect event intensity will have on whether it reports protest events.

H_{2b}: Centrist newspapers will be more likely than left-leaning papers to cover anti-Soviet protests, regardless of event intensity (i.e., event intensity will have more influence on coverage by left-leaning newspapers).

RESEARCH DESIGN

To measure media sensitivity, I selected a purposive sample of six daily newspapers to test the expanded Snyder-Kelly model. The six papers were selected from the universe of newspapers widely recognized as "elite" or of exceptional "quality" compared to the popular press (Merrill and Fisher 1980; Van Dijk 1988b). They are defined by their superiority in depth and breadth of news coverage and by the elite status of their readers. Although international media scholars no longer create ranked lists of such newspapers, the distinction is widely recognized, regardless of the researcher's theoretical or ideological orientation (Van Dijk 1988a).

The six newspapers were selected from three countries at increasing distances from the location of GDR protest events but from countries with somewhat comparable levels of geopolitical interest in the unfolding events in the GDR—the former West Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. Censorship in the GDR precludes use of the local *Neues Deutschland*, the official paper of the former Social Unity Party (SED), or other local GDR papers.⁸ Political orientation of the papers is reflected in the selection of a *centrist* press and a more *left-leaning* press in each of the three countries. Event

⁸ This restriction on local coverage from the GDR precludes an exact replication of Snyder and Kelly's comparison of coverage by the *New York Times* with local newspapers on 1960s civil disturbances. I do not consider this a serious liability because the model should have general application to a wide range of proximity measures.

intensity measures are based on coded data for size (number of participants), duration (number of days of event activity), and level of violence (number of days of damage to persons or property). In these primarily peaceful events, the major source of violence was the police.

Selection of Newspapers

The first three papers, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the *London Times* and the *New York Times*, represent the centrist quality papers in Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. The companion for each is also designated in the media literature as a quality paper that is liberal or left-leaning in political orientation. These include the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the *Guardian*, and the *Washington Post*. The *Washington Post* was also selected because its East Coast location gives it a proximity to events similar to the *New York Times*. Protest event data for 1989 were coded from all news stories on "East Germany." Story citations were obtained from data-based searches for the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Guardian*. A hard copy index was used for the *London Times*, and all stories about "East Germany" were read. There were no indexes available for the two German papers. They were reviewed in their entirety for stories on the "citizen's movement" in the GDR.

Operational Definitions

An *event* is defined as any noninstitutional collective action or series of actions involving 10 or more persons that occur on the same or successive days in the same city to further the goal of democratic reform in the GDR. Following Tarrow (1989, 1994), I recognize that these events combined in a cyclical pattern of increasing intensity over time to form a protest cycle. Although Hirschman (1993) argues convincingly that "exit" (individuals leaving the GDR for the FRG) and "voice" (collective reform efforts) played complementary roles in the unfolding events of the GDR in 1989, I examine only those events that consistently espoused a primarily reform purpose.

The three dimensions of event intensity in this study are based on event reporting for a

master list created from all six papers. Thus, *size* is indicated by the logged number of participants averaged from combined reports for each newspaper covering the event. *Duration*, or length of the event, is measured as either one day or more than one day. *Violence* is indicated by either its absence or presence as noted in any of the six papers. Typically, nonviolent forms of collective action ranged from meetings, demonstrations, and marches to vigils and religious services.

Coding Procedures

Two sociology graduate students, one a native German-speaker, coded the variables. The German-speaking student coded the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Reliability checks were made during the training period between the two coders for the English-language newspapers. Coding reliability on the data used in this analysis was 95 percent.

Creating the Events Lists

A common coding problem in event-listing stems from the standard journalistic practice of generalizing from one event described in detail by the reporter to a "cluster" of events for which the only information is date and location. For analyses in which frequency and distribution of collective actions is sufficient to identify events and describe the pattern of a protest cycle, these clusters offer adequate information (Spilerman 1970). With the more elaborate coding scheme used here, event clusters are treated separately.

The master list includes 267 nonredundant protest events from a total of 513 reported by the six newspapers. The distribution of events throughout the year indicates a pattern of escalation over the protest cycle (Figure 1). Thus, 210 of the 267 events (78.6 percent) occurred in the last three months of 1989 with one-third in October alone. While most attention focused on the few events in which crowds of a half-million seemed to materialize overnight, the number of reported events escalated dramatically as well. This increase reflects the proliferation of event coverage outside the three core cities of Leipzig, East Berlin, and Dresden to over 40 cities throughout the GDR. Of the 267 total events,

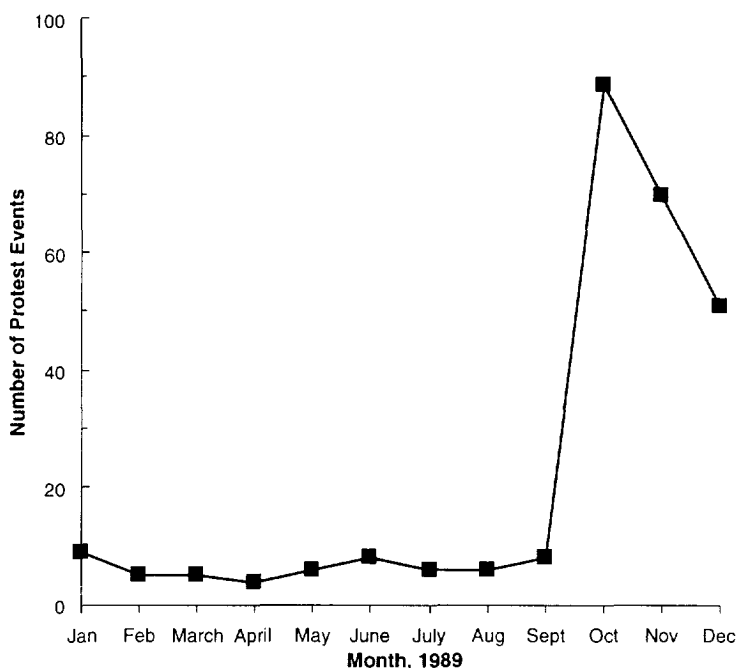


Figure 1. Distribution of Protest Events in East Germany in 1989, by Month

Source: From the master list of events, N = 267.

69 (25 percent) occurred in these reporting clusters, and they are excluded from the intensity analysis. There was also excessive missing data on intensity measures for events in the 93 minor cities. Because much of the collective action occurred in three major cities—East Berlin, Leipzig, and Dresden—the intensity analysis is restricted to the 107 events occurring in these cities for which complete information is available.

Thus, the 267 events are divided into three subsets: “clusters,” “minor cities,” and “major cities.” A remaining question is whether this division of events biases the intensity analyses. Are there significant differences between newspapers in the proportions of protests covered for the three major cities? A comparison of the six newspapers indicates that this is not the case (data not shown); only small differences exist among newspapers in the proportion of all events reported for the three major cities.

The number of events reported for each of the three major cities throughout the year shows distinct differences between countries and newspapers. Table 1 shows the monthly distribution of events reported for the three

major cities for 1989. Differences between the two German newspapers and the four English-language papers are striking. Ninety-six percent of the events reported by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* occurred from October through December. All of the coverage in the *Guardian* and over 90 percent of the coverage in the *London Times* begins in September. In contrast, only one-half of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (50.0 percent) and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (51.3 percent) events occurred after the beginning of September.

RESULTS

Media Sensitivity

Hypothesis 1a states that the number of protest events reported will increase with the proximity of the press to the location of events. Results of pairwise *t*-tests comparing the means of proportions of events covered by newspapers in the three countries are shown in Table 2. The proportion of combined nonredundant events for the two newspapers in each country are compared for the

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Protest Events Reported in Six Newspapers, by Month: East Berlin, Leipzig, and Dresden, 1989

Month	<i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</i>		<i>Süddeutsche Zeitung</i>		London Times		<i>Guardian</i>		<i>New York Times</i>		<i>Washington Post</i>		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
January	6	6.9	5	6.2	1	3.8	0	.0	1	4.3	0	.0	6	5.6
February	5	5.8	4	5.0	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	5	4.7
March	4	4.7	4	5.0	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	1	4.3	4	3.7
April	4	4.7	4	5.0	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	4	3.7
May	5	5.8	5	6.3	1	3.8	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	6	5.6
June	7	8.1	6	7.5	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	8	7.5
July	6	6.9	6	7.5	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	8	7.5
August	6	6.9	6	7.5	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	6	5.6
September	5	5.8	6	7.5	6	17.1	2	6.3	0	.0	0	.0	8	7.5
October	16	18.6	16	20.0	15	42.9	13	40.6	14	60.9	15	65.2	24	22.4
November	11	12.8	11	13.8	6	17.1	9	28.1	6	26.1	5	21.7	14	13.1
December	11	12.8	8	10.0	6	17.1	8	25.0	2	8.7	2	8.7	16	15.0
Total	86	100.0	80	100.0	35	100.0	32	100.0	23	100.0	23	100.0	107	100.0
Percent of total		80.1		74.8		32.7		29.9		21.5		21.5		

total list of events and for the three separate data sets. Most of the tests support the hypothesis. First, there is no German/English-language comparison in which the more proximate country's newspapers do not report a larger proportion of the total number of events in each category. Also, coverage by the two British papers combined exceeds that of the two U.S. papers combined. Second, *t*-values decline with increased distance from the East German protest events. The greatest difference in the proportion of all events reported is in the comparison between Germany and the United States followed by the com-

parison between Germany and Great Britain and, finally, the comparison between Great Britain and the United States. This order holds for all three data sets, although the difference between Great Britain and the United States for cluster cities is not significant.

Examining differences between newspapers within each country, Hypothesis 1b predicts that in each country the centrist newspaper would report significantly more events than would the left-leaning press. The data in Table 3 indicate, however, that for most comparisons there is no significant difference between newspapers within each coun-

Table 2. T-Statistics for Significance of the Difference between the Proportions of Events Reported in German, British, and U.S. Newspapers, by Subsample, 1989

Subsample	German Newspapers vs. U.S. Newspapers	German Newspapers vs. British Newspapers	British Newspapers vs. U.S. Newspapers	Number of Events
Major cities	10.77***	7.45***	2.67**	107
Minor cities	5.97***	3.93***	2.07*	93
Cluster cities	10.76***	7.86***	1.09	67
Total	14.88***	10.59***	3.39***	267

p* ≤ .05 *p* ≤ .01 ****p* ≤ .001 (two-tailed tests)

Table 3. T-Statistics for Significance of the Difference between the Proportions of Protest Events Reported in Centrist and Left-Leaning Newspapers in Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, by Subsample, 1989

Subsample	<i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</i>	<i>London Times</i>	<i>New York Times</i>	Number of Events
	vs. <i>Süddeutsche Zeitung</i>	vs. <i>Guardian</i>	vs. <i>Washington Post</i>	
Major cities	-1.18	.60	.00	107
Minor cities	-1.11	2.79**	2.17*	93
Cluster cities	2.29*	-.26	-1.16	67
Total	.18	2.17*	.88	267

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ (two-tailed tests)

try. Nevertheless, there are four comparisons that support the hypothesis.

To summarize, the data support one of the two tests from the Snyder-Kelly model on media sensitivity. Proximity is highly significant in the international quality press in the reporting of protest events. The farther an elite press is from protest events, the less likely it is that the events will be reported. However, contrary to Snyder and Kelly's (1977) prediction, the ideological leaning of the newspapers is not systematically important for the number of protest events reported.

Event Intensity

The ideal test of event intensity would require a list of events compiled independently of newspaper reports (e.g., the permit data used by McCarthy et al. [1996] for Washington, D.C.) In the absence of such a list, the event intensity hypothesis—Hypothesis 2a—is evaluated by comparing effects for each of the six newspapers that differ in terms of proximity and ideological bias. Separate analyses evaluating the same model of event intensity are run for each of the six newspapers. The dependent variable is each newspaper's coverage of or failure to cover events in the three major cities. Indicators of intensity are: violence (presence or absence), duration (an event of one day versus more than one day), and number of participants (logged).

I selected logistic regression for the analysis because of the dichotomous dependent variable, coverage versus noncoverage. The fit of the models should improve with increas-

ing distance of the newspaper's home office from the source of events in East Germany. That is, the farther the home office is from protest events, the greater the protest intensity required for events to be covered. Thus, the improvement in chi-square of the likelihood estimates for the analysis ($-2 \log$ -likelihood) should be greater for the British papers than for the German papers, and similarly, the improvement should be greater for the U.S. papers than for the British papers (Hypothesis 2a). Within each country, the model should fit better for the left-leaning newspaper than for the centrist paper because of centrist papers' reputations of providing more comprehensive coverage for elites on matters of geopolitical interest (Hypothesis 2b).

The results, shown in Table 4, support the general logic of Hypotheses 2a and 2b.⁹ There is a monotonic increase in the improvement in chi-square from the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (.687) to the *Washington Post* (38.950) with the exception of the *Guardian*. Also, as Snyder and Kelly would predict, improvement in chi-square is not significant for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. That is, differences in chi-square for the likelihood estimates for the German papers are not significantly improved by the addition of intensity variables. The greater sensitivity of

⁹ The program for logistic regression transforms binary variables into +1 and -1. The signs for these data are as follows: no violence = 1.0, violence = -1.0; duration of 1 day = 1.0, more than one day = -1.0 (i.e., in Table 4 a negative slope for violence or duration indicates a positive effect).

Table 4. Logistic Coefficients from the Regression of Number of Protest Events Reported by Six Newspapers on Event Intensity Variables: East Berlin, Leipzig, and Dresden, 1989

Independent Variable	<i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</i>	<i>Süddeutsche Zeitung</i>	<i>London Times</i>	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>New York Times</i>	<i>Washington Post</i>
Violence	-.418 (.553)	-.618 (.556)	-.976* (.379)	-.613 (.420)	.092 (.394)	-1.395** (.433)
Duration	.050 (.381)	.390 (.338)	.004 (.311)	.173 (.373)	-.796* (.318)	.049 (.345)
Number of participants (logged)	.005 (.128)	-.001 (.123)	.523*** (.121)	.934*** (.187)	.510*** (.128)	.676** (.157)
Intercept	2.023 (1.189)	1.910 (1.140)	-4.199 (1.059)	-7.923 (1.610)	-5.108 (1.205)	-6.214 (1.439)
Chi-square	73.330	78.234	83.619	60.323	71.881	60.592
Improvement in chi-square ^a	.687	2.500	32.643***	55.939***	31.879***	38.950***

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors.

^a -2 log-likelihood chi-square for improvement in chi-square.

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

the *Guardian* to intensity reflects that newspaper's very late entry in coverage of the East German protests. With this exception, the data support the Snyder-Kelly argument that the effect of event intensity on the likelihood of coverage increases the greater the distance of the newspaper from the event. For all newspapers for which the model improves reporting probabilities of the protests (the English-language papers), protest size is a significant predictor of reporting. Violence is a significant predictor for only two newspapers; duration of protest is a significant predictor for only one press.

Hypothesis 2b states that because of geopolitical interests, centrist papers will be more likely to cover protests than will left-leaning papers, *regardless of event intensity*. Thus, left-leaning papers should be more sensitive than centrist papers to the Snyder-Kelly intensity model. To test the hypothesis, the difference between the two papers in each country in the fit of the model was compared by calculating the differences between the chi-square improvement as a one-degree-of-freedom chi-square (Hosmer and Lemeshow 1989). For the two countries farthest from the GDR protest events, the United States and Great Britain, the hypothesis is supported. The *Washington Post* is

more sensitive to event intensity than is the *New York Times* ($38.9 - 31.9 = 7.1$, $p < .01$), and the *Guardian* is more sensitive than is the *London Times* ($55.9 - 32.6 = 23.3$, $p < .001$). There is no difference in the fit of the models for the two papers in West Germany ($2.5 - .7 = 1.8$, not significant), the papers closest to the protest events.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Snyder-Kelly model (1977) was designed to challenge Danzger's (1975) conclusion that quantitative studies of the 1960s ghetto riots were flawed by using invalid data derived from newspaper sources which were biased by varying accessibility to wire service offices. Their model expanded Danzger's conception of media sensitivity and added the most salient characteristic of protests for list enumeration—event intensity. This expanded model has been strongly supported by this analysis of international press coverage of the momentous events of 1989 in the former GDR. Data on media sensitivity establish that within a group of countries having similar political interests in a given set of protests, the closer a newspaper's home office is to the site of a protest, the more likely it is that protest events will be

reported. These differences in event reporting are found for events in the three major GDR cities, the minor cities, and for protests reported in city "clusters." The data also support Snyder and Kelly's claims regarding event intensity in relation to proximity: The intensity of an event becomes more important in attracting media coverage the farther the press is from the protest site. For these largely nonviolent events, the number of participants is by far the most important dimension of event intensity.

Contrasts between newspapers based on ideological bias indicate no significant differences in the enumeration of protest events. For event intensity, however, the greater sensitivity of left-leaning newspapers to the size, duration, and violence of an event compared to the centrist newspapers in each country shows a higher threshold for reporting an event and a lower likelihood of covering the full range of 1989 GDR protests. With critical geopolitical interests at stake, the centrist quality newspapers deployed their reporting resources to cover a broader range of protest intensity throughout 1989 than did the left-leaning presses.

The major conclusions I draw are these: (1) Because presses are sensitive to event intensity, the origins of a protest cycle are poorly represented in the international press beyond the countries that border on the protest site (and probably use the same language as well); and (2) within countries farthest from the protests, left-leaning newspapers show a greater sensitivity to the magnitude of event intensity as a basis of protest event reporting than do centrist newspapers. However, these results may be generalized only to the coverage of similar types of protests by international quality newspapers of countries sharing geopolitical interests. In these particular events, the Cold War significance of protests in a critical Eastern European country like the GDR in 1989 seems to have heightened the sensitivity of centrist papers located outside the immediate vicinity of protest, regardless of the intensity of events.

Despite Snyder and Kelly's (1977) pioneering effort to sensitize scholars to issues of validity, there have been no prior attempts to specify more precisely the levels of event intensity at which validity criteria are met. Yet, the support demonstrated here for the

Snyder-Kelly model reinforces their claim that careful attention to the validity of data at low levels of event intensity and media sensitivity is required. This analysis argues strongly in favor of gathering data from "local" coverage by the most proximate quality newspapers and also coding from more than one newspaper.

The results also indicate a high level of risk for researchers who rely on the international elite press to examine the dynamics of protest cycles or the timing of shifts in protest activity within a single country or set of countries that are not of major geopolitical interest. Although the protest events studied here were located in Eastern Europe, these data raise again the issue posed by Snyder and Kelly's comparison of the *New York Times'* coverage with local press coverage of civil rights demonstrations, which showed a significant regional bias by the *Times*. Although the distance from Eastern Europe and language differences are greater impediments to media sensitivity than is the distance between coasts in the United States, these findings suggest caution when relying exclusively on indexed *New York Times* coverage of international protest cycles.

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