

THEY DIVIDED THE SKY: ELITE FACTIONALISM FACTORS DURING CONTENTIOUS POLITICS IN GDR, 1989

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Abstract. *This paper aims to break into a "black box" of inner authoritarian elite mechanics by elucidating the rationales for elite behavior under the pressure of mass discontent during the Peaceful Revolution of 1989 in the GDR. A game-theoretic model is applied and statistically tested in order to explore causal links between elite members' office types and their biological and institutional age on the one hand and defection on the other. The data corroborate three out of four initial hypotheses, namely that (1) party functionaries and (2) persons holding repression-related offices are most prone to defect, and that (3) both inner and outer party circle officials offer equal support to demands for liberalization. One hypothesis was only partly validated: there is an only partial causal relation between age and proneness to defect.*

Key words: *authoritarian regime, contentious politics, elite factionalism, game theory modeling, single-party regime, winning coalition.*

INTRODUCTION

Kuran (1997) has pertinently opined that revolutions seem impossible *ex ante* and inevitable *ex post*. This observation is especially relevant to the German Democratic Republic (hereafter: GDR) case. Since the upheaval of 1953, the GDR regime was fairly stable: the communist ideology had no viable alternative because nationalism was discredited and liberalism uprooted; the populace enjoyed material well-being and remained loyal; a tiny opposition was being constantly monitored by the secret police, the infamous *Stasi*, and thus effectively contained. The implosion of 1989 came as a shock. Because it occurred prior to the Soviet demise, no one was prepared to foresee a collapse of an entrenched single-party regime under duress of mass contentious politics without even trying a Chinese option (repression of contenders). As Madarász summarized, "the existence of the GDR for forty years in relative stability and its rapid

collapse in 1989 pose a major problem for which neither historians nor sociologists nor politicians nor the media have yet found a convincing explanation” (2003: 1).

The absence of explanation, however, is not for lack of trying. The GDR spectacular demise invited many scholars to study the case intensively (see: Ross 2012) for a detailed discussion). One standard argumentation puts the evolution of international developments, first and foremost Gorbachev’s rejection of the Brezhnev doctrine, as a major factor that precipitated the end of the regime. This structuralist explanation, although established as a conventional interpretation (Enquete-Kommission 1995: 1983), virtually ignores that the Soviet disengagement provided only opportunities to challenge the regime but not the contenders. In other words, it became important to explain both the origins and motives of actors who challenged the regime in 1989. Consequently, the research program advanced in the mid-1990s by scholars at the “Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung” (see: Kaiser (1997) and Lindenberger (1999) detailed the everyday life and perceptions, including the growing disillusionment with the regime, of the populace. Kopstein (1997) and Grix (2000) suggested that the regime collapsed when the social contract between the people who traded economic prosperity for loyalty and the regime went void due to economic hardships in the 1980s. Following this line of inquiry, scholars were increasingly focusing on contentious politics to explain the dynamics of the GDR demise. Pollack (1997) and Pfaff (2006) studied informal networks of dissent that eventually gave impetus to the anti-regime opposition. Opp and Gern, in a similar vein, posited that personal networks were the most important contexts for mobilizing citizens, for they made possible a “spontaneous coordination model” (1993: 675), that is, cooperation between strangers advantageous for contenders during the fateful events of 1989. Finally, Madarász observed that four societal groups, “young people, women, writers, and Christians were favoured by the regime [...] they enjoyed some political leeway based on the regime’s conviction that this social group represented the future of the socialist society” (2003: 2). In a blatant illustration of regime’s miscalculation, precisely these four privileged groups formed the backbone of political opposition.

A picture of heroic citizenry challenging the regime, however, conflicts with another strain of research, namely the one convincingly emphasizing the oppressive nature of the GDR. Even when deprived of Soviet support, the regime had a formidable repressive apparatus. *Stasi* alone had numerous detention centers, separate armed forces, and one of the densest internal surveillance networks (BStU 2019). In addition, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (hereafter: SED) machinery controlled public opinion through propaganda and spoils distribution. All in all, as the concept of *durchherrschte Gesellschaft* (Kaelble, Kocka & Zwahr 1994) — literally “overgoverned society” — implies, there was an all-encompassing bureaucratic apparatus that produced a “dictatorship of social structures” (Bauernkämper 2005) in the GDR. Even if, as Glaeser observed, in its last years “the party state was unable to understand and therefore to create the conditions for the possibility to come to terms with the phenomenon of political dissidence” (2010: 28), the system itself had enough resources to at least try to contain and actively repress the contentious actors in 1989.

In this paper, we aim to reconcile the conflicting interpretations of the GDR collapse. To bridge the gap, it is necessary to account not only for the repressive capacity of the regime or the contentious actions by contenders but also for the *political will to use coercive apparatus* to actively muddle the dissent. This crucial component was, in fact, lacking in 1989. In order to explain why it was lacking, a shift from contentious actors, their tactics and strategies is required. In particular, we argue that *elite factionalism* and the defection of the winning coalition members critically diminish the political will of incumbents to use force against the contenders. The cracks in the previously united winning coalition, in turn, are provoked by pre-existing cleavages between its individual members. In this study, we build a model which elucidates the internal structure of the GDR winning coalition and grasps the logic of political defection in regimes challenged by contentious politics. We believe that our analysis will contribute to a better understanding of the GDR implosion and the nature of authoritarian breakdown in general.

THEORETICAL PREMISES

Elite factionalism has long been established as one of the predominant factors of authoritarian breakdown. In his seminal paper, Dix suggests that division within the dictatorial ruling elite is a necessary precondition for regime's loss of legitimacy and the consequent narrowing of its social base (1982), which constitutes the general path for the downfall of a dictatorship. In particular, he emphasizes that when the political opposition poses a formidable challenge, a faction within the ruling elite becomes eager to negotiate some "exit guarantees". In other words, it seeks an agreement with the contenders not to be persecuted or penalized by subtraction of accumulated economic assets should regime collapse in exchange for abandoning the dictator (*ibid.*: 569). Thus, *exit guarantees* are a necessary condition for defection, whereas defection is required for an authoritarian breakdown. "Round tables" in Eastern European socialist states at the end of the 1980s exemplify the path predicted by Dix.

Elite factionalism became a centerpiece of the strategic theory of democratization developed by O'Donnell and Schmitter to the extent that they claim that "there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence — direct or indirect — of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself, principally along the fluctuating cleavage between hard-liners and soft-liners" (1986: 19). More specifically, O'Donnell and Schmitter argue that mass contentious politics provokes a split among the elites into two camps. One camp considers the preservation of authoritarian status quo "possible and desirable" thus advocating hardline strategies in dealing with the contenders, whereas another faction, commonly referred to as "soft-liners", considers the regime's liberalization to be a viable survival strategy (1986: 15).

Despite the alternative explanations of authoritarian breakdown (see: Wintrobe 1998, Collier & Mahoney 1999, Rueschemeyer, Huber & Stephens 2005, Svobik 2012, Acemoglu & Robinson 2012, Svobik 2012, Boix 2013, Boix & Svobik 2013, Haggard & Kaufman 2016), most of the authors acknowledge that elite factionalism is a crucial (albeit not the unique) factor of the process in question. For instance, Svobik speculates

that any authoritarian regime faces two essential difficulties: the problem of authoritarian control and the problem of authoritarian power-sharing, the latter being a particular “authoritarian leadership dynamics [due to which] an overwhelming majority of dictators lose power to those inside the gates of the presidential palace rather than to the masses outside” (2012: 5).

A so-called “institutional turn in comparative authoritarianism” (Pepinsky 2014) gave a particular twist to the issue of factionalism. Most scholars admit that the regime’s institutional framework can either hinder or accelerate elite defection. In particular, single-party regimes, concisely defined by Brooker as those where “the party and its leaders effectively operate a de facto monopoly over the entire country” (2000: 44), are believed to be the most efficient in preventing elite factionalism. Initially introduced by Geddes (1999), the idea that this regime type is on average more stable and resilient due to a combination of patronage, propaganda, power-sharing, collegial decision-making, elite cohesion, and mutual checks imposed on the dictator and the elites, was later elaborated by Smith (2005), Gandhi & Przeworski (2007), Hadenius & Teorell (2007), Kitschelt & Wilkinson (2007), Wright (2008), Malesky, Abrami, & Zheng (2011), Geddes, Wright, & Frantz (2018).

Its resilience notwithstanding, the single-party regime is not immune to instability and collapse. As Greene reminds, dominant parties eventually lose despite rigged electoral systems, patronage networks, and all-encompassing ideologies if contenders manage to appeal to higher values and mobilize citizens undeterred by high costs (2007: 139–172). Sustained mass mobilization has grave implications for the regime: Przeworski (1991: 64), Geddes (1999: 24–25), and Ulfelder (2005: 314) concur that as mass mobilization in the streets intensifies, the risks of repressions as well as co-optation costs for elites rise so high that they eventually become unbearable. At this point the narration of elite factionalism and that of single-party collapse cross: a split within party elites is likely when a fraction deems repressions too costly while the career prospects under a new regime or even under democracy appear more and more alluring. In fact, elite soft-liners tend to be prominent in their public recognition of the regime deficiencies and concessions to the civil society, so that contentious actors eventually enjoy lessening costs, “both real and anticipated, associated with individual expression and collective action” (O’Donnell & Schmitter 1986: 7). Likewise, Stepan surmises that soft-liners advocate “less censorship of the media, somewhat greater room for the organization of autonomous working-class activities, reintroduction of some legal safeguards... for individuals, the releasing of most political prisoners, the return of political exiles, possibly measures for improving the distribution of income, and... the toleration of political opposition’ (1988: 6). Przeworski calls these policies the essential measures aimed at the opening of a political regime usually taken in order to widen the base of support for the liberal elite faction (1991: 57).

One might conclude that typically resilient single-party regimes are of utmost vulnerability when their elite lose their high level of cohesion. In such circumstances, a fraction of soft-liners is likely to advocate liberalization and even regime opening, which sets the regime on the road to possible democratization. However, although there is a

general consensus regarding the role of elite factionalism in authoritarian breakdown, both the origins and the dynamics of the process remain undertheorized.

A promising way to conceptualize elite factionalism in autocracies is to combine authoritarian regime studies with selectorate theory. First outlined by Paterson (1967) to describe party politics, the theory had been successfully adopted to analyze political process in the USSR and its satellites (Hodnett 1975; Stern 1978; Hauslohner 1981; Roeder 1993), but it has achieved general acclaim and universality due to groundbreaking efforts by Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2005). The selectorate theory speculates that each polity consists of four sets of individuals “built-in” into each other like a nesting doll: *populace*, *selectorate*, *winning coalition*, and *leaders* (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005: 37). *Populace* is the population who inhabits a given polity with or without any political rights. Individuals who play a formal role in the process of choosing a leader by giving a vote constitute the selectorate (ibid.: 42). *Winning coalition* is created by the selectorate members whose support and resource investments are vital to the regime’s survival (ibid.: 51). At the regime pinnacle is the leader, a person who constructed a current winning coalition and whose rule embodies the regime per se. Leaders struggle to maintain their winning coalition through the distribution of both private and public goods (ibid.: 29, 38–39). These vary both in substance (i.e. in *what* is distributed) and in *the way* they are distributed. Public goods are impersonal and provided through public policies, whereas private goods are received personally by a small number of individuals closest to the leadership (ibid.: 29).

The selectorate theory predicts that leaders prefer not to depend on too many actors, thus they tend to minimize the winning coalition size as much as possible till it reaches its minimum-size equilibrium. The relations of individual actors within the winning coalition and the winning coalition to selectorate ratio are two principal factors of the regime’s political survival. In a nutshell, if a regime has a small winning coalition and a large selectorate, it is valuable to belong to the winning coalition since most of private goods are distributed there. Furthermore, since the selectorate members (derogatorily called “interchangeable” by Bueno de Mesquita) are abundant, in case of individual defection from the winning coalition there are plenty of actors eager to assume this place. In other words, the selectorate theory predicts that defection is endemic in two regime types: either (1) with big winning coalitions and small selectorate or (2) where private goods distributed among the winning coalition members are perceived as not of a great value.

The problem with the classical selectorate theory is that it reduces complexities to abstractions. (See Gallagher & Hanson (2015) and Cao & Ward (2015) for a wider critique.) In particular, it presents actors both within the winning coalition and the selectorate as “people without qualities”, namely as interchangeable arithmetical machines that only calculate benefits, whereas in reality they are individuals with different expertise, values, emotions, and propensities to misjudge.

We believe that professional background and personal biographies constitute important variables that differentiate individual members of the winning coalition and, consequently, play an important role in their decision whether to defect. In addition, we

contend that no defection decision is taken in a sort of political vacuum; rather, general political climate and particular events like political scandals, economic crises, and – crucial for this paper—mass contentious politics strongly influence this decision. Therefore, we believe that a complex motivation structure proper to each winning coalition member affects his or her choice whether to support liberalization.

To summarize, elite factionalism is a universally observed factor of authoritarian breakdown detected in Middle East (Hinnebusch 2006), Sub-Saharan Africa (Morency-Laflamme 2015), and Soviet satellite states (Thomson 2016). Elite factionalism is contingent upon significant re-arrangements in elite motivation structures. Triggers for such changes are manifold. In Mexico, for instance, it was provoked by the regime's inner decision to open up and change the electoral law (de Sierra 2011), in Indonesia, this was due to a sweeping economic crisis (Eklöf 2003: 284–289), in numerous settings rigged elections and public outcry forced some elite members to reconsider the costs of regime support (Kuntz & Thompson 2009). In the socialist states in the late 1980s, prolonged organized activity of social movements and non-violent contentious politics was instrumental in changing calculations of the party elite (Ulfelder 2005: 323).

The central unresolved question is whether there are some features of both professional and personal nature which make some individual elite members more prone to defect. Since the question is rather broad and the quest for personal details is bound to yield idiosyncratic results, we limit our research focus on (1) shared characteristics (e.g. age and field of expertise) of winning coalition members and (2) instances of defection under specific although universally observed circumstances, namely the challenge to the regime from the contentious politics.

THE GDR CASE: HISTORY AND CONTEXT

The GDR offers a uniquely insightful case in several respects. Firstly, the GDR regime undoubtedly represented a single-party authoritarian type. That is manifested by the fact that the number of all party and organization members in the East German Parliament, *Volkskammer*, with the prevalence of SED representatives, were fixed (see Neugebauer 1974: 390; Schroeder 2013, 213–215; Zimmerman 1988: 250). Besides, albeit other parties were allowed, the state's socialist priorities, as well as the "leading role" of SED in East-German society, were enshrined in the Constitution (*Verfassung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* 1974, see Preamble, art. 1, art. 2, art. 6, art. 9, art. 10). The *Volkskammer* was rather a rubber-stamp parliament whose functions were restricted to a limited discussion and unanimous voting. Leaders of the former opposition to SED were effectively co-opted within the legislature. Since the GDR was a single-party autocracy, we assume that it possessed basic features usually ascribed to this regime type, namely elite cohesion, prominent resilience, and – rather paradoxically – vulnerability to mass discontent. Consequently, the GDR case lends itself to study the motivational structure of elite defection.

We focused on the period of flagrant instability in GDR history, the Peaceful Revolution of 1989. Albeit the demonstrations in some East German cities famously

thrived from the early October of 1989, the first publicly visible cracks within the regime's winning coalition began to surface by the 18th of October, when the long-reigning General Secretary of SED Erich Honecker was forced to resign, the new leader Egon Krenz was inaugurated, and "the turning point" (*die Wende* in German) seeking some liberalization was proclaimed (Major 2010: 246–248). From this point on, a protracted process of elite factionalism took off. One by one, major party leaders but also importantly less weighty Central Committee (hereafter: CC or CC SED) members embraced or disavowed the new party policies up until the entire Politburo was forced to resign on November 8 and the new government was constituted on November 18. Therefore, this paper focuses on the time period **between October 18th through November 18th of 1989**, for it was during this month that the most intense factionalism occurred until the winning coalition eventually reshuffled under external (popular) pressure.

The GDR case is illustrative because its elites were, reportedly, the most *coherent* among former socialist countries (Fulbrook 2015: 260). Indeed, unlike in Poland, Hungary or Czechoslovakia, party elites in GDR never manifested any serious inner splits prior to the October of 1989. Still, as notices Madarász (2003: 21) citing Hans Modrow (the GDR's last socialist prime minister), the GDR had neither homogeneous nor monolithic elites with consensual political views. Beneficially for our study, the lack of clear-cut splits before mass protests commenced sets the stage for accurate observation on how contentious politics alone (though coupled with the withdrawal of guarantees of protection from the USSR) catalyzed regime's collapse.

Moreover, the regime's power structure is of the utmost significance. It was rather the Council of Ministers, an East-German government, packed only with obedient functionaries and technocrats, that had concentrated most power among the *state* institutions. Of course, this Council tended to replicate the decisions approved by the SED Central Committee and its Politburo not least because these organs shared most of their leaders (Meyer 1991: 46). These leaders, in turn, shared not only power that came with their offices but also a range of privileges offered by the state. SED party leadership was thus the regime's true winning coalition. Consequently, there were both clearly identifiable and well-institutionalized selectorate and winning coalition under the GDR, which renders the task of tracing liberalization support patterns more feasible. Indeed, we do not have to account for, for instance, the hidden economic interests that might be represented in other cases by oligarchs and interest groups.

The challenge of a robust and clear winning coalition delineation arises. For the purpose of analysis, we consider **(1) members of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany who (2) were also members of its Central Committee or (3) of its Politburo and who (4) participated in the most important decision-making processes within the regime** as players who constitute the GDR **winning coalition**. We ascribe the primordial role to the Central Committee because without its decision no party member of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany could assume any important governmental position.

Concerning the *inner hierarchy* distinctions (between what we for analytical purpose call *inner* and *outer circles* of winning coalition), Meyer (1991: 76) opines how the "political *leading core*" could be discerned. He claims that the *Führungskern* (German for

"leading core") was composed of nearly fifty people, all **chiefs of the central party organs** plus **members of Politburo, secretaries of CC SED, and first secretaries of *Bezirke*** (major East-German administrative units). As suggested by Meyer (1991) and Thieme (2015), these actors usually combined several offices both within the party and in the state institutions. Their outstanding position indeed mattered: as shown by Fulbrook (2015: 185), they enjoyed considerable privileges such as "freedom to travel to the West, access to Western currency (and hence hard currency shops), preferential treatment for the purchase of new cars..." or the ownership of "private hunting lodges with relatively luxurious facilities." These privileges were reserved for party members and could be scaled along party hierarchy levels. Obviously, highly concentrated power came alongside combined chief offices and economic privileges. As of 1989, almost half of Politburo members (11 out of 21) were also members of CC Secretariat, five were first secretaries of *Bezirksleitungen*, one (Horst Sindermann) presided over the GDR parliament, the *Volkskammer*, four presided over the most powerful executive organ, the Council of Ministers, and one, party chief Erich Honecker, was also the head of the National Defense Council and of the State Council of the GDR (Meyer 1991: 7).

Noteworthy, even the CC members who did not belong to the *Führungskern* cohort appeared to be astonished when the information on the privileges of their comrades was disclosed in November 1989 (Hertle & Gerd-Rüdiger 1997: 464, 477), which implies that the distribution of both the power and goods within the CC was not equal and a distinction between Central Committee's *inner* and *outer circles* has to be accounted for.

It is significant that the GDR regime displays all the features outlined in the previous theorizations on elite defection, thus inviting for a case-study to better understand elite defection. Both the high initial elite cohesion levels and the outstanding position of technocrats in the government coupled with the visible inequalities in power and privileges *within* the winning coalition lay the ground for us to further theorize on the possible cleavage patterns the regime may "crack" along when exposed to the pressure of contentious politics.

Relying on the speculations of prior researchers and on our own assumptions regarding the inner SED party divisions, we introduce a game-theoretic model to analyze political behavior of top SED party members based on the information about their positions, office types and levels within the party hierarchy.

DATA AND METHODS

I. Modeling political behavior

The initial broad inquiry question of this paper is "Why only some members of the winning coalition support regime liberalization whilst others do not?" To provide empirically testable results, a more precise research question is needed, namely "**What are the rational calculations driving some members of winning coalition to support contenders to the regime and the status quo?**" This research question espouses the broad rationalist methodology because we consider each winning coalition member as a rational actor whose behavior is based on the calculation of costs and benefits connected

to each possible decision (to defect or to repress). Given outstanding invulnerability of single-party regimes to factionalism, only significant challenges “from beneath” (i.e. from a social movement or popular contention) are capable of altering a winning coalition member’s expectations regarding the prospects of the regime. Thus, periods of crisis and instability offer proper occasions to observe the trajectories of the coalition’s breaking down.

Some basic concepts from rational choice theory and particularly from game theory are employed in this model.

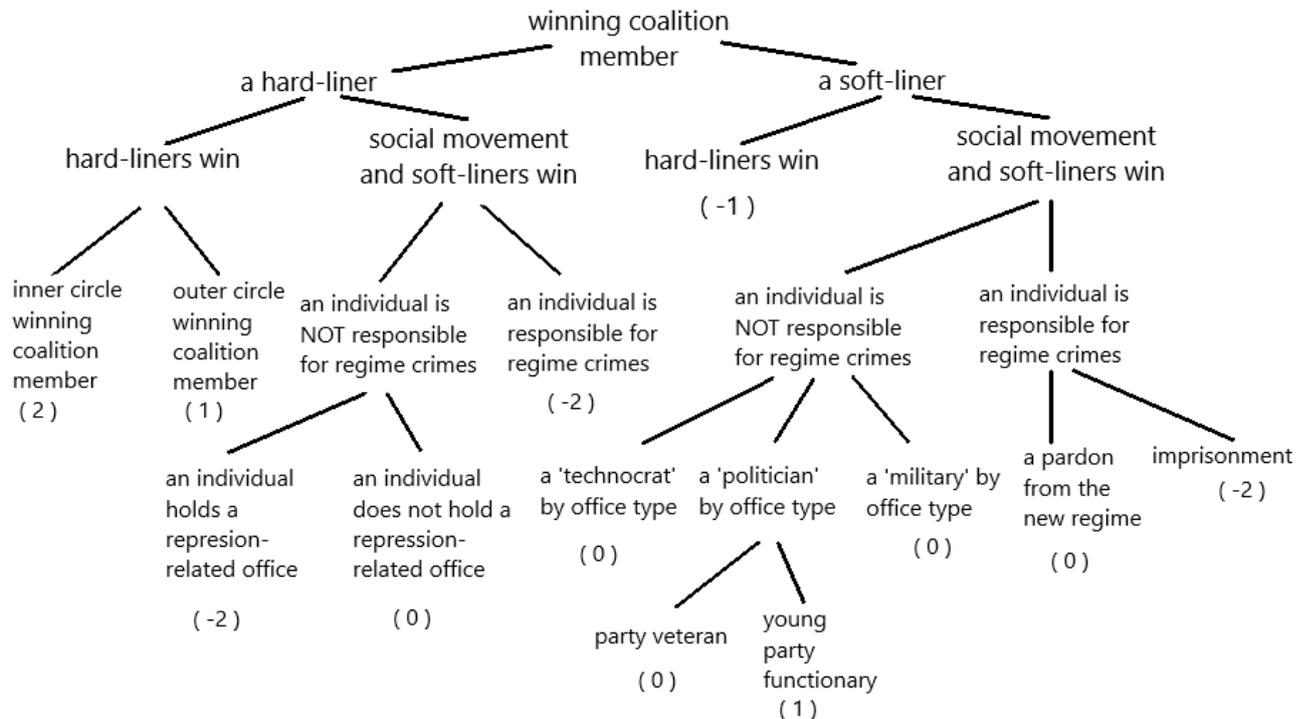
First, analyzing choices and consequent actions, we assume that “the action chosen by a decision-maker *is at least as good*, according to her preferences, as every other available action” (Osborne 2003: 6; our italics). Second, we use classical game theory concepts, namely *actions*, *preferences*, and *payoff functions*. In our formal model, we stipulate that each individual player is free to choose between supporting ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ approach to deal with contenders. Third, we calculate *payoff functions*, hereafter: $u(a)$, and expressed in numerical values. $U(a)$ is always an ordinal variable, which helps to set preferences for each actor, but prevents from calculating the ratio between them.

The model is based upon the assumption that an elite member’s decision on liberalization is contingent upon his or her estimate of the results of such a decision (hence, the payoff functions), which, in turn, depends on the specificities of an actor’s position within the winning coalition. The respective assumptions we made are schematically depicted below on a decision tree.

The decision tree (see Figure 1) illustrates different outputs for a game (that is a choice between hardline and soft-line policies) for players with different positions within the regime. The game itself proceeds as follows. As soon as authorities find out an anti-regime contentious politics mobilized a considerable amount of citizens, each individual winning coalition member has to make a choice: either to publicly approve or to disavow repressions against contenders. However, while assessing the decision outcomes elite members deal with uncertainty regarding contenders’ chances to eventually **win** and topple at least the regime’s conservative wing.

Several combinations are possible. In case a player decides to stick to the old party line, thus supporting repressions against the protesters, and the hard-liners eventually win, their payoff depends on the position held by him or her within the party. If a winning coalition member belongs to its *inner circle* that provides him or her with more goods and privileges as well as with leverage over party colleagues, his or her payoff will be highest, amounting to 2. If an actor comes from the *outer circle* and his or her privileges and access to goods are much more modest, the payoff will equal 1. If a winning coalition member opts to publicly support liberalization and hard-liners eventually win, the miscalculation is expected to be punished through deprivation of some privileges, restricted access to decision-making or even imprisonment. The losses correspond with expected utility -1.

Figure 1. Values of payoff functions for winning coalition members during mass contentious politics (given in parentheses).



If contenders achieve their goals and regime opening ensues, both calculations and outcomes are more complex.

For an individual who participated in regime’s repressive actions and who, therefore, could be charged with regime crimes after liberalization, support of repressions during mass protests could lead to civic degradation or imprisonment, a payoff function of -2. This is true for the individuals who hold the offices directly associated with the necessity to make the decision to repress or tolerate the contentious politics.

Conversely, for individuals responsible neither for regime crimes nor repressive actions during mass contention, the regime opening barely poses much significant threat. This corresponds to a payoff value of 0. This idea is concurrent with the observation by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014: 321) that autocrats after democratization must feel safer in comparison to their counterparts succeeded by other forms of authoritarianism. Even better off are former (single) party regime leaders (ibid.).

The most complicated case is that of persons responsible for regime crimes but who eventually supported regime liberalization. Presumably, they might hope to negotiate a pardon and to get away with what they have done (e.g. through leaving the country). Such a player, however, must face one more uncertainty, for the outcome of negotiation as well as chances for a safe exit, depends on the severity of crimes committed. Clearly, for the head of state or for members of the winning coalition working for repressive organs such chances are close to zero. Expected utility for them will thus be equal to -2. And, conversely, for a person who is responsible for regime crimes, the support of soft-line policies might prove decisive. In line with this suggestion, Tanaka states that the decision to open elections for opposition competitors significantly

increases the safety of autocrats under the new regime even if they do fail electorally. Indeed, repressions against former soft-liners among elites almost never seem advantageous neither to former opposition nor to the international community (2016: 4, 6).

If a person is not responsible for regime crimes and can be categorized as a technocrat, military, or party veteran, sticking to soft-line policies will neither bring significant benefits in case the contender wins nor incur any unbearable costs in case of a crackdown, resulting into a payoff function of 0. Technocrats and military, whose access to power is necessarily assured by their special training and exercise or belonging to powerful institutions with intrinsic norms and values, might be expected to receive a much higher amount of private goods under autocracy than they can count upon under democracy or even within a wider winning coalition. Regime opening, thus, promises them only a few extra perks. The same is true for party veterans. Although they also belong to party functionaries who might proceed with their political career even after the regime collapse and its democratization (what we see has happened with former SED members' passage to the German leftist party *Die Linke* (for instance, former prime minister and party chief Hans Modrow or lawyer and SED party member Gregor Gysi), they, due to their age or to the high level of ideological indoctrination, cannot or simply do not have incentives to profit from regime opening. For the other group of party functionaries, *young party functionaries*, regime liberalization offers opportunities for further political participation or even competition for power, given that single-party regimes are reportedly more prone to democratize rather than to transform into another autocracy type (Geddes, Wright, & Frantz 2014: 325). The expected outcome of successful liberalization support for them thus equals 1 and is one of the most powerful drivers (also 'transition benefits', according to Sutter 2000: 70) prompting some elite members to seek liberalization.

Methodologically, our formal model represents a Bayesian game. In other words, this is a game with incomplete information since the knowledge on outcomes of contender's effort to force the regime change are not unclear beforehand. Therefore, players do not know if the strategy they have chosen is bound to bring victory. In order to account for the inherent uncertainty of each decision, the concept of *expected utility* (EU) is usually deployed. We multiply a payoff function by the probability of obtaining the payoff to calculate EU.

The model suggests that a winning coalition member opts for a soft-line strategy when the following conditions are met: the expected utility EU_s of the decision to support liberalization is equal or bigger than the expected utility EU_h of supporting the status quo. The number of all possible combinations discussed above (e.g. a hard-liner among technocrats not responsible for regime crimes nor for repressive actions during mass protests) equals 18. Eighteen unstrict inequalities must, thus, be written down and solved so that the conditions for elite defection are set. Still, as the conditions for technocrats, military, and party veterans are all the same in this model, the inequalities for them will be presented as one. P_o stands for the probability of contender's victory. Hence the probability of hard-liner's victory $P_h = 1 - P_o$. The probability of a successful pardon

negotiation with the new regime by a person responsible for regime crimes is signified as P_p , while the imprisonment probability is $P_i = 1 - P_p$.

There are ten possible solutions of inequalities:

1) for an inner circle technocrat/military/party veteran neither responsible for regime crimes nor obliged to decide to repress or tolerate the contender:

$$EU_h \leq EU_s;$$

$$2(1 - P_o) + 0 P_o \leq (-1)(1 - P_o) + 0 P_o;$$

$$2 - 2 P_o \leq P_o - 1;$$

$$3 \leq 3 P_o;$$

$1 \leq P_o$, which means that **such a winning coalition member will opt to liberalize only when assured that contender's success is inevitable.**

2) for an inner circle technocrat/military/party veteran who is not responsible for regime crimes but who as an office-holder has to choose either repression or toleration:

$$EU_h \leq EU_s;$$

$$2(1 - P_o) - 2 P_o \leq -1(1 - P_o) + 0 P_o;$$

$$2 - 4 P_o \leq P_o - 1;$$

$$3 \leq 5 P_o;$$

$3/5 \leq P_o$, which means that **this winning coalition member supports liberalization if the opposition's chances to win exceed 60%.**

3) for an outer circle technocrat/military/party veteran who is neither responsible for regime crimes nor obliged to decide whether to repress or to tolerate the contender:

$$EU_h \leq EU_s;$$

$$(1 - P_o) + 0 P_o \leq -1(1 - P_o) + 0 P_o;$$

$$1 - P_o \leq P_o - 1;$$

$$2 \leq 2 P_o;$$

$1 \leq P_o$, which means that **this winning coalition member will opt for liberalization only when no other option to contender's victory left.**

4) for an outer circle technocrat/military/party veteran who is NOT responsible for regime crimes but as an office-holder has to choose either repression or toleration:

$$EU_h \leq EU_s;$$

$$(1 - P_o) - 2 P_o \leq -1(1 - P_o) + 0 P_o;$$

$$1 - 3 P_o \leq P_o - 1;$$

$$2 \leq 4 P_o;$$

$1/2 \leq P_o$, which means that **this winning coalition member supports regime opening provided that opposition's chances to succeed are estimated to surpass 50%.**

5) for an inner circle young party functionary who is neither responsible for regime crimes nor obliged to decide to repress or tolerate the contender:

$$EU_h \leq EU_s;$$

$$2(1 - P_o) + 0 P_o \leq -1(1 - P_o) + P_o;$$

$$2 - 2 P_o \leq 2 P_o - 1;$$

$$3 \leq 4 P_o;$$

$3/4 \leq P_o$, which means that **this winning coalition member opts for liberalization only if opposition's victory is expected to happen with a 75% probability or higher.**

6) for an inner circle young party functionary who is not responsible for regime crimes but as an office-holder has to choose either repression or toleration:

$$EU_h \leq EU_s;$$

$$2(1 - P_o) - 2 P_o \leq -1(1 - P_o) + P_o;$$

$$2 - 2 P_o - 2 P_o \leq 2 P_o - 1;$$

$$3 \leq 6 P_o;$$

$1/2 \leq P_o$, **this winning coalition member will support regime opening if opposition's victory chances exceed 50%.**

7) an outer circle young party functionary who is neither responsible for regime crimes nor obliged to decide to repress or tolerate the contender:

$$EU_h \leq EU_s;$$

$$1 - P_o + 0 P_o \leq -1(1 - P_o) + P_o;$$

$$2 \leq 3 P_o;$$

$2/3 \leq P_o$, **this winning coalition member will choose the soft-line policies if opposition's chances exceed 66.7%.**

8) an outer circle young party functionary who is NOT responsible for regime crimes but as an office-holder has to choose either repression or toleration:

$$EU_h \leq EU_s;$$

$$(1 - P_o) - 2P_o \leq -1(1 - P_o) + P_o;$$

$$2 \leq 5P_o;$$

$2/5 \leq P_o$, **this winning coalition member supports liberalization with opposition's chances for victory being no less than 40%.**

9) an inner circle coalition member who is responsible for regime crimes:

$$EU_h \leq EU_s;$$

$$-2 P_o + 2 (1 - P_o) \leq (0 P_p - 2 (1 - P_p)) P_o - 1 (1 - P_o);$$

$$-2 P_o + 2 - 2 P_o \leq -2 P_o + 2 P_p P_o - 1 + P_o;$$

$$3 \leq 3P_o + 2 P_p P_o;$$

$1 \leq P_o (1 + 2/3 P_p)$, so that **there is no clear-cut condition under which this winning coalition member defects. Only a range of P_o and P_p values allows for this type's defection.** It has to be said, though, that under some critically low value of P_p chances of this player supporting liberalization remain impossible even when the value of P_o remains high.

10) an outer circle coalition member who is responsible for regime crimes:

$$EU_h \leq EU_s;$$

$$-2 P_o + (1 - P_o) \leq (0 P_p - 2 (1 - P_p)) P_o - 1 (1 - P_o);$$

$$-2 P_o + 1 - P_o \leq -2 P_o + 2 P_o P_p - 1 + P_o;$$

$$2 \leq 2 P_o + 2 P_o P_p;$$

$1 \leq P_o (P_p + 1)$, so that **there is no clear-cut condition under which this winning coalition member defects. Only a range of P_o and P_p values allows for this type's defection,** although the fact that the conditions of this inequality are much easily satisfied (meaning that the range of values for both variables satisfying him or her is wider) must be regarded. This, in turn, means that those responsible for regime crimes belonging to the outer circle might be somewhat more inclined to support liberalization than those responsible for regime crimes from the inner circle.

If in any of two last inequalities $P_p \rightarrow 0$ (i.e. the chances for imprisonment for a player grow significantly high), those inequalities turn into the already well-known condition $1 \leq P_o$, meaning that an individual will not switch to support soft-line policies.

We recognize an inherent drawback in the assumption underlying this model that each winning coalition member is an independent rational actor and the inbuilt inaptitude of the model to *directly* account for the network effects. Yet, it is dubious that winning coalition members would ever defect if they had no idea of how their fellow colleagues assess the chances of regime survival. Naturally, this knowledge is accounted for by the P_o variable that indicates a person's estimate of protesters' odds to win. Hence, the model retains a huge bulk of validity.

Although due to deeply subjective nature of these variables, we are not capable of calculating precise values for P_o and P_p , it is possible to put forward some assumptions on the role of the factors which might influence them. In terms of game theory framework, both variables show merely an *estimate* of the situation based on the information

available to an individual. It is needless to say that this estimate might turn out to be (completely) wrong but still influencing the individual's strategic decisions.

We consider the following factors to be critical for the estimate of the contender's chances to win.

1. **Assessment of relative threats posed by the contentious politics.** The best proxy for this variable is the number of protesters usually known at least to some winning coalition members. In addition, quality of contentious actors' coordination and tactics they choose contribute to threat perceptions.

2. **The number of winning coalition members who have already publicly supported the contender's cause and argued for regime opening.** These defectors assume the role of institutional allies thus ratcheting the probability of contenders' success.

3. **Transnational opportunity structure, perceived as availability of external support guarantees to the regime, be it military or economic.**

Solved inequalities are aggregated in the following table. It contains, thus, all the predictions of our model regarding the conditions under which winning coalition members are expected to support liberalization. From these inequalities, we draw four hypotheses regarding the behavior of winning coalition members in the situation of increasing civil society mass mobilization within a single-party regime.

The aggregated payoffs (see Table 1) yields several observations and empirically testable hypotheses. First, there is an understandable difference in liberalization support between winning coalition members who neither hold a repression-related office nor are responsible for regime crimes but who assume a technocratic or military post on the one hand, and who we call party functionaries, on the other. While party functionaries are expected to defect, technocrats and military tend to stay with the winning coalition (except when the regime overturn seems inevitable). In other words, technocrats and the military tend to be hard-liners more often than party functionaries. Hence,

H1. Those *technocrats* and *the military* who do not hold a repression-related office tend to defect less often than *party functionaries*.

Second, an **institutional age variable** is noteworthy: whereas party veterans, just like technocrats and the military, restrain themselves from easily triggered defections, new ("young") party functionaries find the liberalization alluring much earlier. Hence,

H2. *Young party functionaries*, unless they hold repression-related offices, tend to support regime liberalization more often than *party veterans*.

Third, repression-related officeholders face harsher choices and more imminent risks in case of miscalculation on whether the contender eventually achieves the regime change. In other words, their **motivation structures** are much more open and, consequently, we expect them to defect more eagerly. Hence,

H3. Those winning coalition members who hold repression-related offices tend to actively oppose to liberalization less frequently than those who do not.

Finally, inner and outer circle elite members' defection conditions differ only *in the degree of uncertainty* concerning the outcomes of contentious politics. Since the uncertainty variable is highly subjective and the margin between conditions is narrow, it is hard to predict significant differences in the behavior of these groups. Hence,

H4. Outer circle winning coalition members tend to support regime liberalization just as often as winning coalition members from the inner circle.

In order to test these hypotheses, we examine the elite behavior during the German Democratic Republic regime collapse between two crucial months of contentious politics, namely September and October of 1989, since it was in this period of growing mass discontent that most of the defection among the GDR elites took place.

Table 1. Defection conditions for different types of winning coalition members
(P_o is the probability of social movement's victory and consequent regime liberalization)

NOT responsible for regime crimes	Inner circle	An office related to repressions	Technocrat	$3/5 \leq P_o$
			Party veteran	$3/5 \leq P_o$
			Military	$3/5 \leq P_o$
			Young functionary	$1/2 \leq P_o$
		An office NOT related to repressions	Technocrat	$1 \leq P_o$
			Party veteran	$1 \leq P_o$
			Military	$1 \leq P_o$
			Young functionary	$3/4 \leq P_o$
	Outer circle	An office related to repressions	Technocrat	$1/2 \leq P_o$
			Party veteran	$1/2 \leq P_o$
			Military	$1/2 \leq P_o$
			Young functionary	$2/5 \leq P_o$
An office NOT related to repressions		Technocrat	$1 \leq P_o$	
		Party veteran	$1 \leq P_o$	
		Military	$1 \leq P_o$	
		Young functionary	$2/3 \leq P_o$	
Responsible for regime crimes	Inner circle	$1 \leq P_o (1 + 2/3P_p)$		
	Outer circle	$1 \leq P_o (P_p + 1)$		

II. Data and Research Design

To grasp and describe all parameters embedded in the model, we introduce eight variables (six independent and two dependent ones). Variable values are set in correspondence with empirical data collected from the GDR media, court cases, and directories providing reference information on party functionaries.

The information on the SED Central Committee's members is basically a skeleton of our data set. We used the list of Central Committee's members found in the official report in CC's newspaper *Neues Deutschland* on April 22, 1986 (Mitglieder des Zentralkomitees der SED: 4). However, we do not take into account individuals who died or were expelled from the party before the period we study the time period from till the 13th of November 1989 after which the winning coalition was dramatically remodeled

and its power balance shifted after Politburo and government resigned and a new government with Hans Modrow as the prime minister was introduced. In sum, **there are 214 CC members whose choices and behavior constitute our database.**

A) Independent variables

A-1. Biological age and institutional age of a CC SED member. We used several sources to obtain relevant biographical information on CC members, namely *Wer War Wer in der DDR?* (Müller-Enbergs, Wielgohs, & Hoffman 2003) and *Die Volkskammer der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* (1982). Both years of birth and years when an individual joined the SED are provided in these volumes. Fortunately, the directories are designed in a way that significantly facilitates the research, for the names of party functionaries, executives, and even journalists are arranged in alphabetic order. In addition, places of birth, education, career developments, and other relevant biographical data are provided. We put the years into SPSS as auxiliary variables *year_of_birth* and *year_of_joining_the_party* and then computed, by deducting them from 1989, two independent variables *biological age* and *institutional age*. When party joining year for a particular individual was not available, we used the year when s\he joined the party-affiliated civic organization instead. In some instances, when an individual had been a member of the Communist or the Socialist party which existed prior to SED, we put into the database the year of their merger, 1946.

Figure 2. Frequency distribution of the *biological_age* variable values among CC SED members

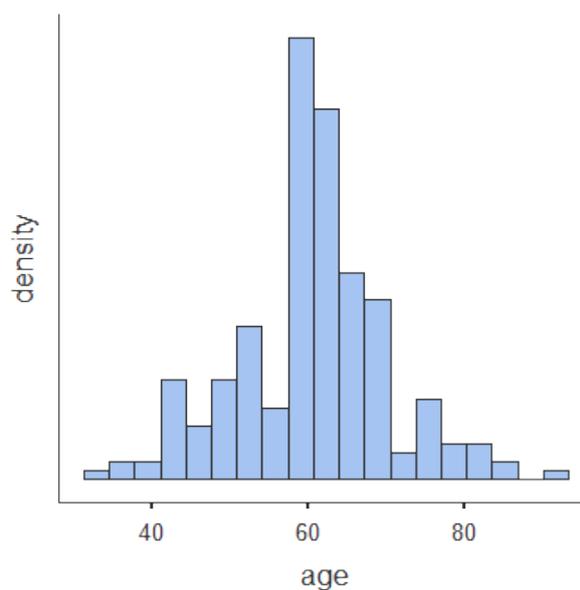
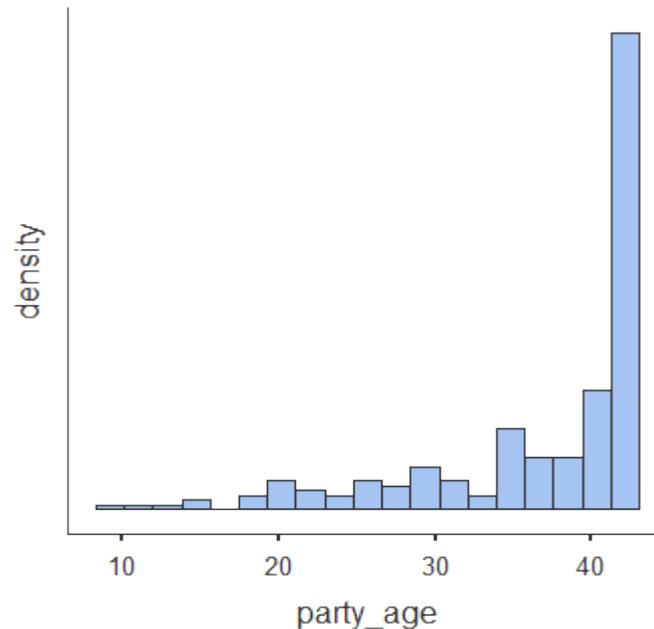


Figure 2 and Figure 3 illustrate the frequency distributions of CC SED members by their biological age and institutional age. It turned out that most of the studied subjects hold the party membership for at least 40 years, since it had been founded or even longer.

Figure 3. Frequency distribution of the *institutional_age* variable among CC SED members



A-2. CC SED member's office type. The most ambiguous variable to be coded was a CC SED member's office, i.e. whether s\he belongs to *technocrats*, to *the military* or to the *party functionaries*. The general rule of thumb was that as opposed to party functionaries, predominantly involved into party organization processes and ideological propaganda, technocrats hold their office mostly due to their special training and expertise or because they possess a significant amount of symbolic capital in society in general or in academia in particular. In addition, unlike party functionaries who had often been members of socialist youth organizations, combined several civic activities, and might at least once during their lifetime dramatically change their specialization (as, for instance, Hans-Joachim Hoffmann who from an ordinary FDJ and SED functionary came to be the Minister for Culture), technocrats rather had a more coherent career path corresponding to their training.

As regards the military, they proved to be easier to discern: we coded an actor as "military" when s\he has access to power thanks to his or her military ranks or high positions in law enforcement agencies.

Once again, the sources mentioned in the previous section provided the data for these variables. Ministers and other officials from economic, industrial, infrastructural, and other technocratic circles, members of respective CC committees and People's Chamber as well as those of local party cells were coded as *technocrats*. Other party functionaries, leaders of the GDR's civil society, journalists, and propagandists were regarded as *party functionaries*. Those bearing a military rank and simultaneously holding an office in the Ministry for Defense, Ministry for State Security (*Stasi*) or the National People's Army of GDR were coded as the *military*. Table 2 indicates the frequency distribution of CC SED members by their office type.

Table 2. Frequency distribution of the CC SED members by their office type

Office type	Frequency	Relative frequency, %
Military	15	7.0
Party functionaries	115	53.7
Technocrats	84	39.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>214</i>	<i>100.0</i>

A-3. Party hierarchy level position. There is no universal “rule of thumb” to apply for distinction between the inner and outer circle of winning coalition. To tackle the issue, we followed Meyer (1991) and Thieme (2015) in treating the CC SED members who simultaneously had a seat at Politburo, the Secretariat of CC SED, State Council or Council of Ministers as belonging to the inner circle. Those who do not meet this criterion were coded as belonging to the outer circle. Such a methodological move was taken because the members of these highest party and state organs had access not only to a wider range of material as well as non-material goods and privileges but also enjoyed noticeable leverage within the party and could exert additional influence over some of the important decisions. Contrary to Meyer (1991), we argue that the distinction between circles of power should not simply lie between those in the Politburo and the Secretariat of CC, on one side, and “ordinary” CC members and candidates, on the other. Some of the latter were ministers or high government officials, who, though subordinate to the party, still got their share from the common “pie” inaccessible to the rank-and-file CC members.

As for other variables, the information on the offices held by the CC members was retrieved from the directories. A simple dummy variable *hierarchy_lvl* taking value of 1 when an individual belongs to the inner circle of the winning coalition and that of 2 when s\he belongs to the outer circle was introduced. Table 3 shows the frequency distribution of CC SED members by their position within the coalition hierarchy. The size of the inner circle appears to be 2.5 times smaller than of the outer circle.

Table 3. Frequency distribution of CC SED members by their hierarchy level position

Hierarchy position	Frequency	Relative frequency, %
Inner circle («1»)	60	28.0
Outer circle («0»)	154	72.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>214</i>	<i>100.0</i>

A-4. Repression-related office. As discussed, for some of the winning coalition members support of the hard-line policies means facing a decision of repression or toleration of the contender, which might significantly influence their rationales for defection. The variable *repress_relat_office* can, thus, was designed as a dummy variable taking value of “1” if a person indeed holds such an office and of “2” if s\he does not. Five types of offices were coded as related to take a decision whether to repress the citizenry in case of contentious politics: **(1) the General Secretary of CC SED; (2) Minister for Interior; (3) Minister for State Security; (4) First Secretary of the *Bezirk* Committee of SED; (5) First Secretary of a district committee.** In addition to these five categories, there was one Chief of the *Bezirk* Committee of the Ministry for State Security in the database, Horst

Felber, whose sanction was most likely required by local party leaders to decide whether to repress contentious actors. For him, the variable *repress_relat_office* also took the value of '1'. All in all, as Table 5 indicates, only 24 out of 214 CC SED members were occupying offices that we deem repression-related.

Table 5. Frequency distribution of CC SED members by their *repress_relat_office* values

An individual holds a repression-relate office	Frequency	Relative frequency, %
Yes ('1')	24	11.2
No ('0')	190	88.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>214</i>	<i>100.0</i>

B) Dependent variables

B-1. Liberalization support and the day when it first went public. *liberalis_support* is a dummy variable that takes the value of "1" should an individual either publicly express his or her support for regime opening or advocate soft-line policies during the time period in question. Conversely, the variable takes the value of "0" if an individual remained silence on this matter or acted as a hard-liner by calling for repressions. Meeting one of the three conditions is sufficient to for *liberalis_support* to take the value of 1: **(1) a direct and verbal support of demonstrators or the reasons they went into the streets; (2) a call for the extension of or respect for human and civil rights by the state, party, and law enforcement agencies; (3) a call for lessening the role of SED in the GDR's political system.** Any of these expressions not only indicates dissent within the general party line but also demonstrates to the contenders and bystanders the lack of homogeneity and, offering possible institutional allies for contentious actors.

The data for this variable was gathered from the three biggest East-German newspapers, *Neues Deutschland*, *Berliner Zeitung*, and *Neue Zeit*. They have been recently digitalized and given to the open-access by the Berlin State Library's project ZEFYS (*ZEFYS Zeitungsinformationssystem*). News messages from these newspapers were considered and looked through when mentioning a name of at least one of 214 winning coalition members registered in our database. Time frame settings allowed to include into a search engine only messages from between the 1st of October and the 17th of November of 1989 inclusively. In total, up to 4.000 messages have been processed. If a message met at least one of three conditions listed above, the variable *liberalis_support* for the individual mentioned there was coded as '1' and the variable *firstlib_sup_date* (from 'the date of the first support of liberalization') took the value of the date of the message, e.g. '30.10.1989'. This feature is relevant for further discussion.

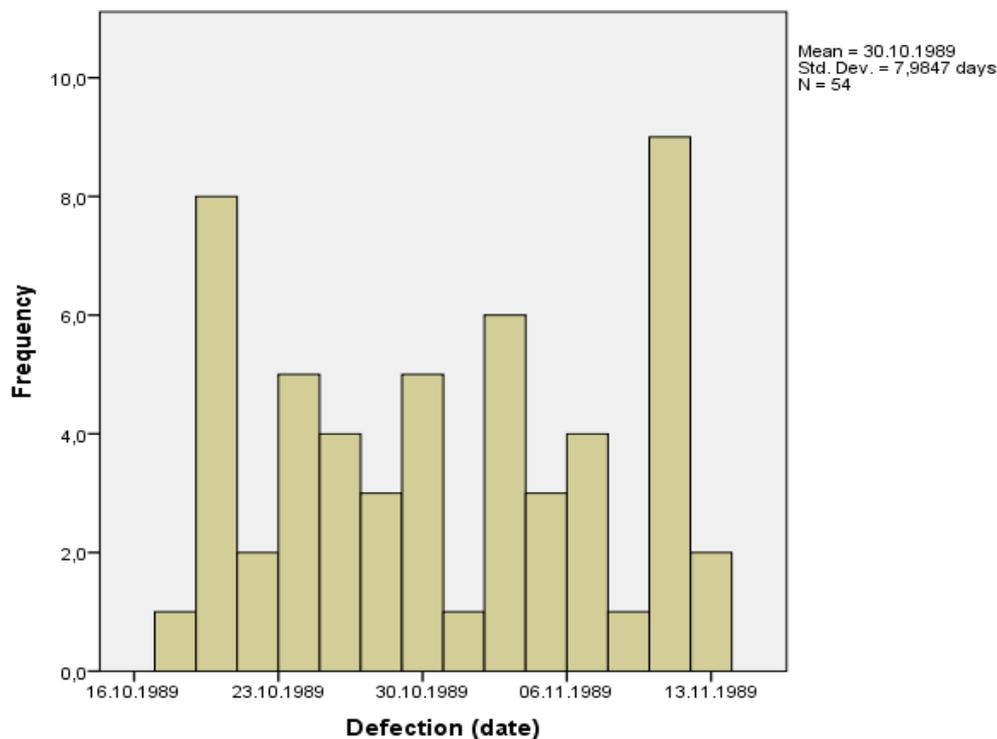
Table 6. Frequency distribution of CC SED members by their liberalization support

Liberalization support	Frequency	Relative frequency, %
Yes ("1")	54	25.2
No ("0")	160	74.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>214</i>	<i>100.0</i>

As shown in Table 6, 54 out of 214 CC SED members at least once publicly supported the opening of the regime, which was documented and re-translated by the state media of the GDR.

Figure 4 represents the frequency distribution of the GDR's winning coalition members by the dates of their first defection. The peaks of defection, reaching up to 9 messages per day, occurred on October 18-20 and on November 10-11. Each peak corresponds to one of two turning points in the GDR collapse history. On October 18 the Central Committee convened to take several key cadre decisions (e.g. to remove Erich Honecker and install Egon Krenz as the General Secretary of SED) and to publicly correct the party line. On November 8-10 another Central Committee meeting took place where entire Politburo resigned, strict travel regulations were withdrawn, and the new Politburo was elected. Eventually, even more CC SED members expressed dissatisfaction with the atrocities of the old regime while appealing, for instance, to the mass gatherings in the streets or to the interests of the people they represented (Hertle and Gerd-Rüdiger (eds.) 1997: 183, 342). Newspapers published speeches and official comments on the Central Committee's decisions during a couple of days afterward, which explains why the number of messages skyrockets to 9.

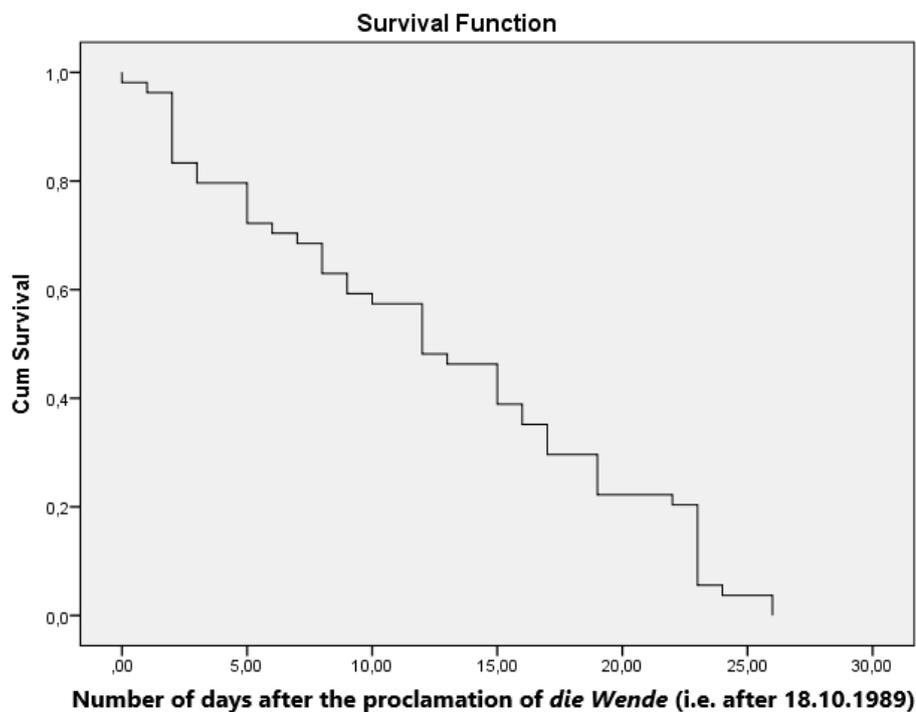
Figure 4. Frequency distribution of liberalization support messages produced by CC SED members by date



It is revealing that no permanent or gradual increase in the frequency of vocal liberalization support is observed. This contradicts the bandwagon effect hypothesis (Lyons 2016: 168), which stipulates that members of the winning coalition should exit the coalition with accelerating frequency. At least in the GDR case, **no bandwagon effect** occurred during the elite factionalism.

To check for robustness of this finding, instruments of survival analysis available in SPSS were applied. Common in medicine and economics, the survival analysis helps to assess the risks of exit, that is, the probability that an individual could modify his or her state, for instance drops out, stops using company's services or, as befitted our case, defects from the regime. We looked at the *cumulative survival function* that gives the probability that an individual survives (i.e. stays within a hard-line camp of the winning coalition) after a certain time point. The switch in the value of *liberalis_support* from "0" to "1" (within a timeline computed from *firstlib_support_date*) served as an exit option indicator. An auxiliary variable counting the days from the beginning of *die Wende* (declared by Egon Krenz at the CC SED Congress on the October 18th,1989) till each individual's liberalization support date was computed.

Figure 5. Cumulative survival function for the sample of winning coalition members



Since the graph of cumulative survival function in the first-order approximation is a straight line (see Figure 5), the probability of survival, as well as the number of hard-liners among winning coalition members, decreased *linearly*. This, once again, contradicts the predictions of the bandwagon effect. Instead of rejecting the bandwagon effect outright, we suggest two explanations of this anomaly.

To begin with, single-party regimes and their institutional framework have impressive cohesive capacity that precludes elite defection more effectively than less institutionalized regimes. Accordingly, the very logic of single-party regime's political survival not only restricts the opportunities and speed of elite factionalism, what is partly accounted for by Geddes (1999) and Ulfelder (2005), but also constrains the impact of the bandwagon effect, making it impossible or at least slowing it down.

Alternatively, our data collection method might be responsible for the signaled anomaly. The data were extracted from the regime's official printed media whose task

was to disseminate official party position enunciated by state and party leaders, especially by CC SED members, rather than grant opportunities to opposition leaders to express their visions. Thus, even if factionalism rates in fact increased in the course of time, it might have been kept underrepresented by the authoritarian media.

In any case, lack of evidence for bandwagon effect during the GDR regime collapse is an important finding that must be double-checked, explained, and become the subject of further research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

We used statistical techniques, foremost chi-square tests and binomial regression on the collected data to test our hypotheses.

To recapture, our Hypothesis 1 assumes that *technocrats* and *military* men who do not hold a repression-related office tend to defect less often than *party functionaries*.

The hypothesis is corroborated in several ways. To begin with, no individual coded as military in the database did support liberalization and, therefore, never defected. In other words, the variable *liberalis_support* for the military always takes the value "0".

In order to explore the relationship between variables *type* and *liberalis_support*, we perform two chi-square tests in *jamovi* software, one for the whole population (see results in Table 7), the other being controlled for the values of *repress_relatt_office*, which is, with all those individuals having the value of "1" the from the sample (results in Table 8). The removal is due to the fact that ignorance of the *repress_relatt_office* variable might significantly distort the results since is the model expects to have the strongest impact on a player's calculations. Additionally, as long as all those holding a repression-related office are party functionaries and not technocrats, party functionaries' preponderance among soft-liners might turn out to be explained not by their office type but by the responsible repression-related position they occupied.

Table 7. Contingency table and chi-square test results for the variables *type* and *liberalis_support* for the total population

<i>Type</i>	<i>liberalis_support</i>		Total
	"0"	"1"	
Military	15	0	15
party functionary	73	42	115
Technocrat	72	12	84
Total	160	54	214

	Value	df	P
χ^2	18.2	2	< .001
N	214		
Contingency coefficient	0.280		
Cramer's V	0.291		

Both chi-square and Cramer's V values are lower when the control variable's impact is accounted for, which suggests that there is indeed some hazard for result skewing. Therefore, only the results of the second test, (see Table 8) are to be considered.

Table 8. Contingency table and chi-square test results for the variables *type* and *liberalis_support* with the accounting for the *repress_relat_office* "control" variable

<i>Type</i>	<i>liberalis_support</i>		Total
	"0"	"1"	
Military	12	0	12
party functionary	67	27	94
Technocrat	72	12	84
Total	151	39	190

	Value	Df	P
χ^2	8.98	2	0.011
N	190		
Contingency coefficient	0.212		
Cramer's V	0.217		

The association between the variables of interest is of moderate strength (Cramer's V equals 0.217) and statistically significant ($p = 0.011$). With some degree of certainty, we can now claim that **technocrats and the military indeed tend to be hard-liners more often than party functionaries**. The review of the GDR's printed media messages during October and November of 1989 gave us an impression that technocrats, despite *die Wende* proclaimed by then-new SED General Secretary Egon Krenz and the increasing intensity of contentious politics notwithstanding, behaved as if within the pre-*Wende* status quo.

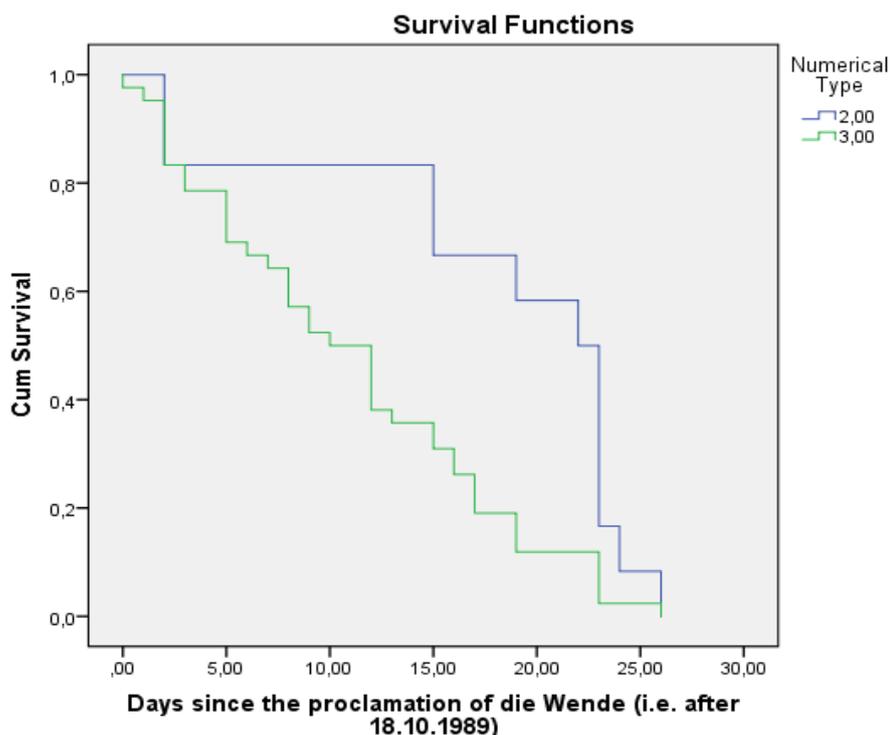
Cramer's V value, though not high, cannot be ignored as long as our model presupposes *co-causality*. By co-causality we mean the simultaneous impact of several factors, such as an office type, holding a repression-related office, and age on the defection likelihood for each individual. If co-causality is indeed a matter, one predictor cannot explain all the cases, so that its share of influence (and, therefore, the association strength as expressed by Cramer's V) is never absolutely perfect and cannot reach the values of 0.9 or even of 0.75. We argue that even the Cramer's V of 0.217, thus, has to be taken seriously.

To check for exit trends, survival analysis techniques for *firstlib_support_date* variable were applied and cumulative survival function was again computed, now differentiating between the categories of winning coalition members (survival analysis was performed via Kaplan-Meier in SPSS). As Figure 6 illustrates, the probability of survival (i.e. the probability an individual stays in the coalition as opposed to defection) was higher for technocrats (the blue line on the graph marked as "2") than for party functionaries (the green line marked as "3"), which means that the latter supported liberalization on average more often *and* earlier than the former. Besides, the *mean survival time* for the technocrats (approx. 18 days) is significantly longer than for party functionaries (11 days). As we conclude, this statistically corroborates the model

prediction that party functionaries should support regime liberalization more vigorously than either technocrats or the military.

Still, the empirical results do not fully correspond with the model’s predictions. 12 out of 84 technocrats turned out to be soft-liners without meeting the condition of contender’s looming success. Apparently, the distinction between technocrats, the military, and the party functionaries does not allow to grasp more nuanced differences *within* these groups. If our assumption is correct and technocrats are less prone to liberalization support due to the uncertainty of their career paths under a new regime and because of the lack of motivation to change the already profitable status quo, what prompted every seventh of them to approve the regime’s opening? One possible explanation is a different motivation structure that sets the technocratic defectors apart from the others. After all, both the workers of relevant (economic) ministries and “general directors” (CEOs) of state enterprises were categorized as technocrats in this study. The latter, however, might expect higher benefits after economic liberalization, which would create some additional incentives to hope for regime transformation. Przeworski also signals about the particular trajectory of “general directors” within the winning coalition (1991: 67–68). Another factor responsible for individual variations of motivation structure is a real-life probability that some technocrats might have had deeper and more dynamic links to the civil society, opposition groups, and their leaders. Network effects, however, were not accounted for due to the research design. All the model deficiencies notwithstanding, statistical results show a clear link between an individual’s office type and his or her tendency to support regime liberalization, which corroborates Hypothesis 1.

Figure 6. Survival functions for winning coalition members differentiated by their office type



According to our Hypothesis 2, *young party functionaries*, unless they hold repression-related offices, tend to support regime liberalization more often than *party veterans*.

Since independent variables *biological_age* and *institutional_age* are interval ones and the dependent variable *liberalis_support* is categorical, binomial regression techniques are required in order to test this hypothesis. Before the test, we excluded technocrats, the military, and those with the "1" value for *repress_relat_office* from the population.

As Table 9 suggests, there is no strong positive impact of the variables in question on an individual's likelihood to support regime liberalization. First of all, a test with *institutional_age* does not yield any statistically significant results. The variable hardly predicts whether the elite member supports liberalization. The results of the test for the *biological_age* variable are also on the limits of statistical significance albeit indicating a weak **negative** association. All in all, the proportion of cases when the *biological_age* variable predicted the value of *liberalis_support* is extremely low (with R^2 equals 0.111).

Table 9. Results of binomial regression for *biological_age* and *institutional_age* as independent variables and *liberalis_support* as the dependent variable.

Model Fit Measures				
Model	Deviance	AIC	R^2_{McF}	
1	100	106	0.111	
Model Coefficients				
Predictor	Estimate	SE	Z	P
<i>Intercept</i>	4.8254	1.8331	2.632	0.008
<i>biological_age</i>	-0.0847	0.0528	-1.606	0.108
<i>institutional_age</i>	-0.0147	0.0652	-0.225	0.822

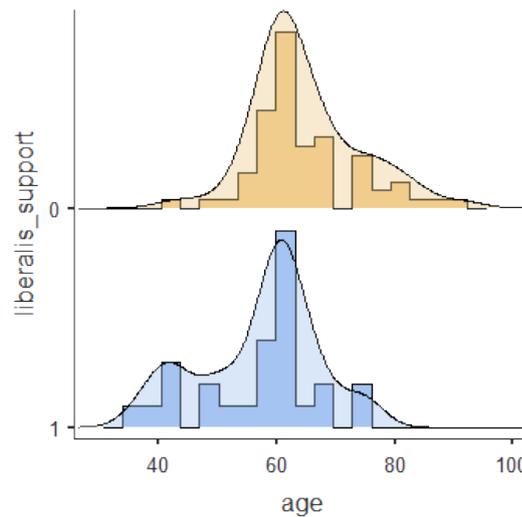
Note. Estimates represent the log odds of "liberalis_support = 1" vs. "liberalis_support = 0".

Statistical results invited for a closer look at the data. Figure 7 plots the variable *biological_age* frequency distributions, first for those subjects whose *liberalis_support* value is "0" (above), then for those where its value is "1" (below). *Repress_relat_office* variable is controlled so that the objects with its value of "1" are excluded from the population. The distribution is skewed a little to the "younger" wing for soft-liners, while it is skewed toward its 'older' wing for hard-liners. It is likely that the oldest winning coalition members tended to disapprove soft-line policies whereas the youngest coalition members had slighter chances to be hard-liners.

Although Hypothesis 2 can partly explain the bimodality of frequency distributions and a noticeable overrepresentation of younger party functionaries (biological age below 60) among soft-liners and of older party functionaries (biological age above 60) among hard-liners, we are inclined to conclude that our model lacks some explanatory value to cover all the cases and to provide meaningful differentiation between the individuals of the same age cohort opting for opposite choices. After all, the majority of CC SED members within hard-liners, as well as *soft-liners*, were of the average group age, which is around 60.

The statistical results offer only a partial and a dubiously robust empirical base to claim the veracity of Hypothesis 2. Young party functionaries indeed are somewhat more inclined to support liberalization than party veterans, but this tendency is only noticeable for individuals within the population with extreme values (i.e., for *the oldest* and for *the youngest* winning coalition members). If these particular findings are valid, further research on age-related effect pronouncement is required.

Figure 7. Frequency distribution by biological age for split samples of party functionaries



Our Hypothesis 3 suggests that those winning coalition members who hold repression-related offices tend to actively oppose to liberalization less frequently than those who do not.

Given the categorical nature of both variables, a chi-square test was performed and Cramer’s V was computed in *jamovi* software (see Table 10).

Table 10. Contingency table and chi-square test results for variables *repress_relat_office* and *liberalis_support* for the whole population

	<i>liberalis_support</i>		
<i>repress_relat_office</i>	“0”	“1”	Total
“0”	151	39	190
“1”	9	15	24
Total	160	54	214

	Value	Df	P
χ^2	19.9	1	< .001
N	214		
Contingency coefficient	0.292		
Cramer’s V	0.305		

The association between the variables appears to be relatively strong (Cramer’s V equals 0.305) while the chi-square value is statistically significant ($p < .001$). Since a co-

causality in liberalization support prediction transpires, the association between these two variables albeit not extremely strong is noteworthy. Moreover, if technocrats and the military are excluded from the sample, the association between *repress_relat_office* and *liberalis_support* becomes even stronger (see Table 11).

Table 11. Contingency table and chi-square test results for *repress_related_office* and *liberalis_support* for the sample including only party functionaries

	<i>liberalis_support</i>		
<i>repress_relat_office</i>	"0"	"1"	Total
"0"	67	27	94
"1"	6	15	21
Total	73	42	115

	Value	Df	P
χ^2	13.5	1	< .001
N	115		
Contingency coefficient	0.324		
Cramer's V	0.343		

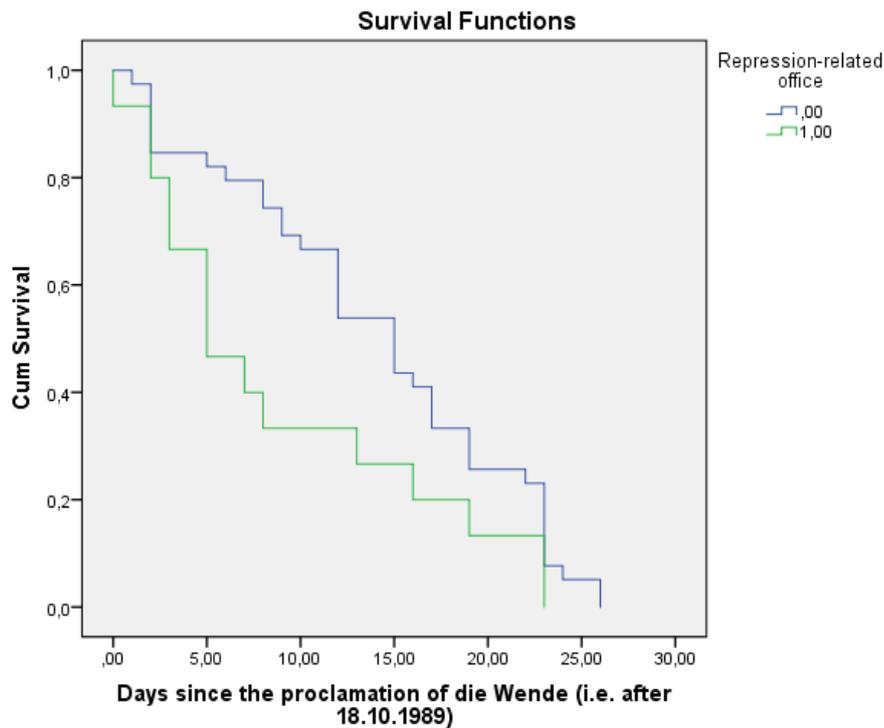
The conclusion that repression-related officeholders are more prone to support liberalization is corroborated by the comparison of survival functions for these two groups. The respective graphs are again drawn in SPSS based on non-parametric Kaplan-Meier techniques frequently used in survival analysis (see Figure 8). The green graph (the survival function for repression-related office holders) is located noticeably lower than the blue one for non-repression-related party functionaries. This trend, as well as a significant difference in mean survival time values (8.9 days for the latter and 14 days for the former), could serve as a statistical proof for the model's correctness.

The number of actual repression-related office holders must be taken into account. Only 24 out of 214 winning coalition members in the database were coded as such. Apart from that, inasmuch as the preponderance of them are also holding higher positions within the party and law enforcement hierarchy and have, therefore, disproportional access to the media, the messages containing liberalization support from the other group might have been simply underrepresented.

The association we spotted, though, is the strongest both according to the model's predictions and to the actual evidence. In other words, **those winning coalition members who hold repression-related offices indeed tend to support liberalization more often than those who do not**. This trend confirms our assumption that in their decision whether to support the regime opening winning coalition members take into consideration not only potential benefits but also possible risks related to further cooperation with regime, especially when this imposes responsibility for the violent repression of thousands of non-violent protesters. It is plausible that awareness of having potential responsibilities for repressive actions is cumulatively amplified by hopes for a political career after liberalization. As a result, actors who have to make these harsh choices tend to switch the sides and to defect even during the early phases of contentious politics. By definition,

most repression-related officeholders were top leaders of the party’s *Bezirk* or district committees. As some historical accounts witness (see, for instance, Bahr 2016), in a situation when several thousand people gathered to demonstrate somewhere in Rostock, Brandenburg or in Halle, it is no wonder they chose to tolerate the social movement and ordered that militia/police platoons hold back, often even without coordinating this decision with the central party leadership. Similar reasoning is suggested by Reuter and Szakonyi (2019) in their account of current elite defections in Russia. The essential question to study is: *under what circumstances do the risks of being sentenced after opposition’s victory outweighed more proximate risks of being punished for disobedience?* This invites to further microanalysis of motivational structures, biographical factors, and network effects.

Figure 8. Survival functions for winning coalition members differentiated by their repression-related (green) or non-repression-related (blue) position



Our Hypothesis 4 premises that outer circle winning coalition members tend to support regime liberalization just as often as winning coalition members from the inner circle.

To test this hypothesis, we applied the classical null hypothesis approach so that confirmation requires merely proof that there is no significant association between the variables in question. Chi-square and Cramer’s V values for *hierarchy_lvl* and *liberalis_support* in this case should approach zero. Their values are computed in *jamovi* after excluding from the sample those objects whose *repress_relat_office* values equal “1” in order to avoid an unaccountable influence of this variable.

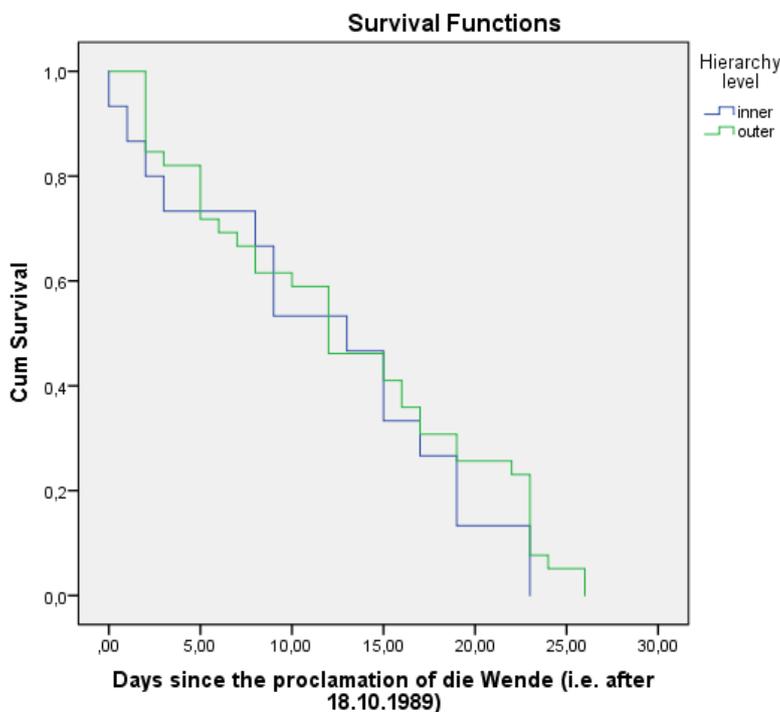
Table 12. Chi-square and Cramer’s V values for *hierarchy_lvl* and *liberalis_support* (*repress_relatt_office* being kept at 0).

<i>hierarchy_lvl</i>	<i>liberalis_support</i>		Total
	“0”	“1”	
Inner	41	10	51
Outer	110	29	39
Total	151	39	190

	Value	Df	P
χ^2	0.0361	1	0.849
N	190		
Contingency coefficient	0.0138		
Cramer’s V	0.0138		

The chi-square test yields neither statistically significant nor positive results. Therefore, there is no clear association between an individual’s position within the party hierarchy (his or her belonging to the outer or to the inner circle) and his or her tendency to support regime liberalization, which corroborates Hypothesis 4. Still, graphs of survival functions which were modeled in SPSS based on the values computed with the help of *Kaplan-Meier* do somewhat differ for the members of the outer and inner circle.

Figure 9. Survival functions for winning coalition members differentiated by their hierarchy level



The graph of survival function for the inner circle members (see the green “2” line in Figure 9) lies somewhere slightly *below* (i.e. has on average somewhat lower survival rate values) than the blue graph (marked as “1”) of the survival function for the outer

circle coalition members. Besides, the difference in mean survival time values between these categories is around 1.2 days with the mean survival time for inner circle members equaling 11.7 days and for outer circle members, 12.9 days. Despite a slight and hardly noticeable discrepancy, it looks like in our sample inner circle winning coalition members supported liberalization *more often* than outer circle members even though, as stipulated by the classical selectorate theory, the regime's existence is more beneficial to them than to the outer circle members.

The anomaly, once again, might be accounted for by the data: the state- or party-owned newspapers under autocracy in crisis are more likely to *publish* someone's call for regime liberalization if s\he turns out to be the head of a parliamentary committee or a general director of a state enterprise rather than if s\he is the head of a local party cell, though such cases occurred as our study of media messages revealed. The differences in support frequencies in relation to the hierarchy level should, thus, be taken with caution and must be double-checked for other, perhaps bigger, winning coalition samples with a higher degree of inner differentiation.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper aimed to disclose some patterns in the downfall of one of the most durable dictatorship types, namely single-party regimes. In particular, we studied the factionalism within the GDR winning coalition under the strain of mass contentious politics. The bulk of evidence we examined sheds light on noteworthy regularities in ways members of the winning coalition chose either to support or to obstruct the liberalization demands voiced by citizens in the streets as well as the timing of their decision. Such a choice provoked splintering alongside cracking lines untraceable prior to contentious politics.

As it turned out, the most robust predictor of eventual defection was what we dubbed in this study a repression-related office. This position obliges a person facing a challenge of popular contention to adjudicate whether repression or toleration is the most appropriate tactics. Contrary to common assumptions, it appears that individuals who hold repression-related offices are less eager to apply force indiscriminately and tend to support regime liberalization more often than those who do not. One can speculate whether such individuals are reluctant to provoke bloodshed, or they fear eventual criminal responsibility for violent crackdown after the regime change. Exact rationale notwithstanding (and, arguably, varying from person to person), it makes strategic sense for contenders to seek geographical diffusion of non-violent contentious politics. Participants of mass demonstration, if organized in large numbers, by the sheer fact of their presence in the streets put local elites in an unenviable position between the hammer of further support for the repressive regime and the anvil of granting concessions to the contenders. As tensions mount and carnage looms ominously, some winning coalition members must thoroughly consider all possible outcomes for their present-time decisions. Under strain, the number of fractures within the winning coalition increases and the gap between individual actors widens. The coalition, therefore, loses its original cohesion, which makes factionalism and defection more likely. We find additional

evidence to this model prediction in the meeting transcripts of CC SED Congresses which took place in October and November of 1989 (see Hertle & Gerd-Rüdiger 1997: 183).

Another remarkable finding is the absence of substantial evidence for any causal links between a person's position within the party hierarchy and his or her eventual support for liberalization. Although the standard selectorate theory stipulates that inner circle members who hold a privileged position within the winning coalition and thus enjoy broader access to both material and non-material benefits should support the regime status quo more vigorously, we find no evidence that these happy few indeed advocated hardline politics more eagerly in any statistically significant instances. In other words, even though coalition members from the inner and the outer circles were granted different amounts of perks, the difference gave no impetus for privileged members to support the regime to the dire end. However, our study offers a vindication for the modified selectorate theory. Elaborated by Cao & Ward, it stipulates that "if state capacity is low, the size of winning coalition should not affect the level of provision of public goods" (2015: 266). We surmise that due to the drastic drop in state capacity observed in the GDR after *die Wende*, the regime, which since the Honecker era had been gradually shifting to public goods distribution simultaneously shrinking the allocation of private goods, suddenly faced the lack of loyalty from populace, selectorate, and individual members of the winning coalition. Therefore, it is arguable that in fat years and with long-time horizons, the single-party regime in East Germany managed to build-in a "safety-lock" against possible party splits along the line separating the *Führungskern* (the ruling core) and rank-and-file CC SED members. However, the very same strategy proved to be fatal during lean years and rapidly shrinking time-horizon.

Next, the absence of a linear relation between a winning coalition member's age (either biological or institutional) and his or her support for liberalization suggests that age on its own without considering the type or importance of the office a person holds can hardly indicate anything consistent about his or her inclinations to support regime opening and reforms. Only the oldest winning coalition members were *never* inclined to defect, for, presumably, they lacked any further political career prospects or even the very understanding of reforms' necessity due to the prolonged ideological indoctrination. Concurrently, the youngest CC SED members were overrepresented among regime liberalization supporters, which reveals their eagerness to remain in politics after regime changes. In addition, they are likely to have cultivated closer ties with civil society. These connections might be partially responsible for youngest CC SED members' awareness that the citizenry has valid concerns and yearn for change. For a better understanding of both the oldest and the youngest generation, a deeper look into biographies, memoirs, and correspondence of winning coalition members is advisable. Most probably, the age anomaly we signaled about is simultaneously conditioned by a group of factors which includes both the biographical and social network ones (e.g. if an individual is in a close relationship with actors who are more mistrustful of the regime). Learning how the state and party apparatus interacted with the civil society in the GDR's capital city as well as in other localities seems to be a promising research direction in a more general effort to explain elite factionalism in terms of the social network approach.

Finally, statistical tests revealed a significant association between a type of the office a person holds and his or her decision to support or not to support regime opening. The statistically significant finding that party functionaries are more inclined to be soft-liners than technocrats or the military does seem to resonate with a thesis advanced by Przeworski (1991: 67–68) that hard-liners tend to be concentrated predominantly in the law enforcement institutions and within the propagandistic apparatus while soft-liners mostly happen to be regime's "politicians". Besides, Przeworski speculates that "socialist managers" should be overrepresented among liberalization supporters (ibid.). Although we don't address this line of inquiry directly, we conjecture that the winning coalition members who expect to instrumentalize their economic, political or symbolic capital to build political career after liberalization are the most likely supporters of regime opening as regime change offers them tangible benefits (for more elaborated arguments in this direction, see again Reuter & Szakonyi 2019). Further studies of this presumption require a more differentiating format of the office type variable so that individuals could be classified and ranked according to the strength of their incentive to instrumentalize regime change for eventual rent augmentation.

The military officials, for their part, turned out to be rather reluctant to support liberalization, which concurs other scholars' conclusions. Still, one must not ignore that rationale to oppose liberalization might be contingent upon both strategic and value judgments. Axiologically, the military ethos, namely the cult of order, the mistrust in street politics, and the apprehension to act against the state interests often perceived as the regime interests, makes the military an unlikely institutional ally for a contender. Strategically, officers and rank-and-file military men might be unwilling to disclose and declassify information about all the atrocities and repressive actions they had been implicated in prior to contentious politics. These stimuli differ significantly in their effects, for if there are no dirty secrets, military men have fewer reasons to actively hinder the regime change. Therefore, a more nuanced approach with more qualitative data must be deployed here to explore the variations within the military's motivation structure.

All in all, not only does this study help to elucidate the critical weeks in the GDR history when the winning coalition factionalized irreparably but also it contributes to democratization theory, social movements theory, and selectorate theory. In particular, we suggest that selectorate and winning coalition members are not merely "interchangeable", for they differ in expertise, expectations, and values. These factors have a considerable impact on their inclination to defect. In addition, we emphasize that even under highly resilient single-party regimes the citizenry does have leverages upon the rulers when it manages to discover and to play on internal cracks between the elites through sustained contention.

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