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## **The Vanishing Lists: Collecting and Matching Parliamentary Candidate Data in Romania**

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Publishing and preserving detailed information about candidates running for public office is a form of accountability and a precondition for the production of reliable academic knowledge about electoral and partisan politics. This article offers a guide to researchers interested in collecting candidate data in environments where both politicians who design and civil servants who administer the electoral process have a limited understanding of the relevance of such data and where their bureaucratic capacity is underdeveloped. It does so by focusing on the case of Romania, where no complete registry of candidatures at parliamentary elections exists and key information about the candidates running in the 1990–2000 elections seems to have been lost forever. We employ process tracing and an in-depth analysis of legal documents to reveal the causes of this outcome. The article describes how a team of researchers devised and implemented several research strategies to cope with scarce data, the various types of logistical or methodological obstacles encountered and the solutions used in order to recover data and build a new, matched dataset of Romanian parliamentary candidates.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The lists of candidates running in parliamentary elections are not just administrative documents and their relevance does not vanish once the elections end and the elected candidates are validated. Instead, candidate lists can enable ordinary citizens, journalists, activists or academics to make informed judgments about individual political careers, about the functioning of parties and about how representation works at a particular point in time or over multiple electoral cycles. The failure to acknowledge this point by political actors and bureaucracies in young democracies has the potential to limit the accountability of the political system as well as the

production of academic knowledge about electoral and partisan politics. The article is a case study analyzing the causes behind this unfortunate scenario in Romania, where no complete registry of candidatures exists and key information about the candidates running in the 1990-2000 elections seems to have been lost forever. We use process tracing to map the sequence (Collier 2011) of bureaucratic decisions and failures that have led to this outcome. We also document the efforts made and the strategies adopted by a team of researchers to uncover and reconstruct the lists of candidates in order to build a comprehensive longitudinal data set of parliamentary candidatures that would cover all elections held since the 1989 Revolution.

The absence of comprehensive longitudinal candidate data has multiple inter-linked causes. One of the main causes is related to the public authorities' incapacity to understand in that first decade of democratic experience the importance of these data for both accountability processes and historical and empirical political research. This lack of understanding resulted in the absence of a detailed legal procedure regarding the storage and archiving of candidates' lists and candidate data. In turn, this opened the way for the courts' haphazard interpretation of the few relevant provisions included in the electoral laws: some destroyed these lists 3 months after the elections, others stored them for 10 years, and only a tiny minority archived them indefinitely. The serial failures in publishing and archiving the candidate data could have been avoided if the Romanian legislators or the executive would have established earlier an institution to ensure the integrated management of the electoral process. Such an institution, named the Permanent Electoral Authority, was founded only in 2003. Before that moment, the elections were coordinated solely by the Central Electoral Bureaus, temporary committees formed mostly by judges.

Another element that contributed to this outcome has to do with the characteristics of the emerging literature on voting behavior and legislative studies in Romania. Although several scholars have written about elections and voting behavior in the first two decades after 1989 (Datculescu and Liepelt 1991, Campeanu 1993, Carey 1995, Mungiu-Pippidi 1995, Badescu 2001, Popescu 2003, Roper and Fesnic 2003, Comsa 2008), the effect of candidate features on vote choice was not investigated, particularly because of an implicit belief (Marian 2012) that the electoral system in use at the time, closed list Proportional Representation, favored party-based voting decisions. The research on party institutionalization, legislative recruitment and candidate selection practices in Romania suffered tremendously from the absence of comprehensive candidate data covering multiple electoral cycles. Beyond the descriptive articles analyzing the parties' candidate selection formal rules (Ciobanu 2007), the few empirical studies which were published concentrated either on the elected candidates (Stefan 2004; Chiva 2005; Stefan and Grecu, 2013) or on recent elections for which data was available (Gherghina and Chiru 2010; Chiru 2010).<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, most of the voting behavior and legislative recruitment studies took a case study approach - looking at the outcomes of one election. All these elements resulted in little concern from the academic community towards collecting and storing longitudinal candidate data from the 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>2</sup>

Searching, collecting and matching information on the Romanian parliamentary candidates was an intensive experience that required many months of coordinated efforts by an entire research team<sup>3</sup>, which devised and implemented several research strategies to cope with the limited information and the various types of logistical or methodological obstacles. The story of this experience could be relevant for a larger audience given that such obstacles might be common in other democratizing countries with an underdeveloped state bureaucracy and a limited political understanding of the value that candidate records hold for both the transparency of the electoral process and historical and political research.

The introduction is followed by an in-depth analysis of electoral legislation that aims to identify the type of information the Romanian state has collected from candidates at parliamentary elections held from 1990 to 2012 and the rules governing the storage and archiving of these data. The next section describes our attempts to retrieve the complete lists of candidates from various public institutions and county courts and the outcomes of these efforts. We then present the data collection and collation process and the main characteristics of the data set we built. The last section discusses the obstacles that had to be surpassed in matching the data and the solutions we adopted. The conclusion reflects on the entire process and proposes several directions for further research and advocacy.

## **WHAT TYPE OF CANDIDATE DATA DOES THE STATE COLLECT AT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS?**

Romania not only lacks a complete public registry or data set of candidatures at parliamentary elections but we do not even know how many candidates ran at each parliamentary election held from 1990 to 2000. The information provided by both legal documents and academic sources is extremely scarce on this issue.<sup>4</sup> Regarding the latter type of source, several authors (Preda and Soare 2008: 78) have reported the number of candidate lists put forward by parties for each parliamentary election from 1990 to 2000, observing their rather constant decline, but no one compiled and published the number of candidates running in each of those elections.

Despite an extensive review of academic and legal sources we could only identify information for the 1990 and 2000 elections, but these are also rather imprecise. It seems that in 1990 there were approximately 5,700 candidates proposed by parties and 212 independent candidates running for the Assembly of Deputies,

while at the Senate the corresponding figures were: 1,580 party candidates and 126 independents (Bucur 2014: 88). For the parliamentary elections held in 2000 the figures reported by the media were 9,828 candidates running for the Chamber of Deputies while ‘more than 4,000’ ran for the Senate (*Agerpress* 2012). However the final election report of the OSCE maintains that ‘approximately 20,000 candidates and some 80 parties, electoral alliances and independent candidates contested the parliamentary seats in the 2000 elections’ (OSCE 2001: 3). What we know for sure is that at each election from 1990 to 2004 the vast majority of candidates ran for parties which had no chance of winning a seat - most probably the peak was reached in 2000 with more than 10,000 candidates proposed by marginal, non-parliamentary parties. Running for a party that has no chance to win a parliamentary seat is in itself a meaningful form of political participation and should not be discarded as irrelevant.

These massive data gaps exist to this day despite the fact that the authorities collected extensive information about the candidates. In order to better understand the causes behind this absence of candidate data, I conducted an in-depth analysis of the relevant electoral legislation together with all its amendments and changes since 1990. This analysis had two objectives: to identify what kind of candidate data did the state collect at parliamentary elections and to reveal how the laws regulated the storage of candidate lists after the elections.

The *Decree law 92/1990 for the election of the Parliament and the President of Romania* established how the first elections after the December 1989 Revolution were to be organized. Article 42 of this law mentioned that the candidates had to provide their address, occupation and profession and that the electoral bureaus had to make this information public. A new electoral law was adopted in 1992 which maintained the abovementioned provision, added the obligation for candidates to declare their date and place of birth, and removed the publication requirement.

Since 2004 candidates have to fill in two additional statements: one regarding their wealth (income, assets etc) and another regarding their collaboration with the Communist political police, the ‘Securitate’. Moreover, since 2008 candidates are also obliged to disclose their business interests (e.g. whether they are shareholders, or members of the leadership of a company, whether they are members of trade unions or other professional associations etc.). Beyond the information listed in Table 1, another mandatory element was the candidate’s party in case the list was put forward by an electoral alliance.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1** Candidate data collected by the state at each parliamentary election

	Address, Occupation, Profession	Date and place of birth	Collaboration with Communist political police statement	Wealth statement	Interests statement
1990	✓				
1992	✓	✓			
1996	✓	✓			
2000	✓	✓			
2004	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2008	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2012	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Sources: Decree law 92/1990 (art. 42), Law 68/1992 (art. 33.8), Law 373/2004 (art. 44.8), Law 35/2008 (art. 29.10-11).

In deciding what information to publish about candidates running for public office from the extensive set of collected data, politicians and bureaucrats have to deal with the trade-off between what is personal data that needs to be protected and the public interest regarding the features and qualities of those who want to represent their fellow citizens. The Romanian authorities have not made any effort to explain how this trade-off was solved and why the full transparency of the 1990 elections has since been abandoned.

In addition, the subsequent electoral laws offer far fewer details regarding what happens with the candidates' data and the candidates' lists after the elections. A procedure mentioned in all these bills is that the electoral bureaus of the polling stations have to hand over all the voting materials to the county courts or tribunals: see the article 36.f of the Decree law 92/199, the article 29.f of the Law 68/1992, the article 118 of the Law 373/2004 and the article 20 of the Law 35/2008. Moreover, the same article 118 of Law 373/2004 establishes that the courts are obliged to keep the voting materials only three months after the elections at which time they are instructed to hand them over to private companies to be destroyed. As it will become clear from the next section, which tells the story of our correspondence with the county courts, the legal interpretation of this provision offered a massive blow to any attempts to construct a data set that would include all candidates running in parliamentary elections from 1990 to 2000.

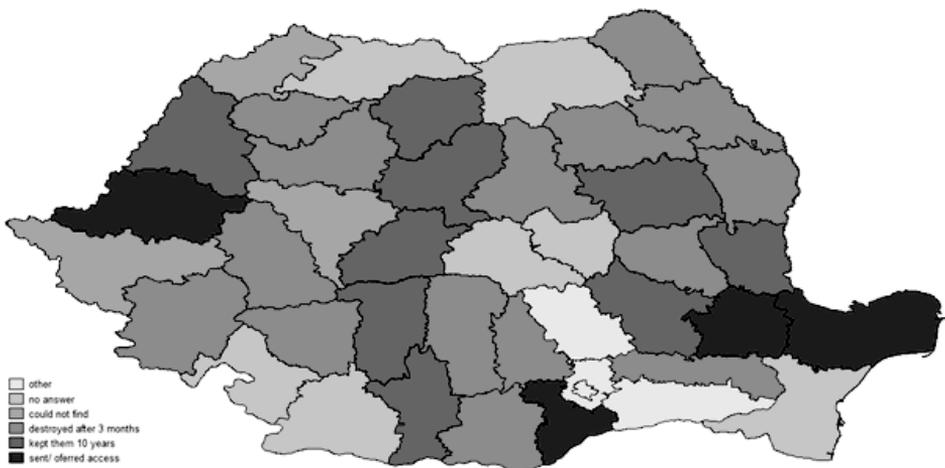
## BUILDING THE ROMANIAN PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE DATA SET: THE LEGAL ROUTE

In an attempt to obtain the complete lists of candidates for the first five parliamentary elections (1990–2004), we sent several Freedom of Information requests to the Permanent Electoral Authority, the National State Archives, and the 42 county tribunals. The Permanent Electoral Authority responded<sup>6</sup> that the party lists of candidates for parliamentary elections are archived by the court which has jurisdiction over the particular electoral constituency: that means the 41 county courts (‘Tribunal judeţean’) and the Bucharest Tribunal. We also received a negative response from The National State Archives who said that they do not have any lists of candidates running at the parliamentary elections held from 1990 to 2000.<sup>7</sup>

In January 2014 we sent Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to all the 41 county courts and to the Bucharest Tribunal asking for the electronic copies of the 1990–2004 electoral lists used in those counties, or for the possibility to copy them ourselves. We also sent a number of reminders in February and March 2014. The response rate was 83%: 7 courts never replied to our FOI requests, although they are required by the FOI law (544/2001) to give an answer in no more than 30 days.

Figure 1 below maps the answers we received and the non-answers. As it can be seen from the figure, the most frequent practice of county courts was to destroy the candidate lists three months after the elections, considering them to be voting materials: 15 out of 42 tribunals (36%) mentioned this solution. Other 9 courts answered that they kept the lists in their archives for 10 years, while 3 courts said they could not find the lists.

**Figure 1** How did the county courts deal with the lists of candidates?



Finally, only two courts did send us the lists, while two others invited us to visit their archives to make copies. One of the two courts that sent the lists redacted the document to such an extent that it was made unusable since much of the personal information was blacked out (e.g. profession, year of birth). The ‘other’ category includes 4 courts which gave rather peculiar answers. One of them refused any cooperation, telling us that the lists contain the candidates’ personal data and they ‘do not represent information of public interest’. Another said that they have sent the documents to the National Archives. The Ilfov court said that due to administrative reasons prior to 2011, all such documents from this county were archived by the Bucharest court. The latter had a different interpretation of the other courts’ terms for archiving and storing the lists: they told us that they can give us access to the 2000 and 2004 lists, while the rest had been destroyed because ‘the terms for keeping them had passed’.

In March 2014 we also wrote to the General Secretariat of the Government (SGG) using the same FOI legal framework. The SGG responded they do not hold such data but forwarded our request to the Permanent Electoral Authority, who ‘miraculously’ found the complete 2004 candidate data and sent it by email.

## **COLLECTING AND COLLATING THE CANDIDATE DATA**

In the end, our data set, ‘The Romanian Parliamentary Candidates Study 1990–2012’ (Chiru and Popescu 2015) is based mostly on official electoral records. For the 1992–2000 elections, the names of the candidates, their party affiliation, list position and the county where they ran were retrieved from the official gazette *Monitorul Oficial*, which publishes all official public documents including new legislation passed by the Parliament. The election reports published by *Monitorul Oficial* included the list of elected candidates as well as the list of substitutes - all unelected candidates on a county party list who would replace an MP in case of resignation or death. Unfortunately, the list of substitutes was reported only for those counties where the party won at least one seat.

We had to leave out the founding elections held in 1990 because of severe data availability problems. First, the election report published by *Monitorul Oficial* included only the list of elected candidates and did not offer information regarding their list position (i.e. candidate names published in alphabetical order).<sup>8</sup> Second, we also tried to find whether the complete lists of candidates were published by national newspapers. At the end of this archival investigation the only lists that could be identified were those put forward by parties for the Bucharest constituency, which were published by the *Libertatea* newspaper. Besides the party affiliation and the list position, these particular lists included the complete address, profession and occupation of the candidate as seen in Figure 2 below, which shows an excerpt from the PNL candidate list of for the Senate.

**Figure 2** The candidate lists in 1990 – full transparency?

B. Lista pentru Senat			
1. Câmpeanu Radu-Anton	Calea Dorobanți nr. 45, Sectorul 1, București	Partidul Național-Liberal	jurist-economist – Președinte P.N.L. scriitor
2. Săndulescu Ionel	Str. Mașina de Pline nr. 41, etaj 7, ap. 75, Sectorul 2, București	Partidul Național-Liberal	
3. Negropones Maria-Sanda (Tăiărăscu)	Str. Sandu Aldea nr. 57, București	Partidul Național-Liberal	profesoară, pensionară
4. Rebențiu Victor-George	Str. Șipotul Fintinilor nr. 7, etaj 2, ap. 8, Sectorul 1, București	Partidul Național-Liberal	actor
5. Teju Maria-Matilda	Str. Dionisie Lupu nr. 50, et. 1, ap. 4, Sectorul 1, București	Partidul Național-Liberal	juristă, pensionară
6. Popescu-Necșești Adrian	Str. Matei Millo nr. 12, et. 5, ap. 24, Sectorul 1, București	Partidul Național-Liberal	inginer, pensionar

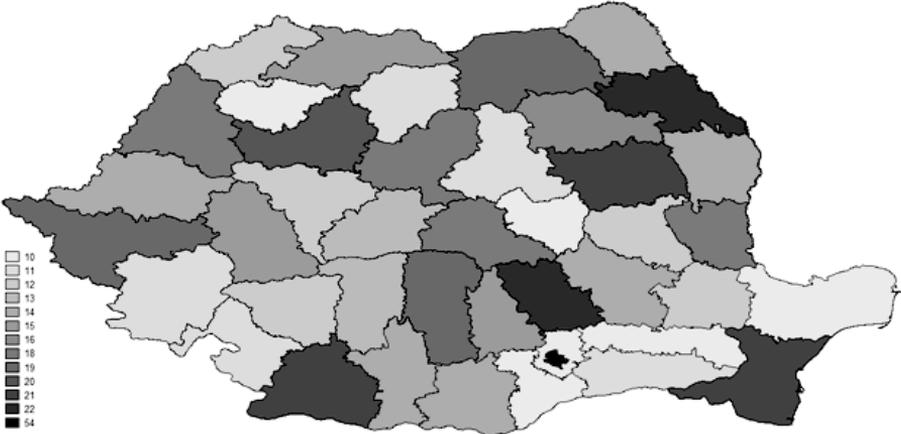
Candidates competing for the reserved ethnic minority seats were excluded from the data collection as these candidates compete under distinct electoral rules in non-territorially organized single-member seat contests. They are also not part of the same type of electoral competition with few minorities having competing organizations on the ballot. Their goal is generally to reach the required number of votes for the reserved seat for each specific recognized minority (Protsyk and Maticescu 2010).

The resulting data set has 2,146 candidates who ran in 1992, 3,510 who participated in the 1996 elections and 2,932 candidates who ran in 2000. In addition, we obtained the entire population of candidates, i.e. independents, as well as candidates of parliamentary and non-parliamentary parties for the 2004 (10,291 candidates), 2008 (2,933 candidates) and 2012 elections (2,451 candidates). As mentioned above, the 2004 data was obtained from the Permanent Electoral Authority. The 2008 and 2012 candidate data were retrieved from the *Romanian Electoral Data* platform.

We manually coded the candidates' gender and incumbency status. For the latter, we considered a candidate to be incumbent if s/he acted as an MP during the last legislative term, irrespective of the duration of mandate, thus including those candidates who were substitute MPs or resigned. By matching records across years we could determine who ran in how many elections, and how many years they spent in Parliament.

To understand better how the 'winning list and substitutes' issue shaped the data availability, Figures 3 and 4 below illustrate the number of candidate records that we could retrieve for PNL and UDMR at the 2000 elections for each constituency. For both upper and lower house elections, Romania has been divided into 42 constituencies – corresponding to the 41 counties and the capital city Bucharest – which are highly heterogeneous in terms of population size and number of seats in parliament.

**Figure 3** Number of PNL candidates at the 2000 parliamentary elections retrieved by the dataset



The number of PNL candidates in each constituency for both houses varied from 10 to 54, whereas for the UDMR it varied from 2 to 20. Parties could nominate twice as many candidates in each district as the available seats and this decision usually co-varied with the number of mandates the party expected to win.

This is one factor that explains why there are more PNL candidates in the dataset, the other being that the UDMR’s support is concentrated in Transylvania, where its ethnic stronghold is situated. Given the fact that the ethnic Hungarian party won very few mandates outside the Carpathian Arch, we did not have access to a considerable number of candidates’ records running on the UDMR unsuccessful lists.

**Figure 4** Number of UDMR candidates at the 2000 parliamentary elections retrieved by the dataset

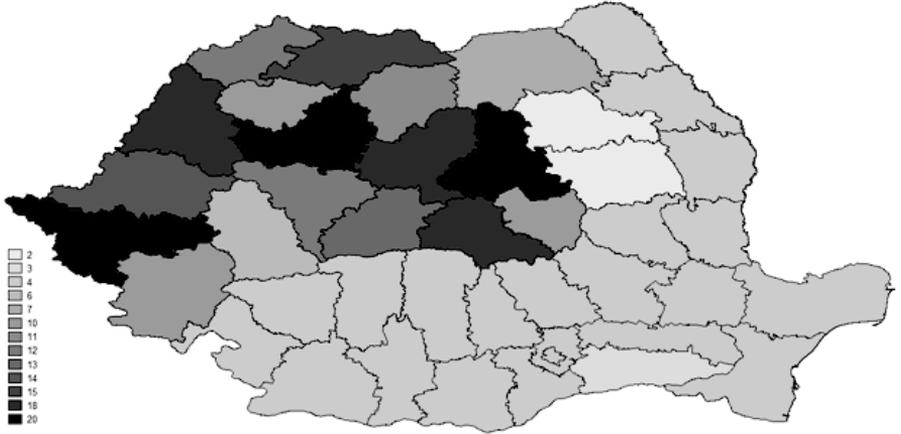


Table 2 below presents the party affiliation and numerical distribution of the candidate records we were able to retrieve for the 8 most successful parties or alliances that ran in Romanian parliamentary elections. Our sample also includes candidate data from many other non-parliamentary parties that ran in 2004, 2008 and 2012 but failed to win representation.

**Table 2** Party affiliation of the candidates

	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012
PSD (PDSR/FDSN)	499	649	654	637	452	230
CDR/ PNTCD	563	657	-	624	-	-
PD (FSN/ USD/ARD)	377	641	655	281	450	452
PNL	-	-	656	356	452	174
PRM	190	620	638	636	440	286
UDMR	160	298	328	431	447	452
PUNR	205	645		446	-	-
PSM/PAS	135			625	-	20

## MATCHING PROCEDURES AND DECISIONS

Because of the degree of missing information for the 1990 elections and because the research objective that motivated our data collection was to map the patterns of candidate recruitment during the PR era<sup>9</sup>, we only matched the 1992 to the 2004 data. However, in the near future, we plan to also match the candidate records for the 2008 and 2012 elections.

One of the problems we faced in matching the candidate records was that in some years the names were written with Romanian diacritics (1992), while in others (1996, 2000, 2004) diacritics were not used. Hungarian diacritical marks were not used at all, which made it even more difficult to identify additional information about these candidates from the Internet or from other written sources. Moreover, in the 2004 data set some of the Hungarian names which originally had diacritics were replaced with odd characters, for example Lőrincz Rozália appeared as: L RINCZ L. ROZLIA. Because the candidate names were written with capital letters in the 1996, 2000, and 2004 data sets, we had to transform in the same manner the names of the candidates for the 1992 elections, which originally had only the first letter in capitals.

Beyond a number of automatic coding decisions explained below, the matching procedure implied, most of the time, a case by case judging, while for those

candidates for whom the criteria did not help us in reaching an unequivocal decision, we also collected additional relevant information available online.

The information used for matching included the candidate's name, party affiliation, age, the county where she ran and the ranking on the list.<sup>10</sup> Thus, if a candidate had the same name, was running for the same party in the same county and had a similar list position, the matching decision was relatively easy.<sup>11</sup> But this situation did not frequently occur, mostly because of the high number of newcomers participating in each election and the practice of party switching.

An additional issue adding to the complexity of the matching decisions was geographical electoral mobility. Thus we had to decide whether candidates with the same name running in different counties at different elections were the same person or not. Carpet bagging or parachuting candidates in counties where they had no footing, but where the party itself had a strong support, was quite a massive phenomenon particularly for incumbents (Stefan 2004: 236) or other party notables in search for an easy (re)election. Last but not least, matching was difficult due to name changes, something which applied particularly to women candidates following marriage or divorce.<sup>12</sup>

Only the 2004 data set included information about the candidates' age. For this reason, one procedure used for automatic matching was to assign a unique identification number and to exclude all those candidates who were too young to run in previous elections: according to the Constitution, candidates for the Chamber of Deputies must be at least 23 years of age while those running for the Senate should be at least 35 years of age. This applied to all candidates who were 26 or younger in 2004: they were not allowed to run in the 2000 elections; similarly someone who was 29 in 2004 could not have ran in the 1996 election and so on, for all elections. Moreover, if a candidate was 37 in 2004 and a candidate with the same name ran for the Senate in 2000, we considered the two to be different individuals. Once again, similar exclusion decisions were made for Senate candidates for all elections, taking into account the age requirement for candidacy.

In cases of inter-party mobility, the matching decisions we took also relied heavily on knowledge on the ideological profile of the parties involved, because for both individual party hopping and faction switching, moving to a party that is in the same ideological family or has a similar set of policy positions is more likely. This is an empirical pattern that was observed in contexts as different as Brazil (Desposato 2009), Czech Republic and Poland (Shabad and Slomczynski 2004), or the European Parliament (McElroy and Benoit 2009). Although Gherghina (2014b) argues that party switching in the Romanian Parliament is generally not driven by ideological compatibility concerns, the ideological connection seems to explain a considerable amount of candidate switching both individually and at group level: for splinter parties and for factions that switched from one party to

another. An example of the former case is the group of ex-candidates belonging to the Democratic Party (PD) who ended up running for the Democratic Force (FD), a splinter, non-parliamentary party founded in 2004 by Petre Roman, the PD's former president. Illustrative for the latter case are the factions of incumbent MPs, former members of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) running in 2004 for the Socialist Alliance Party (PAS) or for the United Socialist Party (PSU), that are smaller leftist, non-parliamentary parties. Finally, an example of individual switching in the same ideological family is represented by a few ex-Christian Democratic National Peasant Party (PNTCD) candidates who ran in 2004 for the Union for the Reconstruction of Romania (URR).

For five<sup>13</sup> small non-parliamentary parties that ran in 2004 and that were ideologically very distinct from the rest (e.g. the two extreme right parties: Party for the Homeland and the Christian National Democratic Party), we employed a mixed strategy. We randomly manually coded more than half of their candidates: more precisely, a share varying from 56 percent to 69 percent of the lists. Since only one or two candidates in these coded samples had run in previous elections, we assigned the rest unique identification numbers.

After matching the 1992–2004 data we observed that 89% of the candidates in the sample ran only in one election, 8.2% participated in 2 elections, 2.2% ran in 3, whereas only 0.4% appeared in all 4 elections. Overall, there are 1,799 candidates in the sample who ran in two or more elections. The share of candidates who participated in more than one election was the highest in the UDMR sample (47%), followed by PSD (40%), PD and PRM (36%) and PNL (31%). These levels of re-nomination point to a relatively high volatility of party cadres, a finding in line with previous empirical research that focused on the re-nomination rates of MPs only (Gherghina 2014a).

## CONCLUSION

This article offers a guide to researchers interested in collecting candidate data in environments where both the actors that design and those who administer the electoral process have poor bureaucratic capacity and a limited understanding of the relevance of such data.

Our analysis of relevant legal documents and the intensive interaction with county courts and various other national institutions not only helped us recover the complete candidate data from the 2004 parliamentary elections, but, more importantly, it allowed us to track the process through which a large part of the 1990–2000 candidate lists were destroyed.

This process strengthened our belief that establishing a publicly available registry of candidates would be a form of accountability because it would allow

ordinary citizens, activists and journalists not only to track individual political careers, but also to judge diverse but crucial democratic aspects such as whether or not parties engage in descriptive representation or they tend to privilege certain socio-economic strata. For academics such a registry would enable longitudinal analyses of topics such as legislative recruitment practices, the degree of party institutionalization at local, regional and national level, the degree of electoral party switching or even comparisons between the wealth trajectories of elected officials and unelected candidates. A proposal to create such a registry was put forward by a policy brief submitted to the parliamentary select committee that debated and initiated the electoral reform bills in 2015 (Chiru et al 2015). Unfortunately, the adopted new electoral bills did not include such a provision.

## NOTES

- 1 The candidate data compiled through the efforts described in this article was later on used in a study (Chiru and Popescu 2016) that analyzes longitudinally the candidate list placement at the Romanian parliamentary elections.
- 2 For an exception see Popescu and Hannavy (2001): their platform also included candidate data for the 1992 and 1996 Romanian parliamentary elections.
- 3 I would like to thank Marina Popescu, Denisa Diaconu, Anca Ciochină, Alin Croitoru and Bianca Toma for their help in searching, collecting, and matching the data.
- 4 We also asked the Permanent Electoral Authority about these figures but the answer was that they do not have this information - personal email communication received on March, 8 2016.
- 5 Moreover, the 2004 law also asked candidates to provide their father's initial, a provision that was abandoned in 2008 and replaced with the requirement of indicating the personal numerical code (CNP), an unique identification number each citizen receives and which is mentioned on all her official documents: from identity card and passport to driving license.
- 6 Personal email communication received on November 12, 2013.
- 7 Personal email communication received on July 21, 2014.
- 8 [http://www.lege-online.ro/lr-PROCES%20VERBAL-din%20-1990-\(92287\).html](http://www.lege-online.ro/lr-PROCES%20VERBAL-din%20-1990-(92287).html)
- 9 Romania changed its electoral system in 2008 replacing the closed list PR with an original mixed member proportional system in which all candidates run in SMD, but only those who win the absolute majority of votes receive the mandate directly. The other mandates are allocated proportionally based on the party vote at county and national level. In 2015 another electoral reform was implemented, the legislators deciding to return to the closed list PR system (Chiru 2015).
- 10 For candidates who were elected at some point between 1990 and 2012, we also used for matching decisions the supplementary information that was available regarding their biographies and political careers on the official websites of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate.
- 11 More than 80% of the manual coding was done by myself, the rest being carried by two research assistants. We did not compute a measure of inter-coder reliability, but the work of the research assistants was constantly verified.
- 12 In Romania most women renounce their family name after marriage and take the family name of their husbands. A different practice has appeared only recently, but it remains

rather marginal, and limited mostly to middle class families: the newlyweds adopt both family names.

- 13 These are: the Party for the Homeland (Partidul pentru Patrie, PP), the Christian National Democratic Party (Partidul National Democrat Crestin, PNDC), the Romanian Socialist Party (Partidul Socialist Roman, PSR), the New Democracy Party (Partidul Noua Democratie, PND) and the Romanian Workers' Party (Partidul Muncitoresc Roman, PMR).

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