

LEGISLATIVE RECRUITMENT AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM CHANGE: THE CASE OF ROMANIA

By
Mihail Chiru

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Supervisor: Professor Zsolt Enyedi

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ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the immediate transformations in Romanian parties' legislative recruitment strategies that occurred with the 2008 change in electoral system, by looking at the 2008 parliamentary elections and data gathered from MPs self-administered questionnaires. They were analyzed through OLS regression and descriptive statistics. The main finding is a general move towards more local patronage-oriented recruitment, determined by the importance in this process of local party officials (presidents of county councils and mayors) as well as of private sponsors. The new electoral system seems to put on premium on local roots (residence, local experience and party career) and thus decrease the number of 'parachutists'. Parties chose to delegate much of the campaigning costs, thus favoring well-to-do candidates. Levels of decentralization and inclusiveness of selectorates are analyzed and the paper proposes a series of explanations for the intra-party mutations since 2004, when the last empirical study was conducted on Romanian legislative recruitment.

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INTRODUCTION

The selection and nomination of candidates for public offices (subject or not to electoral competition) is one of the main functions of political parties and political systems as a whole. This function can be performed transparently and following inclusive procedures, or on the contrary - behind closed doors, at top levels, thus beyond the scrutiny of ordinary citizens or rank and file members of parties. It is necessary to say that political scientists have recurrently deemed the mechanisms of recruitment and their results to have influence on the legitimacy and stability of political systems, as well as on the quality of policy outcomes. These aspects represent in Pippa Norris' terms, "normative concerns about political recruitment"¹ and they are constantly the subject of empirical trials, proxy measurements through which scholars assess the reality behind the expectations. Going deeper into the field, any literature review of political elite recruitment studies will certainly indicate as the most common topic the mechanisms and patterns of legislative recruitment.² The main explanations given by the scholars focusing their attention in this direction refer to the importance of Parliaments for modern democracies – they embody the quintessential function of representation³, as well as to the amplitude of this selection process.

Moreover, legislative recruitment is privileged as a useful analytical tool in understanding political parties: how decentralized, how democratic and how permeable they are to the influence of interest-groups. As the radical statement of E. E.

¹ Pippa Norris, ed., *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3.

² See for example: Robert Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*, (Prentice Hall, 1976); Lester Seligman et al, *Patterns of Recruitment. A State Chooses its Lawmakers*, (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1974); Pippa Norris & Joni Lovenduski, *Political Recruitment – Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*, (Cambridge, Cambridge U. P., 1995)

³ Heinrich Best & Maurizio Cotta, eds., *Parliamentary Representatives in Europe, 1848-2000. Legislative Recruitment and Careers in Eleven European Countries*, (Oxford University Press, 2000), 7.

Schattschneider goes: “[H]e who can make the nominations is the owner of the party.”⁴ This “owner” can be de-constructed into the so-called ‘selectorate’ – “party organizations, the personal cliques, the groups of dignitaries... involved in the selection of candidates and in their presentation to constituencies.”⁵

Above were stated some of the most important arguments of those who study legislative recruitment as independent variable for other phenomena. Subsequently it can be asked: what are the determinants of legislative recruitment (recruitment as dependent variable)? The literature emphasizes frequently four sets of factors: the legal provisions⁶, the electoral system, the party system and last but not least, the territorial organization of the state.

In the USA, Germany, Finland or Norway the legislative recruitment process is officially regulated –must be inclusive, relatively decentralized and based on voting rather than appointment⁷. Next, the party system is considered influential for legislative recruitment because the effective numbers of parties, their size, age or ideologies⁸ are believed to affect the strategies of recruitment. For example, one could think that small/young parties are more decentralized than large ones, or that ‘extremist’ parties are more “authoritarian” - leader-oriented in their selection methods. The territorial organization of the state is yet another factor taken into account when controlling for the inputs of legislative recruitment. It was argued that federalism is related with decentralized candidate selection⁹.

⁴ E.E. Schattschneider, *Party Government*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1942), 100.

⁵ Heinrich Best & Maurizio Cotta, *ibidem*, 11

⁶ Pippa Norris, 1997, 2.

⁷ Lars Bille, ‘Democratizing a Democratic Procedure: Myth or Reality? Candidate Selection in Western European Parties, 1960-1990’ in *Party Politics*, 7, no. 3, (2001): 369.

⁸ Krister Lundell, ‘Determinants of Candidate Selection. The Degree of Centralization in Comparative Perspective’, in *Party Politics*, 10, no. 1, (2004): 32-33.

⁹ Leon Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies*, (New Brunswick: Praeger, 1980), 31; Michael Gallagher & Michael Marsh, eds., *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics*, (London: Sage Publications, 1988).

The fourth variable mentioned regards the effects of electoral systems on legislative recruitment and it is in this direction that the present paper will focus its analysis. The assumptions generally made on this relationship acknowledge the existence of the influence but there is no agreement either on the level of its significance or on the means through which it is exerted. To make clearer the last part: some consider PR/ list systems to favor centralization of recruitment (damaging the intra-party democracy – nomination decided by small, national executives) as opposed to single member districts systems, where candidate selection supposedly tends to be decentralized¹⁰.

Other political scientists¹¹ deny the accuracy of the last argument, while believing that electoral systems influence only the kind of resources/ qualities, selectors are seeking. For example, in SMD's electoral systems it is very likely for parties to seek candidates with local notoriety or strong influence on the local communities.

Taking into account the above mentioned dimensions of scholarship, the aim of this paper is to compare the methods and outcomes of candidate selection of the Romanian parties for the 2008 parliamentary elections and to analyze the immediate transformations in recruitment that occurred, or were likely to occur in accordance with the change of electoral law. Besides looking if running in SMDs has produced the need for different kinds of candidates' assets than previously, I will also assess if the move towards a candidate-oriented election has/will modify the locus of selection (decentralization), or the inclusiveness of selectorates.

Why would it be necessary or interesting to conduct an analysis on this particular topic? The answer is twofold. Firstly, the case is important because of its relative

¹⁰ Donald R. Matthews, 'Legislative Recruitment and Legislative Careers', in Gerhard Loewenberg, Samuel C. Patterson, Malcolm Jewell eds., *Handbook of Legislative Research*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985): 35-7; Moshe Czudnowski, 'Political Recruitment', in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science: Volume 2, Micropolitical Theory*, (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975): 221.

¹¹ Michael Gallagher & Michael Marsh, o. c., 260.

uniqueness. It is very rare for a consolidated democracy¹² to make a shift from a PR formula to a majoritarian or mixed one: Romania is the only European post-communist case. All the other changes meant the replacement of SMD-s with mixed (Albania, Ukraine) or PR (Macedonia), or switching from mixed systems to full PR (Russia, Ukraine, Serbia, Bulgaria and Croatia).¹³ Secondly, the case deserves attention because of the fact that expectations invested in the electoral engineering (by scholars, regular people and politicians alike) regarded directly the legislative recruitment.

The change followed a longish debate about the necessity of reforming the electoral system so as to provoke a renewal of the political class. The abolition of PR was justified by the need to promote new politicians, create stronger ties between the constituencies and their representatives and by the need to have the possibility of sanctioning compromised politicians, who perennially managed to survive by securing safe places on party lists. Moreover, the survey 'Political culture in Romania' (made in October-November 2008 by the Soros Foundation Romania) showed what people hoped the change in electoral system will bring: "...the possibility for the party leaders to impose unprepared candidates will be eliminated or at least decreased, the proportion of the candidates that come from the region for which they candidate will increase, the political class will be changed...MPs will be compelled to a greater extent to keep in touch with those who voted for them." ¹⁴

The first chapter deals mainly with the patterns of legislative recruitment in Romania during the PR era, with a special focus on the elections held since 2000 (the second turnover of power). The second part of the chapter will present an overview of the new electoral system and its possible consequences. Chapter II will state the hypotheses of

¹² As Romania has been considered since 1996, see: Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, 'Poland and Romania' in Larry J. Diamond & Leonardo Morlino, eds., *Assessing the Quality of Democracy*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U.P., 2005): 217.

¹³ Sarah Birch, 'Lessons from Eastern Europe: Electoral Reform Following the Collapse of Communism', paper prepared at the conference on 'Electoral Reform in Canada: Getting Past Debates about Electoral Systems', Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada, 10-12 May, 2005, available at: http://www.mta.ca/faculty/arts/canadian_studies/archives/birch.pdf

¹⁴ A summary of all findings is available at: http://www.soros.ro/en/comunicate_detaliu.php?comunicat=79

the inquiry and will describe the paper's research design: the construction of the datasets, the variables as well as the statistical methods employed for the analyses. The second and third section of this chapter is reserved exclusively to the discussion of the findings produced by the statistical analysis. The fourth (last) section compares the decrease in 'center-imposed MPs' after the 2008 elections with previous trends from the PR era. Chapter III will investigate the additional direct information collected via questionnaires sent to MPs and discuss the decentralization/ inclusiveness of selectorates, as well as the resources of the candidates. Finally, the conclusions will synthesize the results of the research and will provide answers for the puzzle mentioned above.

1.1 Patterns of Legislative Recruitment in Romania during the PR period

One of the criticisms commonly made towards PR by electoral system scholars was that it makes parties ‘strong’ at the expense of individual politicians, who do not need to develop strong reputations, but only the right connections in the party, in order to get on the list¹⁵. This results in obscurity of the legislators or very weak ties of MPs with their constituencies. The very same argument was relentlessly repeated in the Romanian context, where the electorate voted only closed lists, without having the possibility of expressing preferences. If someone sympathized with the party as a whole, or only with some candidates he/she was obliged to endorse the entire list even if on it were present people imposed from the centre or absolute no-names. In the following lines, I will briefly describe how the process of composing the list and establishing the order of the names usually occurred for the main parties in the PR era, with a special focus on what happened since 2000, when the party system started to stabilize itself. The analysis will consider three dimensions: the level of decentralization (centre vs. local vs. corporate), the mechanisms deployed by the selectorate (voting vs. appointment), and (where information are accessible) the criteria for selection. The description is based on comparisons between the formal regulations present in party statutes and “de facto” selection procedures as perceived by the literature or the actors involved.

The indicators for judging the decentralization of parties’ legislative recruitment were borrowed from the above cited article of Krister Lundell, who has derived - from

¹⁵ Matthew Soberg Shugart, ‘Extreme Electoral Systems and the Appeal of the Mixed Member Alternative’ in Matthew S. Shugart & Martin P. Wattenberg, eds., *Mixed Member Electoral Systems – The Best of Both Worlds?*, (NY: Oxford University Press, 2003): 26.

analysis of formal statutes of Western parties and previous scholarly work - a hierarchy of selection methods going from the most decentralized to the most centralized, as follows:

- “1. Selection at local party meetings, by local selection committees or by primaries open for all party members
2. Selection at the district level by a selection committee, by the executive district organ or at a convention (congress, conference) by delegates from the local parties
3. The same as 1 or 2 but regional or national organs exercise influence over the selection process, e.g. add names to the lists or have veto power. The decision, however, is taken at the district level. Formal approval by regional or national organs without actual involvement in the process belongs to the second category
4. The same as 5, but local, district or regional organs exercise influence over the selection process, e.g. party members, the local parties or committees at the constituency or the regional level propose candidates. The decision, however, is taken at the national level
5. Selection by the party leader, by the national executive organ, by a national selection committee, or by primaries at the national level”¹⁶

Table 1: The Romanian Parliamentary Elections 2000-2008

Parties	2000 (t=65.31%***)		2004 (t=58.93%)		2008 (t= 39.26%)	
	votes	seats	votes	seats	votes	seats
Social Democratic Party *	36.85%	210	36.9%	159	33.62%	158
Humanist/Conservative Party *		10		30		5
National Liberal Party**	7.18%	43		93	18.65%	93
Democratic (Liberal) Party**	7.35%	44	31.48%	68	32.96%	166
Greater Romania Party	20.24%	121	13.32%	69	3.36%	0
UDMR	6.85%	39	6.23%	32	6.28%	31

* PSD and Humanists run together in all the elections, so separate percentages of vote are not available

** PNL and PD run together in 2004 as ‘Justice and Truth’, their percentages being thus aggregated

*** t = voter turnout

¹⁶ Krister Lundell, (2004): 31.

According to the above criteria, the most decentralized party is the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR). Their lists were composed and voted by the local branches and the ordinary members had the opportunity to participate (level 1 in Lundell's scale). The National Council of the Alliance could make some recommendations, but the last word with regard to the selection decisions belonged to the territorial organizations/ branches.¹⁷

The decentralization of candidate recruitment facilitates the functioning of an Alliance marked by its internal pluralism: several political orientations, from liberal to social democratic have their own factions within the union. There were also criticisms addressed to this model of recruitment, among which the most important regard the degree of professionalism of selected candidates, the costs implied, the easy distortion of results and the "electioneering fatigue" of candidates and staffs¹⁸. It should be added that many of the MP's of the Alliance are veteran parliamentarians, reelected always since the beginning of the new regime, so it seemed there was little room for new-comers.

The Social Democratic Party (PSD) organized internal elections for nominations, open to all members, only in 2004. Nevertheless, their results were not enforced because of the electoral alliance with the Humanist Party (later renamed, Conservative). Although the 2005 new party statute officially imposed them, under the label "preliminary elections" to be held at the district level (articles 3 and 39), there is no evidence of the provision being applied. The party statute also limited to a proportion of maximum 1/3 the number of MP candidates in a constituency that can be nominated by the national leadership (article 99).

¹⁷ Ionuț Ciobanu, 'Selectoratul partidelor politice romanesti' [The Selectorates of Romanian Political Parties], *Sfera Politicii*, no. 126-127, (2007): 66

¹⁸ For more details see the comments of UDMR's vice-president, Peter Kovacs available at: <http://kovacspeter.wordpress.com/2008/01/17/eficacitate-vs-populism-consideratii-privind-institutia-alegerilor-interne/>

Having said this, it is realistic to believe that party county organizations have an important say in the nomination decisions (even if we only consider the number of “local barons” in the party), which does not mean that the National Executive Committee does not play a significant role. The empirical research done by Laurențiu Ștefan was the first to emphasize this balance between national and local leaders of the PSD in the process of candidate selection, the author mentioning that despite “rather numerous parachutists” who needed the backing of central leadership, the proportion of 2/3 of candidatures decided at local level seemed to be a reality¹⁹. Therefore, on Lundell’s scale of decentralization the social democrats would be somewhere closer to ‘3’ than to ‘4’ (levels). The classical recruitment from the party ranks was doubled by a large share of outsiders²⁰: businessmen, trade union leaders, but also public servants or (former) managers of state owned-companies (many of them members of second or third layers of the former Communist Nomenklatura).

The Democrat Party (named nowadays, Democrat-Liberal after its merger with a faction from the Liberal Party) had fixed in its statute²¹ a mixed procedure: drawing up and voting²² the lists of candidates at the county level, but also nominations made directly by the National Permanent Bureau (art. 148, 3-8 of the statute). In case of deadlock between the two levels, the final decision is taken by another national body: the National Coordination Council. Candidacy requires at least 3 years of party membership and 2 years of active involvement certified by the Secretariat for Human Resources, Militants and Career Management (art 148.1)

¹⁹ Laurențiu Ștefan, *Patterns of Political Elite Recruitment in Post-Communist Romania*, (Bucharest: Ziua Publishing House, 2004): 185.

²⁰ Laurențiu Ștefan, (2004): 242.

²¹ The paragraph discussing the selection and nomination of candidates for Parliament is identical in both the older statute of the PD and the new one of the PDL.

²² This procedure is probably dead letter, since it was never certified by an official account neither in the newspapers nor in the specialized literature.

Going beyond the formal regulations, it was argued that the “incidence of national party leadership intervention is the lowest after UDMR.”²³ A strong importance was given in the party’s legislative recruitment process to the position in the party hierarchy and to political experience at local level. The rate of legislative incumbency was quite high, veteran MPs actually controlling the party until the 2001 change in leadership (when P. Roman was replaced by the future mayor of Bucharest and current President, T. Băsescu). A ‘3’ on Lundell’s scale is appropriate.

The National Liberal Party had a recruitment process based mainly on nomination. The lists are the result of negotiations between the Territorial Permanent Delegations, the (National) Permanent Delegation and the Central Political Bureau (art. 52 and 68 of the old statute and 71 in the new Statute adopted at the March 2010 Congress). A sharp distinction is made between those county organizations that received at the last elections (irrespective if they were held for county councils, for the national/ European Parliament or for the country’s President) fewer votes than the national average of the party and the rest. In the case of the former, the Central Political Bureau (CPB) is entitled to make proposals on the basis of the nominations made by the Territorial Permanent Delegations, the final lists being validated by the National Executive Council.

The CPB does not intervene in the decisions of the ‘successful’ county organizations, their nominations being formally validated by the same National Executive Council. Ordinary members are not involved. Candidacy implies at least 2 years of party membership, but the Permanent Delegation can approve derogations (art. 87).

The analysis conducted by Laurențiu Ștefan pointed to a preeminent role in PNL candidate selection of the central leadership, the author assessing the autonomy of ‘local

²³ Laurențiu Ștefan, (2004): 184.

structures' as being rather weak²⁴. However, since the first years of the new millennium, when Ștefan has made his research, there has been an important mutation in the internal power division of the PNL²⁵. This concern especially the great importance acquired by certain county branches of the party through powerful local leaders, the best examples being the Iași organization (Relu Fenechiu), Gorj (Dan Ilie Morega) or Constanța (Puiu Hasotti). The fact that this logic of decentralization affected the recruitment is demonstrated by the number of new MPs promoted by the above mentioned leaders, who had a fulminating ascension - some of them were even appointed ministers, in the last 4 years. In June 2008, the president of the party, (and Romania's Prime-Minister at the time) Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu announced internal elections for the nomination of candidates to the November elections. This initiative was re-framed several times before being completely abandoned. Given all the above different trends it is quite hard and maybe sort of meaningless to aggregate and simply say, following Lundell's scale that the Liberals exhibit a medium centralized recruitment pattern.

On the contrary, Greater Romania Party and the Conservative Party (former, Humanist Party), two small parties continuously present in Parliament (in the analyzed period, 2000-2008) can be straightforwardly categorized as having a recruitment highly-centralized and leader-dominated²⁶ – values of 5 on Lundell's continuum (articles 75 and 76 of the Conservatives' statute). As in all other matters of party life the president of the PRM, C.V. Tudor, was the one to make the final decision: his faithful collaborators generally received higher places on the party ballot.²⁷ Beside large amounts of politicians

²⁴ Laurențiu Ștefan, (2004): 186.

²⁵ The transformation of the PNL was only covered by the media, no scholarly work being done in this direction.

²⁶ Laurențiu Ștefan, (2004): 185-6.

²⁷ Sergiu Gherghina, 'Still Waters Run Deep: Party Organization and Electoral Stability in New Democracies', paper presented at the ECPR Joint Sessions, Lisbon, April 2009

adopted from other parties, they relied also on former Communist activists and officers of the ‘Securitate’, political police.²⁸

As already mentioned two of the most important parties, PSD and PNL considered at various moments in their recent, post-2000 history, the option to democratize their candidate selection by organizing preliminary elections open to all members (i.e., closed primaries). What is really interesting is that this perspective did not come from internal (party activists) or external pressures (media, sympathizers) for more participatory democracy, as was the case for some Western Europe parties.²⁹ Instead, the democratization of selection was a political marketing strategy suggested to the two party leaders (A. Năstase – PSD and C. Popescu-Tăriceanu - PNL) by the famous Israeli political consultant, Tal Sillberstein³⁰.

On the one hand, the move was meant to show the public how modern /progressive those parties were compared with the other political competitors. On the other hand this top to bottom type of candidate selection democratization serves extremely well ‘the leader autonomy feature’ of cartel parties described by Richard Katz.³¹ His hypothesis was that party leaders are very keen to give a say to individual members through the opening of recruitment because by doing so they undermine the power of middle-level elites. Once

²⁸ Raluca Grosescu, ‘Traietorii de conversie politica a nomenclaturii din Romania. Spre o taxonomie a partidelor create de fostele elite comuniste’ [Political Conversion Trajectories of the Romanian Nomenclatura. Towards a Taxonomy of the Political Parties created by the former Communist Elites] in *** *Elite comuniste inainte si dupa 1989*, [Communist Elites Before and After 1989], the Yearbook of the Institute for the Investigation of the Communist Crimes in Romania, vol. II, (Iasi: Polirom, 2007): 203-5. See also: Marius Oprea, *Mostenitorii Securitatii* [The Inheritors of the Securitate], (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2004); and the ‘Lists of Stained / Compromised Parliamentarians’, initiated by several NGOs’ under the initiative, ‘Coalition for a Clean Parliament’, available at <http://www.catavencu.ro/lista.html>.

²⁹ Susan E. Scarrow, Paul Webb & David M. Farrell, “From Social Integration to Electoral Contestation: The Changing Distribution of Power within Political Parties”, in: *Parties without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Eds. Russell J. Dalton and Martin P. Wattenberg, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 129–153.

³⁰ For more details see: http://www.cotidianul.ro/alegeri_interne_in_pnl_marca_silberstein-50657.html and <http://www.gandul.info/politica/alegerile-interne-din-pnl-varianta-restransa.html?3928;2763141>

³¹ Richard S. Katz, ‘The Problem of Candidate Selection and Models of Party Democracy’ in *Party Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 3, (2001): 277-280.

the latter grow weaker it is much easier for the party leaders to impose their preferences and to maneuver the individual party members to support the desired direction.

Extrapolating, the model of ‘the powerful leader [that] represents and hierarchically guides a collective of followers’³² and has the ability to ‘circumvent organizational boundary controls whenever needed’³³, describe very well the reality of the Romanian politics, especially on the (self-claimed) right. Thus, the description suits nicely PDL, the presidential party, explains the recent evolution of PNL under the leadership of Crin Antonescu and it was always the case in PRM.

It is also important to take into account the other dimension of decentralization that is emphasized by the literature, besides the territorial one. Corporate decentralization refers to functional representation of specific groups (women, youth, trade unions etc.) through specific strategies of selection like the “reserved place mechanism” (quotas) or the “sectarian district” (selectorates and candidates come from the same sector or social group)³⁴. None of the Romanian parties applied this kind of decentralization, although there were some initiatives inside the PSD about implementing specific quotas of representation for women and youth party organizations. Hence, In July 2004 the ‘Ovidiu Șincai Institute’ affiliated to the PSD proposed a project of preliminary elections, through which 25% of the candidates would have been chosen by the women organization, respectively another quarter by the youth organizations³⁵

Next, I will mention two other common patterns of selection and nomination that were shown to cut across partisan differences. First, an important observation regards the level of center domination, revealed by the growing number of ‘parachutists’ – politicians

³² Nicole Bolleyer, ‘New Parties: Reflection or Rejection of the Cartel Party Model?’ paper presented at the ECPR General Conference in Pisa, September 6th – 8th 2007, p. 16.

³³ Idem.

³⁴ Gideon Rahat & Reuven Y. Hazan, ‘Candidate Selection Methods – An Analytical Framework’ in *Party Politics*, 7, no. 3, (2001): 304.

³⁵. For more details see: http://www.fisd.ro/PDF/mater_noi/Raport%20alegeri%20interne.pdf

with national careers that were imposed on the parties' district lists, disregarding the will and potential of members in local branches: "Gradually, more and more constituencies are represented by politicians with... residence in Bucharest. Parliamentary activities become more and more a matter within the practical reaches of the central elite of the parties and less accessible to the genuine representatives of the constituencies."³⁶

Second, another important factor in the legislative recruitment of new-comers was their financial background. Every second candidate with no previous political or administrative experience elected as MP was a wealthy businessmen.³⁷ My assumption is that all parties chose to reward businessmen that contributed to electoral campaigns' costs with seats in Parliament. The impact of both factors on recruitment will be tested later in the analysis.

As a final remark of this part I have to say that none of the Romanian parties modified the articles of their official statutes regarding selection of candidates for Parliament, after the change in electoral system. This implies that informal practices are much more important and that is why an empirical inquiry is needed. Nevertheless, statutes cannot be altogether neglected since they set at least the general desiderata for recruitment, not to mention that they can be reactivated and used in intra-party struggles. On the other hand, the fact that the "guidelines and rules in official party regulations tend to have de jure not de facto power"³⁸ points to the fact that the Romanian parties (with the exception of UDMR) are more inclined towards a patronage-oriented recruitment than to a 'bureaucratized' process of selection, to use the ideal types proposed by Pippa Norris.

³⁶ Laurențiu Ștefan, (2004): 236.

³⁷ Laurențiu Ștefan, 'Political Careers between Local and National Offices: the Example of Romania', 2006, unpublished manuscript.

³⁸ Pippa Norris, 'Legislative Recruitment' in Lawrence Leduc, Richard G. Niemi, Pippa Norris, eds., *Comparing Democracies, Elections and Voting in Global Perspective*, (London: Sage Pub., 1996): 203.

1.2 The new electoral system and its alleged consequences

Several alternative variants of electoral system were debated by the Parliament for many months, varying from the German MMP, proposed by an NGO (Pro-Democracy Association) to the French run-off system. In addition to this institutional debate, the President called for a referendum in November 2007 whereby the people were asked if they want a two rounds-majoritarian system. Although more than 80% agreed, the referendum was invalidated by the participation of only 26% of the voters³⁹. A compromise was finally reached on the variant proposed by the Liberal minority government and Pro-Democracy Association. The new electoral law adopted by the Romanian Parliament on March 4th 2008 brought to an end the Proportional Representation system used for 5 electoral cycles since 1990. There are 43 constituencies (for the 41 counties, Bucharest and Diaspora) with Single Member Districts for each seat in Parliament (330 deputies and 135 senators). The citizens have two votes (one per chamber); the mandates are attributed in three stages:

1. The candidates with a share of votes of at least 50% + 1 win directly a seat in the new legislative. The parties that did not manage to surpass the national threshold (5% of the total number of votes) can enter via the alternative threshold (6 districts won in the Chambers of Deputies + 3 in the Senate). Independent candidates can make it into Parliament only in this stage – they are excluded from redistributions.
2. All the votes won by the candidates of a party in a constituency are added and the number is divided by the electoral coefficient (ratio between the total votes cast in that constituency and the number of seats allocated for that constituency). In this way is computed the number of seats that each party (above the national thresholds) is entitled to receive. After subtracting the number of seats won directly by the candidates of that party,

³⁹ The 2000 referendum law specifies the validation threshold at 50% + 1 of the persons entitled to vote.

the remaining mandates are given to those candidates of the party that received the largest share of votes. If a party wins more mandates than it is proportionally entitled to, the seats are kept and the size of the Parliament increases.⁴⁰

3. If there are still mandates to be allocated, they are redistributed according to the national coefficients of parties to the best situated candidates of those parties, in the same constituency.

The first question one should ask is why did all parliamentary parties, with the exception of the PRM, support more or less loudly the abandonment of an electoral system which they knew so well and which had inherent advantages for the party leaderships? The explanation is rather ambivalent. The plausible, rational choice facet maintains that the parties in power PNL and PDL (through president Băsescu) chose to promote the modification in order to capitalize on the public dissatisfaction with the lists and then all the other parties were left with no other choice than to bandwagon.

The other side of the coin emphasizes the indisputable temptations of electoral engineering. Not only that is much easier to buy votes in an SMD system and party candidates perceive a personalized vote as a strong incentive to invest in this way⁴¹, but this type of change offered also the possibilities for partisan redistricting. The law stipulated all the parliamentary parties represented in the respective county have the right to make suggestions to the Electoral Code Commission with respect to the boundaries of the SMDs. In the end, the suggestions coming from the county organizations of only two

⁴⁰ This is what actually happened: 4 more seats were allocated in the Chamber of Deputies, and 2 in the Senate.

⁴¹ Allen D. Hicken, 'How do Rules and Institutions Encourage Vote-Buying?' In *Elections for sale: Causes and Consequences of Vote-Buying*, by Frederic C. Schaffer,. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007: 47-50; Fabrice Lehoucq, 'When do Parties Buy Votes? Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives on Electoral Corruption' *Annual Meetings of the American Political Science Association*, Boston, Mass., 2002.

parties were accepted⁴² and thus the SMDs generally reflected the interests of the minority Liberal government and of PSD which supported it tacitly. The visibility of the gerrymandering strategies applied differed from county to county, as their results were only vaguely spotted in local media outlets.⁴³

The new electoral system proposed a combination in which although running in SMDs, candidates are - if they do not get absolute majority - still dependent on the performance of their party colleagues in the other SMDs of the county, and subsequently their chances are increased/ decreased by the party's national performance. Another important feature of the new electoral formula is that it keeps a low level of accountability – voters can be only partially effective in sanctioning candidates, by not voting them, because candidates can win the seat from the second or third place (after redistributions). Thus, the system favors strategic choice of SMDs.

Table 2: Incumbency rates 2008

	PNL	PDL	PSD	UDMR
MPs elected in 2004	93	68	159	32
MPs running again in 2008	70	74*	123	17
Re-elected	32	40	71	16
Percentage of re-election	45.71%	54.05%	57.72%	94%

*The difference appears from the merger with the PNL faction

** I did not take into account the candidates that had previous mandates in the Parliament but were not present in 2004-8

⁴²For more details see: <http://www.ziare.com/politica/stiri-politice/comisia-de-cod-electoral-a-decupat-colegiile-uninomiale-din-9-judete-357592> or: <http://www.emaramures.ro/stiri/Stire.aspx?NewsID=1457>

⁴³ See for example: <http://www.contrasens.com/2008/07/18/colegiile-uninomiale-in-bacau.html>.

The change from voting a party list to voting a person made the parties face many dilemmas in what regards the selection of candidates. The first dilemma would regard the question where to find the candidates? (excluding from the discussion the incumbents) An option given the personalization of the vote was to look outside the party and invite to run local notables that enjoyed high popularity and/or influence: from physicians to businessmen or singers. The opposite option was to appoint local, loyal “party soldiers”⁴⁴ (politicians holding local offices, or simply activists) so as to reward them and at the same time to retain a strong party discipline within the parliamentary group, a discipline that could be endangered if too many former apolitical figures were co-opted.

A second dilemma refers to decision of delegating the costs of campaigning: since the PR unique party campaign was history and each candidate had to have a separate campaign with prints, clips, blogs or other personalized advertising materials, the parties could choose to put the expenses on the accounts of those running. Either by nominating affluent candidates or by putting candidates to find themselves sources of financing. But this move could, in turn, produce again too much independence, and weaken the party control over its MPs.

Next, for the very fact that the new electoral system is a middle-of-the-road solution between a constituency-oriented candidacy and the desire of the parties’ to keep the control over the candidates, it was quite unclear to whom will be responsive the new MPs. On the one hand, all the MPs face the problem of identification with a particular constituency, which triggers the ‘delegate’ logic of representation⁴⁵. On the other, the MPs could be perceived as “trustees”, since for many the locus of loyalty is represented by the party selectorates - especially in the cases where the candidates were allocated safe seats

⁴⁴ Ioan Mircea Paşcu, ‘Uninomialul’, *Q Magazine* (August, 31st 2008), available at: <http://www.qmagazine.ro/articole/595/Uninomialul.html>

⁴⁵ J. Mansbridge, “Rethinking Representation”, *American Political Science Review*, no. 97, (2003): 515–528.

or where they got their places due to redistributions based on party performance. A third, alternative explanation makes the MPs responsive neither to the citizens in their constituency nor to the parties, but to the interests of those wealthy persons that sponsored their campaigns.

2.1 Conceptual Framework & Research Design: Hypotheses, Data and Methods.

The present study follows the tripartite model of legislative recruitment proposed by Pippa Norris. Her idea was to assess candidate selection through a political economy conceptualization that privileges three categories of factors: *supply*, *demand*, and the *structure of opportunities*⁴⁶. The first regards the motivations of those that choose to run for office and their ‘political capital’, composed of financial resources, record of party service and political networks. *Demand* includes the formal party regulations of candidate nomination and the informal criteria used by the gatekeepers – party leaders, party caucuses or party sponsors when preferring some aspirants above others.⁴⁷ Lastly, the *structure of opportunities* contains the different influences of legal regulations, political culture, party system, and electoral system on recruitment.

Correspondingly, the most ambitious purpose of the present inquiry would be to see how changes in the structure or opportunities modify the informal demand vis-à-vis candidates’ resources and political capital that compose the supply. However, this comparison was possible only on a few dimensions, were data from PR period were available. For the rest of the determinants of recruitment taken into account, the current study offers only a snapshot juxtaposed on anecdotal evidence from the past.

On the supply side I looked at four types of assets: political experience, party career, wealth and local roots. The first is generally considered to be an important advantage for candidates, in Western European settings⁴⁸ and for Romanian parties as well⁴⁹. Given that the electoral system change clarified a territorial mandate for representation which was

⁴⁶ Pippa Norris, (1997): 11.

⁴⁷ Idem, p.1

⁴⁸ Michael Gallagher & Michael Marsh, eds., (1988): 248.

⁴⁹ Laurențiu Ștefan, (2004): 151-156.

rather vague before, one would expect selectorates and voters as well to put a premium on knowledge of particular problems and interests attached to the SMD, knowledge which comes with local politics expertise. To give an example, that would imply that being mayor of a small town should have been more important than having an important function in a governmental agency. In other words, local notability and local political influence ought to represent strong assets for a successful recruitment. Thus:

H. 1: Political experience at local or county level should matter for nomination and election.

Next to political experience, a position in the party's (different levels of) leadership is one of the most salient determinants of recruitment as results from the ample comparative study edited by Heinrich Best and Maurizio Cotta: 'Generally more than 30% of MPs (up to around 80% in some countries) can be seen to have held a leading party position at a local or national level before their first election to Parliament.'⁵⁰ Keeping in mind the low levels of inclusiveness in candidate selection described in the previous chapter, it is very likely that the party elites that make the nominations to reserve for themselves the lion's share of the best/ safest SMDs. Therefore:

H. 2: A party office ought to be relevant for the candidate's chances to be nominated and win a mandate.

To continue with, the Romanian parliamentary parties reported to have spent almost €42 million in the local and general elections in spring and autumn of 2008. The money received from the state that entire year was only € 2.15 million, distributed according to the share of seats in the national legislature. Because the state financing cover such a meager part of the parties' expenses, one could naturally expect a high share of private donations, coming from businessmen (party clientele-s) and not least from the

⁵⁰ Heinrich Best & Maurizio Cotta, eds., (2000): 505.

candidates. Indeed, it was shown that wealthier candidates are generally better positioned on Romanian party lists even for generally unattractive elections, such as those for the European Parliament.⁵¹ Thus, I expect that well-to-do candidates capable of financing fully or partially the costs of their campaigns to be now placed in SMDs were they can gather large shares of vote. The corresponding hypotheses are:

H. 3: *The candidate's wealth should matter for nomination and election.*

H. 4: *A significant number of candidates are likely to choose or to need to finance themselves their campaign.*

The fourth and last type of candidate asset I expected to influence the recruitment and election was represented by local roots, having as indicator the politicians' place of residence. Above were described both the pattern of imposing 'parachutists' on eligible positions and the change of focus towards autochthonous/ local politicians that was expected when reducing the magnitude of the electoral districts. The electorate had now the possibility to sanction such practices, while the selectorates could in turn refrain or limit the number of parachutists that they could still impose in safe SMDs. Thus:

H. 5: *The new Parliament should include fewer politicians representing other constituencies than those of residence.*

Additionally, I also tested one hypothesis for the 'structure of opportunities' and one for the 'demand' sides of recruitment. The former refers to the influence of the County Leader. Thus, because many Romanian political scientists and journalists have signaled the great power enjoyed by the presidents of county councils - many of them labeled as 'local barons', I decided to introduce a dummy variable to control for the effects of running in a constituency part of the county governed by a politician coming from the same party. The presidents of county councils distribute the funds for all the city halls and

⁵¹ Sergiu Gherghina, Mihail Chiru, 'Practicing and Paying: Determinants of Candidate List Position in European Parliament Elections', *European Union Politics* forthcoming December 2010.

issue development plans that shape the economy of the entire county. Many of them managed to keep the office for several terms, thus creating strong clientelistic networks. The decision for their impeachment is almost impossible to obtain. From June 2008 they are elected in a FPTP contest, which is supposed to give them the legitimacy they lacked until now – they were elected by the other councilors. Therefore:

H. 6: Running in an SMD part of a county governed by a politician from his/ her party should influence the vote share of the candidate.

Finally, I expect that the ‘demand side’ of the recruitment was for sure not a unique uniform procedure applied in the same way in all the parties’ branches. This diversity was already demonstrated for some of the Romanian parties (such as PDL and PSD) even in the supposedly centralized recruitment process for the European Parliament elections.⁵² Its causes are related with the fact that certain organizations enjoy more autonomy than others due to previous electoral performances or as a consequence of the power of their leaders within the parties. Moreover, the availability of resources at the disposal of the branch might predetermine whether popularity polls are conducted prior to nominations. Thus:

H. 7: There should be variation of selection methods within the parties.

Hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 6 were tested only on the MPs elected for the first-time in 2008, while the rest were tested on all the parliamentarians. I did so mainly because the former regard determinants of recruitment which could not be satisfactorily distinguished from the incumbency advantage of current MPs. Moreover, I excluded from those specific tests the incumbents because many of them certainly had the possibility of running again without passing a new selection process.

⁵² Sergiu Gherghina, Mihail Chiru (2010): pp. 25-26.

The two sets of hypotheses correspond to two different research strategies that were adopted. The first strategy meant an OLS regression⁵³ of the electoral results (which had the determinants of recruitment as independent variables), because I believed that by looking at the elected candidates I will have a valuable proxy measurement of the different recruitment processes. I argue this by showing that 33% (83 persons) of the MPs in the sample got their seats after being on the second, third or fourth place – thus the sample contains not only the novices with the perceived most chances to win but also the more marginal figures produced by different recruitment strategies. More important, because of the short time passed since the local elections, party elites knew approximately what kind of scores they could expect in almost each SMD and thus the final percentages obtained by the candidates should be partially explainable by the weight the selectorates assigned to their political capital or other assets.

Furthermore, this kind of analysis is valuable not only with respect to the assessment of the assets that parties took into account when nominating candidates, but also for the feedback gave by the electorate, which can in turn provoke subsequent changes in the selection practices. Besides the hypothesized effects for the four variables, I also controlled for the age, gender⁵⁴, and the candidate's party vote share in that particular county at the 2004 parliamentary elections. For the operationalization of all the variables see the codebook in Appendix 2.

Secondly, in order to have direct information about the recruitment, questionnaires were sent to all the MPs. I sought to obtain data about selectorates, campaign financing, perceived decentralization and inclusiveness in the candidate's party, but also to re-test some of the findings of the previous statistical analysis. The rate of response was around

⁵³ Although some political scientists would think 252 cases are too few for a regression, I considered the number appropriate since the research is focused on elites.

⁵⁴ The sample included 29 women and 222 men.

10%, in line with other researches on elites, thus making the generalization of findings partially limited.

The first dataset consists of all the MPs, first time elected on November 30th 2008, which resulted in 251 units of observation (out of 471). I did not include in the dataset the 18 deputies of the national minorities, because their places are guaranteed by the electoral law, irrespective of the number of votes received, and they do not need to compete with the others candidates. I did include the 4 of the MPs elected for the first time by the Romanians in Diaspora. The possibility to have in the Parliament representatives of those living abroad was introduced by the new electoral law. The data were taken from the official websites of the parties and their local branches, from websites of candidates, but also from newspapers and campaign blogs. For the variable ‘institutional experience’ the information provided by candidates or by news regarding them, was verified on the official websites of those institutions. The availability of information differed from party to party, and also varied with the region, and with the degree of development of local media. Nevertheless, I managed in the end to have complete data on all the variables.

Regarding the questionnaires, they were sent to all the MPs, including those that were re-elected in 2008, on their official electronic mail addresses at the Parliament as well as on many of their private accounts. I received 45 responses - approximately 10% of the total number of parliamentarians, (453) (the largest percentage being 15% for PNL – for all details see table 6 below). There is no regional bias concerning the provenience of respondents as they come from 27 counties, from all the regions in Romania. Moreover I received a questionnaire also from an MP elected in the Diaspora. Only 4 of the 31 UDMR MPs responded, despite the fact that I sent them questionnaires in both Hungarian and Romanian – but the percentage is perfectly similar with that of the other parties. Because

the information received from the questionnaires came from a small number of cases (45) it was analyzed only through descriptive statistics.

2.2 Candidates' Assets or Party Support (General Features)?

The distribution of new-comers and their degrees of electoral success within parties is relevant to make the whole picture clearer. Table 3 below confirms the expectations one could had after the recruitment processes and electoral campaigns. Firstly, one half of the newcomers are members of the Liberal Democratic Party, the presidential party, and a party of mayors/local notables which had an electoral boom (mainly because of the President's populist-driven popularity). The second largest percentage belongs to PNL (the minority-governing party), which recruited recently a significant number of persons with high visibility, not involved before in politics⁵⁵.

Table 3: Party Identity of Newcomers and Electoral Results

N=251	National Liberal Party	Liberal- Democrati c Party	Social Democrati c Party	Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania	Total
Winning the 1 st place	19	86	53	10	168 66.93%
Being on the 2 nd , 3 rd or 4 th position	33	26	19	5	83 33.07%
Total	52	112	72	15	
% newcomer s Proportion in the PPG	55.9%	67.4%	45.5%	48.3%	

⁵⁵ They are well-know actors like Mircea Diaconu and Florin Calinescu, singers (Mihai Pocorschi, Dida Dragan, Nicolae Furdui-Iancu) or journalists (Cristian Topescu).

Experience in political institutions

55.8% of the first time elected MP's hold experience in local/county administration, as opposed to 24 %, who have no political experience and the remainder, 20.2%, who have participated mainly in national politics.

Although the level of missing data makes the comparison almost impossible (see table 4 below), it does seem that the change in electoral system did come along with an increase in politicians with local careers. For example, even if we assume that all the missing cases from the fourth term were newcomers with local experience their percentage is still well below the corresponding proportion in 2008.

Table 4: Newcomers' Political Experience (Highest Office Held)

	First term (1990- 1992)	Second term (1992- 1996)	Third term (1996- 2000)	Fourth term (2000- 2004)	Sixth term (2008)
Local level	20.8	19.6	16.3	30.4	55.8
National level	0.7	2.05	5.4	9	20.3
No experience	56	41.3	25.8	39.2	23.9
Missing data	22.4	37	52.5	21.4	0

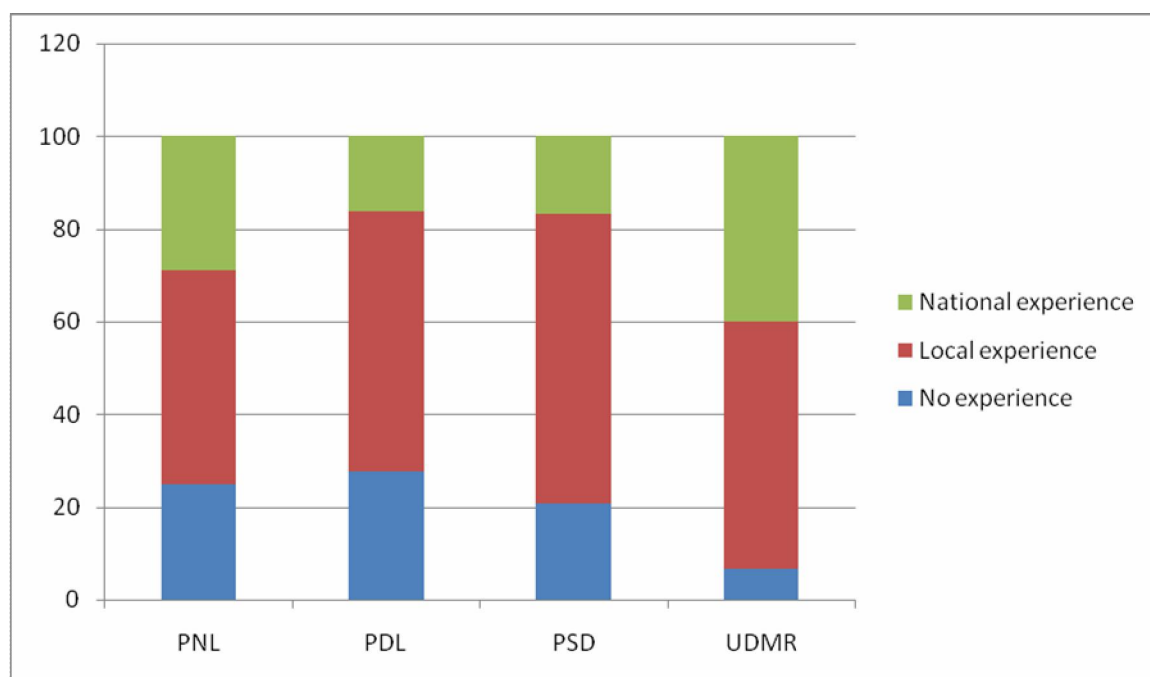
*Data for the first four terms are taken from Stefan (2004).

However, if we are to compare instead the ratio of local versus national politicians, it seems that the gap between the two categories has constantly decreased irrespective of the electoral formula. This happened – as it can be seen from table 4 – mainly at the expense of politicians with no previous experience, fact which can be taken as a sign of professionalization.

The picture for the 2008 elections is quite homogenous even if we compare the first time MPs' experience according to their party affiliation (see figure 1 below). The

only exception is represented by the large percentage of UDMR newcomers who have political expertise at national level - not less than 40% of them.

Figure 1: Newcomers' Political Experience 2008



Laurențiu Ștefan considers experience in public institutions to be a sign of parties giving their members the chance of apprenticeship before recruiting them as MP candidates. I would rather follow the interpretation given by another political scientist, Cristian Preda, who considers the fact that the same people are repeatedly running for local councils, district councils, city halls and Parliament to be a proof of parties' paucity in human resources.⁵⁶ On the other hand, the local politics expertise can be also interpreted as

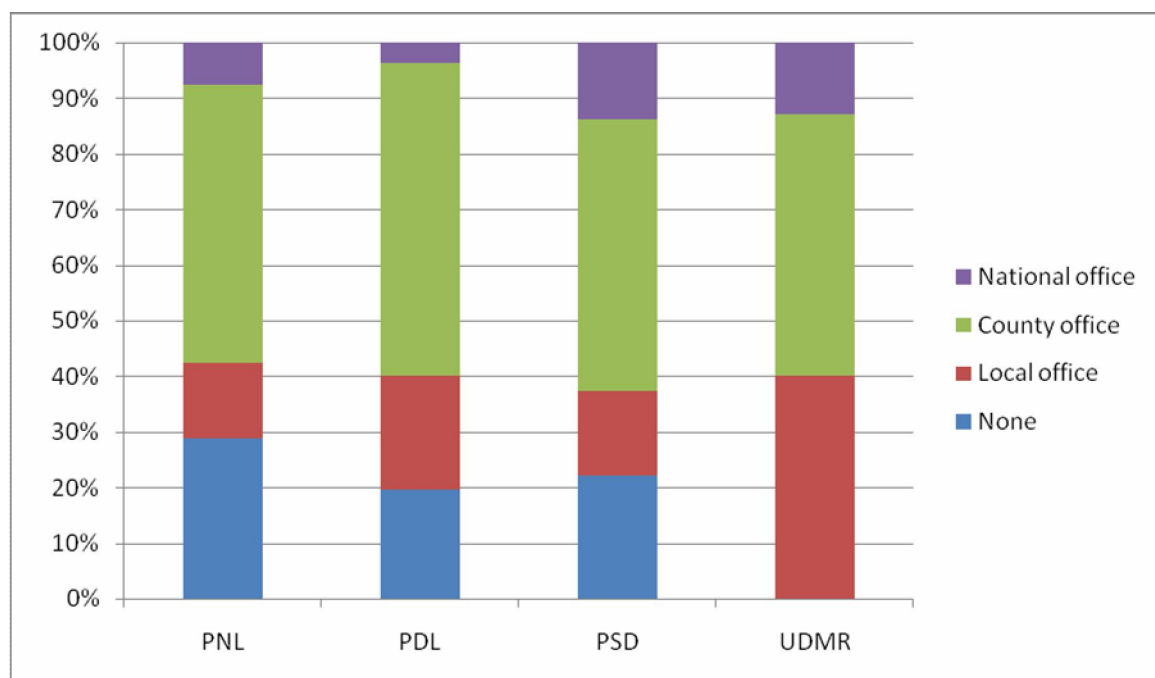
⁵⁶ Argument from a public debate quoted by Razvan Braileanu, 'Nu trageți în pianist, votați-l!' ('Don't shoot the pianist, vote for him!') *Revista 22*, no. 968, (September 2008).

favoring the “delegate” logic of representation, since it means that the MPs have significant knowledge about the problems of the communities they represent.

Party Career

More than 2/3 of them (70.9%) are members of the local and county leadership of the party branches where they run for a constituency. Moreover, it could be argued that there is a preeminence of the county level of the party over the others in the selection and promotion of new candidates: 52.2% of the new MPs come only from the ranks of parties’ county leaderships. The proportions are similarly distributed also within parties as one can observe from Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Newcomers’ Party Careers



Influence of the County Leader

For the ‘county leader’s influence’ variable I had to exclude the results registered for the Diaspora (where parties have no local branches, and more important, there are no county leaders). The result (see Table 4) seems actually very convincing of the importance of this

variable since only 5 candidates enjoying the support of the president of the county council did not manage to win a plurality of votes.

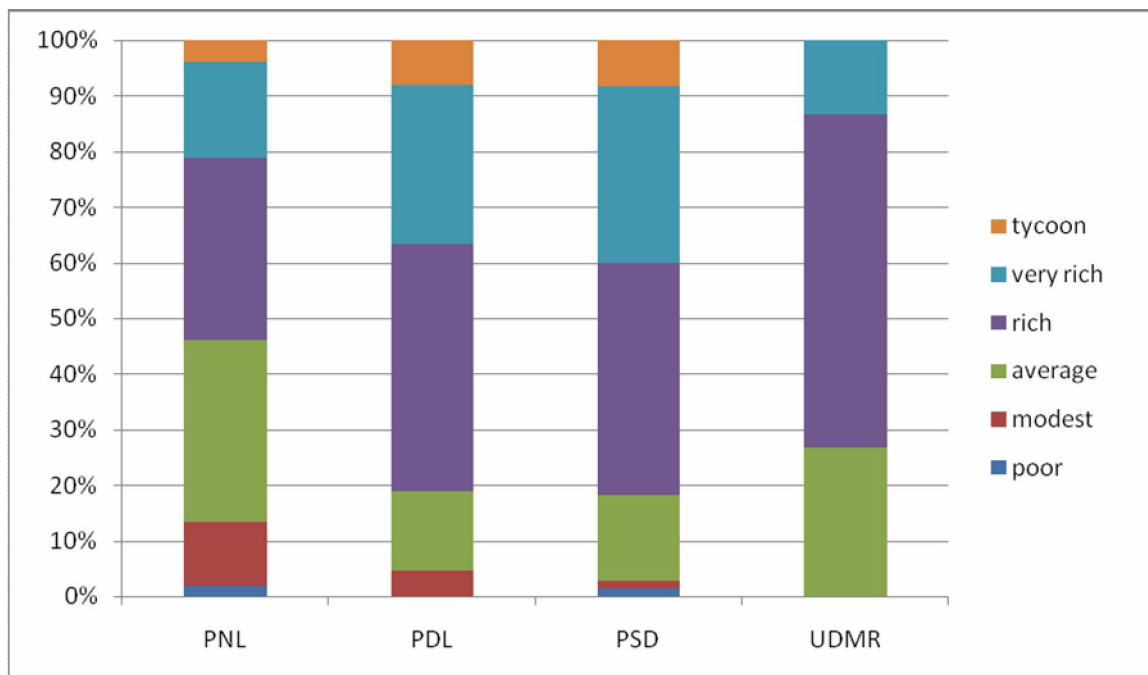
Table 5: The Importance of Appropriate Support

N=247	Running against the 'system'	Having the support of the 'county leader'	Total
Winning the 1 st place	70	96	166
Being on the 2 nd , 3 rd or 4 th position	76	5	81

Wealth

Just by looking at Figure 3 one has the obvious impression that wealth represents a major asset in the eyes of the party recruiters. Overall, 75.2% of all the newcomers fit in the three upper categories. The preeminence of well-off persons is even more so the case for the two largest parties, PSD and PDL.

Figure 3: Financial Situation of the Newcomers



More than 83% of the newcomers from the former are either rich, very rich or tycoons, the same being true for 81% of the latter party's first time MPs. Paradoxically for a social democratic party, at the PSD the layer of poor and modest newcomers represents less than 3%. The plutocratic flavor is somehow diluted only for the PNL, where the share of poor, modest and average MPs reunites 46% of all newcomers. UDMR is in between the two poles, as almost 30% of its first time MPs have a medium financial situation and only 13% are very rich.

Age

As expected the new-comers are generally younger than the incumbents: the mean being 45.23 years (the average age taking into account all Parliamentarians is 48.5⁵⁷). While the Liberal newcomers are in average younger than the rest (mean of 43.67), those of the Hungarian Alliance are older (mean of 47.8).

⁵⁷ Dan Arsenie, 'Parlamentarul Tipic: 48 de ani, inginer sau jurist' [The typical MP: 48, engineer or jurist] in *Evenimentul Zilei*, (December 5th 2008)

Gender

The female newcomers represent 2/3 of the total number of women MP elected: 28 out of 44⁵⁸. If we compare the percentages of female MPs only with the previous election (2004) it seems that the change in electoral system did affect slightly the chances of women to be recruited and elected: 9.71% versus 10.86%. However, if the comparison takes into account a longer period - 9.63% women elected in 2000 and only 4.45% in 1996 - then women's under-representation remains a constant, irrespective of the electoral formula or of the size of the Parliament.⁵⁹ Due to this structural condition, one cannot authoritatively claim that the Romanian case corroborates the assumptions for which the literature considers disadvantageous for women to run in SMDs as opposed to PR systems.⁶⁰

2.3 Understanding Newcomers' Vote Determinants

Because 'institutional experience' and 'party career' variables were moderately correlated, (Pearson's $r=.365$) I chose to run two separate models include only one of the determinants in each. As it can be observed from Table 5 below the variables included in the pooled model 1 explain almost half of the variance. The model fit is particularly good in the case of PSD – it accounts for more than half of the variance. I did not include UDMR in split file analysis the because of the small number of cases.

Table 6: Newcomers' Vote Determinants, Model 1⁶¹

Variable	Pooled	PNL	PDL	PSD
Vote share	.39***	-.44*	.28**	.39**

⁵⁸ There were in each legislative 2 women elected as deputies representing minorities – they were excluded from the counting

⁵⁹ The Parliament was comprised of 471 MPs in 1996, 467 in 2000, 451 in 2004 and 453 in 2008.

⁶⁰ Steven Saxonberg, 'Women in East European Parliaments', *Journal of Democracy*, 11, no: 2, (April 2000): 147-148; Pippa Norris, 'Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian and Mixed Systems', *International Political Science Review*, 18, no. 3, (July 1997): 306-309.

⁶¹ This is the most parsimonious model as the gender and the age group of the candidates did not show any significant effect on vote. I also checked for multicollinearity which was not a problem: the VIF for the 'vote share 2004' variable was only 1.29, while VIF for 'local baron' variable was 1.27.

2004	(.06)	(.19)	(.10)	(.14)
Institutional	2.20**	4.04**	-.06	1.60
Experience	(.77)	(1.46)	(.89)	(1.48)
Wealth	1.65*	.16	.03	2.52*
	(.62)	(1.27)	(.72)	(1.00)
Influence	10.77***	12.23**	7.86***	9.27***
of County	(1.42)	(3.58)	(1.50)	(2.65)
Leader				
Constant	12.04***	35.74***	27.97***	9.03
	(3.28)	(8.44)	(4.16)	(6.15)
R ²	.455	.416	.349	.511
N	248	52	111	71

Significance levels: * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Note: Reported coefficients are non-standardized, standard errors in brackets.

By far the most important determinant of vote share in both the pooled analysis and for each of the three parties is the presence of a county leader of the same political color. This seems to bring right from the start an average ‘dowry’ of 10% of the votes, with a maximum of 12.2% for the PNL and a minimum of 7.8% for the PDL. Nevertheless there are a number of possible objections that can be addressed to this finding. Firstly, it can be argued that not the presence of a county council president from the same party as the candidate is “a ticket to success”. Those officials have been recently elected by the same population of the county that votes for the MPs. Such correlation, if valid, would only mean that preferences of the electorate have not changed since the local elections. Therefore, the correlation could be considered spurious. This concern is however alleviated by the fact that the effect is so strong even in the presence of the control variable ‘vote share 2004’, which was introduced with the precise aim of accounting for the parties’ traditional strongholds.

Moreover, the effect is in line with the expectations derived from the fact that there are certain counties where the president of the county council has cumulated several mandates and is publicly recognized as a ‘local baron’ using his clientelistic networks to mobilize voters, either for him or for his party. At least 11 (25.6%) of the actual presidents of county councils were identified as ‘local barons’ by inquiries mainly based on policy and local media monitoring, of several NGOs under the initiative, ‘Clean Government Coalition’. Those politicians were involved in corruption acts (falsified auctions, public contracts for the political clients’ firms etc.) and are now serving for the second or third mandate⁶².

A further objection refers to the case when more local barons can be identified in the same county – besides the presidents of county councils there are also mayors who have build in several mandates, similar, though smaller power networks based on the same recipe of corruption and clientelism. Indeed, this is a very complex situation which cannot be covered without an in depth knowledge of local affairs. What can be said is that because of the de facto ‘power vertical’⁶³ (presidents of county councils distributing funds and issuing development plans that affect all city halls), the presidents of county councils have the capacity to coerce mayors, and thus their influence is greater. Nevertheless, the importance of mayors is crucial since the electoral districts are in the majority of cases designed so as to coincide with towns or larger villages, and especially in poorer and rural areas this gives mayors even more incentives to mobilize the electorate in one direction or another. Consequently, it is not surprising that with the new electoral system dozens of incumbent mayors have been elected as MPs (observation which applies best to the PDL). Thus the number of mayors and local councilors elected in the Chamber of Deputies has

⁶² See further information at www.romaniacurata.ro

⁶³ To paraphrase the concept associated with Vladimir Putin’s strengthening of the central power vis-à-vis the leaders of the regions – see Richard Sakwa, *Putin: Russia’s choice*, (London: Routledge, 2004): 159.

increased from 92 in 2004 to 127 in 2008.⁶⁴ I tried to find an answer to the antinomy of influences (presidents of counties vs. mayors) by putting in the questionnaire an item related to the support given to the candidate by the party officials.

The second most important predictor of vote in the pooled analysis is the institutional experience of the candidate, although the effect is several time smaller than the presence of a county president from the same party. Institutional experience was prioritized particularly by the PNL selectorates, as it seems that experienced candidates were put to run in SMDs that appreciated their expertise. Hence, the linear effect of one category increase in experience that brings more than 4 percentage points of additional votes.

The third most important determinant of vote when looking at all newcomers is their wealth. As hypothesized, wealthy persons had from the start two advantages against the others. First they were much likely to receive safer SMDs to contest and second, they were able to invest substantially in their campaigns, even by buying votes. In a manner consistent with the above description of the general features, this variable has a significant impact within the PSD – the party with the absolute largest category of well-to-do newcomers.

It is surprising on the other hand that wealth is not a significant predictor in the case of the PDL, despite the frequency of rich/ very rich/ tycoon candidates, which is very much comparable with that of PSD. Probably it happens so because all the PDL candidates have benefited rather evenly from the presidential-driven wave of popularity which transformed the party from the fourth largest parliamentary faction in 2004 into the first in 2008.

⁶⁴ Calculations made by Laurențiu Ștefan, 'Political Careers of Romanian MPs: Paths to and From Parliament', paper presented at the conference 'Twenty Years After: Parliamentary Democracy and Parliamentary Representation in Post-Communist Europe', Jena, Germany, 7-8th May 2010, p. 10.

As for the PNL – the role of wealth is relatively minor as one could already guess by looking at the distribution in Figure 3. It happens so because this party was less than PSD and PDL colonized by wealthy businessmen and also because it was the governing party at the moment of the elections and it could use state resources for the campaign. One important example for the latter is the Government Decision nr. 1155 from September 24th 2008, which directed important amounts of money from the Budgetary Reserve Fund available at the disposal of the executive, to the city halls of localities with PNL mayors or with PSD mayors that were to be part of the Liberal gerrymandered SMDs.

From the control variables only the 2004 vote share proved a significant determinant, showing that generally the party strongholds were kept despite all the mutations in local and national politics in the last 4 years. The only partially intriguing element is the negative sign of the effect in the case of the PNL. The explanation is rather straightforward: the party was the ‘first violin’ of the Right and it was accordingly perceived in 2004, only to lose this role in favor of the initially junior partner in the Justice and Truth Alliance, PD(L).

Replacing ‘institutional experience’ with the ‘party career’ measure did not change very much the above discussion of vote determinants for the first-time MPs. There are only two significant differences that look evident when comparing table 5 and 6. First, that the party career acquires a significant effect only in the pooled analysis and second deriving from the first, that the model fit for the PNL is relatively damaged (from an $R^2=.416$ to $R^2=.346$).

Table 7: Newcomers’ Vote Determinants, Model 2

Variable	Pooled	PNL	PDL	PSD
Vote share 2004	.39*** (.06)	-.416 (.21)	.28** (.10)	.34** (.14)

Party	1.91**	2.07	.42	1.21
Career	(.67)	(1.56)	(.82)	(1.01)
Wealth	1.56*	.01	.01	2.65*
	(.63)	(1.35)	(.72)	(1.00)
Influence	10.83***	13.11**	7.84***	9.78***
of	(1.42)	(3.77)	(1.50)	(2.71)
County				
Leader				
Constant	11.81***	37.15***	27.32***	9.35
	(3.31)	(9.42)	(4.31)	(6.08)
R ²	.454	.346	.351	.521
N	248	52	111	71

Significance levels: * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Note: Reported coefficients are non-standardized, standard errors in brackets.

2.4 Decimating the Parachutists - the Only Objective Achieved?

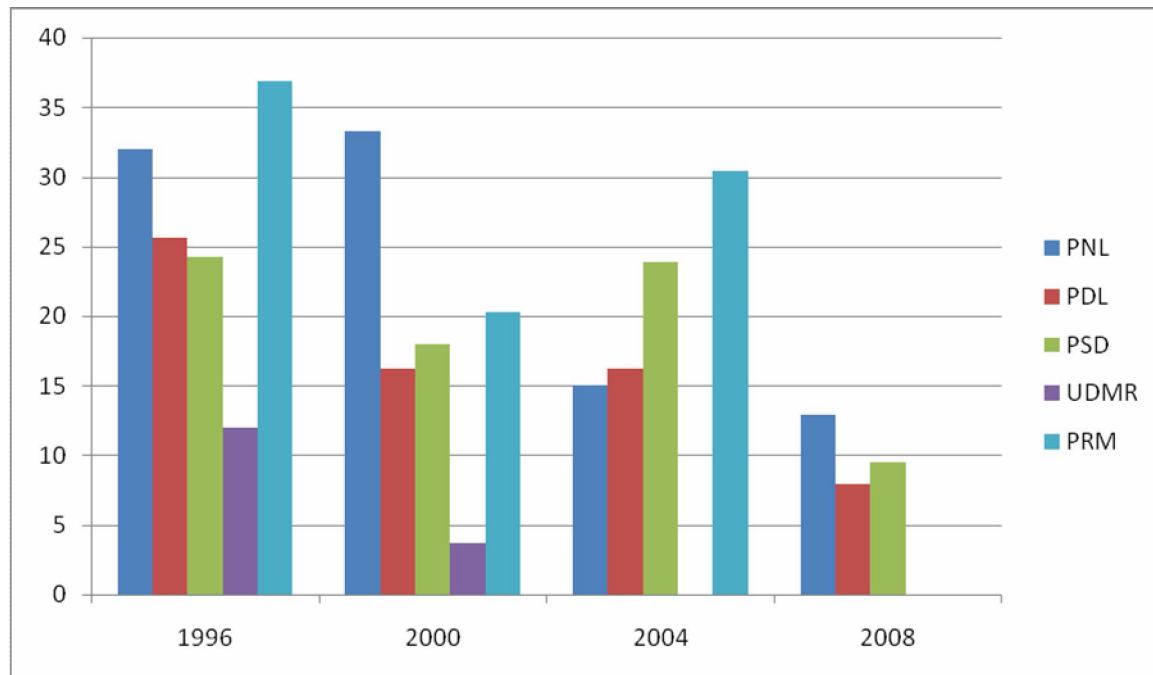
As mentioned before, one of the major reasons of Romanian public's dissatisfaction with closed list PR was the weak connection the MPs developed with their constituencies, mainly because their focus of representation⁶⁵ remained the party elites who drew the lists, not the voters. Furthermore, the recurrent practice of putting on high positions on the ballots MPs who lacked any local roots - residing in other constituency and having little knowledge of the peculiar interests and matters salient for that area - made the perception of parliamentary representation even more bitter.

At the 2008 elections, although the safe positions were not anymore as straightforward as in the case of the hierarchical party lists, certainly the party elites knew exactly which SMDs offered sure victories – mainly because of the short time passed since the local elections. Thus, theoretically it was once again possible to send into Parliament a

⁶⁵ John C. Wahlke *et al.*, *The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962)

larger number of ‘parachutists’, despite the institutional change. For this reason, I choose to compare the total and individual party percentages of MPs currently in this category with the last 3 elections before the switch of electoral formula.

Figure 4: MPs Representing Other Constituencies than Those of Residence 1996-2008



In 1996 and 2000 20% of all MPs were representing other constituencies than those where they resided.⁶⁶ For 2004 the corresponding proportion (computed by the author) was very close to that level, namely, 18.62%. The overall percentage of ‘carpetbaggers’ after the 2008 elections was more than halved, at 8.83%. Figure nr above shows clearly how the three main parties (PSD, PDL, PNL) chose to limit the number of outsiders in favor of local politicians, thus one of the objectives of the electoral system change seems to have been achieved. This is the most evident in the case of the largest party, PSD, which throughout the period had a two digit percentage of parachutists (24.2% in 1996, 18% in 2000 and 23.9% in 2004), while in 2008 this category shrunk to less

⁶⁶ Laurențiu Ștefan, (2004):166.

than 9%. PDL followed a similar abrupt trend, i.e., a decrease of 50% in the proportion of center-imposed MPs.

In the Liberals' case the same pattern was present - with the important difference that the magnitude of the change was much more limited (barely 3%). UDMR, which is by the nature of its natural constituency a regional party never had a real problem of this sort excepting the 1996 elections when 12% of its MPs had a different residence than the counties they were representing.

Nevertheless, the 2008 overall spectacular decrease in the number of parachutist MPs is also due to failure of the Greater Romania Party to surpass the electoral threshold. 36.8% (1996), 20.2% (2000) and 30.4% of the PRM MPs were part of this category. One could, however, interpret their failure also as a consequence of the changing expectations of the electorate projected upon the new electoral formula while the PRM leadership proved incapable to adapt and promote more visible, local politicians.

On a side note, it is worth mentioning that the practice of 'adoption'⁶⁷ described by Laurențiu Ștefan for the previous terms is still very fashionable: all 20 incumbent 'parachutist MPs' that returned in the Parliament in 2008 have got reelected in the very same counties where they received their previous mandates.

CHAPTER III

The author acknowledges that the MPs' own recruitment evaluations analyzed in this chapter come with a potential interpretation bias as these people were directly involved in and benefited from the process. Furthermore, the small rate of responses

⁶⁷ Laurențiu Ștefan, (2004): 167-170.

certainly indicates a self-selection bias. However, I expected that at least some of them would assess critically the candidate selection in their party, even just because they got elected through redistribution and did not receive a safe single member district. Moreover, factual information about how the recruitment occurred even if at a superficial/ façade level was highly needed since other sources (newspaper articles/ TV reports/ scholarly analysis) were almost completely missing.

Table 8: How Representative Are the Respondents for All the MPs?

	Population	Completed Sample
Newcomers	55.4%	75.5%
MPs at second term	33.2%	20%
Veteran MPs (3 terms or more)	11.4%	4.5%
Women MPs	9.7%	20%
Wealth ⁶⁸	0.8(P) 4.8(M) 19.1(A) 42.2(R) 26.3(V) 6.8(T)	2.2(M) 28.8(A) 33.3(R) 31.1(V) 4.4(T)
Mean Age	48.5	44.35

Table 7 indicates the aspects in which the completed sample diverges from the population. Thus, the newcomer MPs and women are over-represented, while veteran MPs are under-represented. The latter is also true for MPs in the poor, modest and rich categories of wealth. Moreover the respondents are slightly younger than the overall average. I do not expect the gender dissimilarity to produce any bias on the respondents' interpretation, and I think that generally the respondents are quite representative for the preeminence of wealthy persons in the Parliament. The fact that they are younger implies

⁶⁸ The letters are the initial of the 6 categories: poor, modest, average, rich, very rich, and tycoon. The numbers for the population wealth are actually those corresponding to the 55.4% newcomers.

that they were socialized to a lesser extent during former Communist regime, which in turn might come with a gain in critical thinking beneficial for the findings.

3.1 Selectorates and intra-party variations of selection procedures

85% of all the respondents say that they were nominated as candidates in the county organization of the party. But there are, as we shall see in the following lines, important nuances about selectorates at this level. The rest were nominated within their local organizations (10%) and by the national leaderships (5%).

Tabel 9: Distribution of Responses per Parties

	PNL	PDL	PSD	UDMR	Total
Number	14	15	12	4	45
Proportion out of PPG	15%	9.03%	7.6%	12.9%	9.93%
First time elected	9	11	10	3	33

With only one exception all the respondents from the PSD have been nominated by the county leadership of the party: the executive bureau – this explains probably why the selection is not perceived as very inclusive and shows at the same time that decentralization is rarely applied fully – to the last tier. None of the PSD respondents mentioned anything about their nomination being validated through vote in the organization.

In contrast with the above described situation, four respondents from the PNL argued that their nomination has been established by voting. One of them describes lengthily the procedure: 10 persons applied for candidature to the county's 5 SMDs held in the county delegation of the party. The amounts of votes received by the first 4 candidates

allowed them to choose the SMD where to run, the 5th remaining with the last constituency. These four testimonies are quite important findings because they show not only a variation of selection methods within the PNL, but they represent the first proofs of legislative recruitment through voting at the Liberals.

In the same category of variation of selection procedures within parties we can put the information given by two PDL respondents who said that the nominations in their counties (Timisoara and Gorj) were made after surveys over possible candidates' popularity have been conducted in each electoral district. This sort of polling has been used also by some of the organizations from the PNL – as described by the respondent from Teleorman county.⁶⁹

Returning to PDL – two their MPs said that their nominations were decided through vote in the Permanent Bureau of the county organization (PBC). In contrast to this procedure, 20% of the PDL respondents declared that their nomination was entirely due to the will of presidents of their county organizations. Generally the procedure in the PDL was to appoint candidates at local (20%) and county level (one third), candidatures validated in the PBC and sometimes at the national level.

Finally, the questionnaires reflected that voting to decide upon the candidatures remained the rule in the UDMR for the 2008 elections as well. Regularly at the internal elections vote an important number of members: for example at the Cluj county caucus voted 170 people. The sole exception is represented by the candidatures in the Diaspora which seem to have been decided by the executive leadership of the Alliance.

⁶⁹ Besides this, see Alexandra Ionaşcu, 'Les candidats aux élections parlementaires en Roumanie', CEVIPOL, available at: http://dev.ulb.ac.be/cevipol/dossiers_fichiers/candidats.pdf

Support from party officials

Because the previous statistical analysis (of the electoral results of the new comers) showed that running in a constituency part of a county governed by a person from the same party has an important positive effect on chances of being elected, I re-tested the assumption through the questionnaire (see Appendix 1). The results confirmed partially the analysis, while suggesting another important factor – the support of mayors and local councilor from the same party. Only 10% of all the respondents declared that they were not supported by officials from their party. 27% of all the respondents declared that they were supported by presidents of county councils.

More than half of the PSD respondents (7) have acknowledged the support coming from president of the county council while 4 others have pointed to the help given by mayors from the party. The situation is reversed in the case of PDL, where 80% of the respondents acknowledged the support given by local authorities that are party members. This is not counter-intuitive at all since PDL is mostly a party of mayors. For the PNL, the support from officials goes more or less in the same way as for the PDL (71% acknowledging support from mayors and local councilors). One factor explaining the situation would be the fact that the party has very few presidents of county councils. For the UDMR, the question was not applicable to the MP elected in the Diaspora while to others said they were helped by mayors and local/county councilors.

Financing the campaign

The overall mean of candidates' financial contributions to their campaigns was 64.97%. Only three respondents acknowledged that they did not contribute at all or to their campaign financing. The party that seems to have asked the most substantial contributions from its candidates is the PSD. Among the respondents of this party, one third has covered entirely the campaign expenditures while another third has contributed with more than 80%. This corroborates the above findings about the preeminence of wealthy candidates at

the Social Democratic Party, and the connection assumed between financial status and support of campaign costs.⁷⁰

As regards the PNL, 50% of respondents have covered entirely the costs of their campaign, while other 14.2% of them have paid at least 75% of the expenses. The situation is partially different for the PDL where although one third of the respondents paid more than 75%, another 40% covered between nothing and maximum one quarter of all costs (two respondents did not answer this question). For the UDMR the distribution is the following: one full contribution, one with 75%, another with half of the costs and, as expected, the respondent which got entirely random his seat, did not contribute at all.

Overall, 35% of the respondents paid for everything in their campaigns. This transfer of the financial burden on candidates can be explained partially by the fact that the general party campaigns from the PR era, conducted with unique political advertising materials for all the candidates present on the party list, have been now replaced by personalized campaigns. In line with this assumption was not surprising to find that 54.5% of the respondents have used the services of political communication advisers (the percentage being roughly the same within parties).

Despite the fact that there is no comparable data about the levels of candidates financing their campaigns in the past, I would dare to maintain that if present, these contributions were smaller and less frequent. I base this assessment on a straightforward and logical argument comparing the number of MPs resigning their mandates in the past and nowadays, after half of the tenure.

Table 10: Parliamentary Resignations 1990-2010⁷¹

⁷⁰ However, when taking into account all the respondents, the Pearson correlation of 'wealth' and level of 'campaign self-finance' proved not to be significant ($p=.413$)

1990-1992	1992-1996	1996-2000	2000-2004	2004-2008	2008-2010
81(15.7%)	43 (8.9%)	25 (5.1%)	62 (12.8%)	68 (14.5%)	2 (0.4%)

Even if in the remaining two years the current proportion of MPs resigning will increase by ten times, the overall percentage will still be exceptionally smaller when compared to the PR era. The first explanation of this dramatic change is that parties are pressuring their MPs not to quit because this will provoke by-elections, in contrast to the old electoral law which automatically granted the mandate to the next candidate on the same party list. A second, complementary explanation would be that after investing so many resources in the campaign (compared to the past), they are less willing to renounce voluntary the seat.

3.2 Decentralization and inclusiveness of recruitment

The MPs were asked to give their general perception about how decentralized and how democratic/inclusive is the candidate selection process in their party. I will not repeat all the categories of answer (the appendix contains the questionnaire), it suffice to say that the MPs had 5 options for each scale (1-being most inclusive/ decentralized).

The percentages should be taken with certain reservation, given the natural tendency of new successful MPs to project a positive light on the process that had as one of the outcomes their election.

Figure 4: Decentralization of Recruitment as Perceived by Respondents

⁷¹ Laurențiu Ștefan, 'Political Careers of Romanian MPs: Paths to and From Parliament', paper presented at the conference 'Twenty Years After: Parliamentary Democracy and Parliamentary Representation in Post-Communist Europe', Jena, Germany, 7-8th May 2010, p. 17

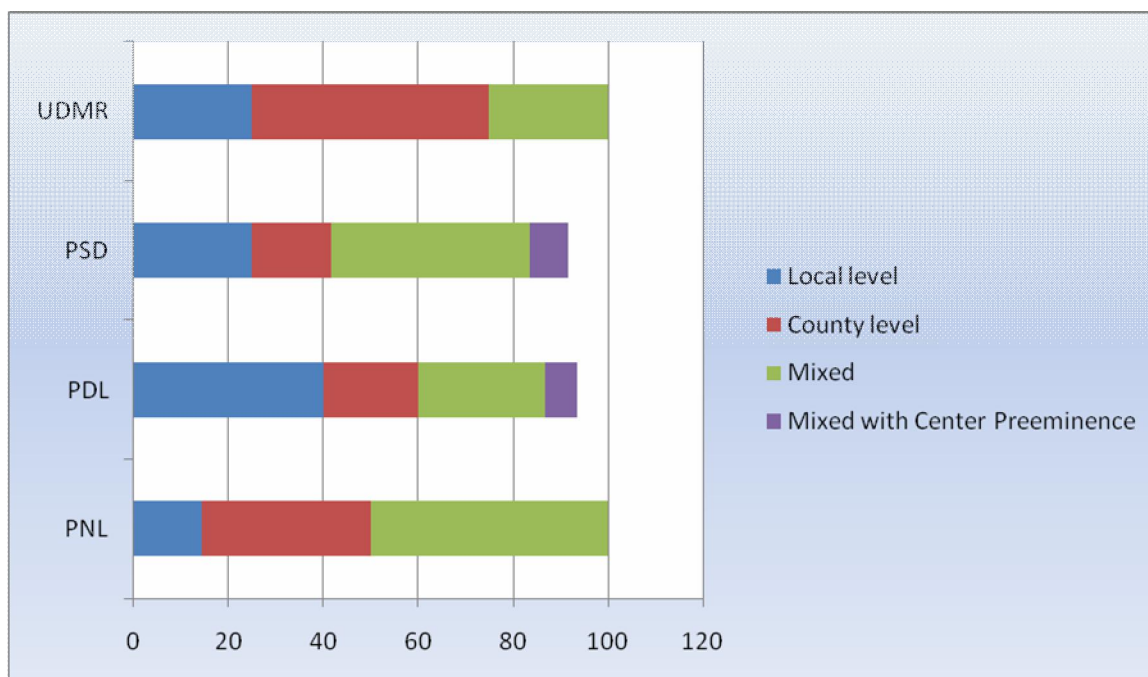
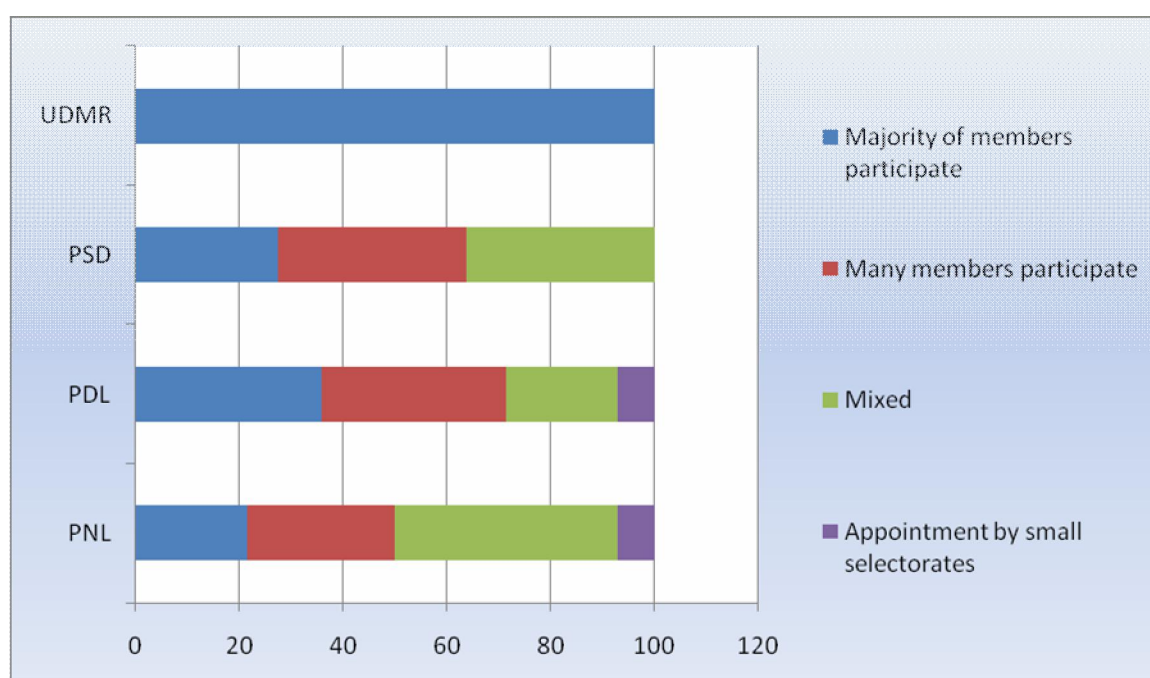


Figure 3 confirmed the opinions that UDMR and PDL have the leading positions in what concerns decentralization of legislative recruitment among Romanian parties: almost 80% (UDMR) and 60% (PDL) have described the recruitment as taking place either within the local organization or within the county branch.

The fact that the PNL also exhibits quite a good score on decentralization confirms the expectation about the internal power mutation towards a greater importance of the county branches of the party. On the other hand, it seems there are important influences of the central leadership in the selection made within the PSD since half of the respondents classified the process as being mixed or mixed with the preeminence of the centre.

The first thing to be observed about figure 4 below is the consensus among the UDMR respondents about the high level of inclusiveness of selectorates in their party, a fact made possible by the existence of internal elections for nominations. The PDL seems to come closer to the Alliance, with 71% of the respondents believing that a fair amount of members participate in the recruitment process. There is one exception – a respondent which believes that the appointments are made by small selectorates.

Figure 5: Inclusiveness of Recruitment as Perceived by Respondents



For the other parties the image is rather blurry. Thus, half of the respondents of the PNL see the process rather inclusive, whereas the other half believes the process is mixed or not inclusive at all. Nevertheless, this paradox has a simple explanation as the central leadership (National Permanent Delegation) had the right to intervene (and did intervene) in the nomination process for those branches which received less than the average score of the party at the last elections.

At the PSD almost 37% of the respondents see the recruitment process as rather mixed. This is probably due to the widespread condition of powerful local leaders imposing their will over the organizations and not allowing for too much participation in the selection of candidates. For this reason, it seems that the PSD is closer to the type of ‘local patronage’⁷² recruitment, as defined by Pippa Norris.

⁷² Pippa Norris, (1997): 205.

Length of party membership

Seniority in the party is commonly perceived by the literature as one of the assets of potential candidates. That is why I included a question regarding the length of the membership in the party.

All the respondents from the PNL and PSD claim to have more than 4 years of party membership. However, the average is much higher: 11.23 years for PNL and 10.71 years for PSD. One fifth of the respondents from the PDL have less than 1 year of membership. This figure emphasizes the PDL campaign of recruiting candidates from outside the party, but can be also interpreted conversely as a result of the increased popularity of the party, attracting opportunists. Nevertheless, the average is 7.7 years of membership. Last but not least, the UDMR respondents have the highest mean of years of party membership, 15.5, which is not surprising given the fact that the Alliance remained the only alternative for the majority of politicians of Hungarian decent, despite the appearance of Civic Magyar Party or the cooption of some in the PNL.

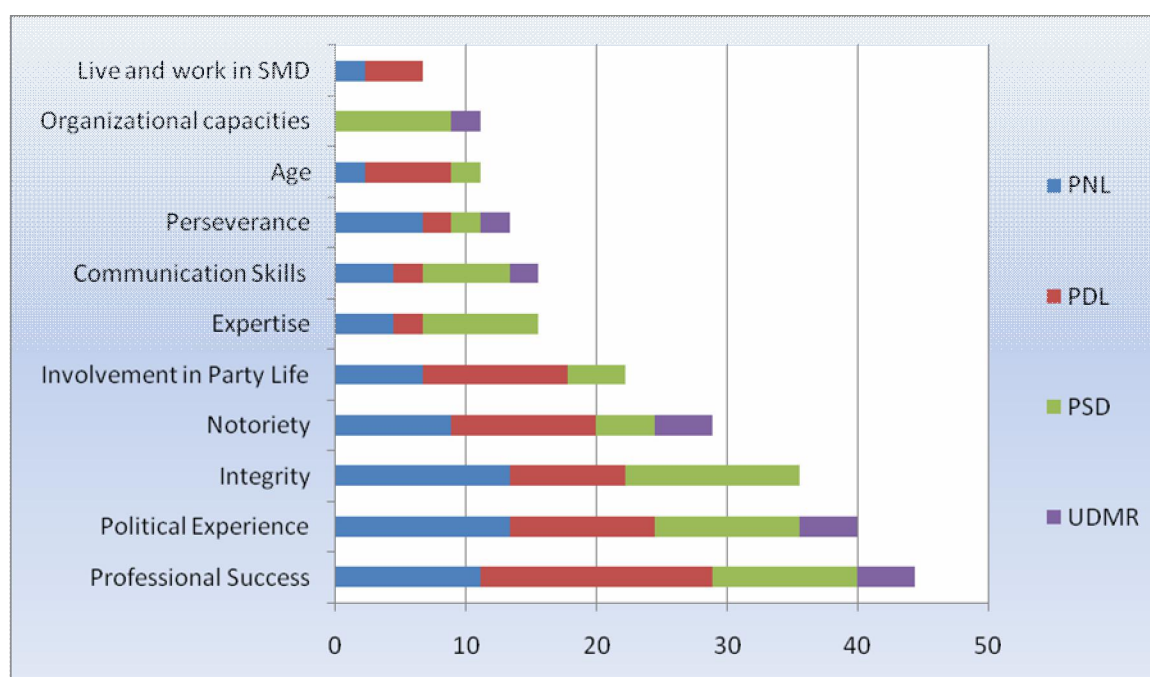
The fact that generally most of the respondents had more than 5 years of party membership can be interpreted both as a proof of apprenticeship in the party before nomination for an important office, and as a safety measure through which the party leaders make sure that the new MPs are faithful ‘soldiers’ of the party, who now got rewarded for their loyalty.

What exactly made you candidate?

Given the already mentioned changing conditions of the campaign, it was important to know what resources the candidates perceived as their most important assets in the competition for nomination. It was an open ended question, in order not to lose any possible explanation. And indeed, the figure 5 below shows enough surprises. First of all, the most important quality - mentioned by almost half of the respondents – was their professional success and not the political experience accumulated prior to candidacy.

An important finding is also the frequency with which the MPs refer to their ‘integrity’ (one out of three respondents), as a major quality. Selectorates have surely appreciated a ‘clean record’ of their candidates, since this would make them immune to attacks on corruption grounds, in a political system already very personalized and with a general public highly distrustful of politicians.

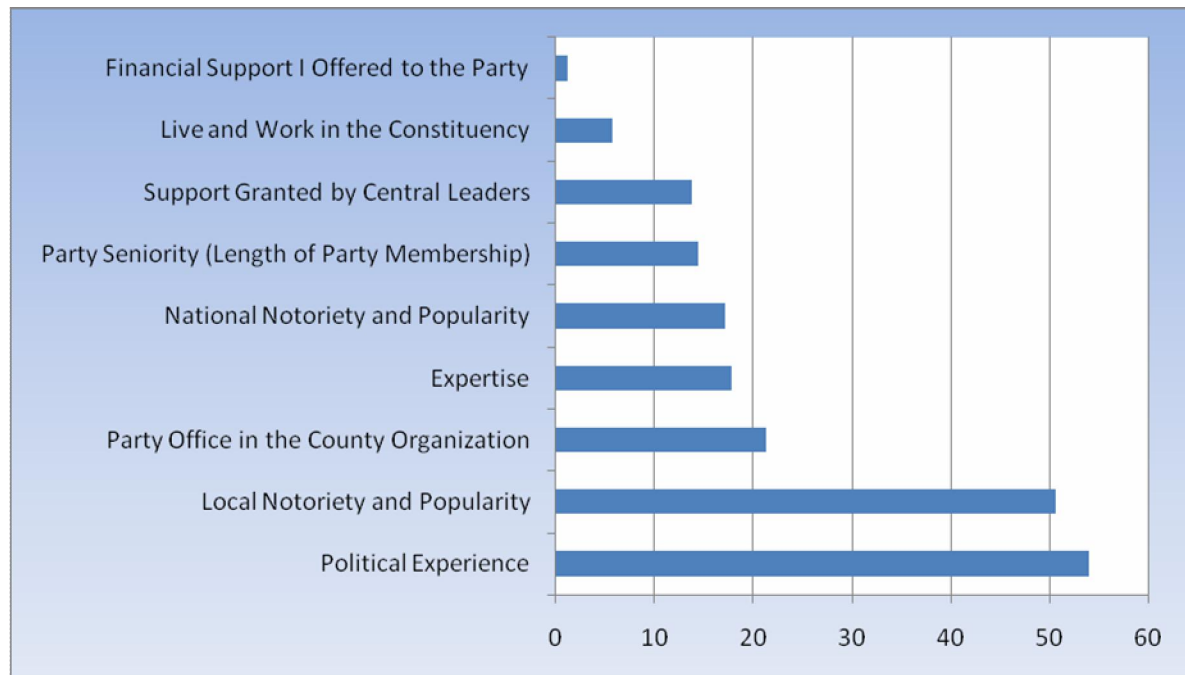
Figure 6: Candidates’ Beliefs about the Resources That Have Determined Their Selection



The change to SMDs was also supported with the argument that the parties will no longer afford to send ‘parachutists’ from the centre or to fill the list with ‘no-names’, but will need instead to promote candidates well-known in that particular area. The perceptions of the candidates from all the four parties confirm this expectation, seeing that together the ‘notoriety’ and ‘live in and work in the SMD’ items were being mentioned by almost 40% of the respondents. One can see from figure 6 below, that local notoriety was very important also for the MPs elected under PR, who responded to the RomElite survey conducted by Laurențiu Ștefan in 2003. But on the other hand, 14% of those deputies and

senators admitted that the support given by the central leaders was decisive in their nomination and election.

Figure 7: Candidates' Beliefs about the Resources That Have Determined their Selection (2000-2004)⁷³



Returning to the 2008 elections, it seems that parties have also chosen to reward loyal soldiers, for their past services – reflected in figure 5 by the ‘perseverance’ and ‘involvement in the party life’ responses given by 33% of the MPs. The recruitment of specialists on certain policy areas (i.e.: expertise in agriculture, industries, energy or environment) is yet another meaningful explanation present the questionnaires and especially true for the PSD and PNL respondents. This seems to be a constant path to

⁷³ Laurențiu Ștefan (2004): 155. The data are part of the RomElite survey conducted by the author in 2003, with 174 MPs responding. Unlike the open-ended question I used, this survey provided 9 options, asking the respondents to choose only two of them. These methodological differences make the responses less comparable, but the information itself is meaningful for those who want to understand better the points of continuity and rupture with the past.

Parliament, given that almost one in five respondents of the 2003 survey have emphasized the importance of their specific expertise as determinant of recruitment.

Finally, it is essential to notice that respondents from all parties (although not too many: 14.5%) have brought up in discussion their communication capabilities, which was to be expected as the new electoral system favors more contact with the public in the constituency and certainly a more confrontational style than before. Other responses referred to age (the advantage of being a young candidate), intelligence, loyalty to the party, team spirit and even empathy.

CONCLUSION

The primary relevance of this study resides with its focus: analyzing the consequences which a unique transformation of electoral system might produce on the candidate selection strategies of the Romanian parties. Because of the lack of official information, previous works regarding legislative recruitment in Romania failed to give exact figures of legislative turnover. Nowadays, the website of the Chamber of Deputies offers the complete lists of MPs since 1990. Based on them, I could calculate the percentage of new-comers⁷⁴ in the last four legislatures: 1996 - 58.4%, 2000 - 56.5%, 2004 - 57.2%, 2008 - 55.6%. Given this very high percentage of novices in almost each legislative one cannot claim that the transformation of electoral system did produce a structurally fundamental change in recruitment patterns. However, important changes are present and they will be re-emphasized in the following lines.

The first significant finding, not considered previously⁷⁵, refers to the importance of the variable 'county leader's influence' for the vote share of a newcomer when running in the right fief. The magnitude of the effect remained the largest for all parties, even after controlling for the traditional strongholds of each. The finding could be taken as the basis of a new study going deeper into the logic of the relation between the power of county councils' heads and the election of MP's in that particular administrative region. Of course, not all heads of county councils are 'local barons' but the specific context of

⁷⁴ I systematically excluded from the data the 18 MP's representing minorities because of the reasons which I already mentioned.

⁷⁵ A partial exception might be represented again by Laurențiu Ștefan, 'Career Patterns and Career Preferences of Romanian MP's' in Z. Mansfeldova, D.M. Olson, P. Rakusanova, eds., *Central European Parliaments. First Decade of Democratic Experience and Future Prospective*, Institute of Sociology, Academy of Science of the Czech Republic, (Prague: 2004): 194. The author's point is that many MPs would rather prefer a career as county leader thanks to the great influence provided by such an office. However, he indicates that there are instances where there is a direct connection between these two 'offices' – his example was that of Nicolae Mischie (famous Gorj Baron of PSD), who run in 2000 for Parliament only to act as a locomotive for the party list.

Romanian elections points to their importance in the contests for SMDs. Thus, the heads of county councils dispose of such mechanisms as mobilizing mayors to campaign for a certain candidate or arranging deals even with local authorities coming from other parties. They can also use their clientelistic networks to urge businessmen to engage in campaign donations or directly, ‘electoral bribes’⁷⁶. I acknowledged that the above mentioned finding has several limitations, the most important being the existence of others ‘local barons’ in the same county: ‘everlasting’ mayors, who applied the same recipe of clientelism and corruption to build personalized power networks. The influence exerted by these mayors seems indeed to be translated into vote mobilization, and case-studies of small towns and impoverished rural areas could produce valuable information about a type of voting behavior which is overly-assumed but under-studied.

The second most important finding refers to the extent to which the candidates chose or had to finance their campaigns: the overall mean of financial contributions was 65% (in the 45 questionnaires received). The delegation of costs, operated by parties can be partially explained by the personalization of campaigns produced through the abolishment of list voting. At the same time, there is preeminence (absolute in the case of the PSD and PDL) of rich and very rich first-time MPs and the candidates’ financial situation was shown to influence the final share of votes they received. As shown by the regression analysis, this is the most evident in the case of the PSD, where party selection committees probably have deliberately placed wealthy candidates in safer SMDs. All these are not good news for democracy since they imply a possible discrimination against the chances of less well-off politicians.

⁷⁶ Buying people’s votes (for sums that vary from some dozens to some hundreds of euros) seems to be quite an increasing phenomenon – reported by the press and NGOs. In the local elections held in June 2008, the results from a locality near Bucharest were nullified due to obvious electoral bribes, but the practice has survived.

On the other hand, the self-financing move does not mean only that there is a shift in recruitment towards financially potent candidates but also it could bring too much independence vis-à-vis the parties, i.e., weaken the discipline within parties' parliamentary groups. The first signs of the transformation towards the 'delegate logic of representation' were visible in the 2009 debates on the annual budget: almost every MP had a financial amendment trying to direct funds towards his/her constituency. This is a consistent behavior since many of them, profiting of people's ignorance, had made mayor-like promises in the campaign (building a bridge/ repairing the church/more green space for the neighborhood) and now they are trying to show they are really striving to fulfill them. More important, since the beginning of the term 38 MPs⁷⁷ (8.4%) have either migrated to the governing party (PDL) or became 'independents' – de facto being integrated in the parliamentary majority. Almost all of them did it in exchange for promises that government funds will be directed toward their districts.⁷⁸

A certainly positive transformation in nomination patterns produced by the change in electoral system is the decrease of center-imposed MPs, having no connections with the constituency. The overall percentage of 'parachutists' dropped by more than 50%, the trend being most visible at PSD, while also present at PDL and PNL. The 'local roots' orientation is generally complemented by a premium put by selectorates on local political experience and local party offices in the case of the first-time MPs.

The questionnaires showed that there are important intra-party variations with respect to the methods of candidate selection. The most salient examples came from PNL MPs who argued that their nomination have been established by voting in the county party organization. In addition, it seems more and more county branches from both PDL and

⁷⁷ Seventeen MPs left from the PNL and twenty one from PSD.

⁷⁸ A second major reason of migration, mentioned by the press were the credible threats that corruption investigation against these MPs would be instrumented by the politically directed National Anti-Corruption Department (DNA)

PNL have conducted popularity polls before nominating their candidates. Probably there are more instances in which these different practices are being applied in the same party, and this, I believe, correlates with the increasing degree of autonomy enjoyed by certain local organizations.

Another important facet refers to the fact that women's under-representation remains a constant, irrespective of the electoral formula or of the size of the Parliament. Due to this structural condition, one cannot authoritatively claim that the Romanian case corroborates the assumptions for which the literature considers disadvantageous for women to run in SMDs as opposed to PR systems.

It seems also necessary to say that since the winners of the constituencies and the lucky losers (benefiting from redistribution) were not significantly different on important variables like institutional experience, party career or profession, the media-created hysteria around the redistributions in favor of candidates being on the 3rd or 4th place is not that justifiable. Maybe people are forgetting too easily the other 'anomalies',⁷⁹ created by the PR electoral system.

A final conclusion to be made based on all the above factors is that the new electoral system is likely to strengthen the patronage-oriented recruitment, giving at the same time a premium to local political and economic elites acting as selectorates.

Although the present study proposes a theoretically-driven, easily replicable model it has a number of inherent shortcomings. They are represented by the type of data (i.e. self-reported for the financial status), the level of missing information in the elite survey, and the additional longitudinal limitations. That is why further studies would have to bring qualitative data into picture. A relevant direction is to interview members of the party

⁷⁹ A good example would be the so called 'Giurgiu paradox' (borrowed from professor Florin Feșnic) - in 1996, in that constituency, PDSR won a seat (46,810 votes); UDMR won the second seat (with 269 votes – due to redistribution), although the Democratic Convention won more than 100 times more votes (39,672)

selection committees to see their self-perceived priorities when recruiting and ordering candidatures. On a different level, it is crucial to have data beyond the official documents provided by parties about their campaign donors in order to document the indirect routes through which candidates finance their campaign

Appendix 1

Here are the items included in the questionnaire:

1. For how long have you been a member of the party?
2. Do you hold any office in the party? If yes, specify it.
3. To what organization/branch of the party do you belong?
4. What personal assets do you consider have determined your selection for candidacy?
5. What was the percentage you contributed with to the financing of your personal campaign?
6. Have you been supported in the campaign by officials (mayors, county councilors, presidents of county councils) from your party? If yes, name the function of the person?
7. Did you use in the campaign the help of political communication advisers/ specialized firms?
8. Who nominated you as a candidate?
9. On a scale from 1 to 5 how democratic/ inclusive is the candidate selection in your party? (1 - the majority of members participate/ even by voting, 2 - many members participate, 3 - mixed, 4 - appointment by a small selectorate, 5- recruitment controlled by the party national leaders)
10. On a scale from 1 to 5, how decentralized is the candidate selection in your party? (1 – selection at local level, 2 - selection at county level, 3 - mixed, 4 – mixed with the preeminence of the centre, 5- selection made at the national level)

Appendix 2: Variable Codebook

Variable	Operationalization
Age Group	1= 25 to 40 years, 2=41 to 60 years, 3= 61years or above
Gender	0 = female, 1 = male
Experience in public institutions	0 = no experience, 1 = experience at local level, 2 = national political institutions, 3 = both local and national expertise
Local Baron Influence	0 = president of the county council from another party 1 = president of the county council from the same party
Party career (prior to candidacy)	0 = no office, 1 = member of the party's local branch leadership, 2 = member of the party's county branch leadership, 3= office in the national organs of the party.
Party Vote 2004	The vote percentage of the candidate's party in that county at the 2004 parliamentary elections
Wealth	1 = poor: no house, no car, no land, no account, 2=modest – one house/ car, no land or accounts, 3 = average – house, car, accounts smaller than 10,000 Euro or one land, 4 = rich – two houses, car, two lands or accounts between 10,000 and 50,000 Euro, 5 = very rich – three or more houses, lands or accounts larger than 50,000 euro, 6=tycoon.

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*I did not include all the sites (of county councils, city halls or other central or local institutions) or blogs of politicians which have been used, but they can be offered upon request.