

# The core voter's curse: Coercion and clientelism in Hungarian elections\*

Isabela Mares<sup>†</sup>

Lauren E. Young<sup>‡</sup>

May 24, 2016

## Abstract

In elections around the world, voters are influenced not only by offers of gifts and favors by the state but also by coercion. In this paper, we examine whether and how politicians use positive and negative individually-targeted inducements in rural Hungarian communities. We argue that in this setting, characterized by high ballot secrecy and entitlements that can be politicized, targeting is influenced by two factors. First, ballot secrecy causes parties to focus on influencing the turnout decisions of voters who are ideologically close to parties because their vote choices are easily predictable. Second, election-time targeting of positive and negative inducements is influenced by the context of pre-election benefits, particularly entitlements. Because core supporters are more likely to receive entitlements during the pre-election period, they are subsequently more likely to be targeted with negative inducements during the election campaign, specifically threats to be cut off from the economic benefits on which they rely. We test this theory using an original household survey of 1800 Hungarian citizens in 100 rural communities fielded shortly after the 2014 parliamentary election.

Word Count: 11,837

---

\*For advice and suggestions, we are extremely grateful to Lili Török for exceptional research assistance and to Graeme Blair, Doro Bohle, Alex Coppock, Daniel Corstange, Donald Green, Bela Greskovits, Nahomi Ichino, Kimuli Kasara, Alex Kuo, Suresh Naidu, Didac Queralt, Tara Slough, and seminar audiences at NYU - Abu Dhabi, University College London, and the EPSA and APSA annual meetings for advice and suggestions. This project was approved by the Columbia University IRB: IRB-AAAN5501.

<sup>†</sup>Columbia University Department of Political Science, [im2915@columbia.edu](mailto:im2915@columbia.edu)

<sup>‡</sup>Columbia University Department of Political Science, [ley2106@columbia.edu](mailto:ley2106@columbia.edu)

Victor Orbán, Hungary's incumbent prime minister, won by a landslide majority in the election that took place in April 2014. Hungarian voters entrusted Fidesz, Orbán's Christian-conservative political party, with an absolute political majority in the Hungarian parliament. Remarkably, voters largely did not punish Orbán or Fidesz for policies that infringed on the prerogatives of courts or that limited the freedoms of the press and that had created an open conflict between his administration and the European Union.

International election observers noted very few irregularities (OSCE, 2014). The limited OSCE-ODIHR mission that monitored Hungarian elections noted that "the April 6 parliamentary elections were efficiently administered and offered voters a diverse choice following an inclusive candidate registration process" (OSCE, 2014, 3). As the report noted, the "limited number of counting and tabulation processes observed were carried out in an orderly manner, with all key procedural elements adhered to" (OSCE, 2014, 28).

While blatant manipulations of voting outcomes—such as ballot rigging or the emptying of urns—were absent in Hungary's election, a number of civil society observers remarked on irregularities that occurred in the interaction between politicians and voters during campaign.

These observers noted that in rural localities candidates and members of their campaigns attempted to sway the political choices of voters through a variety of strategies that transgressed the boundaries of the electoral law. These strategies included promises of monetary rewards, preferential access to governmental policies, and threats of post-electoral punishment of voters that made the 'incorrect' political choice. Mayors or mayors' men (*polgármester emberei*), as these political agents were known in rural Hungary, reportedly threatened to limit access to workfare programs or other social programs (such as temporary assistance for firewood) of those voters that supported undesirable candidates (Interview, Baranya county, April 2014). Similarly, moneylenders who were embedded in the political campaigns of candidates were reported to threaten indebted voters to change the terms of current or future loans if these voters took political risks and made the 'incorrect' political choice.

Consider one such report of electoral irregularities published on a popular Hungarian political

blog before the April 2014 election.

“Then, there is the locally influential, powerful man, the predatory lender. I mean the kind of lender who is not such a petty player. A mid-level manager in a regional organization or even in one run from Budapest. You can also tell that he is not a beginner by the fact that in a small or even a mid-size village or town, everyone knows what he’s up to. So then this lender tell their employees to go in campaign in settlements and localities. He will also say that in cases the client voted correctly their fruitful relationship will be maintained (...) So in case you don’t vote for the right person, you can yourself and your extended family with greater interest rates for a while and on top of that you can lose the opportunity to participate in the welfare work program.”

While journalists or non-governmental associations have presented preliminary evidence documenting the existence of these practices, these reports did not provide a systematic assessment of the magnitude of various illicit electoral strategies in Hungary. The paper seeks to address these questions. Our empirical analysis seeks to assess more systematically the magnitude of these electoral irregularities in Hungarian rural provinces during the recent election. Do these examples reflect wider political practices in Hungary? How common are these practices in a country that is a member state of the European Union and that enjoys significantly higher levels of economic development than many of its former post-communist neighbors?

The second objective of our analysis is to disaggregate clientelistic strategies into positive and negative inducements. Politicians in many competitive authoritarian or weakly democratic contexts have a large toolbox of strategies with which they influence voters. Voters perceive positive inducements like offers of gifts, money, and favors as very different from threats of economic sanctions or violence. How do politicians decide which voters to target with positive and negative inducements? Do politicians target similar voters using both forms of clientelistic strategies or do they discriminate among the voters targeted by these strategies, coercing some voters while offering positive inducements to others? If such clientelistic discrimination exists, what criteria are used to determine which voters are targeted with which strategies?

We bring empirical evidence to bear on a dynamic and rapidly growing literature on the targeting of electoral clientelism. There has long been a debate about whether core or swing voters are targeted with individual inducements such as patronage or pork (Cox and McCubbins, 1986; Dixit and Londregan, 1996; Stokes, 2005; Nichter, 2008). Recent theoretical work argues that brokers should target clientelism on core supporters when vote choice can't be monitored to buy their turnout rather than the vote choices of unaffiliated voters (Gans-Morse, Mazzuca and Nichter, 2014). Others have argued that under conditions of ballot secrecy brokers monitor the aggregate turnout of small localities (Gingerich and Medina, 2013). However, there have been few empirical tests of these theories' predictions of how brokers and parties deploy turnout buying and turnout suppression. We test the implications of this theory in a country where the vast majority of the voters believe that their votes are secret.

We argue that when ballot secrecy is high, party agents should invest in influencing the turnout of people whose vote choices they can easily predict rather than the vote choice of swing voters. If agents cannot monitor the choice made in the ballot box, influencing swing voters has a lower expected payoff compared to influencing core voters. In such cases, swing voters can renege on their contracts with brokers without consequences. By contrast, providing inducements to core voters who have no interest in voting for the agent's opponent means that agents only have to monitor whether or not the respective voter has turned up at the polling station.

In addition to disaggregating clientelism into strategies that aim to influence either the choice of which party to vote for, or the choice of whether or not to turn out, we disaggregate clientelistic strategies into those based on positive or negative inducements. Positive inducements involve promises of new benefits, while negative inducements involve threats to make the voter worse than their status quo or expected future state. Negative inducements can involve both physical threats, and threats to cut voters off from expected future economic benefits. The latter are more prevalent in Hungary and are thus the main focus of this paper.

Second, we argue that the timing and duration of the economic benefits that are used in clientelistic transactions in this context create a "core voter's curse." When access to ongoing

entitlements such as welfare transfers, land, jobs, or forbearance in the prosecution of illegal economic activities are used to influence voters, recipients should be influenced on election day not with promises of additional benefits but rather threats that they will be punished by being cut off from the benefits on which they already rely. Thus, such contingent entitlements are a double-edged sword, as the voters who receive them are more vulnerable to election-day threats.

Our empirical evidence comes from a survey of 1,800 citizens in nearly 100 rural Hungarian communities that we conducted immediately after the April 2014 election. We sampled localities with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants from three rural counties in Hungary. We assess the incidence of various clientelistic strategies using list experiments, a survey method that enables respondents to report sensitive information without incriminating themselves or others and thus can reduce bias in the measurement of sensitive political phenomena (Corstange, 2009; Imai, 2011; Glynn, 2013). We document the existence of various non-programmatic strategies by which politicians and brokers acting on their behalf attempted to influence voters. These include evidence of pressure by mayors to restrict access to welfare-for-work programs for voters who made incorrect political choices, threats of money lenders directed towards their debtors that they will be charged higher interest rates, and evidence of administrative favors promised by employees of the local city hall. Furthermore, we draw in original qualitative evidence from several months of interview and observation in 12 localities to validate the findings of the quantitative survey and illustrate how clientelism works when the ballot is secret.

We find that in this context where voters believe that their vote choices cannot be monitored, candidates and their agents are more likely to target core supporters with negative electoral strategies. Positive inducements around the time of the election, however, are much less targeted based on the strength of party identification. These results are robust to multiple codings of the strength of party identification, including one that is predicted based on voters' ideological positions on several key issues that is very unlikely to be influenced by the past receipt of benefits. Thus, the evidence is partially supportive of our prediction that brokers in this context with high ballot secrecy should try to influence the turnout behavior of people whose vote choices they can easily predict rather than

vote choices, which are much harder to monitor.

This variation across positive and negative strategies seems to be driven by the fact that election-day clientelistic transactions are carried out in a context of preexisting politicized entitlements. We conduct three additional tests in order to assess the plausibility of this interpretation and rule out alternative interpretations such as abstention buying. First, we find that core supporters are more likely to receive access to informal credit and welfare, most likely during the period before the election, and that voters who do receive such transfers are in turn more likely to experience election-time threats of economic sanctions. Second, we find that copartisanship with the mayor is strongly predictive of clientelistic threats, suggesting that such inducements are targeted on core supporters to increase their turnout rather than those who are strongly opposed to reduce it.

These findings are important for several reasons. First, because people are generally loss averse, such threats may be more powerful in motivating voters to change their behavior than a positive offer worth the same amount. Second, given that a number of countries with high levels of electoral clientelism are scaling up social policy programs like cash transfers or social security, this theory sheds light on how such programs may be politicized. The threat of economic sanctions related to entitlements may become an increasingly important form of clientelism going forward. Finally, they add significant nuance to our existing view of the targeting of benefits, suggesting both that the form of the benefits, particularly whether it is an ongoing entitlement or a one-off transfer, is important in understanding how it is targeted and how it affects voters. In addition, these results suggest that targeting may vary across different forms of inducements, in effect creating a more sophisticated system of hedging across strategies or creating tiers of benefits than previous theory has recognized.

## **1 Non-programmatic electoral strategies**

The study of electoral clientelism is an area of research that has experienced spectacular growth in recent years. This new literature has advanced significantly our understanding of electoral

practices both in countries that have experienced recent democratic transitions, but also in relatively established democracies. Clientelistic exchanges have been documented in a variety of settings, ranging from Argentina, Bulgaria, Mexico, Guatemala, Brazil, Philippines, Paraguay, Romania, Benin and India (Wantchekon, 2003; Diaz-Cayeros, Estévez and Magaloni, 2012; Finan and Schechter, 2012; Stokes et al., 2013).

The literature has proposed important conceptual distinctions, differentiating clientelism from other non-programmatic strategies and distinguishing among different forms of clientelism. Stokes et al. (2013) define clientelism as ‘non programmatic distribution combined with conditionality’, distinguishing from other forms of programmatic and non-programmatic distribution. In the typology proposed by Stokes, clientelism differs from patronage, and also from pork-barrel politics or non-conditional benefits (Stokes et al., 2013). Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) proposed a classification of various clientelistic strategies that are differentiated based on which type of brokers are deployed by politicians and which types of goods they offer to voters. Similarly, Gans-Morse, Mazzuca and Nichter (2014) developed a formal model that distinguishes among different types of clientelistic strategies, depending primarily on whether they aim to influence vote choice or turnout. The strategies that they identify include ‘double persuasion’ (influencing both vote choice and turnout), ‘turnout buying’, ‘abstention buying’, ‘rewarding loyalists’ and ‘vote buying’.

Most studies acknowledge that clientelism is a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses a wide range of strategies by which actors seek to influence the choices of voters. Regretfully, however, most empirical examinations of clientelistic exchanges focus only on vote buying and ignore other types of non-programmatic strategies. In a highly influential study of clientelism in Argentina, Brusco, Nazareno and Stokes study the “proffering to voters of cash or more commonly minor consumption goods by parties in exchange for the recipients’ vote” (Brusco, Nazareno and Stokes, 2004, 67). Drawing on the same survey, Stokes assesses clientelism through offers of “food, building materials, mattresses and clothing” (Stokes, 2005, 321). In their study of electoral clientelism in Nicaragua, Gonzalez-Ocantos et al. (2012) examine the offer of gifts or favors by politicians. Similarly, Finan and Schechter (2012) measure clientelism as an offer of “money, food,

payment of utility bills, medicines, and/or other goods” during the run-up to the 2006 elections in Paraguay.

Measuring clientelism only as offers of money, goods or food is problematic for a variety of reasons. First, the menu of positive inducements is much broader and it often includes goods and administrative favors provided by the state (Oliveros, *forthcoming*; Mares and Petrova, 2013). In recent years, a number of new studies have attempted to assess the magnitude of these administrative favors provided by the state and whether voters respond differently to state-provided clientelism or to offers of goods and food (vote buying) (Murillo and Calvo, 2014). Recent empirical studies that seek assess the relative incidence of these two forms of positive inducements—vote buying and the provision of administrative favors by the state—using survey techniques to measure sensitive behavior have largely found that administrative favors by the state outweigh in magnitude the importance of vote-buying (Murillo and Calvo, 2014; Mares and Petrova, 2013). As such, an empirical assessment of clientelism on the basis of vote buying alone is likely to result in biased estimates of the magnitude of this phenomenon.

Furthermore, the existence of ongoing transfers or entitlements to policy benefits create different opportunities for party candidates and agents to employ coercion around the time of the election. In various settings, entitlements to land (Boone, 2011), employment (Baland and Robinson, 2008), and welfare benefits (Mares and Petrova, 2013) are used to pressure voters at the time of elections. Such threats to take away an ongoing benefit from the state or another institution that makes up a significant proportion of a citizen’s livelihood are coercive. This distinction between one-off vote buying and long-term clientelist relationships is important as it creates different opportunities for positive and negative inducements during an election.

More generally, we define electoral coercion as strategies that involve threats of the post-electoral punishment of voters for their choices of whether or not to turn out or how to vote. Such punishments can be carried out by a variety of brokers, which include employees of the state or actors with sizable economic resources who can exert influence over the choices made by voters. Consider some examples of coercive electoral strategies that have been identified in

existing scholarship. One such threat of post-electoral punishment invoked by state employees is the threat to cut access to social policy benefits (such as unemployment benefits, social assistance or welfare-to-work programs) to voters that have made the incorrect political choice. Alternatively, state employees may threaten likely voters to prosecute them post-electorally for their failure to comply with existing laws or administrative regulations, such as non-compliance with tax payments if they make the incorrect political choice. Alternatively, economic actors such as employers can threaten their employees with layoffs, reductions in wages or the worsening of their employment conditions (Mares, Muntean and Petrova, 2014; Mares, 2015). In addition to these pecuniary threats, parties can also use the threat of physical violence to mobilize votes. Straus and Taylor (2012) estimate that one in five elections in Africa since 1990 has been afflicted by serious levels of violence. Yet, with few exceptions this type of coercion has not been studied in conjunction with clientelism as part of a menu of strategies that politicians can use (Schedler, 2002; Robinson and Torvik, 2009; Collier and Vicente, 2012).

By considering the deployment of both positive and negative inducements, we can examine a number of questions that have been insufficiently addressed in the existing literature on clientelism. First, we seek to understand politicians' decisions to allocate both positive inducements (vote buying, favors) and coercive strategies. Are these strategies complements or substitutes? Given budget constraints and limits to the supply of different types of brokers, how do politicians and brokers allocate these different clientelistic strategies? Which voters are targeted with positive inducements and coercive strategies? The following section formulates our hypotheses about the incidence of these strategies.

## **2 Theoretical implications**

### **2.1 Which voters are targeted?**

We focus first on how brokers should target inducements and threats based on how well they can monitor voters' behavior in the ballot box. Consistent with a large existing literature, we define

core voters as voters that feel closer to the ideological position of a political party. By contrast, swing voters lack ideological attachment for any party. In our empirical analysis, we will measure ideological attachment on a four-point scale ranging from no affiliation to any party to feeling very close to a party. We argue that the differentiation between ‘core’ and ‘swing’ voters takes place prior to the elections and is thus exogenous to our analysis of election-time targeting.

When the ballot is secret, strategies that aim to influence the vote choice of opposed or unaffiliated voters will be less effective because vote choice cannot easily be monitored. While there are ways to get around the secret ballot, stronger ballot secrecy measures greatly increase the cost of monitoring. For example, in Hungary a number of our interviewees mentioned ‘chain voting’, in which brokers organize groups of voters to prove that they voted for a certain party on a stolen ballot and then bring their new ballot out of the voting booth for the next voter. This is a highly involved, and relatively easy to prosecute, process as compared to monitoring of voting procedures that do not involve the Australian ballot. As a result, the probability that a swing voter will renege is increasing in the level of ballot secrecy, which makes offering inducements to swing voters is a riskier investment for the candidate when ballot secrecy is high (Cox and Kousser, 1981; Gans-Morse, Mazzuca and Nichter, 2014).

Turnout, however, is generally quite easy to monitor. Brokers simply need to position someone who is familiar with the voters around polling places in order to watch who turns up, or can even use public records of voting behavior. As a result, inducements that aim to influence turnout, including attempts to make the known supporters of one’s opponent abstain and encouraging one’s own sure supporters to turn out, are still effective when the actual vote choice is secret.

Thus, our first prediction is that in this case, where the vast majority of voters believe that their votes cannot be monitored, agents should be more likely to direct clientelistic campaign strategies towards core voters. Inducements may either be targeted on strong supporters the brokers’ preferred party to increase their turnout, or on strong supporters of the broker’s opponent to reduce their turnout. In practice, however, we suspect that turnout buying will be more common than abstention buying for several reasons. First, core supporters of the broker’s own party are likely to be easier

to identify and reach because they are embedded in partisan networks (Calvo and Murillo, 2012). Second, supporters of the broker's own party are likely to be dissatisfied with the party if it showers inducements on people outside of the party. This could cause the party to lose some of its existing support, and thus be costly over the longer-run. Finally, turnout buying may be more normatively acceptable to voters than abstention buying, because it is generally seen as a good thing to vote. For all of these reasons, we expect to see more inducements being directed towards the party's own core supporters rather than those of their opponent.

## 2.2 Differentiating positive and coercive inducements

Our second set of predictions differentiates between positive and negative strategies. This prediction primarily stems from our view that the interactions between partisan brokers and voters are not just one-shot events, but an ongoing process that precedes elections. In their seminal paper on political clientelism, Dixit and Londregan (1996) argue that "tactical redistribution is an ongoing process." Similarly, Scott (1969) and Levitsky (2003) discuss the process of formation of clientelistic loyalties during long-term political interactions that precede elections. The history of these prior interactions affects, however, the payoffs and strategic choices available to politicians, brokers and voters at the time of elections. To understand the deployment of positive and negative inducements during elections, we need to place the political activities that occur during elections in this more extended temporal perspective.

Prior to electoral campaigns, politicians attempt to forge and deepen partisan loyalties through a combination of programmatic and non-programmatic strategies. On the one hand, candidates position themselves in the ideological space and differentiate their partisan brand from that of their competitors. In addition to these programmatic strategies, politicians seek to appeal to voters by deploying a variety of economic and administrative resources that are available in the respective locality. One such resource that is widely used for the pre-electoral formation of 'political clients' are the policies of the state. Many policies or programs—even those intended to provide universal benefits—can be politicized and turned into a source of political dependency. If local level bureaucrats

who are administering the respective policy are co-opted in different partisan networks, they can make benefits conditional on political loyalty.

These relationships shape the availability of strategies during the period of the campaign. At this time, politicians deploy a variety of agents to appeal to voters. Agents can be partisan brokers, employees in the local administration or other actors that control important economic resources and who can exercise some leverage over voters.<sup>1</sup> At the time of elections, agents can choose among two broad types of strategies. Positive inducements involve offers of money, goods, food or other transfers that bring about an increase in the future utility of voters. Negative inducements, by contrast, involve the use of coercion, threats and political blackmail, or generally threats to take away utility that voters expect to receive in the future. Such strategies usually involve a threat of post-electoral reprisal for voters that do not act according to the preferences of the broker.

Drawing a sharp line between inducements and coercion is sometimes difficult because it depends on voters' expectations about what they are entitled to receive. Some of the existing studies have in fact analyzed threats to withhold pre-existing benefits to voters in retaliation for their voting behavior as examples of conditional inducements. However, most would agree, for instance, that threatening to remove voters from their land because of how they have voted constitutes an example of a coercive strategy (Boone and Kriger, 2010). We contend that threats to cut off future income streams that are important to voters' welfare should also be analyzed as coercion. This assertion is in line with an abundance of evidence from behavioral economics on loss aversion and endowment effect, which shows that individuals suffer outsized negative shocks to their utility when they lose something that they anticipated or owned (Kahneman, Knetsch and Thaler, 1990, 1991). It is also in line with how voters perceive such strategies: if voters are told that they will lose unemployment benefits if they vote for the opposition, they perceive it as a threat. This higher attention to coercive strategies, which differentiates our study from existing studies on electoral clientelism, allows us to study the political importance of this strategy is sustaining partisan loyalties.

In short, we expect that targeting of inducements occurs in a two-stage process. In the first

---

<sup>1</sup>We assume here that the potential agency gaps between politicians and brokers are not the determining factor in targeting, which implies that the latter will to a large extent implement the strategy that is desired by the politician.

stage, which occurs prior to the election period, partisan brokers distribute access to politicized entitlements. In the case of the poor localities that we study in Hungary, the most important politicized entitlements involve the welfare work program, and informal credit. In the case of the welfare work program, mayors have a high degree of discretion over who gets off and on the welfare rolls. In the case of access to credit, illegal lenders often rely on political allies such as party agents, politicians, and most importantly mayors in order to avoid police harassment or prosecution. As a result, they can be incentivized to act as brokers during elections. During the period before the election campaigns begin, these agents can politicize access to these benefits by favoring the type of voters that they want to influence. As argued in the previous section, in a context of high ballot secrecy, these benefits should go primarily to core supporters.

In the second stage, brokers allocate election-time mobilization strategies conditional on the distribution of existing benefits. In this stage targeting of positive and negative election-time inducements depends on the form of the benefits that have already been allocated. If those benefits are entitlements, meaning access to benefits that are expected to continue, voters who have received them will be more vulnerable to negative forms of clientelism based on threats to take away expected future access. In our case, this could involve threats to cut someone from the welfare roll, or to worsen the terms of an existing or future loan. By contrast, past receipt of one-off benefits should not make voters any more or less likely to experience election-time threats.

To summarize, the main predictions that we take to the data in the following sections are the following:

1. In a context of ballot secrecy, voters who are ideologically closer to a political party should be targeted with clientelistic inducements.
2. Voters who receive access to entitlements during the pre-election period should be targeted with threats of economic sanctions during the election campaign.

### **3 Empirical strategy: Measuring illicit behavior**

It is difficult to assess electoral practices such as vote buying or coercion empirically using traditional survey methods. While voters may have experienced some of these illicit political strategies, they may be reluctant to admit these experiences because of social desirability bias or fear of retaliation or prosecution. One research strategy that has been increasingly used by scholars of clientelism in recent years is the list experiment. First developed to elicit unbiased answers about sensitive political attitudes such as racism or anti-Semitism (Gilens, Sniderman and Kuklinski, 1998), this strategy has become a very powerful tool to study the incidence of electoral fraud or other political irregularities (Gingerich, 2010; Gonzalez-Ocantos et al., 2012).

In list experiments, respondents are presented with a list of items and asked how many (as opposed to which) items are true. To capture the incidence of the sensitive behavior, respondents are randomly divided in two groups. Respondents that are assigned to the control group are asked about a list of three non-sensitive items. By contrast, respondents in the treatment group are presented the same list of non-sensitive items and an additional item that includes the belief or behavior of interest. The difference in the mean number of items chosen by respondents in the treatment and control group represents the incidence of the sensitive behavior in the population.

To identify the menu of possible electoral irregularities that were deployed in Hungary, we began by conducting interviews with members of non-governmental organizations, former politicians and election observers, human rights activists, and voters. This qualitative research provided us with preliminary evidence about day-to-day electoral practices in the Hungarian countryside. Our interviews revealed evidence of systematic violation of electoral rights. Our qualitative interviews suggested evidence of both positive and negative inducements. Respondents reported offers of free food (sausages), drinks and other small goods by representatives of parties who were campaigning in their villages. At the same time, respondents reported that mayors' men and other representatives of the local administration monitored their presence at electoral events organized by the opposition. Our respondents reported threats of local officials that participants in rallies of the opposition would lose their unemployment benefits. In small and economically depressed localities, unemployment

benefits are the only viable source of income for many families. Finally, additional interviews reported that in many small Hungarian localities, politicians relied on moneylenders who threatened to punish indebted voters by worsening the terms of their loans if voters supported the undesired candidate.

We designed the survey instruments that attempted to measure these various electoral irregularities in consultation with experts on electoral politics and with experts of marginalized ethnic minorities. We then pretested both the instruments for the sensitive behavior and the control items that were included in our list in a number of surveys among Hungarian voters. The pretest aimed to identify lists of control items that would provide respondents with plausible deniability on the sensitive item. If respondents experience either none or all of the items on the control list, they will have to actually reveal their agreement to the sensitive item, resulting in floor and ceiling effects, respectively. In addition, control lists that result in an average response tightly centered at one reduce noise in the measurement of the sensitive item, a key concern with this statistically inefficient strategy (Glynn, 2013). We selected low-prevalence items that were chosen by less than 15% of the respondents and high prevalence-items that were chosen by more than 50% of the respondents but that were strongly negatively correlated ( $r > -0.7$ ). Consider the following example of a list included in our survey.

I am going to read some statements of events that happened or could have happened during the elections. Please recall the elections of 6 April, 2014, and tell me how many of these events happened in your locality. You do not need to tell which ones happened exactly, only how many.

- (*High prevalence 1*) People went to vote at different times of the day.
- (*Low prevalence*) The election commission could not provide a vote to everybody.
- (*High prevalence 2*) Rushing to vote was first thing for people to do in the morning.

Our lists included treatments to measure five different types of clientelistic strategies that we had identified as being salient in Hungary using qualitative interviews and pilot surveys. One of these strategies attempted to measure either pressure or a positive inducements offered to voters with the intention to prevent them from voting. The remaining four strategies included positive and negative pressures on voters. Below is the list of items that attempted to measure these irregularities.

- *(Negative)* I was worried that a family member would be dropped from the public works program if I voted wrong.
- *(Negative)* I was worried that I would owe more to my creditor if I voted badly.
- *(Positive)* I was offered a gift, drink, or food in return for my vote.
- *(Positive)* I was expecting a favor from the mayor's men if I voted well.
- *(Abstention buying)* Someone offered me something or tried to convince me not to vote.

In the main analysis going forward, we focus on the four electoral strategies that can be identified as positive or negative inducements: welfare pressure, lender pressure, vote buying, and mayor favors.

The list experiment was administered by a survey company in May 2014 through face-to-face interviews in 100 villages in three Hungarian counties. Our full sample included more than 1,800 respondents. In each locality, the enumerator chose a central starting location and then randomly selected a direction in which to walk, selecting every  $n$ th household along that walk for the survey. Within each household, the enumerator selected the respondent with the birthday closest to the date of the survey to participate in the survey. The implementation of the list experiment Table 1 shows summary statistics and balance for the two versions of the survey. Version A included the treatment versions of the list experiments on lender pressure and welfare pressure (and control for vote buying and mayor favor), while Version B included the treatment versions of the list experiments on vote buying and mayor favor (and control for lender pressure and welfare pressure).

[Table 1 about here.]

The average age of our respondents is 53 years old, with 62% of our sample made up of women.

30% of our sample receives welfare benefits and 36% is in debt. We measure income with a three category variable indicating whether the respondent's monthly household income is less than 50 thousand forints (approximately 200 USD), 50-100 thousand forints, or more than 100 thousand forints. Approximately half of our sample is in the highest income category, with another third in the middle bracket and 6% in the lowest.

Importantly for this study, a very large number of voters in our sample believe that their vote is secret. 96% of respondents believe in the secrecy of the ballot. We measure the strength of party affiliation on a four point scale from 0 to 3, where 0 represents no party affiliation, 1 means that the respondent feels "not very close" to a party, 2 represents feeling "close" to a party, and 3 represents feeling "very close" to a party. 21% of respondents feel very close to a party, 25% close, 9% not very close, and 18% unaffiliated. 26% did not respond to this question. Approximately 50% of respondents who replied to the question about whether they feel close to any party are supporters of the ruling party Fidesz. Last, we asked respondents where they stand on a series of three policy issues that are salient in Hungarian politics around the role of the welfare state, and treatment of Roma.<sup>2</sup> We combined these into an index of political beliefs ranging from left to right.

It is important to note that two questions in our survey had high levels of non-response: the respondents' preferred political party and their household income. Because of this non-response, most of our main analyses are done with between 1200 and 1350 respondents rather than 1800. However, in Appendix D we show that the patterns are similar if we use categorical codings of the variables that do not drop people who did not answer either of these sensitive questions.

We selected a stratified sample of communities with fewer than 10,000 people in three Hungarian counties: Baranya, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén and Heves. Ultimately, 35% of our respondents live in Heves, 36% in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, and 29% in Baranya.

We use a method developed by Blair and Imai (2012) to test the validity of our list experiments. Specifically, we test whether the inclusion of the sensitive item changes the responses to the control items in the list. Intuitively, this test assesses whether responses after the addition of the treatment

---

<sup>2</sup>We also asked about crime, but dropped this from the index because it was not related to partisanship.

item are larger than responses to the control lists, but by at most one. If either of those conditions is violated, then design effects may drive the difference between treatment and control responses.

We use the standard suggested by Blair and Imai (2012) of setting a rejection criteria of  $\alpha = 0.05$  in a two-sided test. Because our measured prevalence of the sensitive items is small, the power of the test to pick up negative design effects is quite high. We fail to reject the null hypothesis in the tests for design effects for all of our four list experiments. The p-values in each test are 1 for the mayor favor list, 1 for the vote buying list, 0.15 in the welfare pressure list, and 0.07 in the lender pressure list.

The mean responses to the control versions of all four lists are close to 1, which increases the precision of the lists (Glynn, 2013). The means of the control versions of the list vary between 1 and 1.11, with standard deviations of between 0.38 and 0.42. Thus, the ability of the lists to pick up precise estimates of exposure to the sensitive item is high. Furthermore, the risk of floor and ceiling effects is low, as very small percentages of respondents who received the control list experienced either zero or three of the control items: less than 1% of respondents in all four control lists experienced 3 control items, and 2-9% experienced none.

## **4 Results: Election-time targeting of clientelism**

### **4.1 How prevalent is clientelism?**

How pervasive were various electoral irregularities during the April 2014 elections in Hungary? We begin by presenting descriptive information on the magnitude of the various electoral irregularities in Hungary. Figure 1 displays these results. The points represent the estimated prevalence of the sensitive items on the list; the bars represent 90 and 95% confidence intervals.

[Figure 1 about here.]

The results displayed in Figure 1 document the existence of all four forms of electoral irregularities during the 2014 Hungarian election. For all four types of electoral irregularities, the difference

between the control and the treatment group is significant, indicating that the likelihood that such strategies did not exist during the 2014 election is less than 5% based on a two-sided t-test. The relative incidence of these irregularities varies between 5 percent in the case of mayor favors and 7 percent in the case of vote buying.

## 4.2 Who is targeted with inducements during elections?

Next we examine whether closeness to party is related to the prevalence of election-time clientelistic strategies. Although we cannot identify the causal effect of being a core supporter on the probability of experiencing illicit electoral strategies, this analysis aims to test whether the correlation between closeness to party and illicit strategies is driven by correlations with other observed characteristics of our respondents. We use a linear estimator based on interactions of the list treatment variables and individual-level characteristics in the list package by [Blair and Imai \(2012\)](#) to estimate the relationship between individual-level covariates and the outcomes measured with our list experiments.<sup>3</sup>

Table 2 shows the results of our estimates of the relationship between closeness to a party and exposure to positive and negative illicit electoral strategies. For each positive and negative strategy, we ran two specifications: first, we estimate the bivariate relationship between closeness to party and our composite measure of positive and negative illicit strategies. Second, we add controls including a dummy for being a Roma, age, gender, and household income. All continuous controls as well as our measure of closeness to party are standardized. Table 2 presents the results of this analysis. The results in the top half of the table present the estimated relationship between each independent variable and the sensitive item, while the bottom half shows the results on the control items on the list.

[Table 2 about here.]

The results in Table 2 show that core supporters are significantly more likely to experience

---

<sup>3</sup>Although [Imai \(2011\)](#) shows that a maximum likelihood estimator based on the expectation-maximization algorithm is more efficient than a model based on linear regression, the estimator failed to converge on the majority of our models.

negative electoral strategies, particularly pressure by informal lenders. A one standard deviation increase in closeness to party is associated with a 4.4 percentage point increase in the likelihood of experiencing welfare pressure (Column 6), and a 6.3 percentage point increase in the likelihood of experiencing lender pressure (Column 8). Positive strategies, however, are not significantly related to strength of party affiliation, although there is a positive relationship between closeness to party and exposure to vote buying offers that is robust to the inclusion of controls (Column 2).

None of the controls are consistently distinguishable from zero. Generally, these results suggest that positive inducements to voters are not carefully targeted based on basic observable characteristics of voters other than the strength of their party affiliations. The bottom half of the table shows that there are significant relationships between the control items on the lists and closeness to party. This is likely because people who feel close to a political party are more interested and involved in the campaigns and thus more likely to be aware of the events around the election campaigns that made up our control lists.

It is important to note that these analyses are based on correlations rather than exogenous variation in the key independent variable. Furthermore, because our dependent variables are measured with list experiments, there is a considerable amount of noise in the data that undercuts the power to find significant effects. Nevertheless, the fact that the estimated coefficients in Columns 5-8 actually increase with the inclusion of the most plausible omitted variables as controls and are similar to the bivariate relationships increases confidence that the coefficients on closeness to party are not biased by omitted variables.

One concern in this analysis is that closeness to party may be driven by the past receipt of clientelistic benefits. Because we propose that closeness to party drives variation in the clientelistic strategies that voters experience, this would introduce bias due to reverse causation. We follow much of the literature on clientelism in viewing closeness to party as a function of ideology-driven policy preferences. To assess whether our results are driven by reverse causation, we use a strategy similar to an instrumental variable in which we isolate the portion of the variation in closeness to party that is driven by ideology. Specifically, we create a predicted value of closeness to party for

each respondent based on how they answer three questions on political ideology regarding welfare and minority rights. These questions strongly predict which party the respondents support, and in turn how close they feel to that party. When we substitute our survey measure of closeness to party with a predicted measure based only on this left-right ideological variable, the results are largely unchanged. Specifically, the coefficient on predicted closeness to party is very similar in magnitude and remains significant at the 1% level. The coefficient in the analysis of welfare pressure is less robust, but still similar in magnitude to that in Columns 5-6 of Table 2. The coefficients on closeness to party in the analyses of positive forms of inducements (vote buying and mayor favors) remain close to zero and statistically insignificant. As a secondary robustness check, we also use a binary measure of closeness to party, and show similar results in terms of the robustness of the relationship between closeness to party and clientelism. The full analysis is presented in Appendix A.

### **4.3 Why are core supporters targeted with negative inducements?**

So far we have shown that voters who are ideologically close to a political party are more likely to experience negative forms of clientelism during the 2014 election. In this section, we test for several additional relationships that can give us insight into why this pattern might occur. We proposed that when voters believe that their ballots are secret, parties should target their own core supporters in order to influence their turnout. One explanation for why that relationship only may be present for negative inducements could be that the most important election-time clientelistic transactions take place in a context of preexisting politicized entitlements. Specifically, if core supporters are more likely to get access to entitlements like debt and welfare during the pre-election period, then they should be more vulnerable to negative inducements based on threats to be cut off from those entitlements at the time of the election. By contrast, smaller, one-off positive inducements may be less rigorously targeted. This explanation also implies that negative inducements should be used for turnout buying of core supporters rather than abstention buying of strong opponents (i.e., core supporters of the party's opponents). While in many cases we lack the empirical leverage to perfectly answer these questions, in this section we use the evidence at hand to shed some light on

the mechanisms that may be driving the observed patterns of targeting.

### **4.3.1 Entitlements and electoral coercion**

We begin by testing whether election-time negative inducements are related to the receipt of entitlements. If core supporters are more likely to experience negative forms of clientelism during elections because they are more likely to benefit from politicized entitlements, then we should see two patterns in the data. First, core supporters should be more likely to have access to entitlements. Second, voters who receive entitlements should be more likely to experience election-time negative inducements.

As in the previous specification, we use a linear estimator from the list package developed by [Blair and Imai \(2012\)](#). We estimate the relationship between receiving welfare benefits or credit and experiencing positive and negative forms of clientelism in four separate specifications: first, a specification with no controls using our composite measures of positive or negative strategies. Second, we present a specification with the composite measures and controls, including age, a dummy for being a Roma, a dummy for being female, income, and strength of party affiliation. In the third and fourth specifications, we estimate the relationship between entitlements and exposure to individual positive and negative strategies.

One caveat should be kept in mind in interpreting the results presented in this section. All of our data comes from a survey conducted in the 4-5 weeks after the April 2014 Hungarian election, and the questions about welfare and credit were asked in the present tense. Thus, while the ideal test of this implication would look at whether pre-election access to welfare and credit are related to election-time inducements, we cannot rule out that these entitlements were in fact granted after the election. We think this is unlikely given that welfare jobs in particular are typically given out at fixed points during the year, and anecdotal evidence suggests that people access credit pretty infrequently. This suggests that it is unlikely that we would see large shifts in access to both of these entitlements during the weeks immediately after the election. However, we still cannot rule this out with our data.

[Table 3 about here.]

Table 3 shows that people who are ideologically closer to a political party are more likely to have access to credit and welfare immediately after the election. A one standard deviation increase in closeness to party is associated with a 7 percentage point increase in the likelihood of having access to credit (Column 2), and a 1.2 percentage point increase in the likelihood of receiving welfare (Column 4). The results on welfare, however, are not statistically distinguishable from zero in the specifications that include controls. In the specification using an index of access to entitlements that can take the value of 0 (neither welfare nor credit), 1 (either welfare or credit), or 2 (both welfare and credit), a one standard deviation increase in closeness to party is associated with a 0.084 unit increase in the index (Column 6). Table 3 in Appendix A shows that these results are even stronger using the version of closeness to party that is predicted from the respondent's policy preferences. Taken together, these results suggest that entitlements are strongly related to how ideologically aligned voters are with a political party.

Next, we assess the extent to which receiving such benefits is associated with increases in the likelihood of experiencing election-time clientelistic strategies. If the observed entitlements are distributed before the election, and if receiving these entitlements makes voters more vulnerable to election-time coercion, then we should see that people who receive entitlements are more likely to experience negative inducements during the election.

[Table 4 about here.]

Table 4 shows somewhat mixed results for our prediction that people who receive access to entitlements would be more likely to experience threats to be cut from those inducements at election time. There is a positive relationship between higher access to entitlements and all election-time inducements, and this relationship is statistically significant in the specifications with mayor favors and welfare pressure as the outcome variables. Respondents who are one unit higher on the entitlements index are 7.6 percentage points more likely to experience welfare pressure around the election (Column 6), and 5.4 percentage points more likely to receive an offer of a favor from

the mayor's office (Column 4). The patterns are similar, although less statistically significant, in specifications that test separately for the effect of credit and welfare, and also confirm that the receipt of past welfare benefits alone has a strong relationship with the likelihood of experiencing welfare pressure ( $\beta = 0.08$ , significant at the 10% level) and receiving credit has a positive (though statistically insignificant) relationship with lender pressure ( $\beta = 0.048$ ). These are presented in Table 4 in the appendices. It may be that receiving welfare makes people easier for the mayor's men to offer favors to because they are often around city hall, although we are reluctant to over-interpret this finding given that it is not very robust.

It is important to note that these are not causal estimates of the effect of receiving welfare or credit on exposure to clientelism. It is possible that some omitted characteristic that is correlated with both clientelism and ability or desire to access welfare and credit is biasing our results. For instance, people who are less skilled or more social could be more likely to be politically active and to get credit and welfare. We control for some demographic characteristics, but the coefficients should be interpreted with this important caveat in mind. However, the fact that vote buying is not correlated with receiving credit or welfare suggests that these variables are not simply measuring economic deprivation.

#### **4.3.2 Are parties engaging in turnout or abstention buying?**

Finally, we test whether patterns in the data are consistent with turnout buying (the use of inducements to increase the probability that people who prefer you party turn out) or abstention buying (the use of inducements to reduce the probability that people who prefer your opponent turn out). Our data, in part because of the complexity of the list experiments measuring our key outcomes, does not ask respondents to report illicit strategies of specific political parties. Therefore, our main results cannot distinguish between turnout buying and abstention buying.

Our interpretation of the data up to this point has been that parties selectively give entitlements to ongoing benefits to voters with whom they are ideologically aligned, and then threaten those voters at the time of the election with the threat of economic sanctions to ensure that they turn out.

The alternative explanation is that parties give entitlements to voters who are strong supporters of their opponents, and then threaten them with economic sanctions to ensure that they don't turn out on election day. While this alternative explanation is somewhat implausible, in this section we use copartisanship between voters and their mayors to assess whether the evidence is more in line with turnout buying or abstention buying in this case.

If parties are using election-time negative inducements to buy the turnout of their core supporters, and if mayors are central figures in the distribution of clientelism, we should expect to see that people who are ideologically aligned with their mayors are more likely to experience election-time inducements. On the other hand, if mayors are engaging in abstention buying on behalf of their political parties, then we should see that non-copartisans of the mayor are targeted with inducements. In our data, we have 302 voters who identify with the same party as their mayors at the time of the 2014 election. The vast majority of these (292) identify with Fidesz, while 10 feel close to the socialist party MSZP.<sup>4</sup>

[Table 5 about here.]

The results presented in Table 5 are strongly in line with a pattern of turnout buying, and not in line with abstention buying. Voters who are copartisans of their mayors are between 13.6 (Column 6) and 16.7 (Column 8) percentage points more likely to experience welfare pressure and lender pressure during the election, respectively. On the other hand, there is a negative relationship (though statistically insignificant or only weakly significant) between being a copartisan of the mayor and experiencing positive inducements. These results are in line with a strategy by which mayors offer less valuable inducements such as one-off payments or small favors to a broad range of voters, and then give valuable long-term entitlements and, by extension, the threat of being cut off from those benefits, to their core supporters.

---

<sup>4</sup>There is some reason to believe that copartisanship should not matter very much. In Hungary, many mayors (and the majority in our sample) identify as independents. However, by many accounts some of these independent mayors are heavily involved in clientelism, despite their lack of formal association with a political party. During the 2014 election, they were thought to mobilize voters on behalf of the ruling party Fidesz. We take this into account by reporting the results of a second coding of copartisanship that also codes Fidesz supporters in localities with independent mayors as copartisans. We report the results in Appendix ???. The main results are consistent across both measures.

## 5 Conclusion

This paper has analyzed the incidence of electoral irregularities during the most recent parliamentary election in Hungary. While the existing literature on electoral clientelism has documented the incidence of clientelistic electoral practices in either pre-modern political settings or in developing countries, we demonstrate that electoral coercion and offers of positive inducements can also be found in economically advanced countries in Europe.

Our paper contributes theoretically and empirically to the existing literature on clientelism. We disaggregate clientelistic practices by distinguishing between positive and coercive economic strategies. In the case of positive inducements, politicians or their agents promise benefits that increase the future income stream of voters. By contrast, coercive strategies involve threats of post-electoral punishments for voters individual electoral behaviors. We predicted that in political environments characterized by high protection of voter secrecy, politicians and their agents will target core supporters with both positive and negative electoral strategies because their turnout behavior is publicly observable. Furthermore, we theorized that core supporters are particularly vulnerable to electoral coercion because of their higher propensity to receive entitlement benefits during the pre-election period. Patronage and coercion, we argue, are thus complementary electoral strategies in this context.

We test these conjectures using a survey of more than 1,800 voters in 100 Hungarian rural communities. Our findings support this explanation and document the existence of a ‘core voter’s curse’. In this context characterized by a high protection of ballot secrecy, core supporters are more likely to be targeted by brokers of the party that they support with coercive electoral strategies. Core supporters are much more likely to receive entitlements to regular transfers from political agents in the months or years before the election, which enables those agents to threaten core supporters with the loss of those entitlements during the election period. While the first result contributes to a large literature on the conditions under which politicians target core or swing voters with clientelistic strategies, the second result documents the the potential for important social policy benefits to make voters vulnerable to coercive electoral strategies in new democracies.

The patterns observed in this context are similar to those described in some late cases of machine politics in the U.S., and may be increasingly common with the expansion of social policy in countries where politics is dominated by clientelism. For example, Wolfinger notes that the expansion of the welfare state in the U.S. dramatically changed the nature of machine politics in cities like Chicago where the machines survived late into the 20th century. While in the pre-Great Society period the machines would provide one-off transfers such as “furnishing needy people with food, clothing, and other direct material assistance – those legendary Christmas turkeys, buckets of coal, summer outings, and so on,” this changed as the state began providing more assistance. However, this opened up new forms of resources for the machines’ agents to politicize. In his words, “The growth of the welfare state therefore has not diminished this need but increased it and presumably offers the machine politician new opportunities for helping citizens get what they want from the government.” Similarly, as low or middle income countries, particularly across Latin America and Africa, expand social services to provide more benefits to families with children, the elderly, students, or the poor (Mares and Carnes 2009) , these programs may open up new opportunities for clientelistic parties to manipulate access to their benefit. Indeed, if the threat of future losses is indeed a more powerful incentive than the promise of future gains, such programs may increase the mobilizing power of clientelistic parties, particularly incumbents. The fact that these effects persist even in a relatively well-off country like Hungary suggests that clientelism may persist long into the future in a number of contexts.

## References

- Baland, Jean-Marie and James A Robinson. 2008. "Land and Power: Theory and Evidence from Chile." *The American Economic Review* pp. 1737–1765.
- Blair, Graeme and Kosuke Imai. 2012. "Statistical analysis of list experiments." *Political Analysis* 20(1):47–77.
- Boone, Catherine. 2011. "Politically allocated land rights and the geography of electoral violence: The case of Kenya in the 1990s." *Comparative Political Studies* 44(10):1311–1342.
- Boone, Catherine and Norma Kriger. 2010. "Multiparty elections and land patronage: Zimbabwe and Côte d'Ivoire." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 48(2):173–202.
- Brusco, Valeria, Marcelo Nazareno and Susan Stokes. 2004. "Vote buying in Argentina." *Latin American Research Review* 39(2):66–88.
- Calvo, Ernesto and Maria Victoria Murillo. 2012. "When Parties Meet Voters Assessing Political Linkages Through Partisan Networks and Distributive Expectations in Argentina and Chile." *Comparative Political Studies* 46(7):851–882.
- Collier, Paul and Pedro C Vicente. 2012. "Violence, bribery, and fraud: the political economy of elections in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Public Choice* 153(1-2):117–147.
- Corstange, Daniel. 2009. "Sensitive questions, truthful answers? Modeling the list experiment with LISTIT." *Political Analysis* 17(1):45–63.
- Cox, Gary W and J Morgan Kousser. 1981. "Turnout and rural corruption: New York as a test case." *American Journal of Political Science* 25(4):646–663.
- Cox, Gary W and Mathew D McCubbins. 1986. "Electoral politics as a redistributive game." *Journal of Politics* 48(2):370–389.
- Diaz-Cayeros, Alberto, Federico Estévez and Beatriz Magaloni. 2012. "Strategies of vote buying: social transfers, democracy and welfare in Mexico." <http://web.stanford.edu/~magaloni/dox/2012strategiesvotebuying.pdf>.
- Dixit, Avinash and John Londregan. 1996. "The determinants of success of special interests in redistributive politics." *Journal of Politics* 58(4):1132–1155.
- Finan, Frederico and Laura Schechter. 2012. "Vote-Buying and Reciprocity." *Econometrica* 80(2):863–881.
- Gans-Morse, Jordan, Sebastian Mazzuca and Simeon Nichter. 2014. "Varieties of clientelism: Machine politics during elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(2):415–432.
- Gilens, Martin, Paul M Sniderman and James H Kuklinski. 1998. "Affirmative action and the politics of realignment." *British Journal of Political Science* 28(01):159–183.

- Gingerich, Daniel W. 2010. "Understanding off-the-books politics: Conducting inference on the determinants of sensitive behavior with randomized response surveys." *Political Analysis* 18(3):349–380.
- Gingerich, Daniel W and Luis Fernando Medina. 2013. "The endurance and eclipse of the controlled vote: a formal model of vote brokerage under the secret ballot." *Economics & Politics* 25(3):453–480.
- Glynn, Adam N. 2013. "What can we learn with statistical truth serum? Design and analysis of the list experiment." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 77(S1):159–172.
- Gonzalez-Ocantos, Ezequiel, Chad Kiewiet De Jonge, Carlos Meléndez, Javier Osorio and David W Nickerson. 2012. "Vote buying and social desirability bias: Experimental evidence from Nicaragua." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(1):202–217.
- Imai, Kosuke. 2011. "Multivariate regression analysis for the item count technique." *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 106(494):407–416.
- Kahneman, Daniel, Jack L Knetsch and Richard H Thaler. 1990. "Experimental tests of the endowment effect and the Coase theorem." *Journal of Political Economy* 98(6):1325–1348.
- Kahneman, Daniel, Jack L Knetsch and Richard H Thaler. 1991. "Anomalies: The endowment effect, loss aversion, and status quo bias." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5(1):193–206.
- Kitschelt, Herbert and Steven I Wilkinson. 2007. *Patrons, clients and policies: Patterns of democratic accountability and political competition*. Cambridge University Press.
- Levitsky, Steven. 2003. *Transforming labor-based parties in Latin America: Argentine Peronism in comparative perspective*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mares, Isabela. 2015. *From Open Secrets to Secret Voting: Democratic Electoral Reforms and Voter Autonomy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mares, Isabela, Aurelian Muntean and Tsveta Petrova. 2014. "The incidence of economic intimidation at times of elections: evidence from Romania and Bulgaria." Paper presented at the 4th Annual conference of the European Political Science Association, Edinburgh.
- Mares, Isabella and Tsveta Petrova. 2013. "Disaggregating Clientelism: Examining the Mix of Vote-Buying, Patronage and Intimidation." *Columbia University. Typescript* .
- Murillo, Maria Victoria and Ernesto Calvo. 2014. "Selecting clients and the electoral benefits or targeted distribution." Columbia University.
- Nichter, Simeon. 2008. "Vote buying or turnout buying? Machine politics and the secret ballot." *American Political Science Review* 102(1):19–31.
- Oliveros, Virginia. forthcoming. "Making it Personal: Clientelism, Favors, and the Personalization of Public Administration in Argentina." *Comparative Politics* . <https://virginiaoliveros.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/oliveros-cp-making-it-personal-final1.pdf>.

- OSCE. 2014. OSCE/ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission Hungary Parliamentary Election: Final Report. Technical report Office for democratic institutions and human rights Warsaw: . <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/hungary/121098?download=true>.
- Robinson, James A and Ragnar Torvik. 2009. "The Real Swing Voter's Curse." *American Economic Review* 99(2):310–315.
- Schedler, Andreas. 2002. "The Menu of Manipulation." *Journal of Democracy* 13(2):36–50.
- Scott, James C. 1969. "Corruption, machine politics, and political change." *American Political Science Review* 63(04):1142–1158.
- Stokes, Susan. 2005. "Perverse accountability: A formal model of machine politics with evidence from Argentina." *American Journal of Political Science* 99:315–26.
- Stokes, Susan, Thad Dunning, Marcelo Nazareno and Valeria Brusco. 2013. *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Straus, Scott and Charlie Taylor. 2012. Democratization and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1990-2008. In *Voting in Fear: Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Dorina Bekoe. pp. 15–38.
- Wantchekon, Leonard. 2003. "Clientelism and voting behavior: Evidence from a field experiment in Benin." *World Politics* 55(03):399–422.

**Tables**

Table 1: Summary statistics by survey version and tests of balance

	Version A Mean	Version B Mean	Difference	p-value
Age	52.89	53.22	0.33	0.68
Female	0.64	0.60	-0.04	0.06
Roma	0.27	0.25	-0.01	0.58
Income	2.49	2.48	-0.01	0.75
Core	1.65	1.69	0.04	0.36
Welfare	0.30	0.30	0.00	0.85
Credit	0.37	0.35	-0.02	0.47
Secret Ballot	0.95	0.97	0.01	0.19
Fidesz Supporter	0.52	0.50	-0.02	0.55
Right Ideology	-0.37	-0.37	-0.00	0.97
Voted	0.76	0.77	0.01	0.46

Table 2: Closeness to party and exposure to clientelism during the election

		<i>Dependent variable:</i>							
		Vote Buying		Mayor Favor		Welfare Pressure		Lender Pressure	
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Sensitive Item	(Intercept)	0.068*** (0.02)	0.066 (0.04)	0.054** (0.02)	0.04 (0.04)	0.083*** (0.02)	0.052 (0.04)	0.057*** (0.02)	0.031 (0.04)
	Core	0.025 (0.02)	0.025 (0.02)	0.018 (0.02)	0 (0.03)	0.023 (0.02)	0.044* (0.02)	0.053** (0.02)	0.063*** (0.02)
	Age		0.009 (0.03)		0.035 (0.03)		0.004 (0.03)		-0.006 (0.02)
	Roma		0.002 (0.07)		-0.046 (0.07)		0.012 (0.07)		0.027 (0.06)
	Female		0.013 (0.05)		0.039 (0.05)		0.051 (0.05)		0.042 (0.05)
	Income		-0.009 (0.02)		-0.035 (0.03)		0.037 (0.02)		0.015 (0.02)
	Control Items	(Intercept)	1.048*** (0.01)	1.067*** (0.03)	0.973*** (0.02)	0.971*** (0.03)	1.01*** (0.01)	1.018*** (0.02)	1.09*** (0.01)
Core		0.071*** (0.01)	0.073*** (0.02)	0.09*** (0.02)	0.1*** (0.02)	0.064*** (0.01)	0.056*** (0.01)	0.055*** (0.01)	0.043*** (0.02)
Age			-0.038** (0.02)		-0.028 (0.02)		-0.004 (0.02)		-0.002 (0.02)
Roma			-0.056 (0.04)		-0.011 (0.05)		0.014 (0.04)		0.045 (0.04)
Female			-0.009 (0.03)		0.001 (0.04)		-0.015 (0.03)		-0.016 (0.03)
Income			0.08*** (0.02)		0.092*** (0.02)		0.048*** (0.01)		0.055*** (0.01)
Observations		1357	1193	1345	1184	1346	1182	1346	1181

Standard errors in parentheses.

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

The outcome in Columns 1-2 is the response to the list containing vote buying; the outcome in Columns 3-4 is the response to the list containing mayor favors; the outcome in 5-6 is the response to the list including welfare pressure; and the outcome in 7-8 is the response to the list containing lender pressure. Core is a standardized four-category variable indicating how close the respondent feels to their preferred political party. Age is a standardized three-category measure of age. Roma and Female are dummy variables indicating whether the respondent presents as being from the Roma ethnic group and whether they are female. Both are identified by the enumerator. Income is a standardized three-category measure of income for the household.

Table 3: Closeness to party and access to entitlements

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Credit		Welfare		Entitlements Index	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Core	0.094*** (0.013)	0.070*** (0.013)	0.026** (0.012)	0.012 (0.012)	0.121*** (0.019)	0.084*** (0.018)
Age		-0.100*** (0.014)		-0.147*** (0.012)		-0.247*** (0.019)
Roma		0.172*** (0.032)		0.153*** (0.029)		0.321*** (0.044)
Female		-0.037 (0.027)		0.006 (0.024)		-0.029 (0.037)
Income		0.013 (0.013)		-0.106*** (0.012)		-0.093*** (0.018)
(Intercept)	0.381*** (0.013)	0.362*** (0.023)	0.287*** (0.012)	0.259*** (0.021)	0.665*** (0.019)	0.618*** (0.032)
Observations	1,367	1,199	1,354	1,188	1,353	1,187
R <sup>2</sup>	0.038	0.127	0.003	0.241	0.030	0.270

Standard errors in parentheses.

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

The outcome in Columns 1-2 is a dummy variable that takes a value of 1 if the respondent reports currently having access to credit; the outcome in Columns 3-4 is a dummy variable that takes a value of 1 if the respondent reports that someone in their family is currently receiving welfare; the outcome in Columns 5-6 is the sum of Credit and Welfare. Core is a standardized four-category variable indicating how close the respondent feels to their preferred political party. Age is a standardized three-category measure of age. Roma and Female are dummy variables indicating whether the respondent presents as being from the Roma ethnic group and whether they are female. Both are identified by the enumerator. Income is a standardized three-category measure of income for the household.

Table 4: Access to entitlements and exposure to clientelism during the election

		<i>Dependent variable:</i>							
		Vote Buying		Mayor Favor		Welfare Pressure		Lender Pressure	
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Sensitive Item	(Intercept)	0.043*	0.039	0.03	-0.006	0.022	-0.017	0.026	-0.005
		(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.04)
	Entitlements Index	0.04	0.052	0.032	0.054*	0.052**	0.076**	0.04	0.039
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
	Age		0.023		0.044*		0.01		0.003
			(0.02)		(0.03)		(0.02)		(0.02)
	Roma		-0.013		-0.037		0.009		0.065
		(0.06)		(0.06)		(0.06)		(0.05)	
Female		0.003		0.042		0.037		0.027	
		(0.04)		(0.05)		(0.04)		(0.04)	
Income		0.011		-0.018		0.032		0.005	
		(0.02)		(0.02)		(0.02)		(0.02)	
Control Items	(Intercept)	1.032***	1.039***	0.974***	0.969***	1.01***	1.008***	1.061***	1.047***
		(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)
	Entitlements Index	0.017	0.022	0.002	0.006	0.015	0.017	0.03**	0.041**
		(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)
	Age		-0.024*		-0.018		0.006		0.017
			(0.01)		(0.02)		(0.01)		(0.01)
	Roma		-0.015		0.026		0.029		0.045
		(0.04)		(0.04)		(0.03)		(0.03)	
Female		-0.01		-0.016		-0.012		-0.014	
		(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.02)		(0.02)	
Income		0.072***		0.082***		0.051***		0.063***	
		(0.01)		(0.02)		(0.01)		(0.01)	
Observations		1798	1536	1776	1527	1776	1520	1793	1531

Standard errors in parentheses.

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

The outcome in Columns 1-2 is the response to the list containing vote buying; the outcome in Columns 3-4 is the response to the list containing mayor favors; the outcome in 5-6 is the response to the list including welfare pressure; and the outcome in 7-8 is the response to the list containing lender pressure. Entitlements Index is a three-category variable that takes a value of 0 if the respondent receives neither credit nor welfare, 1 if she receives credit or welfare, and 2 if she receives both. Age is a standardized three-category measure of age. Roma and Female are dummy variables indicating whether the respondent presents as being from the Roma ethnic group and whether they are female. Both are identified by the enumerator. Income is a standardized three-category measure of income for the household.

Table 5: Copartisanship with the mayor and election-time inducements

		<i>Dependent variable:</i>							
		Vote Buying		Mayor Favor		Welfare Pressure		Lender Pressure	
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Sensitive Item	(Intercept)	0.071*** (0.02)	0.071** (0.04)	0.063*** (0.02)	0.035 (0.04)	0.039** (0.02)	0.011 (0.03)	0.032* (0.02)	0.002 (0.03)
	Mayor Copartisan	-0.028 (0.06)	-0.041 (0.07)	-0.078 (0.06)	-0.107* (0.06)	0.119** (0.06)	0.136** (0.06)	0.132** (0.06)	0.167*** (0.06)
	Age		0.009 (0.02)		0.034 (0.02)		-0.001 (0.02)		-0.005 (0.02)
	Roma		0.013 (0.05)		-0.003 (0.06)		0.008 (0.05)		0.042 (0.05)
	Female		0.009 (0.04)		0.05 (0.04)		0.037 (0.04)		0.023 (0.04)
	Income		0.009 (0.02)		-0.016 (0.02)		0.021 (0.02)		-0.005 (0.02)
	(Intercept)	1.024*** (0.01)	1.038*** (0.02)	0.943*** (0.01)	0.948*** (0.02)	1.007*** (0.01)	1.011*** (0.02)	1.059*** (0.01)	1.057*** (0.02)
Mayor Copartisan	0.117*** (0.04)	0.135*** (0.05)	0.185*** (0.04)	0.213*** (0.04)	0.065** (0.03)	0.059* (0.03)	0.119*** (0.03)	0.109*** (0.04)	
Age		-0.029** (0.01)		-0.022 (0.02)		0.002 (0.01)		0.007 (0.01)	
Roma		-0.024 (0.03)		-0.002 (0.04)		0.029 (0.03)		0.047 (0.03)	
Female		-0.017 (0.03)		-0.025 (0.03)		-0.015 (0.02)		-0.017 (0.02)	
Income		0.065*** (0.01)		0.073*** (0.01)		0.047*** (0.01)		0.055*** (0.01)	
Observations		1818	1552	1797	1543	1799	1537	1814	1547

Standard errors in parentheses.

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

The outcome in Columns 1-2 is the response to the list containing vote buying; the outcome in Columns 3-4 is the response to the list containing mayor favors; the outcome in 5-6 is the response to the list including welfare pressure; and the outcome in 7-8 is the response to the list containing lender pressure. Entitlements Index is a three-category variable that takes a value of 0 if the respondent receives neither credit nor welfare, 1 if she receives credit or welfare, and 2 if she receives both. Age is a standardized three-category measure of age. Roma and Female are dummy variables indicating whether the respondent presents as being from the Roma ethnic group and whether they are female. Both are identified by the enumerator. Income is a standardized three-category measure of income for the household.

# Figures

Figure 1: Proportion of sample who experienced positive and negative electoral strategies

