

Conditionality and coercion: Electoral clientelism in Eastern Europe

Isabela Mares
Columbia University

Aurelian Muntean
SNSPA, Bucharest

Chapter 5

Welfare coercion as non-programmatic electoral strategy

Chapter 4 has documented the electoral role of clientelistic strategies premised on welfare favors. We have shown that mayors politicize the distribution of the resources of the state and condition access to policy benefits on electoral support. This appropriation of state resources is extensive, as mayors condition both access to policies and the myriad of administrative decisions they control on political support.

A different political strategy involves coercion, the threat to withhold access to policy benefits if voters do not support the “correct” candidate. Mayors that engage in such coercive strategies threaten voters who depend on access to the workfare program or on public employment in the municipality that their future income stream will be interrupted if their electoral behavior is not desirable. In using social policies coercively, mayors seek to maximize electoral returns from an investment that has been already made, rather than broadening their electoral coalition of loyal supporters.

In both Hungary and Romania, workfare programs represent the main policies used by mayors who engage in coercive electoral strategies. Chapter 3 has discussed the origin of these programs and the most significant factors that account for the increased reliance of post-communist governments on residualist social policies that require work participation as a precondition of receipt of social policy benefits. We have shown that this change in policy orientation represents a dramatic policy transformation for post-communist welfare states. These measures were adopted alongside with legislation that increased the discretion of mayors over the distribution of social policy benefits. In combination, policy changes that introduced the conditionality of benefits on work requirements and that increased the discretion of mayors over the allocation of benefits established the precondition for the coercive use of the workfare program at elections.

This chapter documents the use of the electoral strategies premised on welfare coercion in Hungary and Romania. Our survey-based evidence documents the use of these strategies during the most recent parliamentary (Hungary) and presidential (Romania) elections held in 2014. In addition to the results of these surveys, our qualitative research

based on interviews with candidates, brokers and voters in thirty rural communities allows us to examine the use of coercive strategies over a longer period of time, spanning multiple types of elections. Our qualitative research allows us also to document the variety of decisions taken by mayors during the mandate that allow the electoral use of coercion. In both countries, we show that welfare coercion and blackmail play an important role in the broader mix of non-programmatic strategies we encounter.

Does the use of welfare coercion vary in systematic ways across localities? We turn to this question next. Drawing on the hypotheses presented in Chapter 2, we discuss the ways in which candidates assess the relative benefits and costs of different clientelistic strategies that politicize resources of the state. We conjecture that welfare coercion becomes an attractive electoral strategy in politically fragmented localities where political conflict over the distribution of welfare benefits is likely to be high. The welfare program, we conjecture, is likely to engender a political conflict between voters who are eligible to access these benefits and other low-income voters who miss the threshold of participation. We refer to such political conflict as a conflict pitting “poor against poor” voters. We conjecture that mayors find non-programmatic strategies premised on coercion particularly attractive in localities where such conflict is salient.

We report the results of two original surveys we fielded in the aftermath of the parliamentary elections and presidential elections held in Hungary and Romania during 2014. In both countries, surveys were administered in small rural localities with population less than 10,000 voters and included a sample of around 1800 voters. We assess the incidence of strategies of welfare coercion using list experiments, a survey method that enables respondents to report sensitive behavior without incriminating themselves or their political opponents and can, thus, reduce bias in the measurement of sensitive political phenomenon. In our analysis of the variation across localities in the incidence of strategies premised on welfare coercion, we leverage the variation in economic, political and social conditions across localities to examine the most salient variables that contribute to an increase in the incidence of this nonprogrammatic strategy.

5.1. WELFARE COERCION IN THE MENU OF NONPROGRAMMATIC STRATEGIES

Beginning with research by Rene Lemarchand (1972) or James Scott (1972), scholars of clientelism have recognized the importance of coercion in the menu of clientelistic strategies. However, most scholars of clientelism have not differentiated between the use of positive and negative inducements to motivate voters (Mares and Young 2016). Positive inducements, a category that includes vote buying, involves offers of rewards such as money, goods, or favors. Negative inducements include the threat of economic or physical sanctions for an individual’s voting behavior. Such negative inducements include cutting voters off from benefits on which they depend, removing them from their land or residences.

Both positive and negative inducements are hard to measure. Both are illicit, giving parties an incentive to hide the transaction, in contexts where vote buying or selling is a criminal offense. In the case of negative inducements, there is also a negative relationship between effectiveness and visibility that obscures true patterns of electoral coercion. Specifically, the most effective threats never result in actual punishments because they convince voters to change their behavior and the threatened punishments never need to be meted out. This implies that a situation in which no one is punished could be totally non-coercive or totally coercive, and the level of coercion can only be distinguished through the beliefs of voters about what would happen if they had voted differently.

Voter expectations or beliefs also matter for distinguishing between positive or negative strategies. If a voter does not expect to receive a sack of grain in the week before an election, and then he does receive it in exchange for a promise to vote for a specific party, it serves as a positive inducement. However, if he expects to receive it or feels entitled to that grain, then an effort to use the grain to incentivize his vote would take the form of a negative inducement, or a threat that the grain will be withheld if he votes for the “incorrect” candidate. Although this difference is quite subtle (and again hard to measure without relying on micro-level measures of voters’ beliefs and expectations), it may have a big impact on behavior. There is significant evidence showing that individuals think about gains and losses in very different ways. Being in the domain of gains (positive inducements) rather than losses (negative inducements) has significant implications for how individuals think about risk and how much utility they derive from various options (Kahneman and Tversky 1976).

Another difference between positive and negative strategies may be in whether the incentive worsens the baseline condition of a voter, or his condition if he rejects the offer of the broker. When a voter considers an offer by a broker to buy his vote, he can either accept the proposal – if you vote for me, you get X, and if you don’t, you get nothing – or turn it down. In other words, the voter’s status quo is not affected by turning down the offer. Coercion, however, can be used to push a voter into accepting a deal to which he wouldn’t otherwise consent (Wertheimer 1987). For example, threatening to lay off all citizens who fail to turn out to vote (regardless of whether or not those citizens accept to be clients of the party) can be conceptualized as reducing the attractiveness of the status quo, or outside options, of those voters. Strategies premised on coercion therefore have much more severe normative implications than illicit but consensual exchanges of positive inducements for votes.

More recent approaches to the study of clientelism downplay the importance of coercion in the menu of non-programmatic strategies. The theoretical justification for this omission provided by existing studies is clientelistic exchanges can be understood as an infinitely repeated exchange between brokers and voters. Coercive strategies are the grim strategy in this infinitely repeated game. The implication of such a conceptualization of clientelistic exchanges is that there is no need to study coercion as a separate strategy from the provision of positive inducements. The discussion presented by Susan Stokes in her seminal article *Perverse Accountability* illustrates this perspective (Stokes 2005). In

this framework, both machine operatives and weakly opposed voters find themselves in a Prisoner's Dilemma and the defection on one player triggers the grim coercive strategy.

Such results rest, however, on two assumptions that can be reconsidered and, perhaps, relaxed. One such assumption concerns the symmetry in the response of voters to positive inducements versus coercion. In the example discussed above, voters react in similar ways to gains and losses, as both gains and losses enter the utility of voters linearly. Findings from behavioral economics suggest, however, that the change in voter utility differs across the domain of gains or domain of losses. One important result from behavioral economics is that losses produce steeper changes in the reaction of voters as compared to gains. If candidates calibrate the mixes clientelistic strategies using this information, one expects to see variation in the mix of positive and negative inducements depending on the distribution of voters' preferences and endowments.

Secondly, one needs to reconsider the assumption that the electoral costs incurred by candidates who engage in positive clientelistic inducements or coercion are symmetrical. A variety of studies suggest that politicians may incur differential costs for pursuing positive or negative strategies. One source of asymmetrical evaluation of positive inducements or coercion are voters' normative beliefs. Using experimental survey-based methods, several studies have shown that voters punish with different intensity candidates that engage in clientelistic strategies that involve coercion as compared to vote-buying (Mares and Young 2016b, Mares and Visconti 2016). In addition to normative concerns, economic considerations may also lead voters to punish negative or positive inducements differentially. Even though clientelistic strategies are normatively undesirable because they condition offers on goods on electoral support, the goods offered as part of the clientelistic exchange – such as jobs or policy benefits – may be highly desirable. Voters may punish candidates that offer highly desirable goods to a particular group of voters if they anticipate that their own likelihood to access these goods is low. We will argue below that such considerations are extremely important in explaining voters' disutility towards clientelistic strategies premised on welfare favors. These considerations increase the electoral costs of strategies premised on favors. We will argue below that candidates will have stronger incentives to rely on non-programmatic strategies premised on coercion in localities where the constituency of voters opposed to the provision of favors is large and where it can be mobilized by political opponents.

5.2. ELECTORAL COERCION: DESCRIPTIVE EVIDENCE

James C. Scott noted that there is hardly any linguistic shortage when it comes to expressing the notion of exploitation (Scott 1990: 187). The same can be said about coercion. While welfare and economic coercion are pervasive non-programmatic strategies across the region, respondents use a wide range of terms to describe their experiences. During our first focus group, conducted in Focsani, a locality in Vrancea county, Romania, we distributed blank pieces of paper to the participants and asked them to write down various illicit strategies used by candidates at elections and to rank them according to their prevalence. The majority of respondents in this focus group ranked 'psychological intimidation' as the most pervasive nonprogrammatic strategy they

experienced. Other voters refer to coercive strategies as intimidation, harassment, pressure or subjugation.

Such diversity in the language used to describe coercion points to the wide heterogeneity in the types of coercive strategies. We begin with a brief presentation of the variety of coercive strategies that involve policy resources of the state as part of the exchange between candidates, brokers and voters. In chapter 6, we turn to a discussion of strategies of economic coercion. In the case of this strategy, brokers are economic actors (such as landholders, employers or moneylenders) who threaten voters to worsen the terms of the ongoing economic exchange if voters' electoral behavior is undesirable. Our discussion draws on qualitative interviews with candidates, brokers and voters conducted between May 2015 and October 2016 in Hungary and Romania. To protect the confidentiality of our respondents, we anonymize the name of the locality and of the respondents.

The modal form of welfare coercion consists of threats used by mayors and brokers operating on their behalf that access to policy benefits will be cut if voters do not support a particular candidate or if they decide to abstain. Let us consider some examples that illustrate the use of this strategy. During our fieldwork in B., a locality in Southern Romania, we encountered Maria, a sixty-seven year old woman. Maria is now retired and had been previously employed at the agricultural cooperative in her locality for only eight years. Due to her short period of employment, Maria is only eligible for social assistance benefits, but not for retirement benefits. The total amount of benefits she received from the city hall every month is 70 RON, about 20 US dollars. Maria considers that this amount is insufficient for survival and that she has no other alternative but to stay hungry on days when the money runs out (B, Interview 24 July 2015).

Candidates competing in this locality target voters like Maria using coercive strategies. On election day, the deputy mayor came to her house and threatened to cut access to her policy benefits if she did not vote. She recalls that "the deputy mayor said *mamaie* (old lady), go to vote or you will lose your social assistance benefits". We asked her what could have happened if she had answered she would not vote. "He would have cut all my benefits", she replied. "They could have cut the benefits because they have all the power in the locality. I could have gone to Alexandria [the capital of the county] to complain but it would have served no purpose (B, Interview 5, 24 July 2015)

Simona is a 52-year old woman of Roma origin living in V., another locality in South East Romania. At the time of our interview, Simona receives social assistance benefits from the city hall. The situation was different a few years ago. At the time, Simona recalls that both she and her husband came into conflict with the mayor after complaining about some irregularities in the distribution of assistance benefits in the locality. The mayor retaliated and cut the social assistance benefits. For Simona and her family, this was a hard lesson. After this event, she decided that the only solution for survival is "to do what the other Roma people in the locality are doing, show less resistance and 'shut up' in order to receive social assistance benefits. There are a few Roma people who have voted for Iohannis, but they have lost access to social policy benefits because of this".

She considers that “there is nobody in the locality who can stand up to the mayor he controls everything, the police and the priests” (V., Interview 2, 30 September 2015)

In the same locality, we encountered Ana, a 74 years old woman. Like many voters of her generation, Ana recalls with nostalgia the communist period. At that time, she worked for a few years in the mechanical station of the local agricultural cooperative. Similar employment opportunities, she considers, are no longer available at present. Ana considers that employees of the city hall notice voters like her on election day only. Prior to the election, she recalls, employees of the city hall go through the locality threatening voters that they will be fined and that their benefits will be cut if they do not turn out to vote. She recalls having voted in every single election and that, on some occasions, when she was sick, someone from the city hall rounded her up in a car and brought her to vote. When asked whom she voted for, she replies, “I do not remember. I voted exactly as told by the persons from the city hall” (V., Interview 4, 30 September 2015).

We can identify a second form of coercion which we call blackmail. Blackmail results from two distinct strategies taken by mayors or employees in local administration. The first strategy facilitating the electoral use of blackmail is forbearance, the decision to forego the implementation of particular laws or to implement these only selectively (Holland 2016). Mayors or employees of the local administration may deliberately decide to tolerate some irregularities and forego their prosecution in order to extract electoral advantages. Such irregularities may include noncompliance with tax obligations, irregularities in accessing policy benefits or other violations of the law, such as theft. The initial pursuit of forbearance increases the future vulnerability of persons who have committed some irregularity to future blackmail.

At the time of elections, candidates and their brokers exploit this vulnerability of voters. The use of blackmail involves threats to expose these irregularities and to threaten voters to end the illicit activity and that they will be asked to make repayments for their previous offenses. Mayors or state employees are likely to remind voters that their past irregularities have been, in fact, duly recorded and will be punished in future. One such example of blackmail we encountered during our fieldwork is the threat that voters who have avoided their fiscal obligations will owe the entire amount of unpaid taxes if they vote for an undesirable candidate (R., Interview 4, 23 October 2015). Another example of this strategy is that threat that the future access to social policy benefits will be rescinded to those voters that have committed irregularities in accessing social policy benefits.

To illustrate the electoral use of blackmail, consider the example of S., a locality in Teleorman county, Romania. At the time of our fieldwork, 500 persons or 16 percent of the locality’s population received workfare benefits. This high number of workfare beneficiaries was a consequence of the decision of workfare officials to implement the work requirements that were demanded by the Romanian workfare legislation only very loosely. The Romanian workfare legislation (law 416) requires workfare beneficiaries to clean public spaces and help with the renovation of official buildings, such as the school or the kindergarden. The deputy mayor was responsible for monitoring the work performance of social assistance beneficiaries. One former employee of the municipality

commented, however, that such verification of work was rare event. “The deputy mayor usually gathers around sixty workfare employees in the morning for a project, checks their presence and lets them disappear on the way to work”. This respondent considered that the decision to grant social assistance benefits without requiring work was a deliberate strategy of the mayor to increase the continuing dependence of workfare employees on the city hall. “It is a form of slavery, a way in which the city hall keeps these persons under control” (S., 04.09.2015, Interview 1). At times of elections, the mayor of this locality exploited this vulnerability reminding workfare employees of the irregularities they committed way in accessing policy benefits. Several respondents commented on the use of such strategy and considered that the mayor campaign “based on influence and fear” and that social assistance beneficiaries are particularly fearful the mayor” (S., 04.09. 2015, Interview 1).

5.2.1. Pre-electoral strategies

Mayors’ capacity to deploy welfare coercion effectively depends on a variety of strategies taken during the mandate. Such strategies seek to deepen the sense of vulnerability of social policy beneficiaries and the belief in their complete dependence on the goodwill of the mayor. James Scott characterized these strategies as efforts to project ‘external power’ (Scott 1990). In the following, we discuss three such pre-electoral strategies. These strategies seek to increase voters’ perception about the arbitrariness of the mayor, which is likely to facilitate submission and weaken political resistance. Other strategies deepen the economic dependence of workfare recipients on mayors, which contribute to the formation of quasi-feudal relations of dependency. Finally, mayors pursue a variety of strategies that lay the groundwork for the electoral use of blackmail. Such strategies include tolerating or actively encouraging a variety of activities which violate legal with the goal of blackmailing offenders at election.

5.2.1.1. Projecting external power

Coercive threats are more credible if voters beliefs that mayors have unlimited discretion over the allocation of workfare jobs and other employment opportunities in the locality. To establish and cultivate this perception, mayors find it advantageous to project an image of capriciousness, arbitrariness, and, often, ruthlessness. Following James C. Scott, we refer to these pre-electoral strategies as efforts to ‘project external power’ (Scott 1990). In Scott’s extremely insightful analysis, coercion rests on the systematic personal *humiliation* of persons situated in a relationship of dependence (Scott 1990: 112). This weakens beliefs of voters in their self-efficacy and lowers their propensity to resist. Such systematic humiliation of voters in their everyday interaction with local officials is a common occurrence in many of the sites of our fieldwork.

One such strategy used by mayors to project external power is by engaging in arbitrary acts of punishment of voters that come into contact with the local administration. Voters of I., a locality in Heves county, Hungary, refer to the mayor of the locality as tyrannical

and arbitrary. One voter in this locality recalls having been dismissed from the public employment program with no prior justification (I, 26 July 2015, Interview 8). In this locality, we also witnessed a violent verbal exchange between the mayor and a workfare employee which was triggered by the objection of the mayor to an insignificant detail in the behavior of the workfare employees, but which resulted in the dismissal of this one person from the workfare program (I, 25 July 2015). In S., another locality in Heves county, Hungary one retired voter recalls a similarly capricious and arbitrary decision of the mayor of this municipality. “My wife had five days left before retiring from her job. The mayor called her telling her that she had to complete these remaining days of work. She requested to maintain her job as a cook at the community kitchen, but was instead sent to the potato fields and asked to work there for the remaining five days” (S., 18 July 2015). Such systematic humiliation is part of “everyday coercion”.

Another component of the strategy to project external power is the verbal humiliation of welfare beneficiaries and other persons who come into contact with the city hall. The use of abusive language by local politicians in Hungary has been the object of research of Hungarian sociologists in recent years (Zolnay 2012, Szombati 2016). In a recent study of local discrimination in Northeastern Hungarian localities, Janos Zolnay has shown that local politicians systematically use aggressive racist terms to refer to social policy beneficiaries (Zolnay 2012). Kristof Szombati’s study of right wing political mobilization in rural Hungarian communities also documents the abusive racist language use by welfare officials during their day-to-day interactions with Roma voters (Szombati 2016).

Respondents we encountered in our research in our own research reported the use of abusive language by public authorities. One workfare employee in S., a locality in Borsod county, considered the interaction with authorities in the city hall “as repressive and humiliating”. The mayor of this locality addressed workfare employees using a highly charged racist language. In I., a locality in Northern Hungary, one respondent reported that the mayor systematically showed “verbal disrespect” to him and other workfare employees. Another respondent in this locality considered that mayor pursued the goal to humiliate all workfare employees who come into contact with the city hall (I, Interview 5, 25 July 2015). We witnessed one such scene of verbal humiliation of workfare employees during our fieldwork in this locality. At the time, one employee of the workfare program complained to the mayor about the “inhumane working conditions”, the lack of water and the disrespectful attitude of the brigade leaders who were monitoring their work. He informed the mayor of his intention to report these abusive practices to labor authorities. The mayor responded dismissively to these accusations. He referred to workfare employees as “beggars for work” and threatened to dismiss them from the workfare program.

5.2.1.2. Economic coercion

In several sites of our fieldwork, we encountered situations where mayors employ workfare employees in economic units or farms they own. These decisions openly violate the provisions of social policy legislation, which makes absence of employment the precondition of access to social policy benefits. Yet mayors choose to violate the

provisions of the labor law with impunity. On the one hand, mayors take advantage of significant opportunities for economic profit. Workfare employees are a reservoir of free labor, whose wages are paid by tax revenues. In addition to the economic gains, mayors also reap political advantages from illegally employing workfare employees in their enterprises. The outside options of workfare employees who enter this illegal employment relationship are significantly worsened. If such irregularity in employment is detected, these employees cannot reapply to the workfare program for two years.

As such, the decision of mayors to hire persons employed in the workfare program is part of a broader political strategy that seeks to worsen the outside options of workfare employees and increase their economic and political dependency on political authorities. These decisions create quasi-feudal relationships of dependency in these localities, where mayors cumulate economic and political control over these persons.

Consider several examples of this neo-feudal dependency. In VR., a locality in Southern Romania, the mayor employed workfare employees on his farm. The mayor here is reported to have dismissed from the workfare program persons who refused offers of employment on the farm. In I., a locality in Borsod county, Hungary, the family of the mayor owned a cucumber plantation which employed workfare employees in the locality. The workplace conditions on the farm are very harsh, and employees are required to work at very high temperatures and without water (I., Interview 6, 26 July 2015) One of our respondents in this locality, who is a Roma minority representative on the city council considers that the mayor does not give employees in the workfare program the alternative to turn down the offer employment on this farm. Rather, workfare employees consider work on this farm as the obligation for continuing access to social policy benefits (I., Interview 7 26 July 2015).

In N., a locality in Nograd county, Hungary, the mayor is the owner of a pheasant farm that employs many workfare employees in this locality. One respondent in this locality considers that people who are employed on the pheasant farm “were trapped”, a statement made in reference to their dependency on the mayor (N., Interview 1, 15 July 2015). This respondent considers that this economic dependency of these voters on the mayor is also the source of their political dependence. “People were told that they had to vote for the mayor because of their employment on the farm. If you work on the farm, you will not vote for anyone else because you are living from the mayor” (N., Interview 1, 15 July 2015). Another respondent in this locality restated the theme of dependency. He considers that “workfare employees are likely to vote for the mayor because he pays them every day” (N., Interview 7, 17 July 2015)

5.2.1.3. Forbearance as the precondition of blackmail

The pre-electoral period is of special importance to mayors who seek to pursue clientelistic strategies premised on blackmail. These mayors turn a blind eye a variety of actions that sidestep legality throughout the mandate. Possible violations of the provisions of the social policy legislation may include decisions to take up illegal employment or not to perform the work required for social assistance benefits. Other

legal violations that are often not prosecuted may include the nonpayment of taxes or minor acts of theft. Mayors pursuing strategies premised on blackmail may not just tolerate, but often encourage the production of these irregularities to exploit the enhanced vulnerability of voters during elections.

Mayors in several localities where we have conducted fieldwork chose to ignore selectively the eligibility rules of social assistance legislation. In R., a locality in Buzau county, Romania, employees of the city hall systematically turned a blind eye to persons that maintained employment while claiming social policy benefits. According to the figures reported to us by officials of this municipality, 1700 persons (or 35 percent of the population) benefit from the provisions of law 416. However, many of these persons maintain part-time employment in other neighboring localities while drawing on social assistance benefits. A local government official in this locality considers such a high number of social policy beneficiaries an accomplishment of this administration which has “quasi-totally integrated all persons in need as part of the social assistance programs” (R., Interview 3, 22 October 2015). Other voters, however, disagree. The result of a decision not to enforce the provisions of the social policy legislation creates a high number of “captive” workfare employees who are vulnerable to blackmail.

Another irregularity mayors may choose to tolerate is the nonpayment of taxes. In R., the locality discussed above, local authorities turn a blind eye to the evasion of taxes owed to the municipality. Such noncompliance with fiscal obligations was higher among Roma families. According to employees of the municipality, only 27 out of the 400 Roma families from this locality paid water and electricity charges. The mayor of this locality tolerated such high levels of tax evasion in the hope of extracting electoral advantages from the situation. At the time of elections, employees of the city hall who operated as brokers were deployed to remind voters their previous noncompliance with tax obligations. As one broker in this locality discusses the use of this strategy, “voters know that the current mayor has not asked them to pay their tax obligations in full. They are likely to think that a new mayor will ask them to pay the outstanding amount of taxes they owe to the municipality”. The mayor thus uses the threat that the selection of his political opponent will result in the punishment of previous noncompliance and increase the retrospective tax obligations of voters. This broker contends that this strategy lowers the cost of electoral mobilization. He considers that “voters in this locality are not very expensive because they understand the indirect payments that have been made on their behalf” (R., Interview 3, 22 October 2015).

Other mayors deploy welfare coercion in combination with other strategies of blackmail. One additional vulnerable population that was subjected to blackmail consisted of persons who had committed prior trespasses of the law. The strategy by which this mayor exploited this political vulnerability paralleled the strategy he used in the case of welfare coercion. In a first step, the mayor tolerated theft in order to leverage the resulting vulnerability at elections.

Several voters in this locality expressed high concerns about the levels of theft. We heard repeated complaints that “theft everywhere in this locality”. During our encounter, the

mayor simulated empathy for the perpetrators. “People steal. But somehow, I can understand this. I don’t know how they would survive otherwise”. But at the same time, the mayor admitted of keeping detailed records of such legal transgressions. He informed us of his intention to take offenders to court and seek to transform the unpaid fines into community work. All this, of course, after the elections were over. (J., Interview 1, 15 Sept 2015).

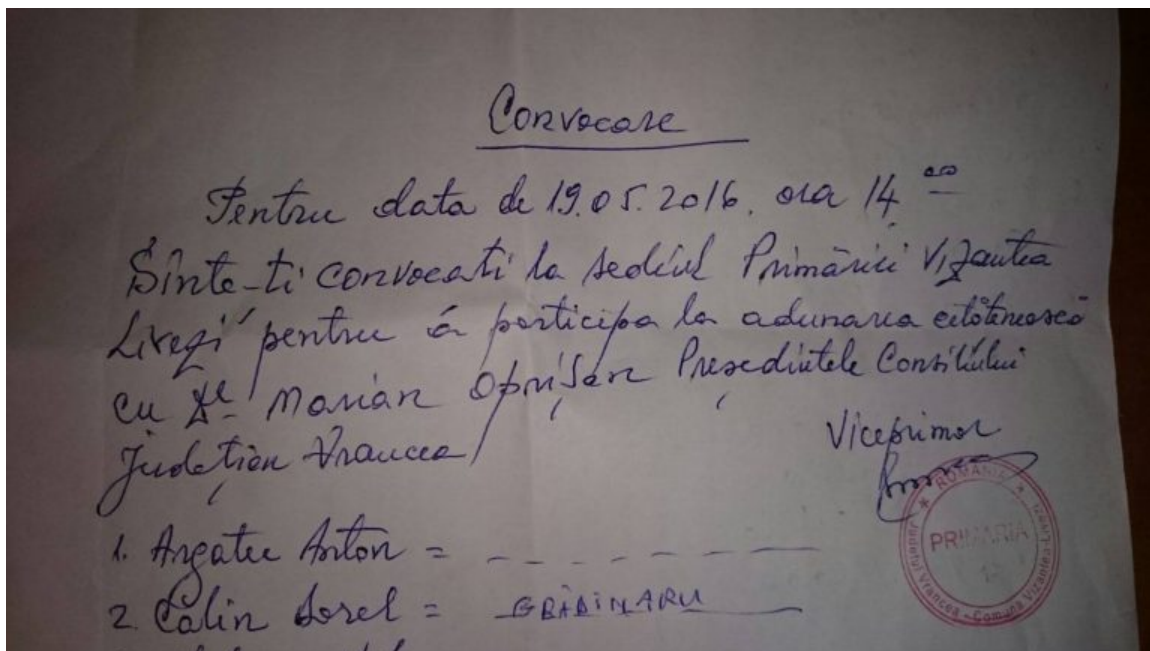
The mayor of this locality had acquired a very expensive camera monitoring system. The presence of such equipment is very rare in Romanian localities with low levels of economic development, such as this locality. According to the mayor, the camera had been established to monitor and deter acts of theft. Despite its high costs, the system was rarely used or, used only selectively. The opponent of the mayor considered that the “cameras have been established to blackmail people. If the persons caught stealing votes correctly, they are forgiven. The mayor only checks up on acts of theft that matter for the vote.” (J., Interview 3, 15 Sept 2015).

5.2.2. ELECTORAL STRATEGIES

These pre-electoral strategies enhance opportunities for the use of workfare coercion or blackmail as electoral strategies. We now turn to a discussion of the electoral use of coercion. We focus here on the use of threats and coercion to incentivize voters to turn out and vote for a candidate as well as on post-electoral efforts to verify that voters did not support the “correct” candidate.

Workfare employees are an important constituency that can be mobilized during campaigns. Mayors often mandate workfare employees to participate in campaign events supporting their candidacy and condition their future access to workfare benefits on the participation in such events. To illustrate this strategy, consider events occurring in the most recent local election in Vizantea Livezi, a locality in Vrancea county Romania. The election was an extremely competitive contest where the incumbent Socialist mayor faced challenges from two other candidates with roughly equal level of electoral strength. An electoral event scheduled by the deputy mayor during the campaign brought in Marian Oprisan, a prominent national figure of the Social Democratic Party and one of Romania’s most powerful ‘regional barons’. To increase participation in this event, the mayor issued a “Public invitation” of this meeting. The statement, printed below, invited all voters to this event, but included a special note that threatened welfare beneficiaries that access to social assistance benefits would be cut persons who chose not to attend the meeting.

Figure 5.1.
Coercive mobilization of social assistance recipients



Source: (<http://www.justitiecurata.ro>)

This publicly-voice threat backfired in this locality, as the Socialist candidate for mayor lost the race. In our discussion with him, the outgoing mayor defended the decisions of the deputy mayor and contended that “the deputy mayor could have invited them to do other things, such as clean up the building of the city hall. He used however, this unfortunate wording and those in the media used it against him” (Vizantea Livezi, Interview 6, August 13, 2016). The candidate refused to comment on the question whether the coercive mobilization of workfare employees was an important factor contributing to his defeat.

However, the electoral use welfare coercion often seeks to accomplish more than the participation in electoral events. Its main goal is to induce workfare employees to turn out and to vote for the candidate who controls their future participation in the program. We find ample evidence of the use of such welfare coercion in both Romanian and Hungarian localities. The mayor of H., a locality in Baranya county, Hungary relied on the use of coercion both during the parliamentary election held in April 2014 and during the 2015 local election. A former member of the city council of the locality recalled that during the 2014 parliamentary election, workfare employees were called in by the mayor and threatened that they would lose access to workfare benefits if they did not support the Fidesz candidate. “Therefore”, this respondent considered, “people who had only the income from social assistance knew how to vote. Campaigning is not only about what I can give you, but also what I can take away. This also makes campaigns cheaper” (H., Interview 6, July 13, 2015).

Such threats are particularly effective in localities where the workfare program presents the only viable employment opportunity. This is the case of many communities where we

conducted fieldwork and can be illustrated using the example of K., a locality in Heves county, Hungary. The locality can be accessed only with great difficulty on small roads. The main employer, a local agricultural collective enterprise closed down nearly a decade ago. Here, the only remaining employers are a water company, a local power station and the local municipality. In this community, the workfare program offers the only viable source of new employment.

The mayor of this locality is affiliated with Fidesz and has held office for three terms. One prominent member of the local political elite described the local political conditions as a locality with clear and comfortable Fidesz majority” (K., Interview 4, July 22, 2015). Citizens’ political views about the effectiveness of the mayor in the locality were divided. Some persons admired the mayor for the investments in public infrastructure and for her ability to draw in EU funds (K., Interview 5, July 23, 2015; K Interview 3, July 22, 2015). Critics of the mayor disliked, however, the mayor’s collaboration with more prominent Fidesz politicians from neighboring communities. This collaboration, critics considered, makes the locality look like it “belongs to the Fidesz territory of another town” (K., Interview 1, July 21, 2015).

One important electoral strategy pursued by this mayor was to ensure that employees participated to vote and that they cast the ballot for her. To achieve this end, this mayor turned to coercion. Prior to the 2014 local elections, the mayor convened around two hundred workfare workers to a meeting, which was publicized as a work-safety meeting (K., Interview 1, July 21 2015). As one participant in the meeting recalled, “all persons that were present were informed that if they want to continue to hold on to their workfare job, they have to vote for the actual mayor” (K., Interview 1, July 21 2015). Commenting on this mobilization strategy, this respondent noted that workfare workers acted as “multipliers”. “Communicating the threat to workfare employees was a very effective strategy as they passed on the threat to their families, multiplying thus support for the candidate of the mayor (K., Interview 1, 21 July 2015). Another respondent also confirmed this account of workfare employees as multipliers. According to this respondent, “the mayor won with the support of employees in the municipality and of employees in the workfare program who were ‘bringing people in’ (K., Interview 2, 21 July 2015)

Another respondent, currently a city council member in the municipality considered that such strategies premised on the inducement of fear were electorally effective. Workfare employees, this respondent considered did not respond to threats by rebelling, but by complying with the mayor. We probed further, by asking how the mayor knows who is on her side, given the secrecy of the vote. The respondent considered that the mayor could learn the voting intentions of voters because “has established a spy system like Rakosi used to have. They are tracking who is talking to whom and where. Lots of people complained that they will not get a workfare job and the mayor even made the comments that the ones who will not join the party line will not receive employment in the workfare program (K., Interview 2, 21 July 2015).

We also found evidence of the use of welfare coercion in N., a locality in Borsod county with a nominally independent mayor. Like in many other communities located in this struggling economic region, the workfare program offers the main opportunities for employment. As one of our respondents described the importance of this program for the economic situation in this community, “if this public works program would not exist, then revolution would outbreak or food riots would happen” (N., Interview 7, 24 September 2015).

At the time we conducted research, only eighty persons were employed in the workfare program. A large part of demand for workfare jobs remained, thus, unmet. According to one informant, who was employed in the local municipality, around 250 persons were in need employment in the workfare program. Due to their scarcity, workfare jobs were intensely desired. “People fight to access public workfare jobs”, this respondent considered (N., Interview 1, 21 September 2015). This situation created an opportunity for the mayor to skillfully exploit the vulnerability of workfare employees, by threatening that workfare employees who supported the opposition candidate would lose their employment in the program.

Several respondents in this locality commented on the use of welfare coercion during the 2014 local election. One respondent considered that “workfare employees supported the incumbent mayor out of fear of losing their jobs”. This respondent added that the mayor exploited the belief of workfare recipients that their current and future employment opportunities are entirely conditional on mayoral discretion (N., Interview 2, 21 September 2015). One of our respondents in this locality also competed during the 2014 local elections, but lost the race (N., Interview 5, 23 September 2015). His discussion of the electoral strategies used the incumbent mayor extensively details the use of welfare coercion. “The mayor”, this challenger argued, “did not compete on the basis of a clearly articulated platform. The main element of her campaign was to threaten workfare employees that they will lose their employment if they do not vote for her. She could influence voters because they are vulnerable” (N., Interview 5, 23 September 2015). The mayor also threatened workfare employee that their employment in the program would be terminated if they sign any document supporting candidacy of her challenger. This challenger considered that these strategies played a decisive role in accounting for the victory of the mayor. “I think that people employed in the workfare program elected her. They voted for her in order to maintain their workfare job” (N., Interview 5, 23 September 2015).

As discussed above, a complementary coercive strategy involves blackmail. To illustrate the electoral use of blackmail, consider electoral events in J., a locality in Southern Romania. The mayor laid the foundations for the electoral use of blackmail by permitting blatant violations of the social policy legislation, which could be then exploited electorally. During the pre-electoral period, the mayor turned a blind eye to persons who engaged in black market employment, while also drawing access to social policy benefits. Many persons in this locality cumulate employment in the workfare program and temporary jobs in neighboring urban localities. At the same time, the mayor allowed workfare employees to draw their social assistance benefits without performing work for

the community. As one respondent in this locality comments on the use of workfare employment, “there are 330 people who receive social assistance benefits and need to perform work for the community. But only ten people perform this work every day. The rest of the beneficiaries receive money without working. However, at the time of the vote, these persons are reminded that they have not performed the work”. (J., Interview 3, 15 September 2015). The mayor himself acknowledges that these decisions violate the provisions of the legislation, but consider these strategies as a necessary quid-pro-quo with voters in conditions of extreme poverty. He refers to such forbearance as a “way to reach our little agreements”.

This forbearance during the mandate created opportunities for electoral blackmail during the election. One former opponent recalled that the mayor relied on fifteen to twenty people to mobilize voters during elections. These brokers were described as being “not necessarily people with important positions, but people who are influential in the locality”. Their mission, the challenger recalls, was “to make people afraid and to remind social assistance beneficiaries that they have access to the social benefits because of the mayor and that they would lose access if they don’t vote as told. (J., Interview 3, 15 September 2015). Workfare beneficiaries were also reminded that they have received the benefits without working.

The mayor also disapproved of participation of workfare employees in the electoral events of opposition candidates. As his opponent recalls, “when I go campaigning and talk to people, they tell me that they cannot be seen talking to me. They tell me, you know, I will vote for you (*lasa ca tot cu tine merg*) but I don’t want them to see me with you. If they do so, they will cut my assistance benefits”. (J., Interview 3, 15 Sept 2015).

Candidates combined threats of future employment losses with the electoral (and post-electoral) monitoring of workfare employees to ensure they support the correct candidate. In several Romanian localities, candidates deployed brokers who attempted to “lock in” the promise of workfare employees, by making them swear on a bible. The additional strategy sought to increase the perceived costs of defection from the initial promise to vote for a candidate. As one broker describes the strategy, “if you swear on the bible and then you break your promise, you are dead” (P., Interview, 15 September 2015).

5.3. VARIATION ACROSS LOCALITIES IN THE USE OF WELFARE COERCION

Does the use of strategies premised on welfare coercion vary systematically across localities? If so, what are the main factors that explain this variation? We turn to the analysis of these questions next. As discussed in chapter 2, we expect that variation across localities in the use of coercive strategies is affected by differences in the capacity of mayors to deploy these strategies and by differences in their incentives to do so. We now turn to an analysis of the locality-level conditions that affect the variation in mayoral capacity and ability.

At the same time, we examine the factors that make clientelistic strategies premised on coercion more attractive to mayors in comparison to clientelistic strategies involving the use of favors. Strategies premised on welfare favors may heighten voters' perception mayors are politically too dependent on the constituency of workfare employees. Such perceptions may bring about an increase electoral costs to some mayors. These electoral costs are likely to be higher in localities whose demographic and economic characteristics increase the likelihood of conflict between low-income families who meet the eligibility criteria for workfare benefits and those who are not eligible of these benefits.

We conjecture that non-programmatic strategies premised on coercion are more prevalent in localities where the workfare program is strongly contested politically. In these localities, mayors face high electoral costs from a strategy expanding the circle of welfare beneficiaries. We expect these mayors to pursue nonprogrammatic strategies premised on coercion, which incentivize beneficiaries of social assistance and workfare employees to turn out and vote.

5.3.1. Incentives and capabilities of mayors

As discussed above, we conjecture that the capacity of mayors to deploy the workfare program coercively is likely to vary across localities. One factor that may influence differences in the capacity of mayors to deploy this nonprogrammatic strategy is the length of the incumbency of the mayor. A longer period in office translates into a higher ability to appoint loyal appointees to the administration of the municipality. The strategies discussed above which involve the forbearance of irregularities or blackmail require the involvement by a group of loyalists within the municipality.

Secondly, we expect that both the capacity and interests of mayors to deploy coercive strategies will vary across mayors of different partisan orientations. As discussed in Chapter 3, the adoption of workfare programs has been the result of strong partisan conflict in both countries. Parties that have played a decisive role in the introduction the workfare legislation – such as Fidesz or the Romanian Socialist Party – seek to project nationally the image of “owners” of this policy. To consolidate the perception of voters about the “partisan ownership” of a policy, these parties adopt legislative changes that consolidate the administration of the particular policy during their term in office and disproportionately target resources for the program to co-partisans located in crucial administrative positions. Co-partisan mayors may benefit from such infusion of resources financed by the central government. As Chapter 3 has documented, the politicization of the workfare policy was particularly intense in Hungary during the last four years of the Orban administration. The policy was at the center of Orban's project to establish a ‘workfare society’ (*munka alapu társadalom*) as a positive alternative to the ‘declining Western welfare state’ (Orban quoted in Szikra 2014: 492) and “to make life easier for hard-working citizens and difficult for social parasites” (Orban quoted in Szombati 2016: 163).

This differences between parties in the ownership of the workfare program may affect differentially both the resources available to co-partisan mayors and their incentives to use this policy in their nonprogrammatic strategies. We expect to find a higher reliance on coercive strategies premised on workfare coercion in localities where mayors are co-partisan with the party that seeks to project its ownership over the workfare program.

5.3.2. Welfare favors or welfare coercion? The choice between negative and positive inducements

When and under what conditions are mayors more likely to favors coercive strategies as compared to non-programmatic strategies premised on positive inducements? We conjecture that mayors have stronger electoral incentives to deploy coercive strategies in localities where a large political constituency opposing the workfare program is in place. As discussed in Chapter 2, one salient political cleavage one encounters in many post-communist localities with low opportunities for economic employment is the cleavage between low income residents who are eligible for social policy benefits and persons who cannot meet eligibility conditions to access these benefits. The latter group may include retirees or persons engaged in temporary employment. In addition, the cleavage between workfare employees and persons lacking access to these programs is likely to be politicized in localities where recipients of social policy benefits are concentrated among the member of the minority Roma population. In such cases, the ethnic conflict between Roma and native Romanian or Hungarian population can further amplify the economic cleavage over the distribution of policy benefits.

Let us elaborate more on the sources of this political cleavage over access to social policy benefits. In Chapter 2, we have characterized this conflict as a conflict pitting “poor against poor” voters. In most rural communities access to the workfare program is an extremely valued commodity. However, the allocation of workfare jobs is likely to generate hostility among voters who cannot meet the eligibility conditions for these benefits. One such group of voters are the working poor, who seek part-time employment in neighboring urban centers rather than drawing on assistance benefits. Another group of voters that harbor resentment against workfare employees are elderly voters. In both Romania and Hungary, retirees can draw either a pension whose benefits are linked to the history of social insurance contributions or a social assistance pension. The value of the social assistance pension is lower than the value of workfare benefits. The same can be said of non-assistance (insurance) benefits of many elderly with a history of interrupted employment. This inequality in the benefit structure is likely to be perceived by many elderly voters in the countryside as a source of immense injustice. Retirees harboring such grievances are likely to oppose candidates who rely on workfare employees as their core supporters and gravitate towards their opponents.

Finally, such economic conflict between the working poor and retirees, on the one hand, and employees in the workfare program, on the other hand, can be ‘ethnicized’ in localities with a large share of voters belonging to the minority Roma population. Such ethnicization of the economic conflict between workfare employees and working poor is

a common occurrence in several sites of our fieldwork. The hostility of the majority of ethnic group of Romanians or Hungarian voters towards ethnically Roma voters is more pronounced if the number of workfare beneficiaries includes a large share of Roma voters receive benefits. In these localities, voters belonging to the majority Roma or Hungarian group are likely to sanction very strongly electoral strategies that expand the number of participants in the workfare program.

The existence of a conflict among workfare employees and other low-income voters is likely to affect the decision of mayors to deploy coercive strategies at elections. We conjecture that mayors have stronger incentives to turn to strategies premised on welfare coercion in localities that exhibit high levels conflict over the distribution of workfare benefits. In these localities, mayors' use of electoral strategies premised on welfare coercion fulfills two roles. On the one hand, this strategy allows mayors to extract high political returns from a group of captive voters. At the same time, mayors may attempt to shore up support among voters who resent social policy beneficiaries. Similar to US mayors who seek to build up their credibility with a certain group of voters by signaling their toughness on crime, mayors in many rural communities in the region may use welfare coercion to appeal to voters who resent workfare employees.

We proxy the existence of a political conflict between workfare employees and other low-income voters using a variety of locality-level economic and social covariates. One such measure, that is available for both countries, is the share of Roma voters. For Hungary, where the locality census is more fine-grained, we also use demographic data on the percentage of the population over 65 years and a measure of the share of employed persons in the locality. These two variables, we conjecture, are likely to predict the incidence of coercive electoral strategies. Finally, we use a measure of the strength of the locality level opposition to the mayor to measure the political polarization in the locality. We also expect to find a higher incidence of coercive strategies in localities that display this higher level of political competition.

Table 5.1. summarizes the discussion and presents the main variables included in the analysis.

Table 5.1.
Prediction about variation across localities in use of coercive strategies

	Locality-level variable	Predicted effect
Capabilities and resources	Mayor incumbency	+
	“Ownership” of welfare program by national party	+
Incentives to use welfare coercion rather than favors	High share of low-income voters opposing extensive use of favors	+
	High levels political opposition in the locality	+

5.4. RESULTS

We measure the incidence of coercive strategies in different localities by using the results of post-electoral surveys fielded in both Hungary and Romania in the aftermath of recent elections. For Hungary, we report the result of the survey fielded in May 2014, which sought to measure a variety of illicit strategies deployed during the parliamentary election held in April of the same year. For Romania, we report the results of a survey fielded in December 2014, which attempted to measure the incidence of this non-programmatic strategy during the presidential election held in November 2014. The Hungarian survey was fielded in a sample of over 90 communities located in three provinces with higher than average vote share of Roma voters. These provinces are Heves, Borsod and Baranya. The Romanian survey was fielded in 70 communities located in Teleorman and Buzau, two counties located in Southern and South-Eastern part of Romania. We refer the reader to Chapter 3 and Appendix 2 for additional details about the fielding of the survey.

In both countries, we sought to estimate the incidence of welfare coercion using questions with similar wording. The questions measuring the incidence of welfare coercion included in our survey were worded as follows:

Hungary

“I was worried that a family member would lose employment in the public works program if I voted for the wrong candidate”

Romania

“I was afraid to lose social assistance benefits from the city hall, if I voted for the wrong candidate”

The implementation of our survey was successful. In Tables 5A1 and 5A2 (Appendix), we present summary statistics about the distribution of different respondents across the different versions of the questionnaires in the surveys administered in Hungary and Romania, respectively. We do not find any statistically difference in observable characteristics of respondents across the two versions of the questionnaire.

Table 5.2. presents the results of our surveys estimating the incidence of welfare coercion in our sample. The third column ('Control mean') presents the average responses to the version of the questionnaire that includes only the control items, while the fourth column ('Treatment mean') presents the average responses to the version of the questionnaire that includes the sensitive question. By subtracting the mean number of item of respondents who received the treatment version of the questionnaire from the mean item of respondents who received the control version of the questionnaire, we obtain the list experiment estimated of the incidence of the particular electoral irregularity measured in the survey.

Table 5.2.
Estimated incidence of welfare coercion

Country	N	Control mean	Treatment mean	Difference
Hungary	1799	1.02	1.08	0.06*** (0.02; 0.09)
Romania	1495	1.15 (1.11; 1.19)	1.26 (1.22; 1.30)	0.11*** (-0.07; -0.05)

^^ The numbers in parentheses represent the 95% confidence intervals. We report the results of a two-sampled t-test with unequal variances.

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

The survey allows us to document the incidence of clientelistic strategies premised on welfare coercion in both countries. In Hungary, we estimate that around six percent of voters have experienced the threat to lose access to the workfare program if they do not support the correct candidate. In Romania, the number of voters who have experienced this strategy is significantly higher and stands at 11 percent.

Before we analyze our results, we need to evaluate the design of the list experiment. To test the validity of our list experiments, we used a method developed by Blair and Imai (2012) to test for design effects. Design effects are present when the response of an individual to the list including non-sensitive items changes if the sensitive item is present. 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 are large than responses to the control list, 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 of measured prevalence of the sensitive item 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 the lists include din both countries. The p-values of the tests are 0.15 in Hungary and 0.8 in Romania.

We are now ready to examine the correlates of the variation in the use of these coercive strategies across municipalities and across individuals. We take advantage of the nested nature of our data and use the following specifications to estimate the incidence of welfare coercion (Gelman and Hill 2007). Let j subscript the different municipalities in our study and i the individual respondents:

$$Y_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TREATMENT_{ij} + \beta_2 X_j + \beta_3 X_j \times TREATMENT_{ij} + \beta_4 Z_i + \beta_5 TREATMENT_{ij} \times Z_i + \alpha_j + \varepsilon_i$$

where $\alpha_j = N(0, \sigma_j)$

The dependent variable Y_{ij} represents the list response for welfare coercion, subscripted ij for different individuals (i) in different localities (j). $TREATMENT_{ij}$ is a variable that takes the value of 1 for those individuals that have received the version of the questionnaire that includes the sensitive item for welfare coercion. X_j is a vector of locality-level variables. Z_i is a battery of individual-level characteristics, ε_i are the error terms. In this specification, β_2 is the estimated relationship between the locality-level variables X_j and the incidence of the control items on the list, while β_3 is the estimated relationship between the variables X_j and the sensitive item of interest. The coefficient of interest for our analysis of the locality level variation in the incidence of non-programmatic strategies premised on welfare coercion is β_2 .

5.4.1. RESULTS HUNGARY

We first turn to an analysis of the variation in the incidence of welfare coercion across Hungarian localities. Table 5.2. presents the main locality-level covariates used in our analysis of the results in Hungary and descriptive information on the variation for these variables. We use two main sources to construct these variables. For measures of the most significant political variables, we use the results reported by the Hungarian electoral commission. To measure salient economic and social variables, we use results of the 2011 Hungarian census (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal 2013a, 2013b, 2013c).

Table 5.2.

Descriptive statistics on locality-level variation of variables explaining the locality-level variation in the incidence of welfare coercion in Hungary

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
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Fidesz Mayor	0.44	0.50	87
Divided City Hall	0.29	0.46	86
Divided City Council	0.53	0.50	85
Incumbent	0.61	0.49	87
Percent Unemployed	41.8	5.4	87
Percent Employed	31.6	6.40	87
Percent Inactive	33.9	5.37	87
Percent Roma	14.6	13.5	87

Sources: For political variables. Nemzeti Választási Iroda. Various publications
For economic and social variables: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal. 2013a, 2013b, 2013c;
Évi Népszámlálás. Területi adatok. Pecs: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal.

As discussed above, we examine the relationship between several political variables and the incidence of coercive strategies. The first variable of interest is the partisanship of the mayor. The variable FIDESZ MAYOR takes the value 1 if the mayor is affiliated with the incumbent Fidesz party. 44 percent of the localities in our sample have Fidesz mayors. The mayors of the remaining localities where the survey was conducted are independents, which is typical of small Hungarian communities. Finally, we include a variable INCUMBENT that takes the value 1 if the mayor has served for more than one term. 61 percent of localities in our sample have incumbent mayors.

We predicted that mayors' incentives to use coercive strategies will be higher in localities where a sizeable part of the population does not meet eligibility criteria for social policy benefits and where the likelihood of a political conflict among different low income voters is likely to be high. We use several variables to proxy the demographic and political conditions that are likely to enhance the likelihood of this conflict. To proxy the size of this political constituency opposed to workfare employees, we use a measure of the share of the elderly population (ELDERLY) and a measure of the population that is employed (EMPLOYED). We predict that the incidence of welfare coercion will be higher in localities with a higher share of one of these two groups. As this economic conflict is often ethnicized, we also expect that the that conflict over the distribution of workfare benefits will be more pronounced in localities with a higher share of Roma voters (ROMA SHARE).

Finally, we conjectured that coercive strategies are more likely in politically competitive localities. We use two measures of political fragmentation of the locality to examine such competition. The first variable (DIVIDED CITY HALL) is a measure of the local division of power. The variable takes the value 1 if the majority in the local city council differs from the partisanship of the mayor. 29 percent of localities included in our sample have a city council with a different political majority. A second variable (DIVIDED CITY COUNCIL) measures the political fragmentation within the local city council. The variable takes the value 1 if the local city council includes representatives from more than one party and 0 if its representatives are elected from the same party. 53 percent of the localities included in our sample have a fragmented city council.

Table 5.4. presents the results of our analysis of the variation in the incidence of welfare coercion across Hungarian municipalities. We estimate two different models. The first model examines the relationship between the locality-level variables of interest and the incidence of coercive strategies. The second model adds individual-level controls. These covariates include variables that measure the gender, poverty and ethnic status of the individual, a variable measuring whether the individual is a member of the Roma ethnic minority and the measure of whether the respondent feels close to the ruling party Fidesz. We begin by focusing our discussion on the presentation of locality-level results and do not display results on the individual level variables in this chapter.

Consider first our results predicting the variation in the capacity and partisan incentives of different mayors to deploy coercive strategies. We find that the use of these coercive strategies is higher in localities with Fidesz mayors. The workfare program itself was a highly politicized issue during the 2014 election, being praised by Fidesz leaders, such as Orban, as an activist policy solution to Hungary's high and persistent levels of unemployment. The high politicization of the workfare program the national party leadership created opportunities for mayors in different Hungarian localities to condition participation in the workfare program on political support for Fidesz candidates.

Secondly, we find support for our second proposition hypothesizing that the incidence of coercive strategies is higher in localities where the political conflict over the allocation of workfare benefits is more salient. We find that the incidence of coercive strategies is higher in localities with a higher share of Roma voters. A second, less robust finding, is that the incidence of these strategies is higher in localities with a higher share of elderly voters. Both variables are likely to proxy political conflict over the distribution of workfare benefits in these localities, which increases incentives of mayors to turn to coercive strategies to incentivize workfare employees to vote.

Table 5.4.

Variation in the incidence of clientelistic strategies premised on coercion

		Model 1	Model 2
Political and partisan resources	Treatment List	0.03	0.04 25
		(0.06)	(0.08)
	Fidesz Mayor X Treat	0.08*	0.09**
		(0.05)	(0.05)
	Incumbent X Treat	-0.02	-0.02
		(0.06)	(0.06)
	Jobbik Share (2010) X Treat	0.17	0.02
		(0.17)	(0.18)
Locality-level conditions predicted to affect higher incidence of coercive strategies	Roma Share X Treat	0.04*	0.04*
		(0.02)	(0.02)
	Unemployment X Treat	-0.02	-0.02
		(0.02)	(0.02)
	Elderly X Treat	0.03	0.04*
		(0.02)	(0.02)
	Employment X Treat	0.02	0.01
		(0.03)	(0.03)
	Divided City Hall X Treat	0.02	0.03
		(0.04)	(0.04)
	Divided City Council X Treat	-0.05	-0.07
	Direct Effects	X	X
	Observations	1,763	1,664
	Log Likelihood	-624.80	-580.44

5.4.2. RESULTS ROMANIA

We now turn to the analysis of the variation in the incidence of nonprogrammatic strategies across Romanian localities.

The different specifications we propose include measures for the incumbency of the mayor (INCUMBENT) and several measures of mayors' partisanship. We include variables that code the partisanship of mayors in Romania's largest political parties at the time, the Social Democratic Party (PSD MAYOR) and the National Liberal Party (PNL MAYOR). Finally, we include demographic, economic or political variables that predict a higher politicization of the conflict over workfare benefits and a higher incidence of coercive strategies. We can include only a smaller number of variables as compared to the analysis in Hungary. We include a variable measuring the share of the Roma population in the locality (SHARE ROMA), based on information collected as part of the 2011 Romanian census. We proxy political fragmentation in the locality with a variable that takes the value 1, if the city council has a different majority than the mayor (OPPOSED CITY COUNCIL). We expect that such fragmentation in the locality to contribute to a higher incidence of coercive electoral strategies. Table 5.5. presents the variables included in our analysis.

Table 5.5.

List of variables included in analysis of variation in strategies of welfare coercion across Romanian localities

Variable type	Variable name	Coding/Source
Locality-level political conditions	INCUMBENT	1 if mayor has been in office for over one term
	PSD MAYOR	1 if mayor elected in 2010 as PSD mayor
	PNL MAYOR	1 if mayor elected in 2010 as PNL
	SHARE ROMA POPULATION	Share of Roma population in locality based on 2011 census
	UNEMPLOYMENT	Percentage unemployment based on data reported in the 2011 census
	OPPOSED CITY COUNCIL	1 if city council has different partisan majority than mayor

Table 5.5. reports the results in our analysis. We present two different models, which differ whether individual level variables are included. In contrast to Hungary, where mayor incumbency is not predictive of the variation in the incidence of coercive strategies, we find that incumbency is predictive about the incidence in the use of nonprogrammatic strategies premised on welfare coercion in Romania. Consistent with our hypothesis, we find that mayors with longer incumbency who develop more familiarity with the workfare program are more likely to deploy nonprogrammatic strategies premised on workfare coercion. One factor that may account for the difference in the importance of incumbency in Romania as compared to Hungary is the longer history of the workfare program in Romania. In contrast to Hungary, where the workfare program was introduced in 2010, the Romanian policy of workfare was introduced in 2001. We don't find strong differences across mayors of different parties in the use of coercive strategies in Romania.

Secondly, consistent with our conjecture, we also find that the incidence of coercion in Romania is higher in more polarized localities. In Romania, the variable that explains this locality level polarization is the presence of an opposition party controlling the local city council.

Table 5.6
Variation in the incidence of strategies of welfare coercion across Romanian localities

		Model 1	Model 2
	Treatment List	-0.019	0.060
		(0.080)	(0.24)
	PSD mayor X Treat	0.043	0.034
		(0.058)	(0.057)
	PNL mayor X Treat	-0.11	-0.12
		(0.074)	(0.073)
	Incumbent mayor X Treat	0.14**	0.14**
		(0.066)	(0.065)
	Opposed City Council X Treat	0.17**	0.19***
		(0.071)	(0.070)
	Romashare X Treat	0.52	0.26
		(0.37)	(0.38)
	Unemployment X Treat	-0.0021	-0.0017
	Individual controls		X
	Direct Effects	X	X
	Observations	1495	1493
	Log Likelihood	-1199.8	-1177.3

Mixed hierarchical linear regression coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

5.5. CONCLUSION

Drawing on qualitative interviews with voters, candidates and brokers in rural communities and on the analysis of new survey data, this chapter has documented the existence of nonprogrammatic electoral strategies premised on coercion. We have illustrated a variety of pre-electoral and electoral strategies that allow candidates and their brokers to rely on coercion and blackmail at elections.

Our quantitative evidence documents the existence of variation across localities in the incidence of welfare coercion in both Hungary and Romania. The comparison between the results presented in this chapter and the results presented in Chapter 4 illustrates that electoral strategies premised on welfare coercion occur in localities with different

characteristics as compared to as compared to localities where favors. These results lend support to the proposition that clientelistic strategies premised on positive versus negative inducements are driven by different political logics.

We have conjectured that nonprogrammatic strategies involving welfare coercion are more likely to occur in localities where the scope of the workfare program is contested within the locality. Low-income voters who cannot meet the eligibility conditions for the workfare program, such as the elderly or working poor, are likely to express significant distrust or hostility towards workfare employees and are more likely to sanction mayors who seek to win on the basis of strategies premised on welfare favors. We believe that the existence of this political conflict within the locality may explain for some of the variation in the use of nonprogrammatic strategies that use welfare coercion.

Appendix

Table
Test of balance results Hungary

	Version A Mean	Version B Mean	p-value	N
Female	60%	64%	0.05	1860
Roma	25%	26%	0.57	1802
Poor	45%	44%	0.66	1635
Age	53.22	52.93	0.72	1808
Fidesz Supporter	50%	51%	0.52	1388

Table
Test of balance results Romania

	Questionnaire 1	Questionnaire 2	Difference	P Value
Female	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.93
Age	50.11	50.46	0.03	0.69
Roma	0.17	0.20	0.02	0.18
Poor	0.57	0.60	0.03	0.19