

The Political Consequences of Outsider Labour Market Status in the United States: A Micro-level Study

Abstract

This paper contributes to recent research that seeks to understand the political consequences of 'outsider' labour market status. There is an emerging consensus that labour market outsiders have systematically different policy preferences and display systematically different political behavior to securely employed 'insiders' in Europe. Yet the political consequences of outsider status in the United States are less clear. They may be expected to differ from those that have been documented in the European context, because 1) the US is characterized by low employment protection of insiders, and 2) there is evidence that Americans are more reluctant than Europeans to hold governments responsible for personal economic hardship. We therefore use the General Social Survey to examine how outsider labour market status is related to voting behavior and to social policy preferences in the United States. We find that the concept of 'labour market outsider' - as conventionally operationalized - holds little explanatory power in the American context. Disaggregating the outsider category, our results suggest that the political consequences of outsider labour market status may be contingent on individual beliefs about government responsibility.

Keywords:

Labour Market outsiders, political participation, policy preferences, United States, unemployment, non-standard employment

Introduction

Political scientists have long identified labour market status as a key determinant of political behavior – of whether someone votes, their party identification and policy preferences. Income, occupation, unemployment, and employment type all have political consequences (Korpi, 1983, Rueda, 2005, Cusack et al., 2006). This paper examines the political consequences of ‘outsider’ labour market status, that is, of being unemployed or employed on a ‘non-standard’ contract, fixed-term or part-time.

Like unemployment, non-standard employment is becoming increasingly common in advanced post-industrial economies (Rueda, 2005, Kalleberg, 2006, Schwander and Häusermann, 2013). Since the mid-1990s, the incidence of part-time work has increased - slightly in the United States, and more dramatically in the European Union - reaching approximately a fifth of total employment in both regions by 2014 (see chart 1). In both regions, the share of part-time employees who work this way involuntarily has almost doubled since the early 2000s, reaching 10 per cent in the United States and 28 per cent in the European Union in 2014 (see chart 2). Temporary work has been growing steadily faster than employment growth in Europe, accounting for 12 per cent of dependent employment in 2011. In the United States temporary work is less common, but has remained fairly stable accounting for around 3.5 per cent of dependent employment since the late 1990s (see chart 3)(OECD, 2016b, OECD, 2016a, OECD, 2016c).

[Chart 1] [Chart 2] [Chart 3]

Most existing empirical research on the political consequences of ‘outsider’ labour market status is based on the experiences of European countries (Marx, 2014, Marx and Picot, 2013, Schwander and Häusermann, 2013, Häusermann and Schwander, 2011, Emmenegger et al., 2015). On the whole, this research tends to find that outsiders have systematically different policy preferences and display systematically different political behavior to securely employed ‘insiders’. European outsiders tend to be more supportive of a range of social expenditure than insiders, and they are also more likely than insiders to abstain from voting and to vote for small left-wing parties.

Yet there are reasons to expect that the political consequences of outsider status in the United States may not be so stark as those that have been documented in the European context. First, since the United States is characterized by low employment protection of insiders (OECD, 2015b, OECD, 2015a), the interests of insiders and outsiders may not be as far apart as they are in Europe. Second, a cultural reluctance to hold the government responsible for personal economic hardship may weaken the link between the economic risks experienced by outsiders and their political preferences (Schlozman and Verba, 1979, Newman, 1999, Sharone, 2007).

We therefore use three waves of GSS data to examine the political behavior and policy preferences of labour market insiders and outsiders in the United States. We find that the concept of ‘labour market outsider’ indeed holds little explanatory power in the American context. American outsiders do not differ significantly in their policy preferences or in their political behavior from insiders. Disaggregating the outsider category, we find patterns of behavior and preferences that are consistent with the idea that a culture of self-reliance reduces the political consequences of outsider labour market status. Moreover, our disaggregated results do not support the idea that universally low formal employment protection in the US eliminates differences in the political

preferences of outsiders vis-a-vis those of insiders. Our analysis has implications for understanding insider-outsider politics. It suggests that the political consequences of increasingly prevalent unemployment and non-standard work may depend less than previously thought on the 'dualization' resulting from formal employment protection differentials between insiders and outsiders. At the same time, the extent to which individuals hold the state responsible for their personal economic hardship may be more important for explaining the political preferences of outsiders than hitherto assumed. We begin with a review of the relevant literature before moving on to discuss our data, methods and results. We finish with a discussion of our findings and suggestions for further research.

Labour market status, policy preferences, and voting behavior

It has long been a point of departure in political science that individual labour market status affects policy preferences and political behavior. To date, the role of unemployment in shaping preferences and behavior has received the most attention. Unemployment is associated with stronger support for redistribution and government spending on welfare, two forms of government action widely perceived to be in the direct economic interest of the unemployed (Owens and Pedulla, 2014, Margalit, 2013). Consistent with this, and with the idea that voters have at least a rough idea of where parties stand on salient issues, unemployment has been associated with support for mainstream left parties, and more recently with support for smaller, more radical parties (Emmenegger et al., 2015, Kiewiet, 1981, Lindvall and Rueda, 2012).

Unemployment also affects political participation. Writing almost 40 years ago, Scholzman and Verba (1979) found that unemployed Americans were less likely to participate in politics than those in work, though the difference was attributed almost entirely to the differential demographic characteristics between the two groups (See also Scott and Acock, 1979). Subsequent research has more readily claimed a causal link between unemployment and lower political participation (Rosenstone, 1982, Anderson, 2001, Schur, 2003, Lim and Sander, 2013). According to Rosenstone, the unemployed tend to withdraw from politics because in the face of economic hardship scarce resources 'are spent holding body and soul together - surviving - not on remote concerns like politics' (Rosenstone, 1982: 26).

More recent work has built on this insight, as well as on the work of Lane (1959) and Balch (1974), to draw a distinction between *internal efficacy* - the subjective ability of an individual to vote, and *external efficacy* - the subjective responsiveness of political elites to public demands (Emmenegger et al., 2015). Low *internal efficacy* stems directly from the psychological effects of unemployment. Frustrating labour market experiences lower self-esteem, and can lead to feelings of incompetence regarding politics. Low internal efficacy means that the unemployed vote less because they are less likely to have confidence in their own political knowledge and ability to influence politics. By contrast, low *external efficacy* does not depend only on personal labour market experiences, but also on the party political landscape; the unemployed are likely to be less motivated to vote if their interests are poorly represented by political parties, because they are less likely to believe that voting will improve their economic situation (Rosenstone, 1982, Emmenegger et al., 2015).

From economic hardship to risk of economic hardship

More recently, research into the effect of labour market status on political behavior shifted its focus away from the political consequences of sources of economic hardship such as unemployment, towards emphasizing the political consequences of sources of *risk* of economic hardship. Cusack et al. for instance find that individuals in occupations with high unemployment rates demand greater insurance against these risks, in the form of income redistribution by the government (Cusack et al., 2006).

As well as varying by occupational group, the risk of unemployment may vary by type of employment contract. Employment Protection Legislation (EPL) tends to be stronger - and the risk of unemployment consequently lower - in standard forms of employment than in 'non-standard' or 'atypical' forms of employment such as part-time work, self-employment, on-call work, temporary agency work, and work for a contractor (Rueda, 2005). In addition to being associated with lower levels of employment protection and a higher risk of unemployment, in contributory systems non-standard employment is also associated with lower levels of protection against other risks, namely ill-health or old age (Emmenegger et al., 2012b, Kalleberg et al., 2000). For these reasons, political scientists increasingly take into account non-standard employment as well as unemployment when assessing the effect of labour market status on political behavior.

Taken together, the unemployed and those on non-standard employment contracts may be seen as labour market 'outsiders', and contrasted to those with secure jobs, the 'insiders'. Although the categories of insider and outsider cut across skill level, skill specificity, economic sector and age (Schwander and Häusermann, 2013: 252, Esping-Andersen, 1999, Kitschelt and Rehm, 2006), they are distinctive in terms of the risk of economic hardship with which they are associated, and as such they are expected to generate quite different political behavior.

How does the political behavior of outsiders differ from that of insiders?

A great deal of what we know about the political consequences of outsider labour market status is based on research into the experiences of European countries (Marx, 2014, Marx and Picot, 2013, Schwander and Häusermann, 2013, Häusermann and Schwander, 2011). On the whole, this research has found that despite the heterogeneity of insiders and outsiders, the distinction has considerable explanatory potential. Outsiders have systematically different policy preferences and display systematically different political behavior to securely employed insiders.

European outsiders are more supportive than insiders of government spending on both active and passive labour market policies. Boeri et al (2001) and Burgoon and Decker (2010) provide evidence that outsiders demand higher unemployment protection. In line with their material interests, outsiders¹ tend to support higher spending on unemployment benefits, and they want more active job creation than insiders (Schwander and Häusermann, 2013). Labour market status also affects the *type* of social benefits that are favored, with outsiders displaying a stronger preference than insiders for universal access to benefits and services, i.e. for the decoupling of employment records from entitlements (Häusermann 2010).

These distinctive policy preferences make outsiders more likely than insiders to vote for left-of-center parties that are associated with social protection and redistribution (Emmenegger et al., 2015). However, in the post-industrial context the link between mainstream left-of-center parties

¹ Operationalized on the basis of risk over the life-course rather than current labour market status.

and outsider-friendly policies is often tenuous (Rueda, 2005). Where Social Democratic parties represent the interests of insiders over those of outsiders, outsiders may vote for small left-wing parties that are more responsive to their interests, if such alternatives exist (Marx and Picot, 2013, Marx, 2014). In a multi-party context, the desire to express resentment with unresponsive political elites can also lead outsiders to vote for populist or anti-system parties. Alternatively, in two-party-systems feelings of both low internal and low external efficacy lead outsiders to abstain from voting (Emmenegger et al., 2015, Lindvall and Rueda, 2012). Disaggregating the category of outsiders, Marx finds that the atypically employed in particular are more likely to vote for 'small left-wing parties' than insiders are, while the unemployed are more likely to abstain (Marx and Picot, 2013, Marx, 2014).

In sum, then, research into the European context indicates that insiders and outsiders differ in both their policy preferences and their political behavior. Outsiders are more likely than insiders to support increased social expenditure than insiders, and prefer more universal benefit arrangements. While outsiders are likely to support left-of-center parties, they are also more likely than insiders to abstain from voting, and to vote for smaller, more radical parties. To what extent can we expect the political consequences of outsider status in the U.S. to differ from those that have been documented in the European context?

Labour market status and political behavior in the American context

While in many European countries labour markets are dualized and non-standard workers receive significantly less employment protection than standard workers do, in the United States low employment protection is the norm and there is almost no difference between the employment

protection extended to standard and non-standard employees (see chart 4 below) (OECD, 2015b, OECD, 2015a). According to the insider-outsider literature, this should have political consequences. Employment protection differentials between standard and non-standard employment are typically identified as key determinants of the extent to which labour markets are 'dualized', with non-standard employees differing systematically from standard workers in the risks they face and therefore the policy preferences they hold (Rueda, 2005, Emmenegger, 2009, Lindbeck and Snower, 2001).

[Chart 4 here]

Of course, formal employment protection is only one of many factors that can affect the gap between the risks faced by standard and non-standard employees (for a summary, see Davidsson and Naczyk, 2009). Despite low employment protection of insiders, non-standard employment in the United States is still associated with a higher risk of economic hardship than standard employment. As in Europe, non-standard jobs - particularly those based on temporary contracts - are more likely to be 'bad jobs' offering no fringe benefits such as occupational pensions or health insurance (Kalleberg et al., 2000, Houseman, 2001). Moreover, temporary workers do not have the expectation of permanent employment and can be discharged without reputational cost to the employer. This means they are often employed for short periods of time to manage demand fluctuations, and as such face increased risk of unemployment and broken contributions records (Davis-Blake and Uzzi, 1993). In sum, despite not differing much from standard employment in terms of formal employment protection, non-standard work (and temporary work in particular) is still associated with increased economic risk in the United States. Indeed, this is reflected in the fact that temporary employment is particularly likely to be involuntary (Kalleberg et al., 1997).

To our knowledge, there are no studies that compare America and Europe with respect to the economic risks faced by non-standard relative to standard employees. It may be that non-standard workers in Europe and the United States are equally insecure relative to their typically employed compatriots. In this case, Americans in non-standard employment would join unemployed Americans in forming a coherent category of ‘outsiders’ who are more exposed to economic risks than those in standard full-time employment. As a result, we would expect outsider labour market status in the United States to be associated with higher support for social spending, higher support for left-of-centre parties, and lower voting turnout, as it is in the European context.

Nonetheless, it is also plausible that the emphasis placed by the insider-outsider literature on formal employment protection is instructive, and the economic risks faced by standard and non-standard workers in the United States are overall fairly similar. If standard and non-standard workers in the US differ less than Europeans in the economic risks that they face, then following the logic set out above, the two groups can be expected to differ less also in their support for insurance against these risks, in their party identification, and their political participation. We therefore put forward the following three hypotheses:

H1. The unemployed in the United States will be more likely than insiders to favor increased social expenditure, and to hold government responsible for redistribution and maintaining the living standards of the poor. Those in non-standard employment however will not be more likely than insiders to favor such policies.

H2. The unemployed (but not those in non-standard employment) will be more likely than insiders to express a preference for Democratic Party candidates.

H3. The unemployed (but not those in non-standard employment) will be less likely to vote than insiders.

An alternative set of hypotheses however emerge from classic studies that find the social policy preferences of Americans to be largely unrelated to either economic hardship or the risk of economic hardship. These studies suggest that the unemployed in the U.S. do not draw a strong connection between their situation and politics, and tend not to blame the government for their economic problems (Schlozman and Verba, 1979, Sniderman and Brody, 1977). Writing 40 years ago, Schlozman and Verba found that the unemployed tended not to perceive themselves as a disadvantaged class, and even the small minority that did remained unlikely to favor economic policies designed for their benefit.

More recently, a number of studies have indicated that dismissing the link between economic hardship and policy preferences in the United States may be premature. Using panel data, Margalit (2013) offers strong evidence that the shock of becoming unemployed temporarily increases support for higher welfare spending – although long term unemployment is not associated with such a change in preferences. Similarly, Owens and Pedulla (2014) find that the transition from full-time standard employment to unemployment increases support for redistribution. And Hacker et al. (2013) have shown that where individuals have weak private safety nets, economic shocks like unemployment - and the financial worries that follow - increase support for government policies that insure against the risk of the economic shock experienced.

While it is clear that the policy preferences of Americans are affected by personal economic shocks, it is less clear how closely they are associated with *ongoing* economic hardship and risk. Comparative work suggests that the link between policy preferences and economic hardship may be weaker in the United States than it is in Europe. Andreß and Heien (2001) for instance find that evaluations of one's own present and future economic situation have a weaker effect on support for the welfare state in the United States than they do in any other country analyzed. Indeed, Mughan (2007) finds subjective job insecurity to be unrelated to the social policy preferences of American respondents.

The explanation favored by these authors builds on Schlozman and Verba (1979), and tends towards the cultural: a relatively deeply engrained self-help ethos simply discourages Americans from looking to government to solve their personal problems. In other words, Americans tend to internalize unemployment and economic hardship as a personal failing, rather than a political one. This idea, since elaborated by others (Newman, 1999, Sharone, 2007), finds empirical support in recent research linking causal beliefs about social mobility to policy preferences (Alesina and Ferrara, 2005, Heinemann and Hennighausen, 2015). It is also supported by comparative work by Linos and West (2003), who find not only that Americans are more likely than Germans and Norwegians to view their societies as mobile, but also that beliefs about social mobility are particularly closely related to support for government redistribution among American respondents. If this is indeed the case and American social policy preferences are only weakly linked to economic hardship or risk of economic hardship, we can expect to find that in the US neither the unemployed nor the atypically employed are more likely than insiders to support social expenditure and left-of center parties:

H4. Outsiders as a whole will be no more likely than insiders to favor increased social expenditure, nor to hold government responsible for redistribution and maintaining the living standards of the poor.

H5. There will be no significant difference between the party identification of insiders and outsiders in the United States

We might still, however, expect to see differences political participation between insiders and outsiders. The causal mechanism here would be low internal rather than external efficacy. A cultural reluctance to link personal economic hardship to government policy means that outsiders are no more likely than insiders to have policy preferences that are unrepresented by existing political parties. They are therefore no more likely to abstain from voting on the grounds that political elites are unresponsive to their demands (that is, due to low external efficacy). However, low internal efficacy (the subjective ability to make meaningful political decisions) stems directly from feelings of failure in the labour market. It should therefore be associated with experiencing unemployment and poor quality non-standard employment per se, regardless of the extent to which affected individuals hold governments responsible for their personal economic hardship.

As such, we can expect the unemployed to be more likely to experience feelings of low internal efficacy - and hence to vote less - than insiders. Non-standard employees should also be less likely than insiders to vote, to the extent that they also experience feelings of low internal efficacy due to higher levels of economic risk and economic hardship. Therefore, we expect that a cultural reluctance to hold government responsible for personal economic hardship is consistent with H3:

H3. The unemployed (but not those in non-standard employment) will be less likely to vote than insiders.

Data and Measures

The analysis relies on data from the 2002, 2006, and 2010 waves of the General Social Survey (GSS)², a full probability sampling of American households that examines attitudes about a range of social and political issues. Most GSS responses are obtained through face-to-face interviews although in some rare cases also through telephone interviews. Since 2004, the target sample for each survey year is 2700 responses although the number of responses can vary from one wave to the next. The GSS is has a high response rate compared to equivalent surveys (Utts and Heckard 2005). The response rates for the surveys conducted in 2002, 2006, and 2010 were 70.1%, 71.2% and 71.4% respectively. For the purposes of this study, we restrict the sample to our population of interest: the economically active population aged from 18 to 64 years old.³ The sample has been weighted with sample weights provided by the GSS to adjust for the probability of inclusion and for survey non-response.

Drawing from microeconomics (Lindbeck and Snower, 2001, Saint-Paul, 1998, Saint-Paul, 2002), most of the dualization literature distinguishes insiders from outsiders on the basis of current labour market status – whether an individual is employed, unemployed, or in non-standard employment. Respondents who are in standard employment are considered to be insiders, while

² These are the only years of the GSS that allow us to separate labour market insiders from labour market outsiders.

³ This excludes individuals who are inactive in the labour market for various reasons such as students, retirees, and homemakers.

all 'unemployed, involuntary fixed-term employed and involuntary part-time employed' respondents are considered outsiders (Rueda, 2007: 14-15, Emmenegger, 2009).

In this paper we adopt broadly this approach, though we make no distinction between voluntary and involuntary non-standard work arrangements. We believe this choice is justified on two counts. First, because, in the American context, so many of the atypically employed are involuntarily so (Kalleberg et al. 1997). Second, because even where part-time, temporary or fixed-term employment is voluntary, it leads, in the context of social insurance welfare states, to lower social rights and a higher risk of poverty than continuous typical employment (Schwander and Häusermann, 2013, Palier, 2010, Emmenegger et al., 2012a). We therefore define labour market outsiders to be individuals who find themselves in non-standard employment or unemployment. Labour market insiders are individuals who are in full time employment that is regular and permanent.

To test our hypotheses, we further disaggregate labour market outsiders into three distinct groups: 1) part-time workers, 2) temporary workers, and 3) unemployed workers. For the purposes of this analysis no person can belong to more than one outsider type. In this study, individuals who are both part-time and temporary workers are categorized as temporary workers. This is done to distinguish individuals who are in permanent, part-time work whose labour market situation is more stable than part-time workers on a temporary contract (Marx and Picot, 2013). Table 1 provides descriptive information on the distribution of individuals across these different categories in our sample.

[Table 1 here]

We begin by examining the relationship between labour market outsider status and preferences about the role of government. Three types of policy preferences are considered 1) support for increased federal welfare spending 2) support for the view that it is the government's responsibility to improve the standard of living of the poor, and 3) support for view that it is the government's responsibility to reduce income differences between the rich and the poor. Next, we examine the relationship between being a labour market outsider and party identification on the right to left political spectrum, ranging from strong democrat to strong republican. Finally we consider the relationship between outsider status and whether the individual voted in the last election. We consider this a binary outcome (yes or no) and individuals who are not eligible to vote are omitted from the sample. Summary statistics of all variables can be found in Table 2.

Our measures of political behaviour are self-reported by respondents through the survey. Measuring individual's policy preferences faces several practical limitations including the possibility of social desirability bias (Karp and Brockington 2005), response instability (Feldman 1989), sensitivity to the wording of questions (Alwin and Krosnick 1991), and a loss of information which occurs by measuring preferences as ordinal categorical variables although policy preference are conceptually continuous (Tausanovitch and Warshaw 2013). While these limitations cannot be fully avoided and are inherent to survey research, we control for age and education - two factors which influence a respondent's ability to answer survey questions reliability (Alwin and Krosnick 1991) - as a compensatory measure. We also examine several different measures of policy preferences as a means of grasping a more reliable understanding of the relationship between labour market status and policy preferences.

In all models, we use a series of control variables that also have a confounding influence on political behaviour and preferences. First we include a series of standard socio-economic controls: a person's age, gender, education, occupation, income, race and ethnicity. Age-squared is also included to control for the exponential effects of age on political behaviour. We also include controls for public sector employment, labour union membership, and religiosity, since these are associated with stronger preferences for income redistribution and distinct attitudes towards welfare and preferences for government intervention (Marx 2015; Svallfors 1997, 2004).

[Table 2]

We estimate a series of regressions with occupation and year dummies to put our hypotheses to an empirical test. We estimate logistic regressions for the individuals' propensity to vote (vote), and ordinal logistic regressions for welfare spending preferences. Party identification and preferences for income distribution are estimated with linear regression since these outcome measures have more than five ordinal categories and the underlying preferences can be assumed to be continuous. We present the regression results in separate models that compare each type of labour market outsider sub-group (part-time, temporary, and unemployed) to labour market insiders. The sample size for regression models which examine voting behaviour and party identification are notably larger than the sample size for models which examine policy preferences, since these questions are asked of every respondent while the questions regarding policy preferences are only asked of a random portion of respondents.

Results

We begin by examining the relationship between outsider labour market status and policy preferences regarding government welfare spending. Table 3 displays the results of ordered logistic models that show the preferences for government to increase welfare spending over labour market status. Higher values of preferences indicate greater support for welfare spending. In Model 1, the results show that labour market outsiders, taken as a whole, do not have significantly different welfare preferences than labour market insiders. Model 2 then disaggregates the outsider category, comparing labour market insiders to part-time workers, temporary workers, and the unemployed. In Model 2 we find that being unemployed is significantly associated with preferences for increasing welfare spending when compared with individuals who are full time and permanently employed ($\beta=0.777$, $p<0.001$). However, we do not observe any significant differences between part-time workers and insiders, nor between temporary workers and insiders.

[Table 3 here]

We also examine how preferences for improving the standard of living of the poor and reducing income differences between the rich and the poor vary depending on a person's employment arrangements. In Table 4, Models 1 and 2 shows the results of labour market status regressed over a person's preferences for improving the standard of living of the poor while Models 3 and 4 shows a person's labour market status regressed over preferences for reducing income differences between the rich and the poor. In Models 1 and 3, there are no significant differences between labour market insiders and outsiders for either policy preference. In Models 2 and 4, we we disaggregate the category of labour market outsiders, and again do not find any consistent differences between each outsider sub-group.

[Table 4 here]

Regarding party identification, we observe no significant difference between labour market insiders outsiders. Table 5 shows the linear regressions that regress an individual's labour market status on his or her party identification. High values in party identification reflect a strong right-wing orientation (strong republican) while lower values represent a strong left-wing orientation (strong democrat). Again, in Model 2 we do not find that any of the outsider sub-categories show significant differences in party orientation when compared to labour market insiders.

[Table 5 here]

Finally, we turn to political participation. Table 6 displays the results of the logistic regressions of voting in the last national election on labour market status. Once again, we use dichotomous variable that compares labour market insiders to labour market outsiders in Model 1. Model 1 shows that labour market outsiders, taken as a whole, are not significantly less likely to vote in national elections than insiders. Yet in Model 2, when examining the relationship within outsider sub-groups, we find that temporary workers and the unemployed are significantly less likely to have voted in the last election while part-time workers are more likely to have voted. These results are robust when controlling for a person's region of residence and if they have a spouse that is full-time employed (results obtainable on request).

In substantive terms, the effect of temporary work on voting appears less important, as we observe that the magnitude of the coefficient for temporary workers is notably smaller than the coefficients

for part-time workers and unemployed individuals. Table 6 reports the coefficient in terms of log odds but for ease of interpretation these coefficients can be considered in terms of their predicted probabilities. When all other variables are held at their means, part-time workers have a 75%, predicted probability of voting while temporary workers and unemployed individuals have 66% and 61% predicted probability of voting, respectively.

[Table 6 here]

While we are not substantively interested in the control variables, it is worth briefly noting that some standard controls included in the models do not achieve significance. Across the models, the most consistent significant antecedents to social policy preferences, party identification and voting are a person's income and race. Regarding the other controls, these sometimes behave as expected: better educated, more religious individuals, and public sector employees are more likely to vote; better educated individuals or labour union members are more likely to identify as Democrats. Yet a person's age, religiosity, union membership, and public sector employment do not consistently predict social policy preferences in our models. This suggests that certain socio-demographic characteristics which are common predictors in Europe may behave differently in the United States where race and income appear to be more relevant predictors of political behaviour, particularly when it comes to social policy preferences.

We are cautious in drawing causal inferences from this study. Certainly, the data at hand is cross-sectional and does not offer a longitudinal perspective on political participation and preferences. In other words, we are not able to rule out the possibility that individuals who are unemployed or atypically employed have certain inherent characteristics which are causally related to certain political behaviors. Moreover, we also cannot be confident that individuals with certain behaviors

and preferences are not more likely to opt for atypical arrangements or occupations that may present a higher risk of unemployment, although this reverse causality is not supported by previous theoretical and empirical work. In the next section, we discuss our results in light of these limitations.

Discussion and Conclusion

While the consensus from analyses set in the European context is that outsiders have systematically different social policy preferences to insiders, we noted two reasons to expect this may not be the case in the United States. First, the low employment protection afforded to standard employees in America led us to hypothesize that the unemployed, but not non-standard employees, would express different social policy preferences to insiders (H1). At the same time, sensitized to the importance of beliefs about government responsibility from prior research, we put forward a competing ‘cultural’ hypothesis of no significant differences between insider and outsider policy preferences (H4).

Our results support H4. We found no significant differences between the social policy preferences of outsiders and those of insiders, on any of our three measures of policy preferences. Only regarding the question of welfare expenditure did one subcategory of outsiders (the unemployed) display significantly different preferences to those of insiders, being significantly more likely to support increased welfare spending.

Next, we examined party identification. We found support for H5, that there is no significant difference between the party identification of insiders and any of the outsider subgroups. The fact

that the unemployed are not significantly more likely to vote Democrat than insiders is consistent with our claim that the policy preferences of the unemployed are not in any robust way significantly different to those of insiders, and by extension with the cultural hypothesis (H4).

Finally, we turned our attention to political participation. We hypothesized that the unemployed in the United States will be more likely than insiders to abstain from voting, because they will be more likely to experience feelings of low internal and external efficacy. Non-standard employees should be no more likely than insiders to experience feelings of low internal and external efficacy and abstain from voting, given universally low levels of employment protection (H3). Since low internal efficacy is associated with labour market disadvantage *regardless* of the extent to which affected individuals hold governments responsible for their situation, hypothesis H3 is also consistent with the idea that patterns of political participation are shaped by a culture of self-reliance.

As expected, we find that the unemployed are significantly less likely to vote than insiders. However, temporary workers are significantly less likely to vote than insiders, and part-time workers are significantly more so. This suggests that non-standard employees in the United States are not homogenous in the risks they face. Despite universally low levels of employment protection, temporary workers may still be more economically vulnerable than those on standard contracts due to their short-term nature and lack of fringe benefits (Kalleberg et al., 2000, Houseman, 2001, Davis-Blake and Uzzi, 1993). By contrast, part-time employees may not experience much greater economic vulnerability than standard workers. If this is the case, higher turnout rates of part-time workers may reflect, as Schlozman et al. (1999) suggest, the effect of lower opportunity costs of voting due to fewer hours worked.

Overall, our findings cast doubt on the dualization literature's contention that 'outsiderness' constitutes a new and coherent category of labour market vulnerability with explanatory power – at least in the American context. In the United States, labour market insiders and outsiders turn out to be remarkably similar in terms of their policy preferences and voting behavior. This is striking in light of strong evidence that in the European context outsiders are more likely than insiders to want increased social expenditure and universal benefit arrangements, to support mainstream and radical left-of-center parties, and to abstain from voting.

We have discussed two possible reasons for the weak explanatory power of 'outsiderness' in the United States. First, the similar levels of employment protection extended to standard and non-standard workers and second, a cultural reluctance of Americans to look to government to solve their 'personal' problems. We see the latter explanation as more consistent with our findings. We find *both* non-standard employees *and* the unemployed to have similar policy preferences and party preferences to insiders. While the case could be made that non-standard employees are not more economically vulnerable than insiders in the United States due to low employment protection differentials, the same cannot be said of the unemployed. There must be another reason why the unemployed do not consistently demand more government protection and vote accordingly.

However, cultural reluctance to hold government responsible for personal economic hardship does not fully break the link between labour market status and political behavior - temporary workers and the unemployed vote less than standard workers. Drawing on the distinction between internal and external efficacy, this can be understood in light of the fact that labour market status

is expected to affect political participation not only by reducing the subjective responsiveness of political elites to personal economic hardship (external efficacy), but also by reducing the subjective ability of individuals to meaningfully participate in politics (internal efficacy). The latter is a psychological effect that stems directly from feelings of inadequacy in the labour market, and does not depend on the extent to which governments are blamed for personal economic hardship.

Our analysis has implications for understanding insider-outsider politics. We find that the political consequences of increasingly prevalent unemployment and non-standard work are sensitive to institutional context. In particular, our analysis suggests that these consequences may depend less than previously thought on formal employment protection differentials between insiders and outsiders. At the same time, the extent to which individuals hold the state responsible for their personal economic hardship may be more important for explaining the political consequences of outsider labour market status than hitherto assumed. Future research might examine more closely how economic risks stemming from individual labour market status interact with individual beliefs about government responsibility to affect political behavior. It would be fruitful for instance to measure how labour market status in Europe and the United States is associated with subjective economic insecurity or economic insecurity over the life-course, and how beliefs about the role of government temper the effect of such insecurity cross-nationally. In this paper, we hope to have set the scene for such interesting new work.

Tables

Table 1. Labour Market Insiders and Outsiders, Sample Description

	<i>n</i>
labour market insiders	3,056
labour market outsiders	2,292
temporary workers	1,480
part-time workers	415
unemployed workers	397
total sample	5,348

GSS Survey Years: 2002, 2006, 2010

Table 2. Description of Variables in the Analysis

Variable Name	Operationalization/GSS Survey Question	Range	Mean/proportion(unweighted)
labour market outsider	dummy=1 if temporary or part-time work, or is unemployed	0-1	0.37
labour market status		1-4	1.65
	insider	1	57.14
	part-time	2	7.76
	temporary	3	27.67
	currently unemployed	4	7.42
voted in last election	dummy=1 if voted in last presidential election	0-1	0.65
party identification	“Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?” Responses: strong democrat (0) to strong republican (6)	0-6	2.87
support for increased welfare spending	“Are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on welfare? “Too much” (1) to “ too little” (3).”	1-3*	2.20
government’s responsibility to improve the standard of living of the poor	“Some people think that the government in Washington should do everything possible to improve the standard of living of all poor Americans. Other people think it is not the government's responsibility, and that each person should take care of himself. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or	1-5	2.89

	haven't you have up your mind on this?" People should help themselves (1) to government's responsibility (5).		
the government's responsibility to reduce income differences	<p>“Some people think that the government in Washington ought to reduce the income differences between the rich and the poor, perhaps by raising the taxes of wealthy families or by giving income assistance to the poor. Others think that the government should not concern itself with reducing this income difference between the rich and the poor. Think of a score of 1 as meaning that the government ought to reduce the income differences between rich and poor, and a score of 7 meaning that the government should not concern itself with reducing income differences. What score between 1 and 7 comes closest to the way you feel?”</p>	1-7	3.76
age	respondent's age in years	18-64	40.77
college	dummy=1 if has a bachelor degree	0-1	0.29
religious	dummy=1 if has a religious preference that is not “none”	0-1	0.82
union membership	dummy=1 if member of a union or similar organization	0-1	0.08
public sector employee	Dummy = 1 if works in public sector	0-1	0.17
female	Dummy=1 if female	0-1	0.5

household income	23 pre-tax income groups ranging from (1=less than 1,000) to (23=more than 110,000).	1-23	17.22
race/ethnicity	respondent's race/ethnicity	1-3	1.3
	white	1	73.90
	black/African American	2	14.84
	other	3	11.25
occupation	ISCO-88 ten digit occupation groups. Military professionals excluded.	1-10	4.37

*The order of the responses from the GSS survey question have been reversed to ease interpretation

Table 3. Ordered Logistic Regressions Showing Labour Market Insider vs. Outsider Preferences for Welfare Spending

	(1)	(2)
labour market outsiders (ref=insiders)	0.131	
	(0.109)	
labour market status (ref=insiders)		
temporary		-0.180
		(0.151)
part-time		0.107
		(0.179)
unemployed		0.777***
		(0.167)
age	0.022	0.023
	(0.032)	(0.032)
age ²	-0.000	-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)
college (1=yes)	0.227	0.241*
	(0.122)	(0.122)
religious (1=yes)	-0.200	-0.210
	(0.130)	(0.128)
union membership (1=yes)	-0.141	-0.122
	(0.212)	(0.212)
public sector employee (1=yes)	-0.214	-0.232
	(0.135)	(0.136)
female (1=yes)	0.051	0.039
	(0.106)	(0.107)
household income	-0.053***	-0.047***
	(0.013)	(0.012)
race/ethnicity (ref=white)		
Black/African American	0.581***	0.553***
	(0.146)	(0.147)
Other	0.305	0.334*
	(0.160)	(0.161)
occupation dummies	yes	yes
year dummies	yes	yes
Cut 1	-0.251	-0.134
	(0.633)	(0.638)
Cut 2	1.421*	1.555*
	(0.634)	(0.640)
<i>N</i>	1,958	1,958

Source: General Social Survey 2002, 2004, 2006.

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$. Standard errors in parentheses. Occupation dummies: ISCO-88 one digit groups. Population Weights applied.

Table 4. OLS Regressions showing Labour Market Insider vs. Outsider Preferences for the Role of Government

	Improve the standard of living of the poor		Reduce income differences	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
labour market outsiders (ref=insiders)	-0.045 (0.060)		-0.061 (0.101)	
labour market status (ref=insiders)				
temporary		-0.054 (0.082)		-0.138 (0.140)
part-time		-0.128 (0.098)		-0.086 (0.163)
unemployed		0.091 (0.097)		0.147 (0.165)
age	0.039* (0.018)	0.038* (0.018)	0.022 (0.029)	0.023 (0.029)
age ²	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
college (1=yes)	0.029 (0.069)	0.027 (0.069)	-0.254* (0.119)	-0.255* (0.119)
religious (1=yes)	-0.067 (0.068)	-0.067 (0.068)	-0.268* (0.116)	-0.269* (0.116)
union membership (1=yes)	-0.071 (0.093)	-0.067 (0.093)	0.161 (0.152)	0.163 (0.152)
public sector employee (1=yes)	-0.072 (0.073)	-0.070 (0.073)	0.054 (0.122)	0.052 (0.122)
female (1=yes)	0.168** (0.059)	0.176** (0.059)	0.160 (0.100)	0.162 (0.099)
household income	-0.044*** (0.007)	-0.043*** (0.007)	-0.065*** (0.011)	-0.062*** (0.011)
race/ethnicity (ref=white)				
Black/African American	0.498*** (0.081)	0.496*** (0.081)	0.479*** (0.131)	0.474*** (0.131)
Other	0.277*** (0.084)	0.274** (0.084)	0.456** (0.147)	0.467** (0.148)
occupation dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes
year dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes
Constant	3.006*** (0.355)	3.001*** (0.354)	5.214*** (0.596)	5.164*** (0.588)
R ²	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
N	2,189	2,189	2,208	2,208

Source: General Social Survey 2002, 2004, 2006.

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$. Standard errors in parentheses. Occupation dummies: ISCO-88 one digit groups. Population Weights applied.

Table 5. OLS Regressions showing the Party Identification of Labour Market Insiders vs. Outsiders

	(1)	(2)
labour market outsiders (ref=insiders)	0.035 (0.063)	
labour market status (ref=insiders)		
temporary		0.050 (0.074)
part-time		0.159 (0.117)
unemployed		-0.182 (0.111)
age	0.016 (0.019)	0.018 (0.018)
age ²	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
college (1=yes)	-0.168* (0.080)	-0.167* (0.080)
religious (1=yes)	0.648*** (0.071)	0.648*** (0.071)
union membership (1=yes)	-0.349** (0.110)	-0.355** (0.110)
public sector employee (1=yes)	-0.069 (0.084)	-0.074 (0.084)
female (1=yes)	-0.411*** (0.064)	-0.420*** (0.064)
household income	0.020** (0.007)	0.018** (0.007)
race/ethnicity (ref=white)		
Black/African American	-1.698*** (0.079)	-1.689*** (0.079)
Other	-0.881*** (0.090)	-0.875*** (0.089)
occupation dummies	yes	yes
year dummies	yes	yes
Constant	2.410*** (0.363)	2.406*** (0.362)
<i>R</i> ²	0.14	0.14
<i>N</i>	4,738	4,738

Source: General Social Survey 2002, 2004, 2006.

Notes; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$. Standard errors in parentheses. Occupation dummies: ISCO-88 one digit groups. Population Weights applied.

Table 6. Logistic Regressions Showing Whether Respondent Voted in Last Election, Labour Market Insiders vs. Outsiders

	(1)	(2)
labour market outsiders (ref=insiders)	-0.123 (0.082)	
labour market status (ref=insiders)		
temporary		-0.199* (0.097)
part-time		0.305* (0.153)
unemployed		-0.386** (0.147)
age	0.035 (0.025)	0.044 (0.025)
age ²	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
college (1=yes)	0.687*** (0.107)	0.693*** (0.108)
religious (1=yes)	0.210* (0.102)	0.201* (0.102)
union membership (1=yes)	0.119 (0.144)	0.111 (0.144)
public sector employee (1=yes)	0.541*** (0.116)	0.533*** (0.117)
female (1=yes)	0.028 (0.085)	-0.006 (0.085)
household income	0.085*** (0.009)	0.084*** (0.010)
race/ethnicity (ref=white)		
Black/African American	0.465*** (0.119)	0.475*** (0.119)
Other	-0.990*** (0.127)	-0.973*** (0.126)
occupation dummies	yes	yes
year dummies	yes	yes
constant	-2.247*** (0.500)	-2.399*** (0.497)
<i>N</i>	4,843	4,843

Source: General Social Survey 2002, 2004, 2006.

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$. Standard errors in parentheses. Occupation dummies: ISCO-88 one digit groups. Population Weights applied.

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