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Paul Marx: *The Political Behaviour of Temporary Workers*

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This book aims to describe and clarify the political views and behaviour of temporary workers in different European countries. It analyses temporary workers' policy preferences, party preferences, and voting behaviour, and also discusses whether temporary workers are politically alienated.

Marx presents several theoretical assumptions on the political preferences and behaviour of temporary workers. First, according to the risk-based approach, insecure (temporary) workers have a higher political demand for generous welfare state policies and protection against the material consequences of job loss. Second, the insider-outsider theory also predicts that outsiders (temporary workers) support social protection. But this theory seems to imply that a more relevant factor for outsiders is the removal of mobility barriers in the labour market (such as job security regulation, protecting insiders). Another political interest of temporary workers is the expansion of active labour market policies, which help outsiders, but are financed mostly by insiders. Based on these interests, insider-

outsider theory expects insiders to support social democratic parties, while outsiders are expected to support market-liberal parties. Another possibility is that outsiders become frustrated with unresponsive political elites and therefore support radical parties or withdraw from politics. Third, Marx advocates an argument reconciling the two previous perspectives. He expects temporary workers to support small left parties (because of the insurance motive postulated by the risk approach), but not the social democrats (because they tend to support the interests of insiders). Moreover, small left parties allow voicing frustration with mainstream parties. Fourth, the author presents a social psychology perspective. He argues that temporary workers could experience relative deprivation if they expect to be stuck in a cycle of temporary work and unemployment. As relatively deprived temporary workers could attribute responsibility for their unfavourable job situation to the government, they are expected to vote against the incumbent government.

Based on his analyses, Marx concludes that temporary workers are more in favour of the welfare state and less in favour of job security regulations compared to permanent workers. Furthermore, his evidence demonstrates that temporary workers tend to support new left parties, such as greens, but also far left parties, albeit to a lesser extent. Contrary to the risk approach, social democrats seem to get little support from temporary workers. Next, Marx shows that temporary workers are more likely to hold the government responsible for their job situation and to vote against it. However, these tendencies are conditional upon negative expectations surrounding the future job situation. Finally, Marx does not find support for the hypothesis that temporary workers can be described as politically apathetic or alienated. General tendencies of lower political interest, efficacy, or trust among temporary workers seem to be ab-

sent. However, a negative but small effect of temporary employment on satisfaction with democracy is observed.

This book explores an underdeveloped topic in the literature, which can certainly be considered a challenge. It is well-written and the author substantiates his theoretical reasoning and empirical choices in a convincing way. To test his hypotheses, Marx uses three different datasets: the European Social Survey (ESS), the German Longitudinal Election Study and the YouGov Survey (Spain, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden). This is definitely an added value. The analyses are based on various complementary variables from different datasets. This provides the reader with information on different facets of the political opinions and behaviour of temporary workers. The book also proposes a new theory, arguing that temporary workers tend to support new left parties, which is an important contribution to the literature. Moreover, the results seem to support this new theory.

Despite its interesting new insights, the research presented in this book has some limitations. First, Marx briefly suggests that workers who lose the competition for good (permanent) jobs will probably be more susceptible to populism and will more often vote for radical and anti-establishment parties. Even though he theoretically connects disenchantment to far right parties, he does not elaborate on the arguments underlying this assumption. In my opinion, this is a shortcoming in the overview of theories aiming to predict the political views and behaviour of temporary workers as presented by the author. The relative deprivation argument needs to be connected in more detail to the preference for far right parties. Marx argues that relative deprivation emerges if people are deprived of something that others have. Social comparisons hence lead to a sense of entitlement. If people realise that their 'referent' other is in a more favourable position, they tend to develop feelings

of anger, resentment, or depression. These emotional reactions in turn lead to attitudinal and behavioural responses (p. 48). Deprived temporary workers are thus expected to vote against the government, to withdraw from politics or to vote for radical parties. I believe far right, xenophobic parties might be an option, since it is plausible that deprived workers will blame others for their 'failure'. These 'others' can be the incumbent government, but also migrants. Standing [2011] states that the 'precariat' (a group of workers characterised by different forms of insecurity and thus often including temporary workers) is anxious and insecure. Consequently, they are easily seduced to support populist and authoritarian actions towards those depicted as a threat, such as migrants. A commonly used argument of far right parties is that migrants are stealing 'our' jobs. In this discourse migrants become the scapegoat, and temporary workers can ascribe their 'inferior' employment status to migrants stealing (good) jobs. This could particularly be a plausible theory in the context of the current refugee crisis in Europe.

A second limitation is that, although Marx recognises that temporary workers form a heterogeneous group, he is not able to make a distinction between different kinds of temporary workers in the analysis. I acknowledge that this is a limitation of the data. But given the fact that a part of the analyses was based on self-collected data in four countries, I believe it would have been of great interest to collect more surveys amongst different kinds of temporary workers and to include more specific questions about their temporary status (e.g. contract duration, motives for accepting temporary work). In my view, differences in groups of temporary workers could potentially have important implications on their political views and behaviour. Temporary agency work, for example, is a marginal phenomenon in many European countries, but it is slightly growing.

Possibly, temporary agency workers hold different political views compared to other kinds of temporary workers. They are confronted with two employers (the agency and the client-employer) and are sent to different employers/workplaces on a regular basis. Therefore, they can be considered the most vulnerable and 'unstable' temporary workers, which could make them susceptible to deprivation. By contrast, some temporary workers are employed on contracts of a year or several years. These workers will probably not suffer from their unstable status to the same extent as temporary agency workers. Also the duration of temporary employment can determine temporary workers' political views and behaviour. Temporary workers who get stuck in a vicious circle of temporary contracts might be more vulnerable to deprivation and consequently develop sympathy for radical parties or withdraw from politics. In light of these examples, it would have been interesting if the author had reflected in more detail on the implications of this limitation—for example, in the discussion of his results. Variations in being temporarily employed could have an impact on temporary workers' view of society, and consequently on their political views and behaviour. Possibly the lack of variations regarding 'temporariness' in the analyses has masked some effects in specific groups of temporary workers.

Another factor is volition. The author describes different motives for accepting temporary work. However, he does not reflect on the possible implications of being (in)voluntarily employed in temporary employment on political views and behaviour. Furthermore, positive future employment expectations and high perceived employability might be important factors for workers' political views and behaviour because they can provide workers with hope and control over their career. Marx includes 'perceived unemployment risk' in his analyses, which is a relevant indicator.

However, measuring employability would be a better option. Employability refers to workers' capability of getting new work on the labour market based on their skills and experience [Silla et al. 2009]. It reflects a worker's long-term employment chances and not only a single chance of getting unemployed in the next three years.

In addition, Marx could not focus on country differences due to the low amount of temporary workers per country in the ESS. Although he recognises that the country-specific context might be very important for the political views of temporary workers, more discussion regarding this limitation would have been welcome. An interesting issue here is whether differences in equal treatment regulation for temporary (agency) workers (regarding wages, benefits, working hours) influence the political views of temporary (agency) workers. Marx points out the differences between generous (the Netherlands and Sweden) and less generous welfare states (Spain and Poland) regarding the perceptions of fairness of labour market dualism and the role of politicians. However, countries with the most generous welfare state do not seem to be the ones that implement the most equal treatment regulation (in case of temporary agency employment) [Schömann and Guedes 2012]. The author could have reflected on this issue. Moreover, temporary employment rates tend to be lower in countries where permanent work is loosely regulated. In the UK, for example, temporary employment is a marginal phenomenon, but permanent contracts often lack protective regulation and are often not covered by collective bargaining. Marx collected data from four countries characterised by high temporary employment rates. I wonder if analyses using data from a country with a low temporary employment rate would have resulted in different insights.

Furthermore, in his conclusion, Marx suggests that future research should focus

on how positions regarding the 'social policies' of political parties are actually perceived and interpreted by vulnerable workers. In my opinion, in-depth interviews with different kinds of temporary workers could focus on these perceptions and could provide us with a deeper understanding of the associations found in survey research. In my own in-depth interviews with temporary agency workers about the quality of their employment and the relation with health and well-being [Bosmans et al. 2015], political issues and frustrations regarding the government and the legislation emerged without explicitly being inquired into. I think this is an indication that interviewing temporary workers about their political views and behaviour could yield interesting results. Such interviews can unravel differences between several groups of temporary workers and can inspire theoretical reasoning as to why some associations are (not) found in survey research.

Finally, as mentioned by Marx, voting decisions are the result of complex socio-psychological processes and are influenced by a myriad of factors idiosyncratic to the context of a specific election (p. 119). One can wonder to which extent temporary workers' employment status has an influence on their voting behaviour. Many people will for example vote for green parties because of their environmental position and not because of the labour market policies proposed by these parties. Marx controls for statements regarding the environment and gay rights in his analyses, which is a well-considered idea. Nevertheless, other aspects might also be important. Here too, qualitative research can offer some more insights. In sum, qualitative research would be very useful to understand the pathways linking temporary employment to political views and behaviour.

All in all, I recommend this book because it presents the reader with interesting new insights on a growing group of

workers in Western labour markets and the implications this could have on political behaviour and democracy. Moreover, temporary employment may possibly grow further due to the neoliberal discourse in many European countries, which makes the results of the book even more important.

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Health care and illness operate in a world of interacting systems, each with their own individual functional purpose and with overlapping and unique elements. At first glance, it would seem that the primary purpose of a hospital, for example, is to practice medicine. However, hospitals have economic and legal systems, among others, that are interacting with medical staff which enable them to practice medicine in mod-