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Public perceptions of non-standard employment and support for inclusive reforms

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Abstract

As non-standard forms of employment have undergone a significant expansion over the past decades across advanced European countries, we currently know little about how populations perceive this expansion and its consequences. Analyzing public opinion data generated by a 15-country survey implemented by the TransEuroWorkS project in the Spring of 2025, this paper sets out to examine the following questions. How do populations assess the disadvantages faced by non-standard workers in terms of their wages and working conditions? How do they perceive their own access to social benefits in comparison to that of other categories workers, including non-standard workers? And do they support inclusive policy reforms, such as improving the social benefits coverage of non-standard workers or restricting the use of short-term and other non-standard work contracts? Our findings show that non-standard workers are strongly aware of the extent of their disadvantages in terms of access to social benefits, but show only little concern for disadvantages related to their wages and working conditions. Moreover, we show that for all categories of workers, feeling that one's access to social benefits is worse than that of other categories of workers is associated with more support for inclusive policy reforms. Finally, we also show that among the group of standard full time workers, who still represent the majority of the labor force in most European countries, individuals from occupational groups that are more exposed to non-standard employment are also more likely to support the aforementioned inclusive policy reforms.

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Introduction

In advanced capitalist economies, the last 30 or 40 years have seen the rise of forms of employment that diverge from the dominant postwar model of full-time work with an indefinite employment contract. The term “non-standard employment” (NSE) is commonly used to encompass part-time employment with an indefinite contract, full-time as well part-time employment with a fixed-term contract, employment on a contract without guaranteed hours of work (the contractual arrangement typically used by temp work agencies), freelance work and various forms of “bogus self-employment” (most common among platform workers). While many authors note that some of these contractual arrangements are more precarious than others, existing literature documents extensive disadvantages associated with NSE in general. By comparison to standard workers, non-standard workers tend to earn less and are more likely to be fired. They are less well-protected by collective bargaining agreements and less likely to have workplace representatives that defend their interests (rights) vis-à-vis management. In addition, many non-standard workers lack access to social benefits, most importantly unemployment and sick pay insurance benefits.

A striking feature of the literature on this topic is that it has little to say about subjective perceptions of employment disadvantages and social protection gaps associated with NSE. We seek to address this lacuna by analyzing data generated from the TransEuroWorkS Public Opinion Survey (Van Vliet et al., 2025), an original 15-country survey fielded in the Spring of 2025, conceived in collaboration with other participants in the Horizon project “TransEuroWorkS” (TEWS).¹ In the first instance, we are interested in whether non-standard workers perceive and resent their disadvantages with respect to employment prospects, working conditions and access to social benefits, and whether such perceptions differ across categories of non-standard workers. We are also interested in the perceptions of survey respondents with full-time jobs and indefinite contracts. Are they aware of the advantages that they enjoy? Do they perceive the conditions of non-standard workers as unfair? Or do they perhaps perceive the growth of NSE as a threat to their own employment conditions? To anticipate, our data suggest that fixed-term and other precarious workers are less aware of inequalities with respect to employment than full-time and part-time workers on indefinite contracts, but are highly aware of inequalities with respect to protection/compensation provided by the welfare state.

We also seek to contribute to the literature on “insider-outsider politics.” The dominant view in this literature posits that the expansion of NSE has been accompanied by a growing divide within the working class, with labor-market insiders feeling increasingly secure and being less interested in (willing to pay for) compensation for the unemployed or active labor-market policies designed to boost the employability of low-skill workers. From this perspective, retreats from redistributive/compensatory policies reflect the changing preferences and persistent political influence of the labor-market insiders. By contrast, we believe that the cleavage between insiders and outsiders

¹With county samples (representative of the resident adult population) ranging between 1,500 and 3,000 respondents, the survey was fielded (by IPSOS) in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

has actually become less pronounced over the last two decades (for reasons that we set out below). Our analysis of TEWS survey data from 2025 shows that many standard workers as well as non-standard workers support policy initiatives designed to redress disadvantages/inequalities associated with NSE.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In the next section, we review existing literature, starting with the political science literature on labor-market dualization. The following section introduces the classification of “employment profiles” that we employ to organize and analyze data from the TEWS survey. Our empirical analysis then proceeds in two steps. First, we present and analyze perceptions of employment conditions of non-standard relative to standard workers and of respondents’ relative access social benefits. Secondly, we present and analyze responses to survey questions intended to assess support for extending social benefits access to non-standard workers and for restricting fixed-term employment. The final section summarizes our findings and identifies questions for further research.

Literature review

Inspired by new thinking in mainstream economics, most notably Lindbeck and Snower (1988), political scientists and political sociologists working on comparative political economy with a focus on Western Europe discovered labor-market dualization in the early 2000s. Rueda (2005, 2007, 2014) played a pioneering role in the development of this literature. Subsequent contributions have criticized and qualified some of Rueda’s claims, but his work remains, we think, emblematic of the political science literature on this topic (see Emmenegger et al. (2012)), and serves as a useful foil for our inquiry.

The dualization literature proceeds from the observation that many governments in the 1960s and the 1970s responded to trade-union demands (and electoral pressure) by introducing legislation to protect workers against unfair dismissals and to impose notification and compensation requirements for collective layoffs. As high unemployment proved persistent through the 1980s and early 1990s, subsequent governments (often more Right-leaning governments) sought to generate employment growth by relaxing restrictions on the ability of employers to hire workers on fixed-term contracts.² Rueda (2007) argues forcefully that this combination of legislative initiatives, along with immigration and the entry of women into the labor force, have created a fundamental divide between labor-market insiders (full-time workers on indefinite contracts) and outsiders (in the first instance, part-time workers and workers on fixed-term contracts). In countries with strong employment protection, insiders are opposed to government spending on unemployment compensation and especially to spending on active labor market policies that target workers who are exposed to unemployment risks. By contrast, outsiders favor reductions in employment protection as well as generous unemployment benefits and active labor market policies.

In Rueda’s theoretical model, the extent to which the policy preference of insiders and outsiders

²See Emmenegger (2014) for the definitive study of the politics of employment protection in Western Europe.

diverge varies with the level of employment protection for insiders and the political implications of the insider-outsider divide depend on government partisanship. It is tempting to suppose that the interests of the insiders will always prevail over the interests of outsiders so long as there are more insiders than outsiders, but Rueda's model includes "upscale groups" (managers, professionals, etc.) who do not favor either employment protection or policies to help insecure workers. The median voter is not necessarily an insider, but insiders are more likely to be unionized than outsiders and constitute a core constituency of Left parties. Analyzing country-level data for 16 OECD countries, Rueda (2007, Ch.4) finds that Left government is associated with higher levels of employment protection over the period from 1970 to 1998 and that Left governments spend less on labor-market policies than non-Left governments when employment protection is high over the period from 1980 to 1998.

Setting Rueda's empirical findings about the contingent effects of partisanship aside, his theoretical framework arguably pays insufficient attention to heterogeneity among "insiders" and "outsiders" and exaggerates the divide between the two groups. As illustrated by the experience of the economic crisis in 2008-12, quite a few full-time workers with indefinite contracts remain exposed to unemployment risk even in countries with high levels of standard employment protection. On the other side of the insider-outsider divide, as conceived by Rueda and other authors, data presented by Poltier and Pontusson (2025, 15) indicate that part-time workers with indefinite contracts are much less exposed to unemployment risk than full-time workers on indefinite contracts. In addition to heterogeneity among insiders and outsiders alike, there is mobility between the two categories. Quite a few of the insiders who became unemployed between 2008 and 2012 appear to have re-entered the active labor force in some form of non-standard employment (Lietzmann and Hohmeyer, 2025; Girardi et al., 2025). Some rational and forward-looking workers in full-time jobs with indefinite contracts ought to care not only about the generosity of unemployment insurance but also about access to unemployment insurance for workers in less secure jobs. And there is surely upward mobility prospects for some people in non-standard employment as well, most obviously younger persons with some form of tertiary education (McVicar et al., 2018; Berglund et al., 2023). Again, "outsiders" with some reasonable probability of becoming "insiders" ought to support employment protection for workers on indefinite employment contracts. Arguably, sharing of unemployment risks and other disadvantages associated with non-standard employment within households also serves to blur the separation between insiders and outsiders.

Non-standard employment has arguably become more "normal" in the 15-20 years since the insider/outsider divide attracted the attention of Rueda and other political scientists. Analyzing data for 31 European countries, Latner (2022) reports that the rate of fixed-employment (fixed-term employment in percent of total employment) increased sharply in the pre-crisis period and has changed little since the crisis (see also Girardi et al. (2025)), yet the percentage of employed individuals with some experience of fixed-term employment increased sharply from 2007 to 2019. In a similar vein, we mobilize data from the EU Labour Force Survey to show the evolution of the overall incidence and the occupational concentration of NSE for each of the 15 countries

included in the TEWS survey in Figures A.1 and A.2 in the Appendix.³ We observe increases in incidence of NSE from earliest to most recent observations in eight countries (Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovakia) and decreases in the occupational concentration of NSE in all but three countries (Germany, Italy and Romania).

More recent literature by sociologists, labor economists and industrial relations scholars also document that disadvantages associated with non-standard employment extend beyond exposure to unemployment and long-term employment prospects. On average, non-standard workers earn less, on hourly basis and especially on an annual basis, than standard workers. This literature also documents that NSE tends to be concentrated in workplaces without shop stewards or works councils and that non-standard workers have fewer training opportunities than standard workers (see Larsen and Ilsøe (2024) as well as contributions to Doellgast et al. (2018)). Most importantly for present purposes, it is well established that non-standard workers often struggle to qualify for unemployment and sick pay insurance (Immervoll et al., 2022; Spasova and Regazzoni, 2022; Girardi et al., 2024). Again, there are important differences between categories of non-standard workers with respect to their access to social insurance benefits. In many countries, reforms in the pre-crisis period removed minimum earnings requirements that discriminated against part-time workers, but the self-employed remain poorly covered and requirements pertaining to prior work history restrict the access of workers on fixed-term contracts and contracts without guaranteed hours.⁴

As noted at the outset, we seek to contribute to the literature on NSE by bringing subjective perceptions of differences in employment conditions and access to social benefits between standard workers (“insiders”) and non-standard workers (“outsiders”) into the picture. While there are quite a few studies that explore the role of employment contracts and hours worked as determinants of worries about losing one job, job satisfaction and well-being (Burgoon and Dekker, 2010; Kalleberg, 2011; Kvart et al., 2025), we are not aware of any prior study based on survey questions that ask respondents to engage in comparisons across different employment profiles. Such comparisons are of particular interest if we are interested in the implications of standard/non-standard differences for policy preferences and collective behavior. To the best of our knowledge, our study is also unique in that it explores perceptions of social protection gaps as well as perceptions of inequalities in employment.

Furthermore, we seek to contribute to the political science literature, in particular, by uncovering policy preferences that pertain specifically to inequalities in employment and social protection

³Consistent with the following analysis of TEWS survey data, NSE is operationalized as fixed-term, temp agency and marginal part-time employment, with “marginal part-time” defined as working, on average, less than 15 hours per week. Based on 41 discrete (two-digit) ISCO categories, occupational concentration is measured by the Herfindahl-Hirschman index, which would take the value of 1 if all NSE were concentrated in one occupation and zero if NSE were evenly distributed across occupations. Approaching concentration and NSE exposure (see below) from an occupational perspective, we draw on Eichhorst and Marx (2015).

⁴Analyzing EU-SILC data for 2003-23, Poltier and Pontusson (2025) find that the rate of indefinite part-time employment is associated with more redistribution via unemployment benefits. Part-time workers with access to unemployment insurance benefit disproportionately from benefit floors (minima for the benefits received) as well as supplementary child allowances commonly built into unemployment insurance schemes.

between standard and non-standard workers. The empirical evidence in support of a fundamental divide between labor-market insiders and outsiders presented by Rueda and other contributions leaves a good deal to be desired. For example, Rueda (2005, 2007) treats the importance that survey respondents assign to job security in choosing a job as a measure of support for employment protection and disagreement with the statement that “the welfare state costs too much” as a measure of support for generous unemployment compensation. Marx (2014) relies on party identification and support for redistribution as indicators of the insider-outsider cleavage. More appropriately, in our view, Guillaud and Marx (2014) analyze public support for a specific French proposal to make protection of standard employment more flexible (and find no significant differences between insiders and outsiders) while Schwander and Häusermann (2013) analyze support for the proposition that the government should spend more on unemployment benefits (and do find significant differences between insiders and outsiders). Yet even these studies do not directly speak to policies designed to close the gap between standard and non-standard workers.⁵

Sorting survey respondents by employment profiles

The dataset that we analyze consists of TEWS Public Opinion Survey respondents aged 18-65 (“working-age respondents”). Seeking to steer a middle path between the insider/outsider dichotomy (Rueda, 2007) and “outsiderness” as a continuous variable (Schwander and Häusermann, 2013), we begin by sorting employed respondents into five categories based on different combinations of contractual status at the time of the survey, weekly hours worked at the time of the survey and employment experience over the previous twelve months.

The category “permanent full-time employment” (PERM_FULL) includes all respondents with an open-ended contract and averaging at least 30 hours of work per week while “permanent part-time employment” (PERM_PT) includes all respondents on an open-ended contract and averaging between 15 and 29 hours per week. We also distinguish between fixed-term and precarious forms of non-standard employment, NSE_FT and NSE-PREC, with the latter category including respondents with the following profiles: (a) respondents who are currently in dependent employment but do not report having an employment contract, (b) respondents who declare themselves to be self-employed but who, over the past 12 months, experienced employment contracts without guaranteed hours, temp agency work, sub-contracted work or platform work; and (c) respondents who are currently employed on an open-ended contract but usually work less than 15 hours a week (“marginal part-time employees”).

The fifth employment category (SELF) consists of self-employed respondents. Unfortunately, the TEWS survey unfortunately does not enable us to distinguish between self-employed with and without employees. We classify as self-employed individuals whose only employment experience over the last 12 months falls under the categories of “external consultant” or “freelance work, self-employed or entrepreneur”, even if they state that they have an open-ended employment contract.

⁵The absence of more recent studies by political scientists is noteworthy. For reasons that are not immediately obvious, the field of comparative European politics and political economy has moved on to other topics.

In addition, we restrict this category to respondents who declare themselves to be self-employed and who have not experienced any form of precarious employment over the last 12 months. The latter criterion serves to minimize the number of “bogus self-employed” (platform workers and sub-contracted workers) in the SELF category.

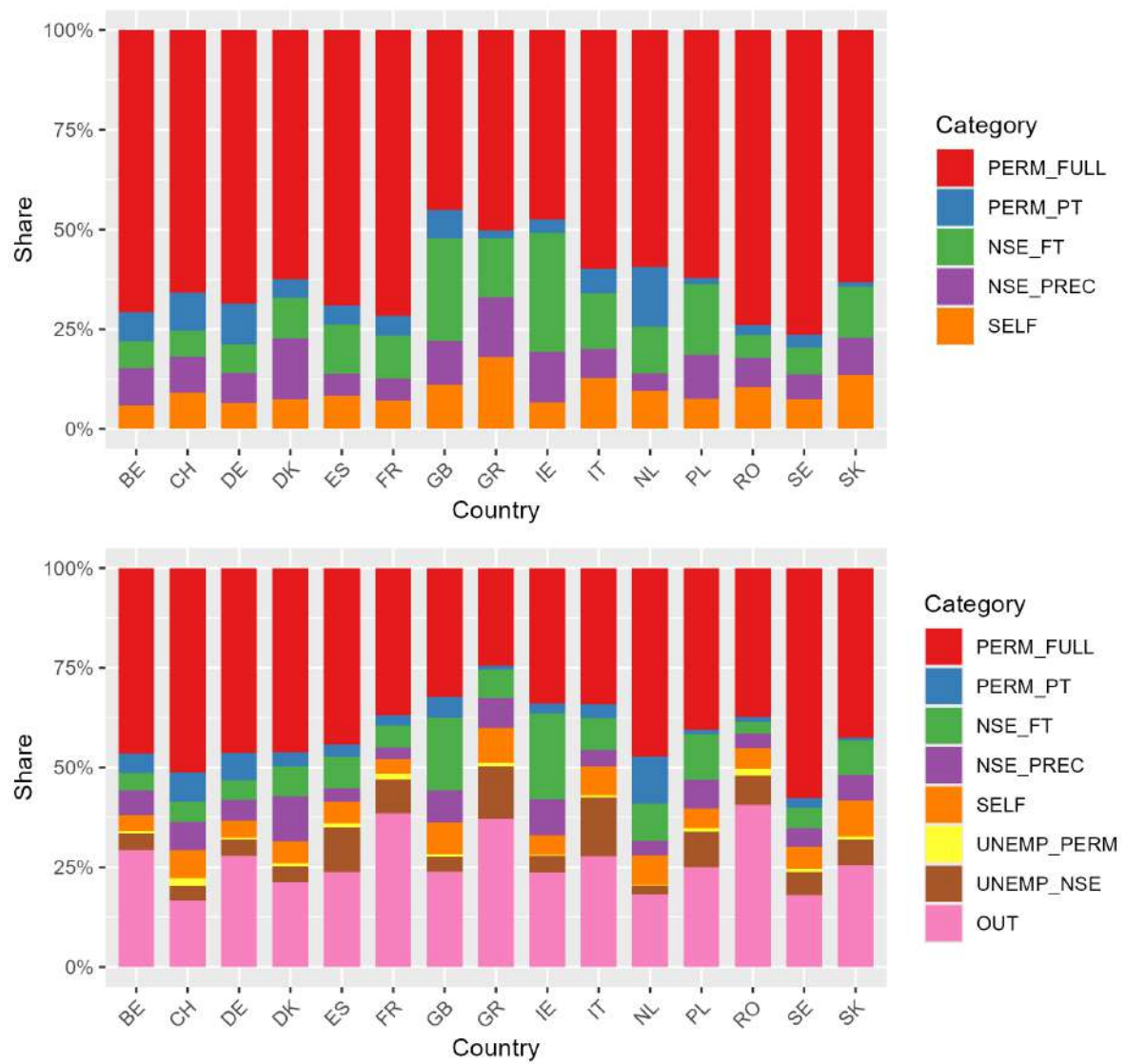
Survey respondents who are not employed include respondents who say that they are looking for a job, which we take to be a proxy for being unemployed. Among the unemployed, we distinguish between those whose recent labor market experience includes only employment on an open-ended contract (UNEMP_PERM) and those who either do not report such employment or report other forms of employment as well (UNEMP_NSE). Finally, we group students, house minders, handicapped and retired into a single category of people outside the labor force (OUT).

Figure 1 displays the distribution of respondents across the aforementioned categories for each of the fifteen countries included in the TEWS survey. While the upper panel is restricted to employed respondents, the lower panel includes all respondents (representing the working-age population as a whole). According to these data, full-time workers on indefinite contracts constitute far more than 50% of employed individuals in all but three countries. With PERM_FULL shares of just about 50%, Great Britain, Greece and Ireland stand out as countries where the combined shares of fixed-term and precarious non-standard employments are particularly high. However, it is not immediately obvious that the “median voter” is a labor-market insider in very many countries once we add the unemployed and the non-active to the picture. If part-time workers with open-ended contracts are included, insiders constitute a majority of the working-age population in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland, but fall far short in the other countries. That said, it seems highly plausible to suppose that (1) labor-market insiders are more likely to be citizens with full voting rights and more likely than other citizens to exercise their voting rights, (2) many students above the age of 18 expect to become insiders in the near future, and (3) retired insiders constitute a large share of the population above the age of 65 (and retain political preferences formed prior to retirement). Whether or not the median voter is an insider, insiders constitute an electoral constituency that vote- and office-seeking parties would not want to alienate. The open question is whether they have salient preferences in common that set them apart from other citizens.

Perceptions of employment conditions and access to social benefits

The TEWS survey includes two questions designed to capture perceptions of (dis)advantages associated with different types of employment. The first of these questions asks respondents to assess how people in fixed-term and part-time jobs “generally compare to people in permanent full-time jobs” with respect to hourly wages, ability to influence conditions at work and “employment conditions over the long term,” with three response options for each item: “worse,” “the same” and

Figure 1: Survey-weighted distributions of employment profiles by country



“better.”⁶ The second question asked respondents to assess their own access to “social benefits (for example, unemployment, social assistance, family allowances)” relative to people with different kinds of employment contracts, listing five reference categories: (1) employees with permanent contracts, (2) employees with fixed-term contracts, (3) small business owners, (4) workers without formal contracts performing skilled tasks (“freelance software developers, independent management consultants, etc.”), and (5) workers without formal employment contracts performing non-skilled tasks (“food delivery, taxi app drivers, etc.”). For each of the five categories, respondents are asked whether their access to social benefits is “worse,” “the same” or “better” than the respondent’s own access. While the question about employment conditions was asked of all respondents, the question about access to social benefits was only asked of currently employed respondents.⁷

Assessments of the three dimensions of employment disadvantage for fixed-term and part-time workers relative to permanent full-time workers are closely correlated across individuals and across employment profiles (see Table A1). We generate a single, composite indicator of perceptions of FT-PT employment disadvantages by assigning numerical values of 1 (“worse”), zero (“the same”) and -1 (“better”) for each dimension and adding these values up. The composite indicator thus ranges from -3 to 3, with respondents who (accurately) perceive that non-standard workers are disadvantaged obtaining a higher score. For relative access to social benefits, asking respondents to compare themselves to others in their own employment profile may at first seem odd, but the fact that all respondents are asked to compare their own access to that of the same five categories enables us to construct a scale of perceived own access to social benefits relative to perceived access of other workers. Assigning numerical values 1, zero and -1 for each comparison, a score of 5 on our composite access indicator means that the respondent thinks that she enjoys the best benefits on offer in her country, whereas a score of -5 indicates that she believes that her access is worse than that of most other workers.⁸

For the self-employed, the precariously employed and respondents outside the labor force, the question about employment conditions invites more or less informed comparisons between the employment profiles of others. It is perfectly possible that some of these respondents had prior experience of permanent full-time, part-time or fixed-term employment, but their responses should not involve any assessment of their own situation at the time of the survey. By contrast, it is likely

⁶The TEWS survey also asked respondents to compare FT-PT jobs to permanent full-time jobs in terms of work intensity and work-life balance. In contrast to the three items on which we focus here, respondents across all employee profiles tend to think that fixed-term and part-time workers are better off than permanent full-time workers with respect to these items.

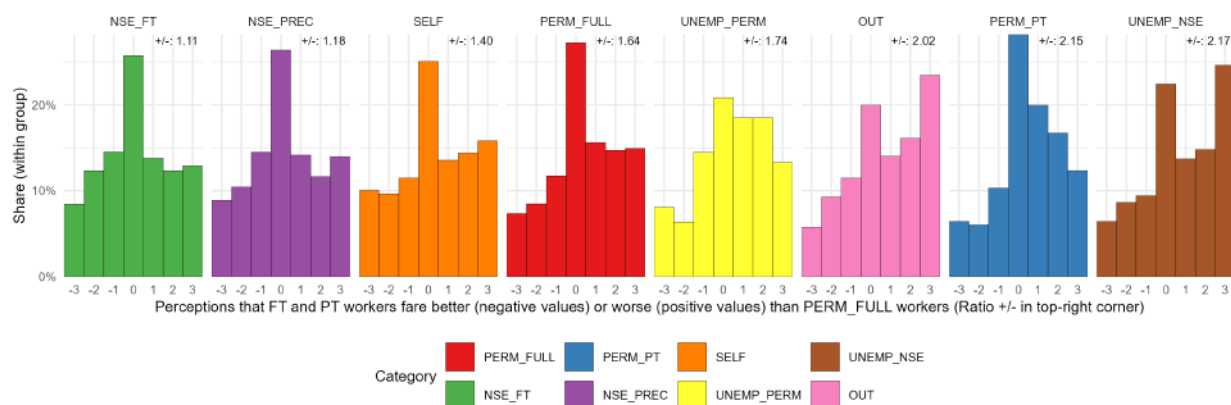
⁷The three dimensions of employment disadvantage were presented in randomized order, as were the reference categories in the second question. Both questions provided “don’t know” as a response option. The following analysis is restricted to respondents who answered the questions in full (82% of respondents for the first question and 75% for the second question).

⁸Quite a few respondents that we code as permanent full-time workers judge their access to social benefits to be worse than that of “employees with permanent contracts.” These respondents might be confused by the term “permanent contract” (might think that it refers to the employment status of civil servants). They might also be attuned to more subtle differences in access to social benefits among “insiders.” For example, it has become increasingly common for employers to top off public unemployment and sick-pay benefits for salaried (white-collar) employees (a practice that has become widespread in Sweden since the early 2000s (Lindellee and Berglund, 2022)).

that the respondent's satisfaction with her own situation influences the responses of permanent full-time, part-time and fixed-term workers. A permanent full-time worker who is satisfied with her wage, her influence at work and (or) her employment prospects will likely perceive the disadvantages of part-time and fixed-term employment to be greater than a permanent full-time worker who is dissatisfied with her own situation (vice-versa for part-time and fixed-term workers). For all respondents, the question about relative access to social benefits elicits the same ambiguity, with answers reflecting (dis)satisfaction with one's own situation as well as (informed) perceptions of the conditions of others.

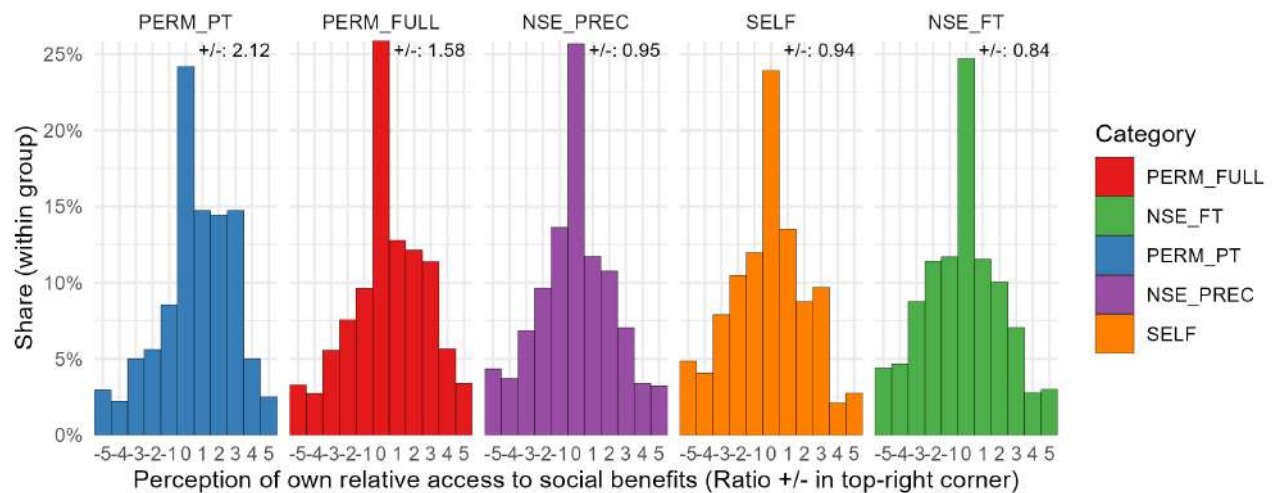
Pooling data from the 15 countries included in the TEWS survey, Figures 2 and 3 present the distribution of our composite indicators of perceived employment disadvantages and relative access to social benefits by employment profile. In Figure 2, we report group-based ratios of respondents who consider fixed-term and part-time workers to be worse off than permanent full-time workers (above zero) to those who consider them to be better off (below zero). Similarly, in Figure 3, we report group-based ratios of respondents who consider themselves to be disadvantaged in terms of benefits access to those who considered themselves to be advantaged (ditto).

Figure 2: Group-based perceptions of the employment conditions of FT and PT workers relative to permanent full-time workers



Starting with Figure 2, our data suggest that respondents who perceive the employment conditions of fixed-term and part-time workers to be worse than the employment conditions of permanent full-time workers outweigh those who consider them to be better across all employment profiles. However, the modal value is zero for all categories of employed respondents. More than 25% of the self-employed as well as fixed-term, part-time and full-time workers perceive the employment conditions of fixed-term and part-time workers to be the same as the employment conditions of permanent full-time workers. Part-time workers take a more negative view of their conditions than full-time workers, but fixed-term workers (and precarious workers) perceive themselves as less disadvantaged than permanent full-time workers perceive them. As suggested above, there are two possible interpretations of this rather puzzling finding: fixed-term workers may be unaware

Figure 3: Group-based perceptions of own access to social benefits, relative to different employment profiles



of the advantages that permanent workers enjoy, or they may be more satisfied with their own employment terms than we (academic observers) commonly suppose. As part-time workers are likely to be partners of permanent full-time workers, the fact that they take a more negative view of standard/non-standard differences might be interpreted as evidence in support of the information argument.

Turning to Figure 3, we again find that zero is also the modal value for perceptions of relative access to social benefits across all employment profiles. In this domain, however, cross-profile differences in perceptions are more in line with what the literature on social protection gaps would lead us to expect. On average, workers on indefinite employment contracts consider themselves to be much better off than other workers. This is even more true for part-time workers on permanent contracts. By comparison, fixed-term and precarious workers (as well as the self-employed) have more negative perceptions of their relative access to social benefits. In general, individuals with these employment profiles would seem to be more aware and (or) more resentful of being treated unfavorably by the (welfare) state than being treated unfavorably by employers. Arguably, they expect equal treatment by the state but not by employers.⁹

To assess associations between employment profiles and perceptions of employment disadvantage and relative access to social benefits in a more rigorous manner, we estimate OLS regression models with dummies for employment profiles and a number of individual-level control variables: high-skill occupation (a dummy variable for major ISCO groups 1-3), household income, age, gender, migrant background (a dummy for country of birth being different from country of residence), union

⁹In a similar vein, Scheve and Stasavage (2016) argument about tax fairness distinguishes between distributive outcomes determined by markets and distributive outcomes determined by political decisions.

membership, working in the public sector and a left-right self-placement scale.¹⁰ The models we estimate include country fixed effects (controlling for unobserved heterogeneity across countries) and standard errors clustered at the country-level (correcting for within-country correlation of standard errors).¹¹ For comparability across models with employment disadvantage and benefits access as dependent variables, we drop the unemployed and respondents who are out of the labor force from this analysis.

Table 1 presents a first set of regression results. With perceptions of FT-PT employment disadvantages as the dependent variable and permanent full-time workers as the reference category, the negative coefficients for fixed-term and precarious workers clear the 95% significance threshold in Model 1, but this is no longer the case when we add the aforementioned control variables (Model 2). Already in the model without controls, perceptions of employment disadvantages held by permanent full-time and part-time workers (and the self-employed) are statistically indistinguishable from each other. With or without controls, perceptions of relative access to social benefits held by fixed-term and precarious workers (and the self-employed) are significantly different (more negative) from those of permanent full-time workers (Models 3-4). With respect to benefits access as well as employment disadvantage, part-time workers turn out to be more closely aligned with full-time workers than suggested by the descriptives presented in Figures 2-3.

As for the control variables, the results presented in Table 1 indicate that perceived access to social benefits rises with household income, but household income is not a significant predictor of perceptions of FT-PT employment disadvantage. The coefficients for high-skill occupations and public-sector employment fail to clear the 95% significance threshold with either employment disadvantage or access to social benefits as the dependent variable. We take these results to mean that contractual status – specifically, the distinction between standard and non-standard employment – matters more than other employment-related variables. Our results also show that perceptions of employment disadvantages rise with age while older workers perceived themselves as having better benefits access. Similarly, women (over-represented among part-time workers with dependent children) are more likely to perceive fixed-term and part-time workers as disadvantaged in terms of employment conditions and more likely to perceive themselves as having favorable benefits access.

Most intriguingly, we find that first-generation immigrants and union members perceive FT and PT workers as less disadvantaged relative to permanent full-time workers but also perceive them-

¹⁰ISCO groups 1-3 encompass managers, professionals, associate professionals and technicians. The income variable is an integer variable identifying the respondent's decile in terms of her equivalized disposable household income. The underlying income variable is obtained by taking the midpoint of the income band selected by the respondent for all income bands but the open-ended top income band, to which we instead apply the method developed by Hout (2004). We then divide the resulting quantity by the square root of all household members to obtain equivalized disposable household income. See Table A.1 for summary statistics for all the variables included in our regression models.

¹¹With only 15 countries in our dataset, we construct our robust variance-covariance matrix using the "CR2" method from the ClubSandwich R package, which includes a small-sample correction. We then use the Satterthwaite test to estimate the p-values of coefficients as implemented in the `coef_test` function from the same package, adjusting the degrees of freedom used in the t-test on a coefficient-by-coefficient basis. (This last operation means that the t-ratio associated with a p-value of $< .05$ varies slightly from one coefficient to the next).

Table 1: OLS models of perceptions of employment disadvantages for fixed-term and part-time workers and perceptions of own relative access to social benefits

	Employment disadvantages		Benefits access	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
PERM_PT (ref: PERM_FULL)	0.08 (0.08)	−0.01 (0.07)	0.09 (0.07)	−0.15 (0.11)
NSE_FT	−0.26** (0.07)	−0.15 (0.10)	−0.60** (0.06)	−0.47** (0.07)
NSE_PREC	−0.21** (0.06)	−0.14 (0.08)	−0.42** (0.08)	−0.34* (0.11)
SELF	−0.10 (0.07)	−0.12 (0.07)	−0.53** (0.10)	−0.72** (0.12)
High-skill		−0.02 (0.05)		0.10 (0.08)
HH income decile		0.03 (0.01)		0.04* (0.02)
Age		0.03** (0.00)		0.04** (0.00)
Female		0.16** (0.03)		0.27** (0.03)
Migration background		−0.30** (0.08)		−0.25 (0.13)
Union member		−0.38** (0.08)		−0.53** (0.12)
Public sector		−0.06 (0.06)		0.02 (0.08)
Left-right self-placement		−0.24** (0.03)		−0.31** (0.05)
Intercept	0.69** (0.01)	0.95** (0.04)	0.63** (0.02)	0.85** (0.05)
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.03	0.09	0.03	0.10
Adj. R ²	0.02	0.09	0.03	0.10
Num. obs.	14325	10206	13085	9530

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

selves as disadvantaged in terms of access to social benefits. Over-represented among NSE workers, first-generation immigrants accurately perceive restrictions on their access to social benefits but either fail to appreciate the employment advantages enjoyed by native insiders or, alternatively, consider their employment conditions to be satisfactory. As union members are over-represented among permanent full-time workers, the negative effect of union membership on perceptions of FT-PT employment disadvantage might be interpreted as an indication that unions and their members are oblivious to the conditions of non-standard workers. The alternative interpretation is that union members have a more negative view of the employment conditions of permanent full-time workers than non-union respondents. With respect to perceptions of access to benefits, it seems plausible to argue that union members tend to be less skilled than non-members and more aware of skill-based differences in access to social benefits. Finally, we find that respondents who situate themselves to the right of the political spectrum are less likely to perceive FT and PT workers as disadvantaged in terms of their employment conditions and more likely to perceive themselves as disadvantaged in terms of access to social benefits.

To shed further light on the distinction between satisfaction with one's own situation and information about the conditions of others, we identify two sets of respondents who transitioned between permanent full-time employment and non-standard employment over the twelve months prior to the TEWS survey and re-estimate the regression models presented in Table 1 with the addition of these employment profiles. First, we identify respondents who had a permanent full-time at the time of the survey but had experience of fixed-term employment, precarious employment, or long-term unemployment spells in the recent past (PERM_FULL_TR) and, secondly, we identify fixed-term workers with recent experience of permanent full-time employment (NSE_FT_TR).¹² The information argument would lead us to expect both groups to perceive bigger differences in the employment conditions of permanent full-time and fixed-term workers. As shown in Table 2, our results do not bear out this expectation. To the contrary, individuals who moved up (from non-standard into permanent employment) and individuals who moved down (from permanent to fixed-term employment) both perceive FT-PT workers as less disadvantaged than individuals who occupied the same position over the entire year prior to the survey. In the model with control variables, there is no longer a statistically significant difference between PERM_FULL and NSE_FT perceptions of employment disadvantage once we separate out downwardly mobile respondents. Not surprisingly, we also find that transitioning from permanent full-time employment to fixed-term employment is associated with perceived lack of access to social benefits.

The results presented in Table 2 strongly suggest that mobility leads individuals to reevaluate their initial conditions. While permanent full-time workers who transition to fixed-term employment adopt a more negative view of the advantages of permanent full-time employment (perceiving it as less secure), non-standard workers who transition to permanent full-time employment adopt a more positive view of fixed-term employment (perceiving it as a stepping stone to a better job).

¹²Pooling data from the 15 countries, PERM_FULL_TR represents 5.0% of employed respondents and 8.2% of all PERM_FULL workers. NSE_FT_TR represents 2.4% of the employed and nearly 17% of all NSE_FT workers.

Table 2: OLS models of Perceptions of at-work disadvantages of fixed-term and part-time workers and perceptions of own quality of access to social benefits

	Employment disadvantages		Benefits access	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
PERM_FULL_TR (ref: PERM_FULL)	-0.48** (0.13)	-0.28* (0.12)	-0.58** (0.17)	-0.30 (0.19)
PERM_PT	0.05 (0.08)	-0.02 (0.07)	0.04 (0.08)	-0.17 (0.12)
NSE_FT	-0.24* (0.08)	-0.10 (0.12)	-0.56** (0.08)	-0.39** (0.10)
NSE_FT_TR	-0.61** (0.09)	-0.55** (0.11)	-1.12** (0.14)	-0.97** (0.09)
NSE_PREC	-0.25** (0.06)	-0.17 (0.08)	-0.47** (0.08)	-0.37** (0.12)
SELF	-0.14 (0.07)	-0.14 (0.07)	-0.58** (0.11)	-0.74** (0.13)
High-skill		-0.02 (0.05)		0.11 (0.08)
HH income decile		0.03 (0.01)		0.04* (0.02)
Age		0.02** (0.00)		0.04** (0.00)
Female		0.16** (0.03)		0.26** (0.03)
Migration background		-0.30** (0.08)		-0.25 (0.13)
Union member		-0.38** (0.08)		-0.52** (0.12)
Public sector		-0.07 (0.06)		0.02 (0.08)
Left-right self-placement		-0.24** (0.03)		-0.31** (0.05)
Intercept	0.74** (0.01)	0.98** (0.04)	0.69** (0.03)	0.87** (0.05)
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.03	0.09	0.03	0.10
Adj. R ²	0.03	0.09	0.03	0.10
Num. obs.	14325	10206	13085	9530

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Policy preferences

Building on the preceding analysis, we now turn to the question of public support for policy initiatives to address the employment conditions of non-standard workers and their access to social benefits. In the TEWS survey, we asked respondents two questions framed in terms of whether they would be more or less likely to vote for a political party that proposed measures “intended to ensure that everyone is protected against employment risks:” first, a party proposing measures to ensure “full access to unemployment, sick pay, and occupational injury benefits for people in part-time and temporary jobs;” and, secondly, a party proposing “restrictions on temporary and other employment contracts that are less secure.” For each item, respondents were provided with three response option (in addition to “do not know/no answer”): “less likely,” “no difference,” and “more likely.”¹³ An obvious critique of these questions is that respondents were not presented with any indication that the proposed reforms might be costly in terms of the fiscal room for other policy initiatives (in the case of inclusive social reforms) or in terms of economic performance (in the case of employment regulation). To the extent that such considerations are in play, they were introduced by the respondents themselves rather than the people who designed the survey.

Pooling the 15 country samples, Figure 4 shows the distribution of responses to the two policy questions by employment profile. At the end of each row, we report net support for the group in question, measured as the percentage of respondents who said they would be more likely to vote for the party proposing the policy minus the percentage who said they would be less likely to do so. With net support ranging from a low of 37.4 percentage points among permanent full-time workers to a high 54.3 percentage points among permanent part-time workers, the extension of access to social benefits to less secure clearly stands out as the more popular of the two policy initiatives. However, net support for restrictions on insecure employment contracts is also positive across all employment profiles, ranging from a low of 21.9 percentage points among the self-employed to a high of 34.2 percentage points among workers on fixed-term contracts.

Figure 5 in turn reports on the distribution of responses to the two policy questions by country, again with net support reported at the end of each row. Across countries, net support for inclusive social policy reforms ranges from a low of 25.7 percentage points in the Netherlands to a high of 56.0 in Italy. For restrictions on temporary contracts, the corresponding figures are 12.6 (again for the Netherlands) and 41.2 (for Spain). Assuming that our samples are representative of the voting population in each country and that political parties are only motivated by vote maximization, we would expect to observe the adoption of inclusive social policy reforms in all of these countries and the adoption of new restrictions on non-standard employment in at least half of them.

¹³The TEWS survey asked similarly phrased questions designed to elicit support for universal basic income and more generous social assistance as a solution to problems associated with employment precarity. We decided to drop these items from the main analyses primarily on account of space constraints and due to them being less immediately relevant to non-standard employment. Moreover, we worried that respondents might lack an understanding of what universal basic income would entail. (The survey question mentioned the term, without any elaboration). Note also 12% of all respondents opted for “do not know/no answer” in response to the question about inclusive social policy reforms while 15% took this option in response to the question about restricting less secure employment. (The corresponding figures for respondents without missing data on other covariates are 2.7% and 4%).

Figure 4: Aggregate distribution of responses to policy questions by employment profile

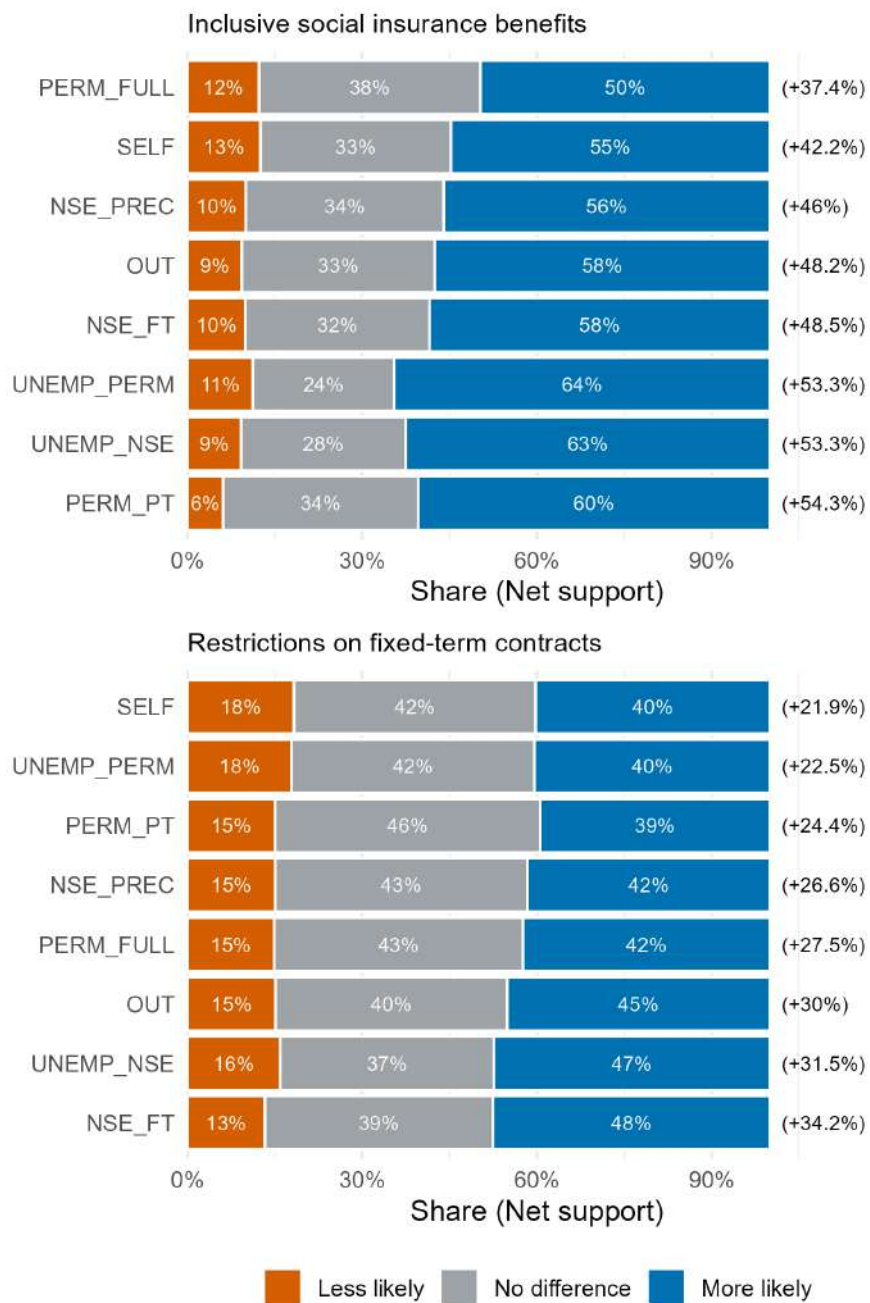
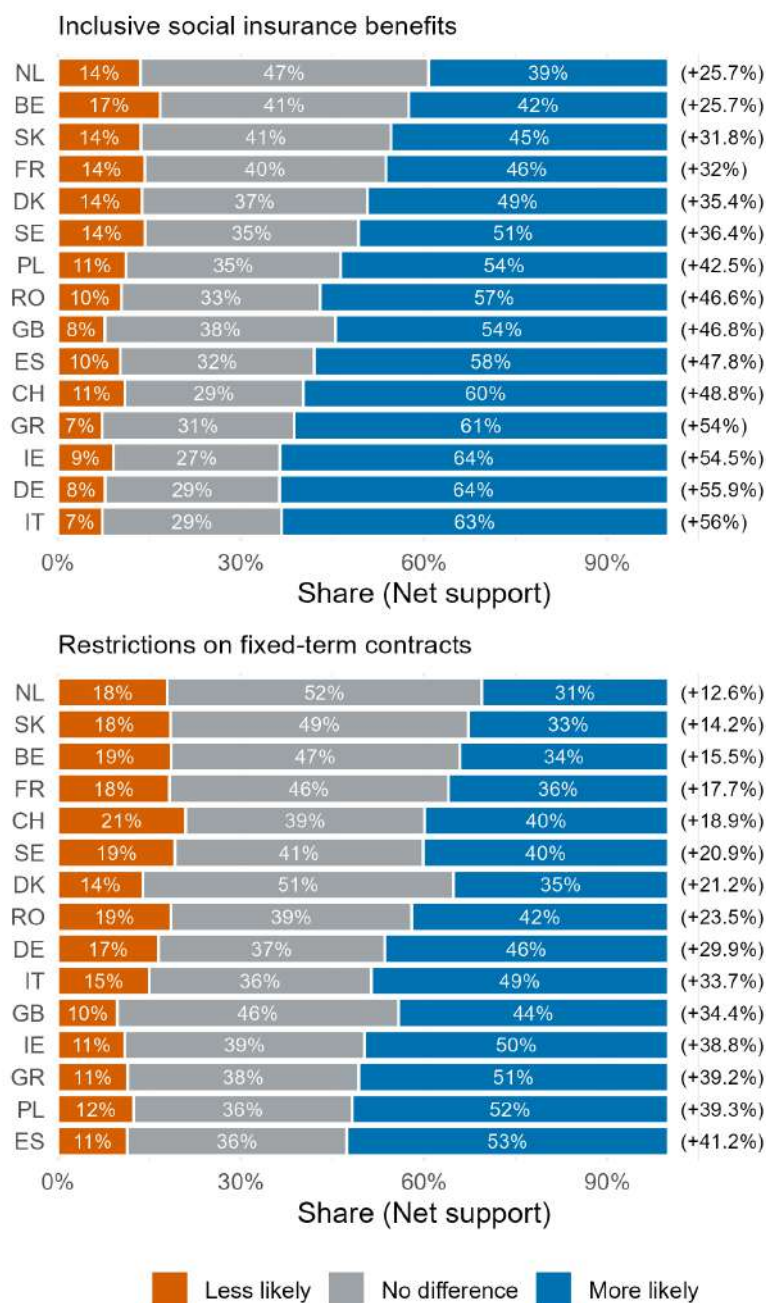


Figure 5: Distribution of responses to policy questions by country



As suggested earlier, one reason why we do not observe such widespread adoption of pro-outsider reforms might be that mainstream political (perhaps mainstream Left parties in particular) cater to the preferences of permanent full-time workers. Again, permanent full-time workers are by far largest employment category in every one of these countries and their propensity to vote further enhances their electoral weight. Across the 15 countries, net support for inclusive social policy among permanent full-time workers exceeds 35 percentage points, but perhaps there are countries in which this figure is much lower? Figure 6 addresses this question by showing country-specific estimates of support for inclusive social policy reforms across three groups of survey respondents: (1) respondents coded as PERM_FULL and UNEMP_PERM; (2) respondents coded as NSE_FT, NSE_PREC and UNEMP_NSE; and (3) all other respondents (PERM_PT, SELF, and OUT).¹⁴

With the notable exception of Greece, net support for inclusive social policy reforms among non-standard workers invariably exceeds net support among permanent full-time workers and the policy preferences of “others” are more closely aligned with the preferences of non-standard workers than those of permanent full-time workers. However, net support among permanent full-time workers exceeds 18 percentage points in all 15 countries. In light of these data, it seems hard to invoke opposition by labor-market insiders to explain why governments have not acted more decisively to address social protection gaps.

Setting cross-national variation aside, Table 3 presents the results of estimating regression models with “more likely to vote for party X” as the dependent variable. We seek to assess not only the direct effects of employment profiles, but also the mediating effects of perceptions of employment disadvantages and social protection gaps. To include perceived access to social benefits as an independent variable and to facilitate comparisons with previous regression results, this exercise is again restricted to employed survey respondents. The dependent variable being dichotomous, we now estimate linear probability models, but the models are otherwise the same as the models used to generate the regression results presented in Table 1-2 (country fixed effects, standard errors clustered at the country level and the same battery of control variables).

Table 3 shows that public support for inclusive social reforms is not only higher than support for restrictions on less secure forms of employment, but also more differentiated between labor-market insiders and outsiders. The self-employed, the precariously employed, fixed-term and part-time workers are all significantly more supportive of inclusive social reforms than permanent full-time workers (with part-time workers as the strongest supporters). By contrast, model 8 suggests that support for stricter employment regulation, while lower overall, is more evenly distributed between different categories of workers than support for social policy inclusiveness.

The results for the perception variables are consistent across all the models presented in Table 3. While individuals who perceive big employment disadvantages are no more likely to support pro-outsider reforms than individuals who do not think that the employment conditions of fixed-term and part-time workers are worse, perceiving one’s own access to social benefits to be relatively poor turns out to be a significant predictor of support for regulatory restrictions as well as inclusive

¹⁴See Figure A.4 for group-based distributions of support for restrictions on fixed-term employment by country.

Figure 6: Support for inclusive social policy reforms by country and group

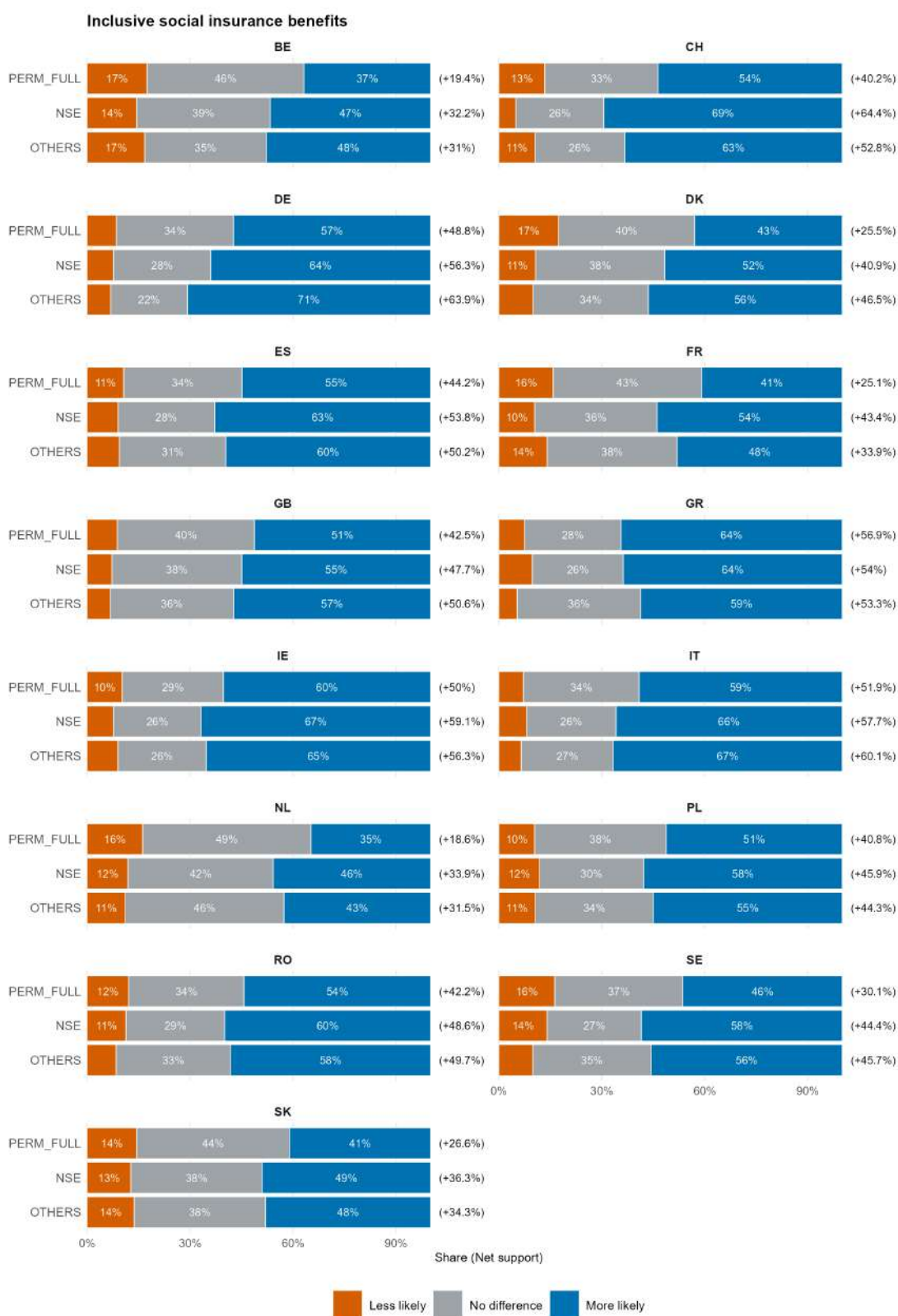


Table 3: Linear probability models of being more likely to vote for a party proposing policy X in their platform

	Inclusive social insurance				Restrictions on temporary contracts			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Perceptions of NSE at-work disadvantages	-0.28 (0.35)		-0.25 (0.33)	-0.76 (0.43)	-0.41 (0.36)		-0.33 (0.36)	-0.27 (0.40)
Perception of own relative access to social benefits	-0.89* (0.34)		-0.84* (0.34)	-1.22** (0.33)	-1.69** (0.25)		-1.70** (0.25)	-1.74** (0.26)
High-skill				-2.10* (0.81)				-2.42* (0.84)
PERM_PT (ref: PERM_FULL)		10.50** (2.20)	10.76** (2.18)	10.79* (3.40)		-0.61 (2.04)	-1.88 (2.26)	-1.74 (2.37)
NSE_FT		7.11** (1.52)	7.07** (1.58)	8.22** (1.39)		4.09* (1.69)	3.05 (1.48)	3.83 (1.73)
NSE_PREC		4.31** (1.29)	4.80** (1.45)	5.11* (1.84)		-2.41 (1.46)	-3.02 (1.52)	-2.88 (1.70)
SELF		4.57** (1.43)	4.91* (1.74)	4.67* (1.86)		-1.97 (1.82)	-1.88 (1.83)	-1.03 (2.37)
HH income decile				-0.25 (0.31)				0.24 (0.24)
Age				0.09 (0.08)				-0.04 (0.10)
Female				5.20** (1.20)				2.88* (1.03)
Migration background				-2.16 (1.85)				2.56 (2.40)
Union member				2.93 (1.66)				2.81 (1.31)
Public sector				-2.85** (0.71)				-0.89 (1.27)
Left-right self-placement				-6.43** (1.07)				-3.27* (1.11)
Intercept	38.74** (0.23)	36.63** (0.21)	36.51** (0.42)	38.20** (0.94)	33.81** (0.24)	32.01** (0.33)	33.61** (0.41)	34.84** (1.17)
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04
Adj. R ²	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.04
Num. obs.	11831	12538	11573	8646	11701	12360	11446	8544

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

social reforms. Introducing this variable does not noticeably reduce the coefficients for any of the employment-profile dummies in the case of support for social policy inclusiveness, but it does lead to the difference in support for stricter regulations between fixed-term and permanent full-time workers to become non-significant. Perceptions of access to social benefits would appear to be an important variable on its own, but not a mediator in the relationship between employment status and preferences for social policy inclusiveness and employment regulation. It might be tempting to think that perceptions of one's relative access to social benefits reflect broader dispositions towards redistributive policies, whereby individuals who support redistribution are more likely to perceive their access to be relatively poor. The TEWS survey contains an item that prompts respondents' agreement with the statement that 'The government of [country] should take measures to reduce income inequality' on a 5-point scale from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree'. Interestingly, we find that responses to this item are completely orthogonal to perceptions of one's own relative access to social benefits.

Regarding the control variables, individuals in high-skill occupations tend to be less supportive of extending access to social benefits as well as restricting non-standard employment forms. On the other hand, women are consistently more supportive of pro-outsider policies than men, whereas individuals who situate themselves to the right are, unsurprisingly, less supportive of such policies. The one other control with a statistically significant coefficient is public-sector employment, with a negative effect on support for inclusive social policies.¹⁵

As noted above, permanent full-time workers account for more than half of employed in most of our countries. Our findings thus far suggest that they are, on average, more satisfied with their access to social benefits than other categories of workers and much less likely to support inclusive social reforms. Permanent full-time workers being such a large group, they are bound to be a highly heterogeneous group as well. While this heterogeneity spans many dimensions (social and occupational class, skill levels, earnings, etc.) our discussion of prior literature invites attention to the question of how exposure to the risk of becoming a non-standard worker is associated with support for pro-outsider policies. With the sample restricted to permanent full-time workers, we add an occupation-based measure of NSE exposure to the linear probability models used to generate the results in Table 3. With occupations measured at the level of two-digit ISCO codes in the TEWS survey, we mobilize data from the three most recent waves of the EU Labour Force Survey (carried out in 2022-24) to generate country-specific estimates of the share of NSE employment in each of these occupations.¹⁶ As shown in Table 4, support for inclusive social policy reforms as well as support for restrictions on fixed-term employment among permanent full-time workers rises with

¹⁵Table A.2 replicates Table 3 with transitional employment profiles added. Consistent with the results presented in Table 2, we find no significant difference in the propensity to support inclusive social policy reforms between individuals who have transitioned from non-standard to standard employment (PERM_FULL_TR) and those who have always been in standard employment, but individuals who have transitioned from standard to fixed-term employment (NSE_FT_TR) are at least somewhat more likely to support such reforms than stable fixed-term workers.

¹⁶The estimates are based on operationalizing "NSE employment" as temp agency work, fixed-term employment and marginal part-time employment (less than 15 hours per week). There are 41 distinct two-digit ISCO codes.

Table 4: Linear probability models of being more likely to vote for a party proposing policy X in their platform (only standard full-time workers)

	Inclusive social insurance				Restrictions on temporary contracts			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Occupational exposure to NSE	3.33** (0.56)	3.87** (0.67)	2.74** (0.77)		2.33* (0.83)	2.53* (0.92)	1.94 (0.89)	
Perceptions of NSE at-work disadvantages		-0.89 (0.56)	-0.94 (0.61)	-0.92 (0.61)		-0.36 (0.38)	-0.32 (0.40)	-0.31 (0.40)
Perception of own relative access to social benefits		-0.78 (0.38)	-1.18** (0.36)	-1.18** (0.35)		-1.40** (0.33)	-1.56** (0.25)	-1.56** (0.25)
High-skill			-0.99 (1.93)	-3.38 (1.63)			-1.99 (1.33)	-3.68* (1.44)
HH income decile			-0.80* (0.31)	-0.84* (0.31)			0.12 (0.21)	0.10 (0.21)
Age			0.11 (0.06)	0.11 (0.06)			0.06 (0.09)	0.06 (0.09)
Female			6.80** (1.48)	7.18** (1.45)			3.47 (1.75)	3.74 (1.76)
Migration background			-3.36 (2.37)	-3.31 (2.35)			-0.92 (2.96)	-0.88 (2.99)
Union member			3.64* (1.49)	3.63* (1.48)			4.26* (1.57)	4.25* (1.57)
Public sector			-2.33 (1.77)	-1.86 (1.78)			0.13 (1.27)	0.47 (1.19)
Left-right self-placement			-6.44** (1.23)	-6.53** (1.26)			-3.88* (1.33)	-3.95* (1.35)
Intercept	35.08** (0.00)	35.45** (0.02)	35.00** (1.19)	35.65** (1.25)	32.04** (0.00)	34.91** (0.02)	34.48** (1.01)	34.94** (1.05)
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.03	0.04	0.07	0.07	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.05
Adj. R ²	0.03	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.04
Num. obs.	7542	5699	4895	4895	7330	5637	4836	4836

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

the percentage of NSE employment in their (2-digit) occupational category, although the coefficient falls just short of being statistically significant in model 7, with a p-value of .055. As illustrated through models 4 and 8, it is also noteworthy that adding NSE exposure to our models does not significantly alter the coefficients for perceptions of FT-PT employment disadvantages or relative access to social benefits. It does, however, notably alter the high-skill coefficient. When NSE exposure is entered in the model, we no longer observe a significant effect of high-skill occupation, which suggests that, at least as far as permanent full-time workers are concerned, the positive coefficient for high-skill occupation is primarily due to the associated differences in NSE exposure. We also observe a significant effect of union membership on support for inclusive social policy reforms in table 4, a change that appears to be due to the sample being restricted to permanent full-time workers rather than the addition of the NSE exposure variable. Our analysis of the alternative DVs mentioned above suggests that there is something unique about the relationship between NSE exposure and support for inclusive social policy reforms, in that it doesn't turn out to be as robust a predictor for any of the other three DVs.¹⁷

Returning to Figure 6, net support for inclusive social policy reforms among permanent full-time workers ranges between 18% in the Netherlands and 57% in Greece. With only 15 country-level observations, we cannot possibly assess alternative explanations for this variation in any systematic manner, but it is noteworthy that, contrary to what one might expect based on the individual results in Table 4, there is no meaningful cross-national correlation between, on the one hand, our EU-LFS-based measures of the levels and concentration of NSE employment (presented in Figures A.1 and A.2) and, on the other hand, net support for inclusive social benefits among permanent full-time workers. Also contrary to what the results in Table 4 would seem to imply, we do not find any cross-national correlation between union density and net support among permanent full-time workers. As illustrated by Figure 7, however, we do find a meaningful negative correlation between the generosity of unemployment insurance, as measured by Bakker et al. (2022), and net support among permanent full-time workers.¹⁸ For the 15 countries, the correlation coefficient is -.446, with a p-value of .095, and without the biggest outlier (Italy), the correlation coefficient is -.542, with a p-value of .045.¹⁹

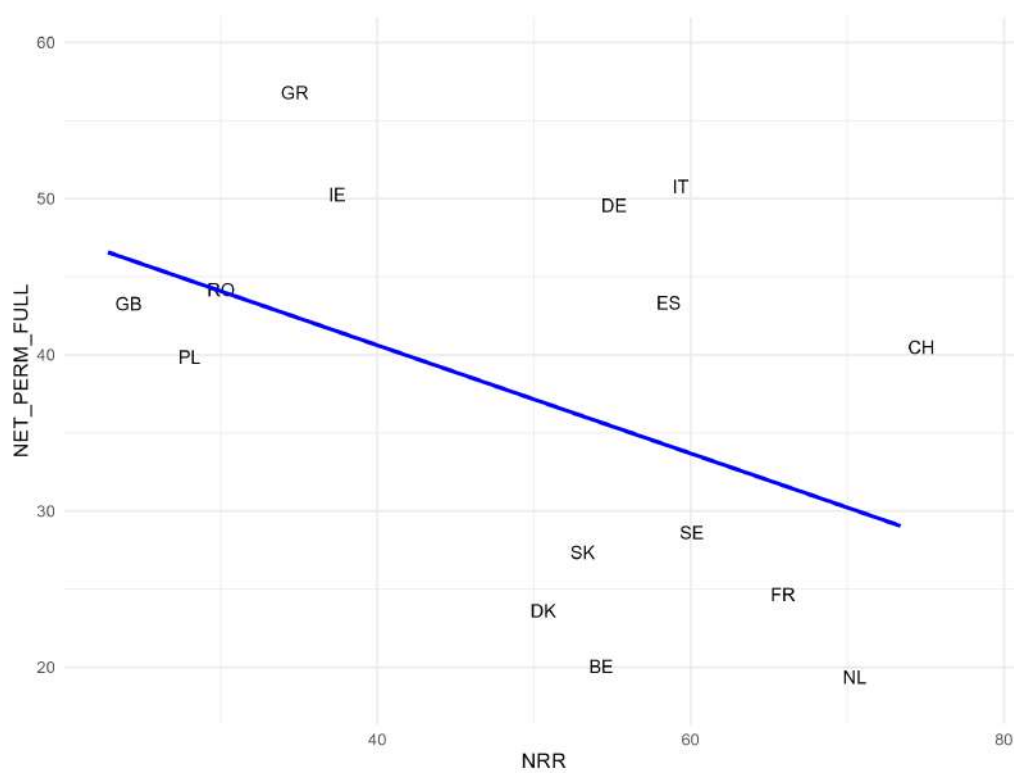
The cross-national correlations displayed in Figure 7 would seem to make intuitive sense. Ar-

¹⁷Tables A.3 and A.4 replicate tables 3 and 4 but substitute support for Unconditional basic income and support for more generous social assistance for our two DVs of interest. One notable result is that perceptions of one's own relative access to social benefits remains a strong predictor across all models. As far as categories of workers are concerned, model 4 in table A.4 suggests that only fixed-term and self-employed workers are significantly more supportive of Unconditional basic income than their permanent full-time counterparts, once covariates enter the model. According to model 8 from the same table, only fixed-term workers are somewhat more likely than permanent full-time workers to support more generous social assistance. Among permanent full-time workers, however, exposure to NSE loses its statistical significance once other covariates enter the model.

¹⁸The measure of unemployment insurance generosity used in Figure 7 is the average net income replacement rate for two individuals earning the average wage prior to becoming unemployed, one being single and the other being the only wage-earner in a household with two dependent children.

¹⁹By contrast, there is no significant correlation between unemployment insurance generosity and net support for inclusive social reforms among NSE workers (r equals -.123 with Italy and -.241 without Italy). It is also noteworthy that cross-national variation in net support among permanent full-time workers is significantly greater than cross-national variation in net support among NSE workers.

Figure 7: Net replacement rates in unemployment insurance and net support for inclusive social policy reforms



guably, permanent full-time workers in countries with generous unemployment insurance benefits are less worried about the prospect of falling into non-standard employment than their counterparts from countries with less generous unemployment insurance benefits. If they were to lose their job, they are more likely to be able to hold out for a permanent job offer in these countries (Poltier and Pontusson, 2025). At the same time, extending equal access to unemployment benefits is a more costly proposition, from the perspective of the average taxpayer, when benefits are generous. To an extent, our findings confirm that the social policy preferences of labor-market insiders and outsiders are more divergent in countries with more developed systems of social protection, which is arguably Rueda (2005)’s core insight. However, welfare-state generosity appears to be more important than employment protection legislation and the divergence of insider and outsider preferences is not nearly as sharp as suggested in the dualization literature of the 2000s and early 2010s.²⁰

Conclusion

To summarize, TEWS survey respondents with any and all employment profiles perceive the employment conditions of fixed-term and part-time workers to be worse than the employment conditions of full-time workers with indefinite contracts. Controlling for other characteristics, there is no statistically significant difference between standard and non-standard workers in this regard. One notable exception to this concerns fixed-term workers with recent work experience as permanent employees who, likely due to said experience ending poorly, perceive people in permanent full-time jobs to be worse off than fixed-term and part-time workers. Non-standard workers do not appear to be particularly aware or resentful of their employment disadvantages and perceptions of perception of employment disadvantages do not appear to be associated with support for policy proposals that that would restrict fixed-employment or improve social protection for non-standard workers. By contrast, workers with fixed-term contracts or other precarious employment arrangements are more likely than full-time and part-time workers with indefinite contracts to perceive themselves as being relatively disadvantaged in terms of access to social benefits. Fixed-term and precarious workers are also more prone to support inclusive social policy reforms than workers with indefinite contracts, whereas support for restrictions on fixed-term employment is more evenly distributed. Perceptions of relative access to social benefits is a significant determinant of support for both kinds of reforms, but they do not seem to mediate the relationship between employment profiles and policy preferences.

Welfare-state provisions would appear to be the main source (or object) of contention between labor-market insiders and outsiders. At the same time, we find that many insiders support pro-outsider reforms, especially the extension of access to social benefits to non-standard workers. On the face of it, the failure of governments to undertake such reforms since the economic crisis of 2008-12 can hardly be attributed to opposition by working-class “insiders.”

²⁰We have not found any significant cross-national variation between OECD measures of permanent employment protection and net support for inclusive social policy reforms among permanent part-time workers.

Our findings suggest that Center-Left parties might stand to gain electorally from proposing (and implementing) pro-outsider reforms. That said, an important limitation of the TEWS survey must be noted: we didn't ask any questions pertaining to different ways in which closing social protection gaps might be financed. Yet we find suggestive evidence that insiders from countries with more generous welfare states tend to be comparatively less supportive of such reforms. It seems very plausible to suppose that insider support would be much diminished if respondents were told that the extension of access to social benefits for non-standard workers would involve a reduction in benefits generosity or increased social insurance contributions. In other words, the potential electoral gains from pro-outsider reforms might presuppose a policy package that would involve either deficit spending or increases in the taxation of high incomes and wealth. The reluctance of Center-Left parties to move in either of these directions arguably explains why legislative initiatives to address the "non-standard employment problem" since the early 2010s have primarily involved less popular but also, from a budgetary point of view, less costly restrictions on employers' ability to keep workers on fixed-term contracts over long periods of time (see Eichhorst and Marx (2021)).

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Appendices

Figure A.1: The evolution of the overall incidence of non-standard employment by country

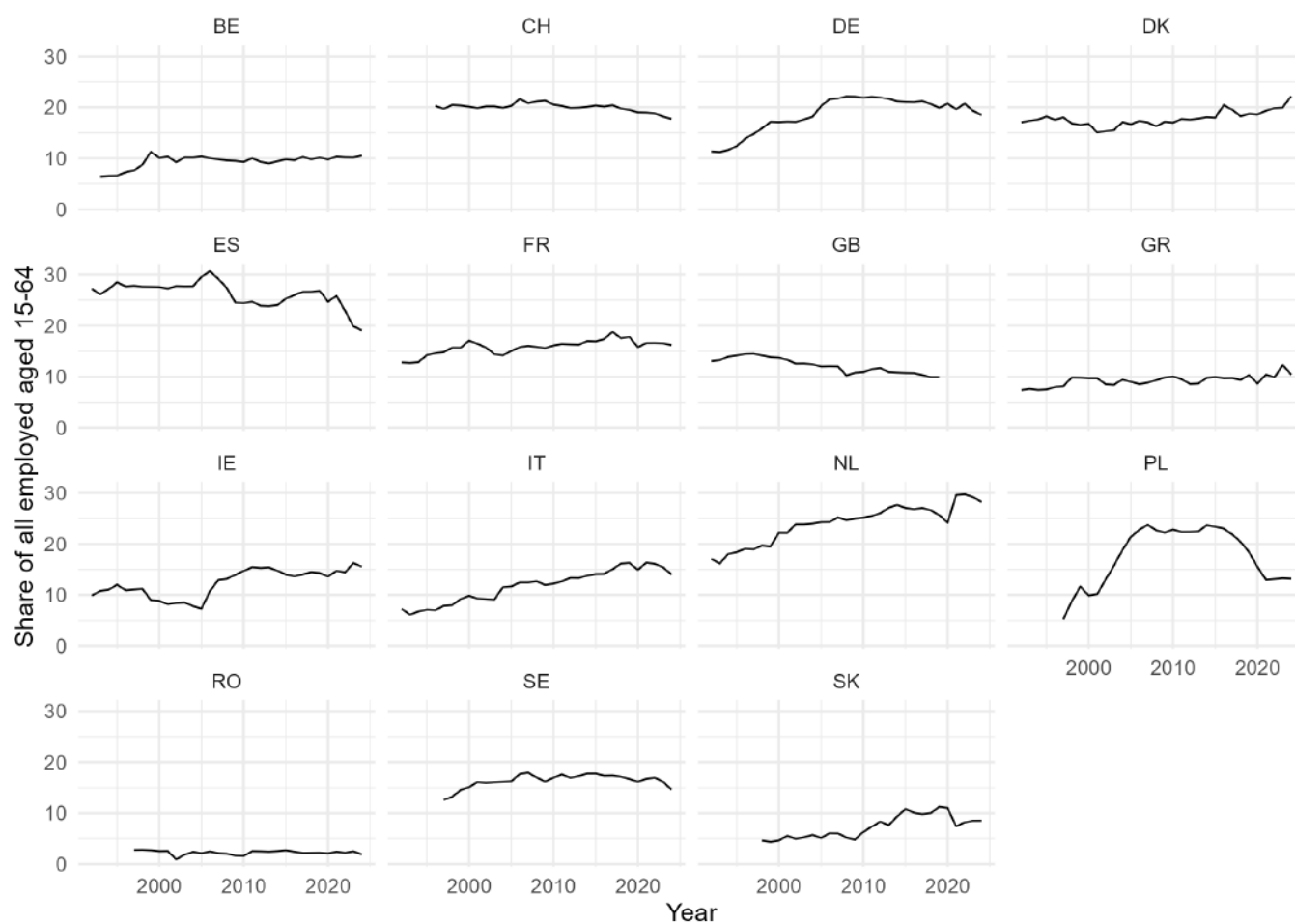


Figure A.2: The evolution of occupational concentration of non-standard employment by country (Herfindahl-Hirschman Index values)

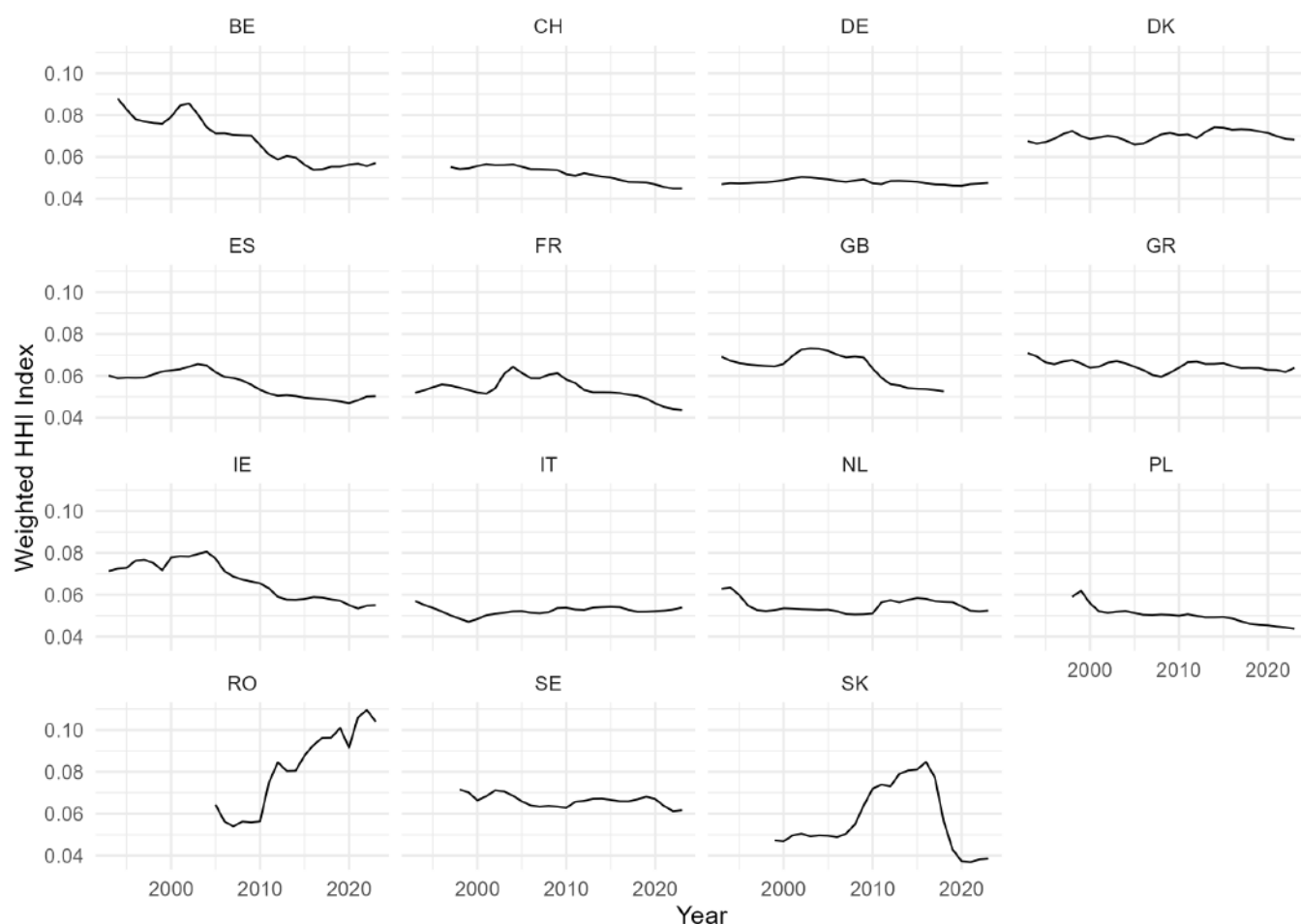


Table A.1: Descriptive statistics for regression models

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Perc. of NSE disadvantages	14,953	0.32	1.77	-3	3
Perc. of own relative access	13,411	0.23	2.34	-5	5
Occup. exposure to NSE	8,273	16.67	11.28	0.00	79.52
Age	27,849	43.33	13.51	18	65
High-skill	20,573	0.35	0.48	0	1
Female	27,779	0.55	0.50	0	1
Migration background	25,706	0.09	0.29	0	1
Decile	23,586	5.38	2.90	1	10
Union membership	26,384	0.22	0.41	0	1
Public sector	23,588	0.35	0.48	0	1

Figure A.3: Group-based perceptions of separate dimensions of the employment conditions of FT and PT workers relative to permanent full-time workers

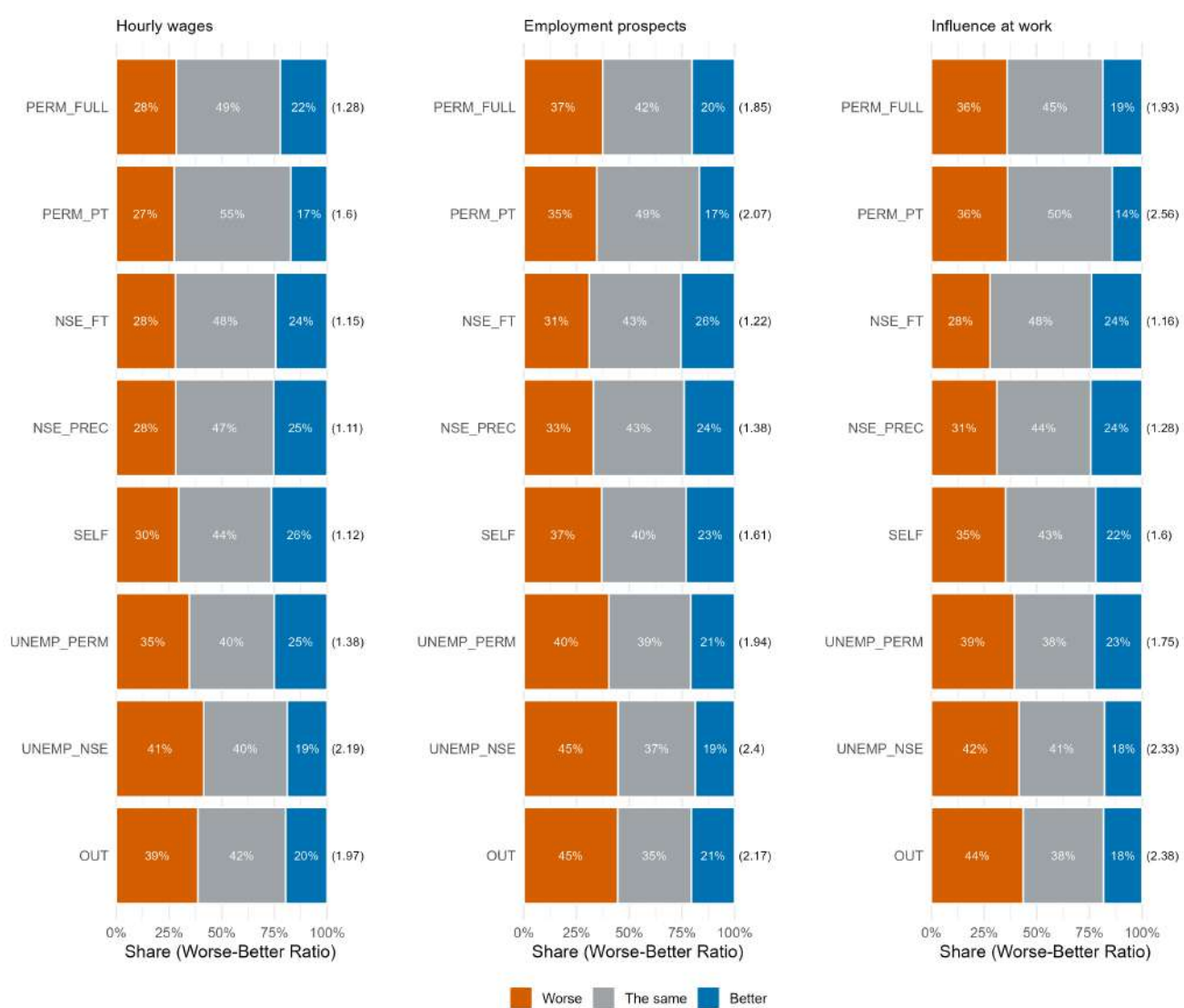


Figure A.4: Support for restrictions on fixed-term contracts by country and group

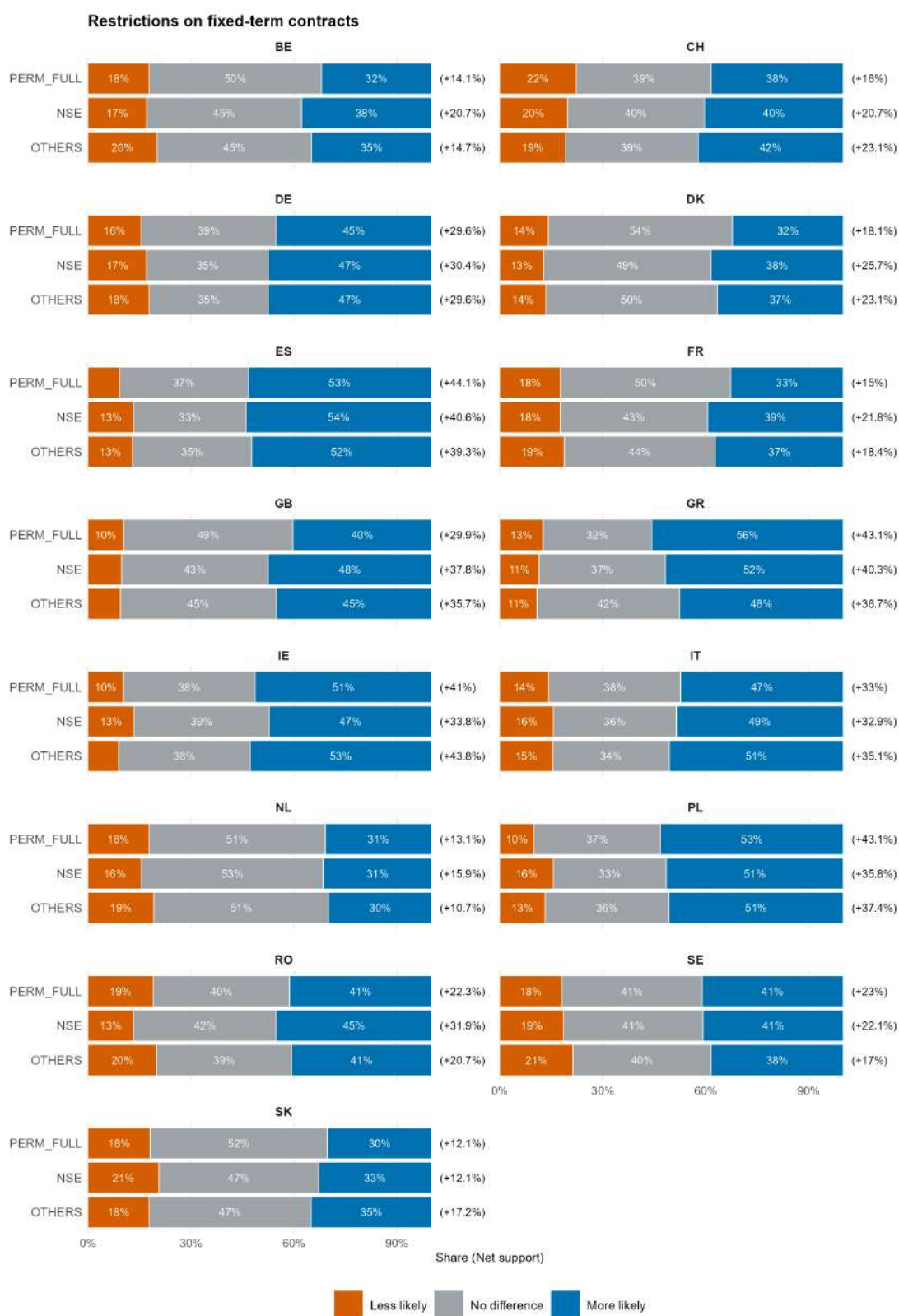


Table A.2: Replication of Table 3 with transitional employment profiles (PERM_FULL_TR and NSE_FT_TR) added

	Inclusive social insurance				Restrictions on temporary contracts			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Perceptions of NSE at-work disadvantages	-0.28 (0.35)		-0.24 (0.32)	-0.74 (0.42)	-0.41 (0.36)		-0.33 (0.35)	-0.26 (0.40)
Perception of own relative access to social benefits	-0.89* (0.34)		-0.83* (0.34)	-1.21** (0.33)	-1.69** (0.25)		-1.70** (0.26)	-1.73** (0.27)
High-skill				-2.15* (0.79)				-2.44* (0.84)
PERM_FULL_TR (ref: PERM_FULL)		3.01 (2.45)	2.02 (2.36)	3.36 (2.26)		0.51 (1.86)	-0.77 (2.13)	0.10 (2.20)
PERM_PT		10.75** (2.25)	10.93** (2.21)	11.03** (3.44)		-0.57 (2.06)	-1.94 (2.29)	-1.76 (2.32)
NSE_FT		7.48** (1.68)	7.51** (1.83)	8.12** (1.70)		3.91* (1.51)	2.81 (1.37)	2.83 (1.64)
NSE_FT_TR		6.98 (3.50)	6.12 (3.50)	10.67* (4.05)		5.13 (5.06)	3.72 (4.96)	8.56 (4.93)
NSE_PREC		4.60** (1.28)	5.00** (1.41)	5.43* (1.79)		-2.36 (1.49)	-3.10 (1.56)	-2.90 (1.72)
SELF		4.83** (1.45)	5.09* (1.76)	4.95* (1.91)		-1.93 (1.86)	-1.95 (1.86)	-1.03 (2.37)
HH income decile				-0.23 (0.31)				0.22 (0.24)
Age				0.09 (0.08)				-0.04 (0.10)
Female				5.23** (1.22)				2.89* (1.05)
Migration background				-2.19 (1.84)				2.56 (2.41)
Union member				2.86 (1.64)				2.79 (1.32)
Public sector				-2.84** (0.70)				-0.90 (1.27)
Left-right self-placement				-6.45** (1.07)				-3.28* (1.11)
Intercept	38.74** (0.23)	36.35** (0.29)	36.33** (0.41)	37.89** (1.06)	33.81** (0.24)	31.96** (0.41)	33.68** (0.50)	34.79** (1.14)
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04
Adj. R ²	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.04
Num. obs.	11831	12538	11573	8646	11701	12360	11446	8544

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table A.3: Linear probability models of being more likely to vote for a party proposing policy X in their platform

	Unconditional basic income				More generous social assistance			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Perceptions of NSE at-work disadvantages	-0.43 (0.43)		-0.38 (0.44)	-0.86 (0.45)	-0.84 (0.58)		-0.83 (0.59)	-1.20 (0.57)
Perception of own relative access to social benefits	-1.66** (0.28)		-1.59** (0.28)	-1.96** (0.34)	-1.95** (0.19)		-1.87** (0.18)	-2.29** (0.20)
High-skill				-1.20 (1.18)				-1.83 (1.75)
PERM_PT (ref: PERM_FULL)		7.82** (1.91)	8.16** (2.06)	5.71 (2.78)		3.97 (1.81)	3.78 (1.72)	1.21 (2.12)
NSE_FT		7.15** (1.72)	5.66** (1.79)	4.65* (1.98)		6.26** (1.33)	5.40** (1.33)	4.30* (1.66)
NSE_PREC		5.19* (2.35)	4.13 (2.28)	3.22 (2.00)		3.31 (2.08)	2.24 (2.00)	2.63 (1.91)
SELF		6.33** (1.43)	5.23** (1.53)	5.32** (1.53)		2.43 (1.50)	1.74 (1.51)	2.32 (1.29)
HH income decile				-0.88** (0.28)				-0.61 (0.45)
Age				-0.05 (0.08)				-0.14 (0.10)
Female				4.47** (1.16)				3.38* (1.35)
Migration background				-0.84 (2.26)				0.71 (1.88)
Union member				0.19 (1.81)				0.96 (2.00)
Public sector				-0.64 (1.17)				-1.52 (1.74)
Left-right self-placement				-5.99** (1.08)				-6.98** (1.31)
Intercept	37.92** (0.32)	35.78** (0.32)	36.13** (0.36)	44.14** (3.14)	37.18** (0.41)	35.46** (0.31)	36.68** (0.38)	48.30** (5.36)
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.08
Adj. R ²	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.04	0.03	0.05	0.07
Num. obs.	11730	12411	11474	8567	11858	12583	11600	8651

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table A.4: Linear probability models of being more likely to vote for a party proposing policy X in their platform (only standard full-time workers)

	Unconditional basic income				More generous social assistance			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Occupational exposure to NSE	2.87** (0.73)	3.16** (0.80)	1.82 (0.89)		2.04* (0.80)	1.87* (0.79)	-0.24 (0.94)	
Perceptions of NSE at-work disadvantages		-0.48 (0.59)	-0.53 (0.56)	-0.52 (0.56)		-0.92 (0.76)	-0.96 (0.69)	-0.96 (0.69)
Perception of own relative access to social benefits		-1.83** (0.31)	-2.20** (0.32)	-2.20** (0.32)		-1.93** (0.30)	-2.25** (0.24)	-2.25** (0.24)
High-skill			-0.38 (1.19)	-1.96 (1.25)			-4.79* (1.81)	-4.58* (1.83)
HH income decile			-1.07* (0.38)	-1.09* (0.37)			-0.92 (0.50)	-0.92 (0.50)
Age			0.03 (0.07)	0.03 (0.07)			-0.06 (0.09)	-0.06 (0.09)
Female			5.65* (1.93)	5.91* (1.94)			5.66* (2.24)	5.62* (2.26)
Migration background			-0.11 (2.65)	-0.05 (2.63)			0.02 (2.97)	0.02 (2.98)
Union member			-0.80 (1.68)	-0.80 (1.69)			0.36 (2.84)	0.36 (2.84)
Public sector			0.39 (1.80)	0.71 (1.84)			-0.50 (1.61)	-0.54 (1.57)
Left-right self-placement			-6.45** (1.21)	-6.51** (1.22)			-7.90** (1.47)	-7.89** (1.49)
Intercept	36.74** (0.00)	35.34** (0.02)	33.30** (0.79)	33.73** (0.76)	38.49** (0.00)	35.68** (0.02)	36.00** (1.95)	35.94** (2.00)
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.02	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.10	0.10
Adj. R ²	0.02	0.03	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.09	0.09
Num. obs.	7409	5658	4854	4854	7560	5710	4892	4892

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$