

What asylum and refugee policies do Europeans want ? Evidence from a cross-national conjoint experiment

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Context and Motivation

- Public debates; political pressure to reform current asylum and refugee policies
- Various policy reforms proposed, offering contrasting ideas
- We know very little about public preferences in this policy area
- Key: ‘multidimensionality’

This study

What asylum and refugee policies do Europeans prefer?

- Examine public support for asylum and refugee policy and the extent to which it is contingent on certain policy features
- Focus on public support for key principles underlying policies rather than for specific reform proposals

Contributions:

- first-ever analysis of public's multi-dimensional preferences in this policy area
- analysis considers non-binary policy choices, i.e. we go beyond “oppose/support” by analysing the role of limits/ conditions

Conceptualizing Asylum and Refugee Policy

Key dimensions of asylum and refugee policy:

- how refugees and asylum-seekers **access protection** in EU countries;
- the **quality of protection** that is provided by EU countries to asylum-seekers and refugees;
- **how national governments and the EU govern** the asylum and refugee process
- provision of **financial assistance** to “**first countries of asylum**” in/near conflict regions

Methods

A Cross-National Conjoint Experiment

- Fully randomized conjoint experiment on nationally representative samples in eight EU countries: Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden
- Experiment fielded online by survey company *Respondi* in May 2019; 1,500 individuals per country (12,000 respondents in total)
- Introduction briefly explains *asylum seekers, refugees, resettlement*
- 5 conjoint tasks: constrained choice between 2 randomly selected policies that vary along 6 dimensions (binary choice; rating 1-7)

Policy Dimensions 1-3

Policy Dimension	Randomly Allocated Values in Experiment
Applications for Asylum	<p>a. anyone can apply for asylum in [YOUR COUNTRY] with <u>no annual limits</u></p> <p>b. anyone can apply for asylum in [YOUR COUNTRY] until an <u>annual limit</u> is reached</p>
Resettlement of Recognized Refugees	<p>a. <u>no resettlement</u> of United Nations-recognized refugees to [YOUR COUNTRY]</p> <p>b. <u>low resettlement</u> of United Nations-recognized refugees to [YOUR COUNTRY] (1 persons per 10000 citizens per year, i.e. [country specific population])</p> <p>c. <u>high resettlement</u> of United Nations-recognized refugees to [YOUR COUNTRY] (2 or more persons per 10000 citizens per year, i.e. [country specific population])</p>
Return to Harm	<p>a. refused asylum seekers are <u>never</u> sent back to countries where they could face serious harm</p> <p>b. <u>in some cases</u>, refused asylum seekers can be sent back to countries where they could face serious harm</p>

Policy Dimensions 4-6

Policy Dimension	Randomly Allocated Values in Experiment
Family Reunification	<p>a. recognized refugee can <u>always</u> bring his/her spouse and children</p> <p>b. recognized refugee can bring his/her spouse and children <u>only if</u> <u>refugee can pay for their cost of living</u></p> <p>c. recognized refugee <u>cannot</u> bring his/her spouse and children</p>
Decision on asylum applications	<p>a. <u>each EU country</u> makes its own decisions on asylum applications within its territory</p> <p>b. <u>A centralised European Union agency</u> decides applications for asylum for all EU countries</p>
Financial assistance to non-EU countries	<p>a. [YOUR COUNTRY's] provides <u>unconditional</u> financial assistance to non-EU countries that host refugee</p> <p>b. [YOUR COUNTRY's] provides financial assistance to non-EU countries that host refugees <u>only if</u> they help reduce asylum seekers coming to Europe</p> <p>c. [YOUR COUNTRY's] provides <u>no</u> financial assistance to non-EU countries that host refugee</p>

Sample Conjoint Task

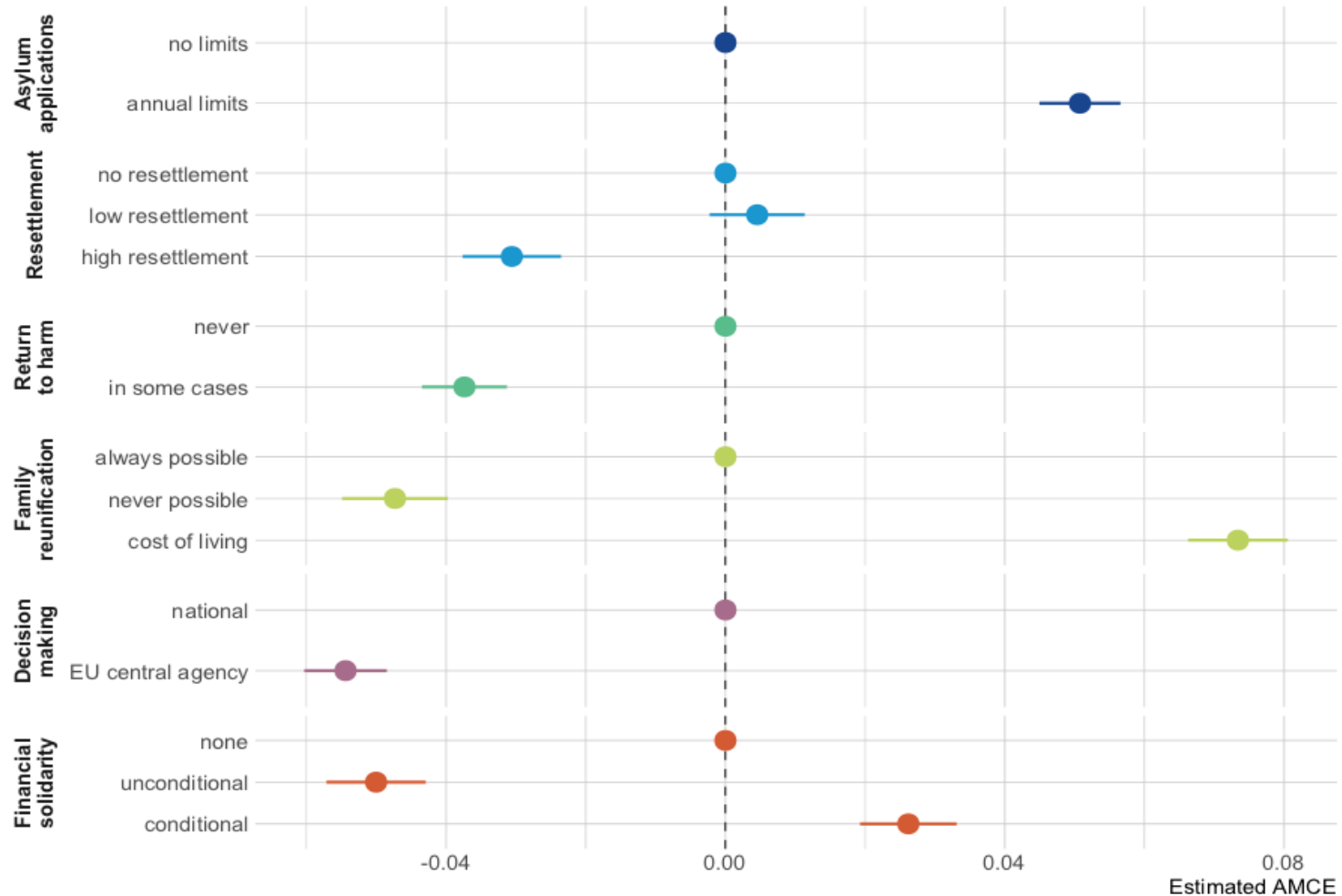
	Policy Option A	Policy Option B
Resettlement of recognized refugees	There is no resettlement of United Nations-recognized refugees directly from non-EU countries neighboring conflict regions to [YOUR COUNTRY]	There is no resettlement of United Nations-recognized refugees directly from non-EU countries neighboring conflict regions to [YOUR COUNTRY]
Return of asylum seeker whose applications have been unsuccessful	Refused asylum-seekers are never sent back to countries where they could face harm	Refused asylum seekers are never sent back to countries where they could face harm
Decisions on asylum applications	A centralized European Union agency decides applications for asylum for all EU countries	A centralized European Union agency decides applications for asylum for all EU countries
Applications for asylum	Anyone can apply for asylum in [YOUR COUNTRY] until an annual limit is reached	Anyone can apply for asylum in [YOUR COUNTRY] until an annual limit is reached
Financial assistance to non-EU countries	[YOUR COUNTRY] provides unconditional financial assistance to non-EU countries that host refugees	[YOUR COUNTRY] provides financial assistance to non-EU countries that host refugees only if they help reduce asylum seekers coming to Europe
Family Reunification for Recognized Refugees	A recognized refugee can always bring his/her spouse and children	A recognized refugee bring his/her spouse and children only if the refugee can pay for their cost of living

Empirical strategy

- Analyse the results by computing the Average Marginal Component Effects (AMCEs)
- Unit of analysis is the rated policy (n=120,000)
- Clustered standard errors by respondent
- Entropy balancing weights

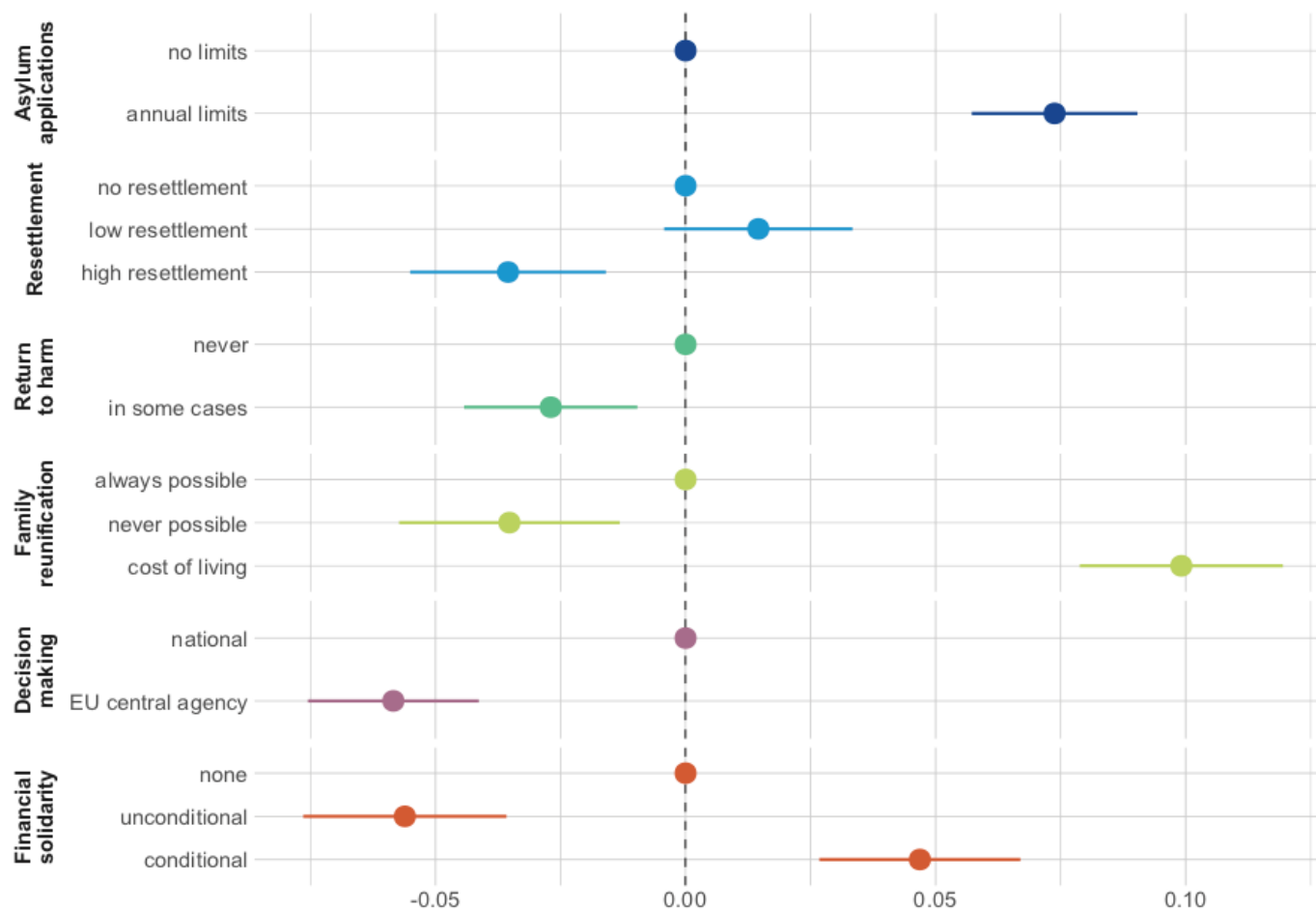
Results, all countries

Effects of policy features on the probability of accepting an asylum and refugee policy



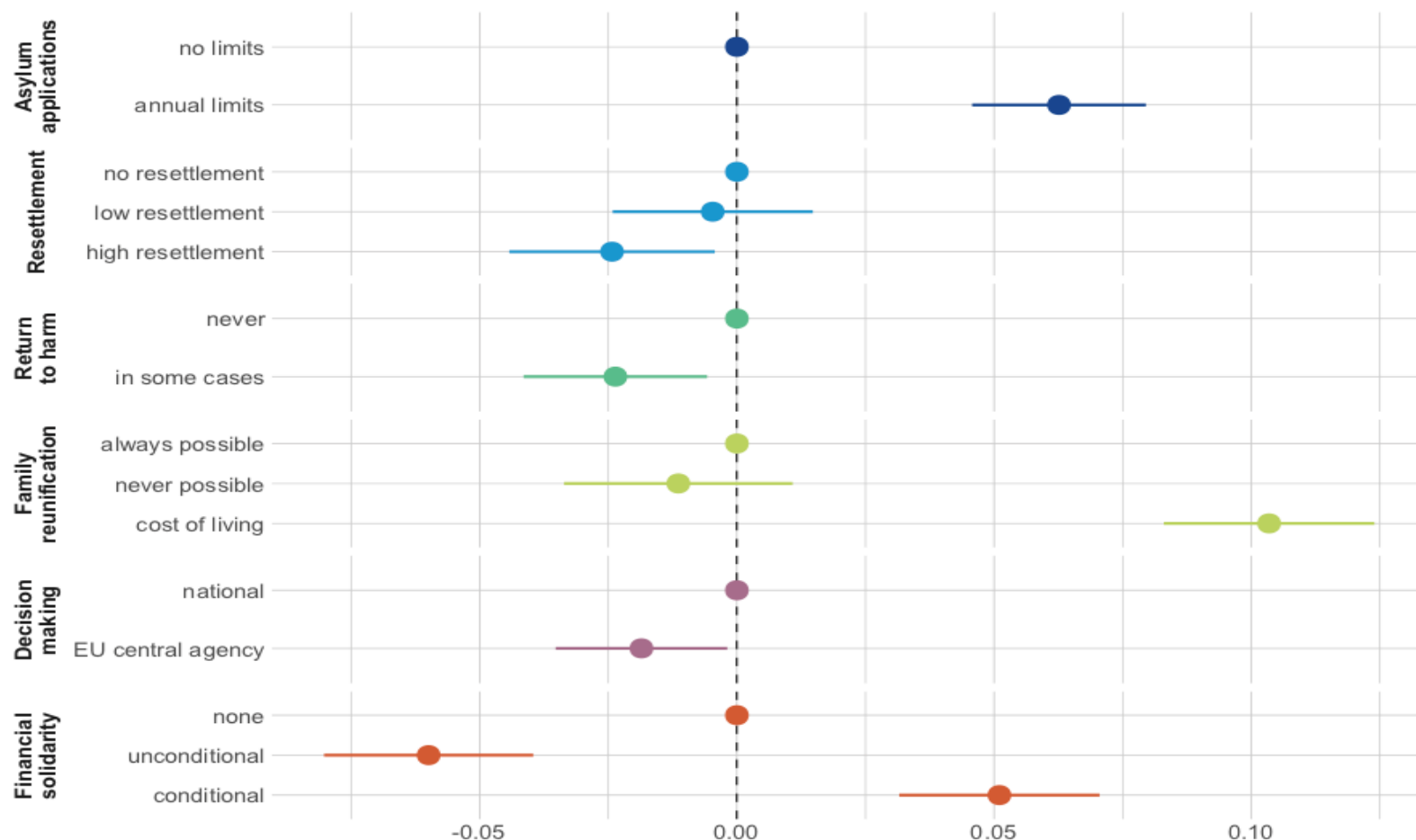
Results, Austria

Effects of policy features on the probability of accepting an asylum and refugee policy



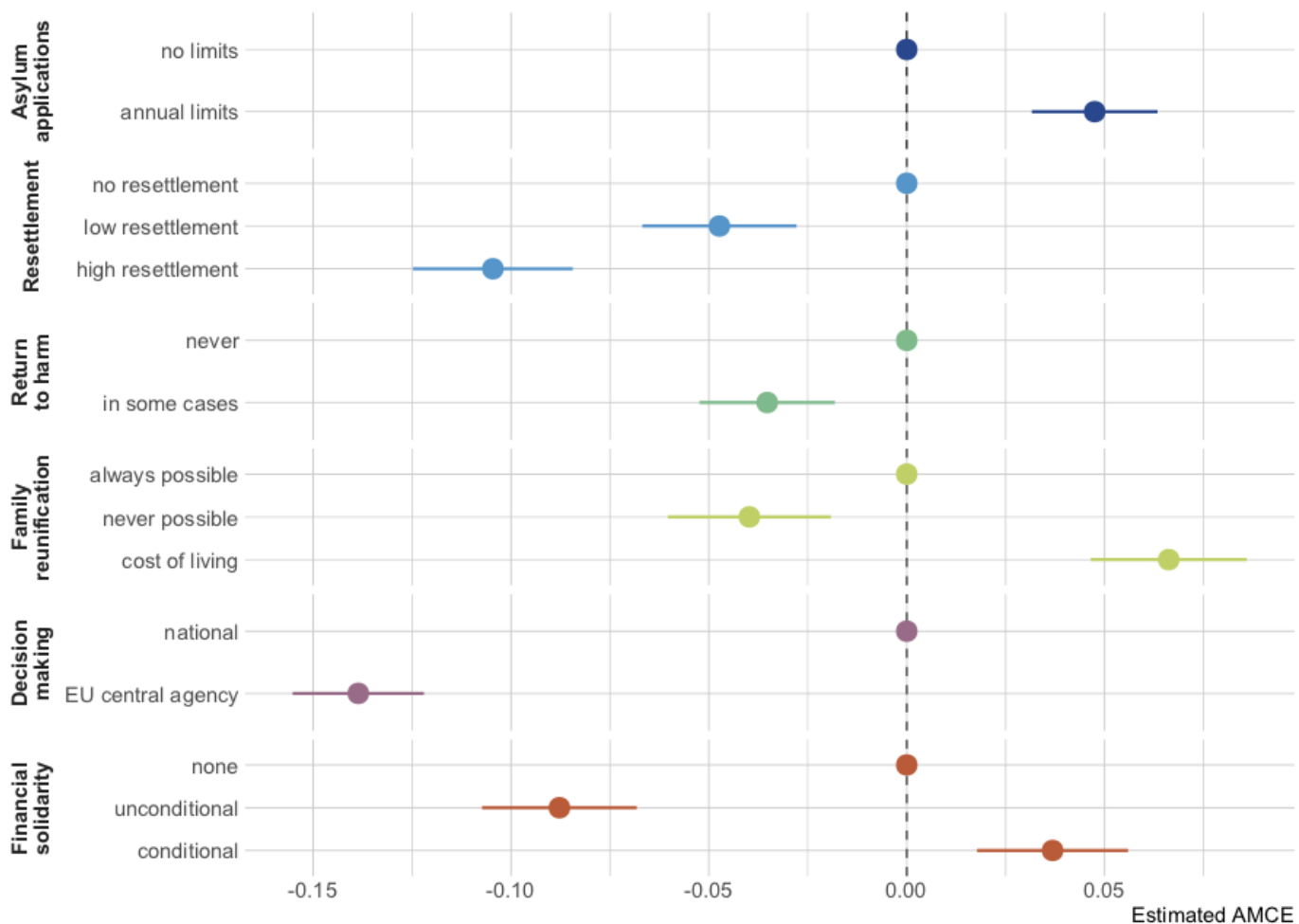
Results, Germany

Effects of policy features on the probability of accepting an asylum and refugee policy



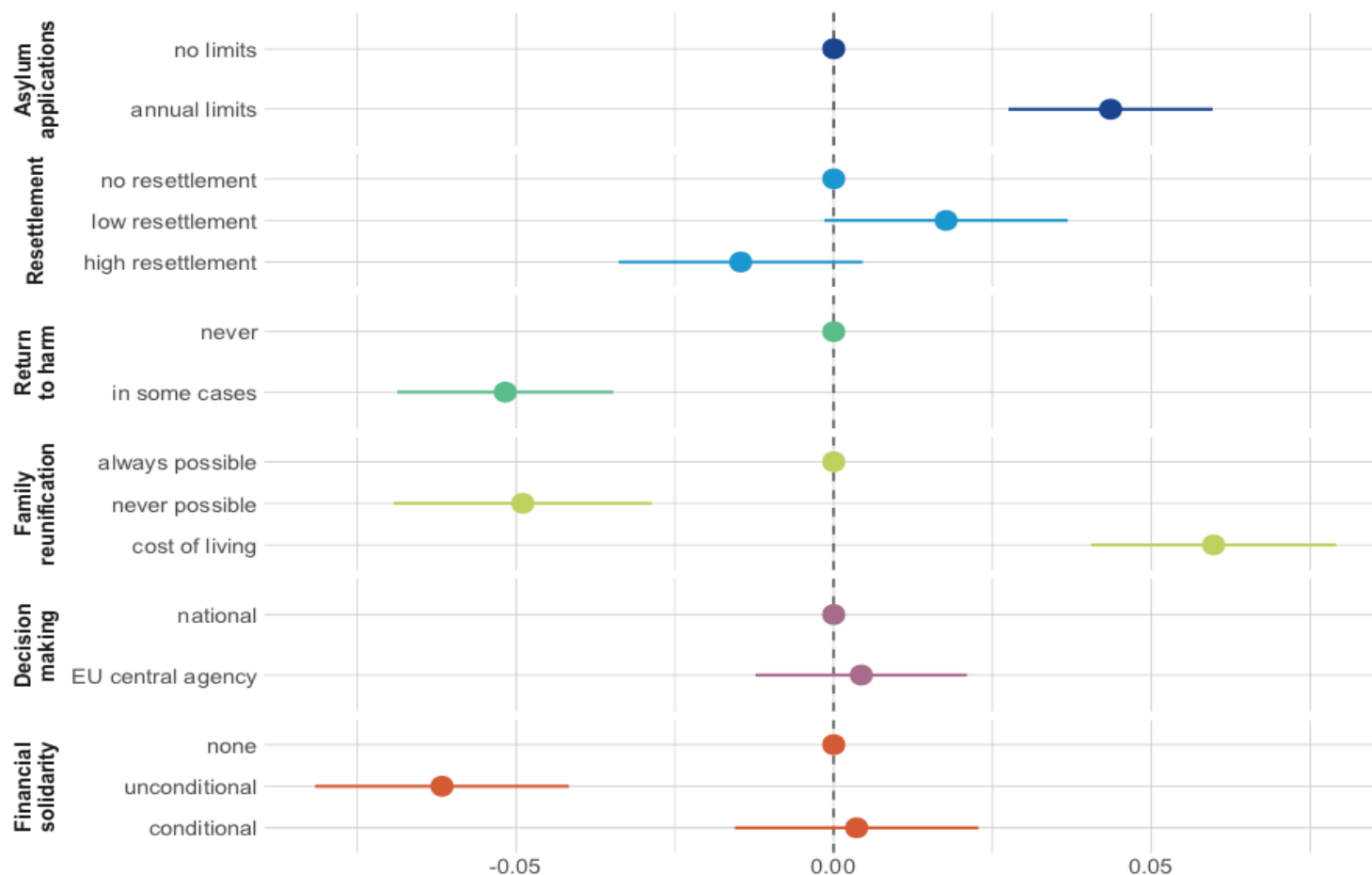
Results, Hungary

Effects of policy features on the probability of accepting an asylum and refugee policy



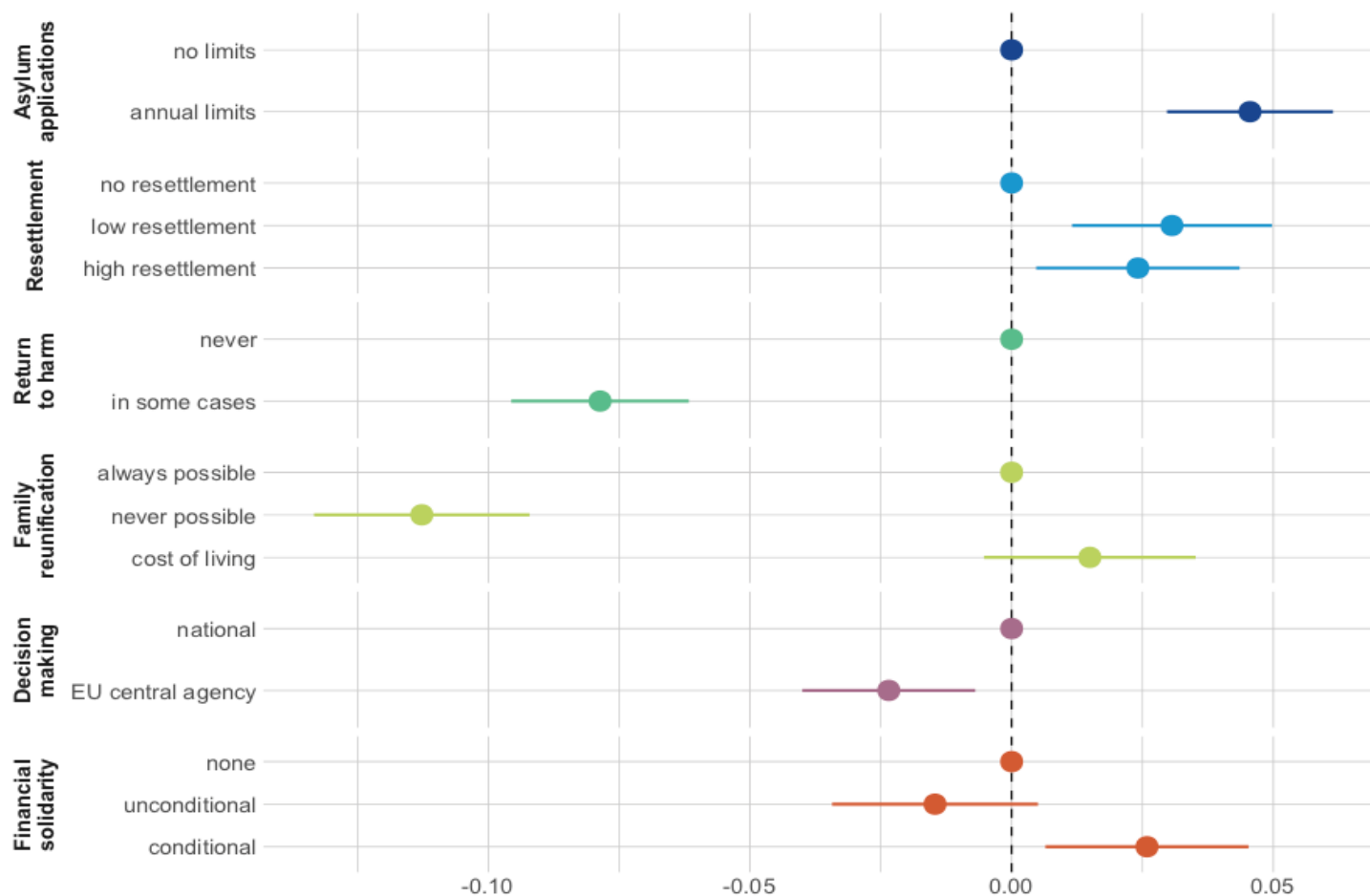
Results, Italy

Effects of policy features on the probability of accepting an asylum and refugee policy



Results, Spain

Effects of policy features on the probability of accepting an asylum and refugee policy



Conclusions

- Europeans generally committed to policies that provide protection to asylum seekers and refugees but this commitment is contingent on use of limits and conditions
 - Overall pattern of policy preferences remarkably similar across eight countries included in our study
- => Challenges common idea that Europeans are hopelessly divided on asylum and refugee policy issues

Future work

- Relationships (trade-offs?) between policy features across different policy dimensions
- Role of trust in political institutions in conditioning public preferences for asylum and refugee policies

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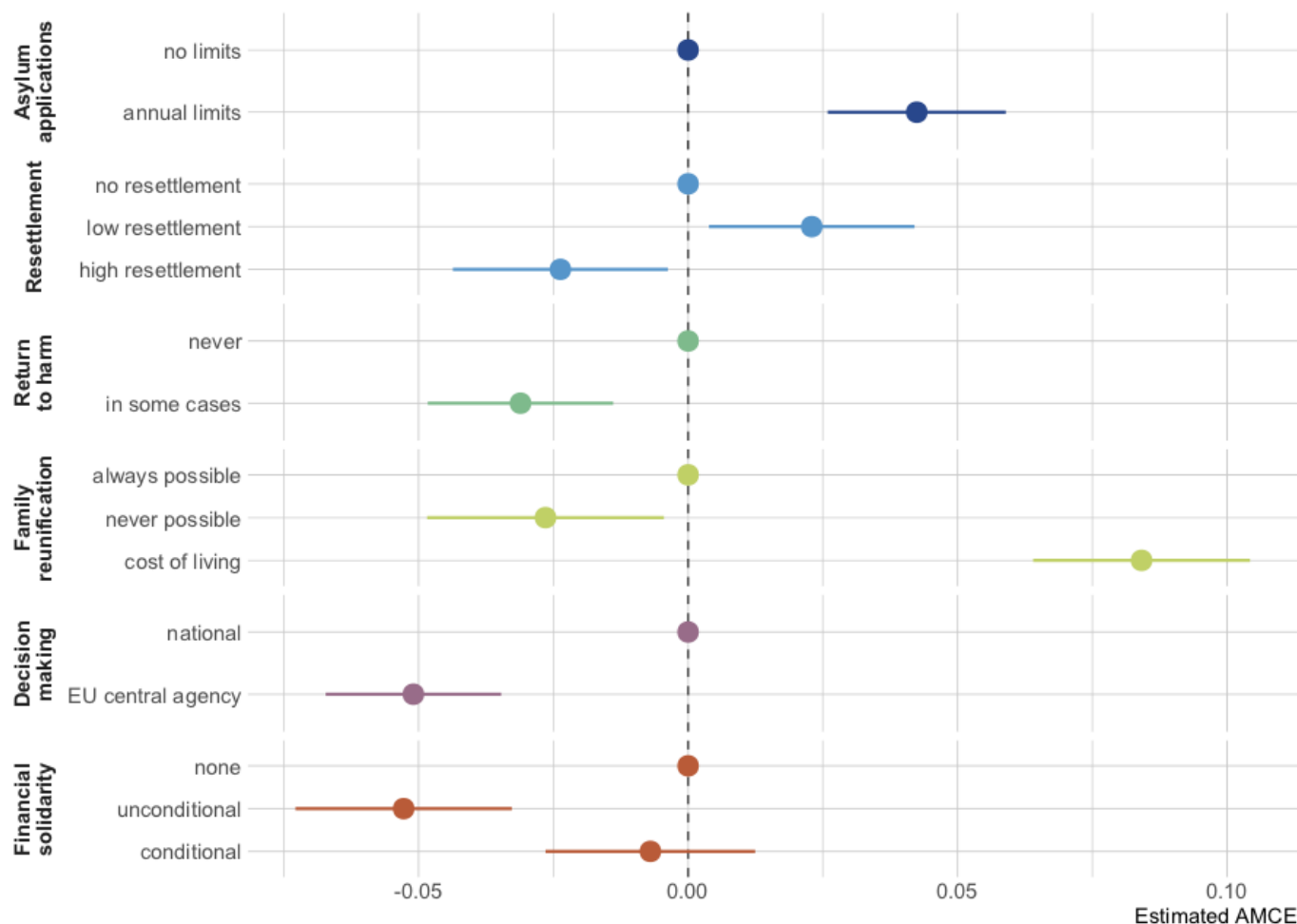
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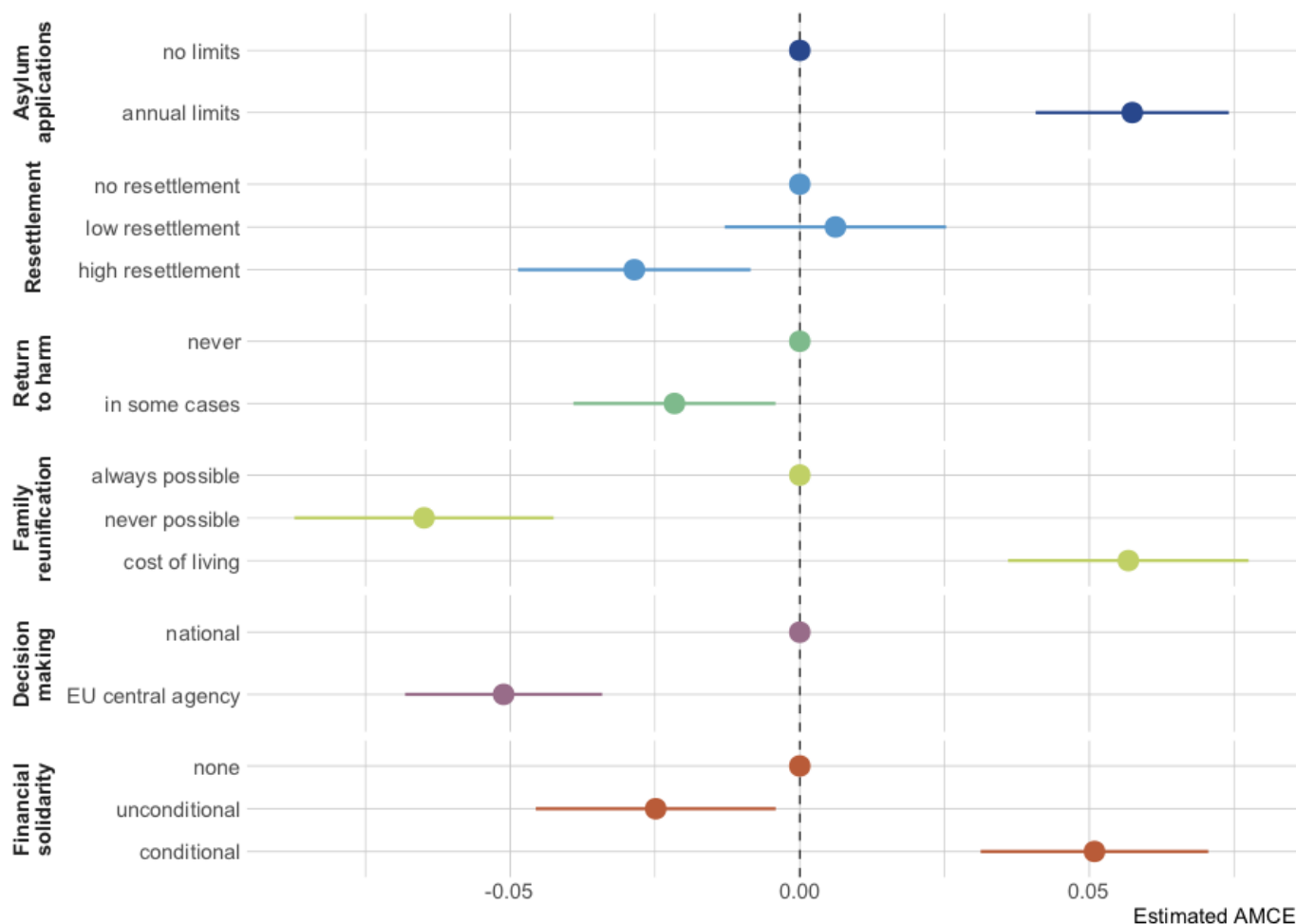
Results, France

Effects of policy features on the probability of accepting an asylum and refugee policy



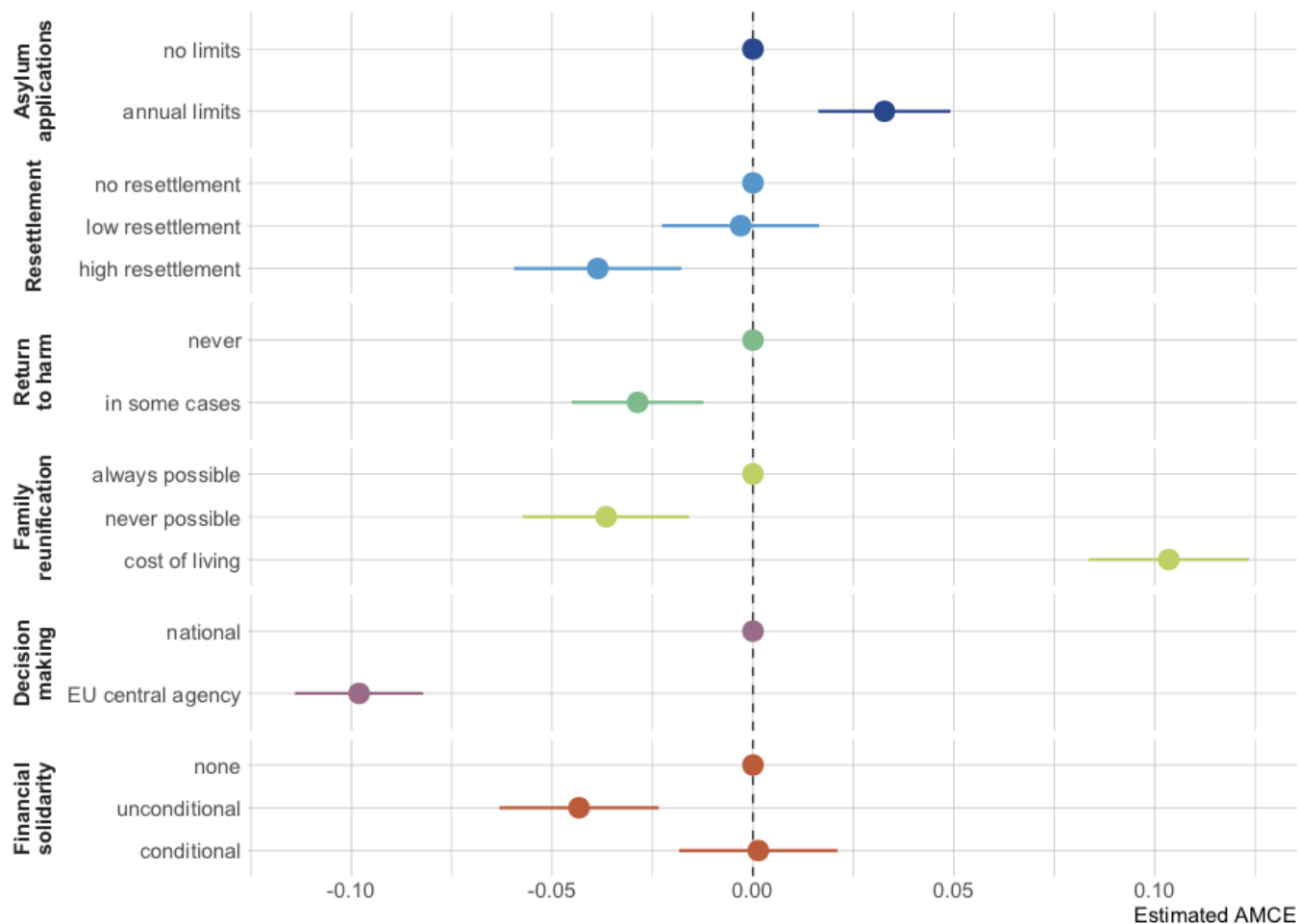
Results, Sweden

Effects of policy features on the probability of accepting an asylum and refugee policy

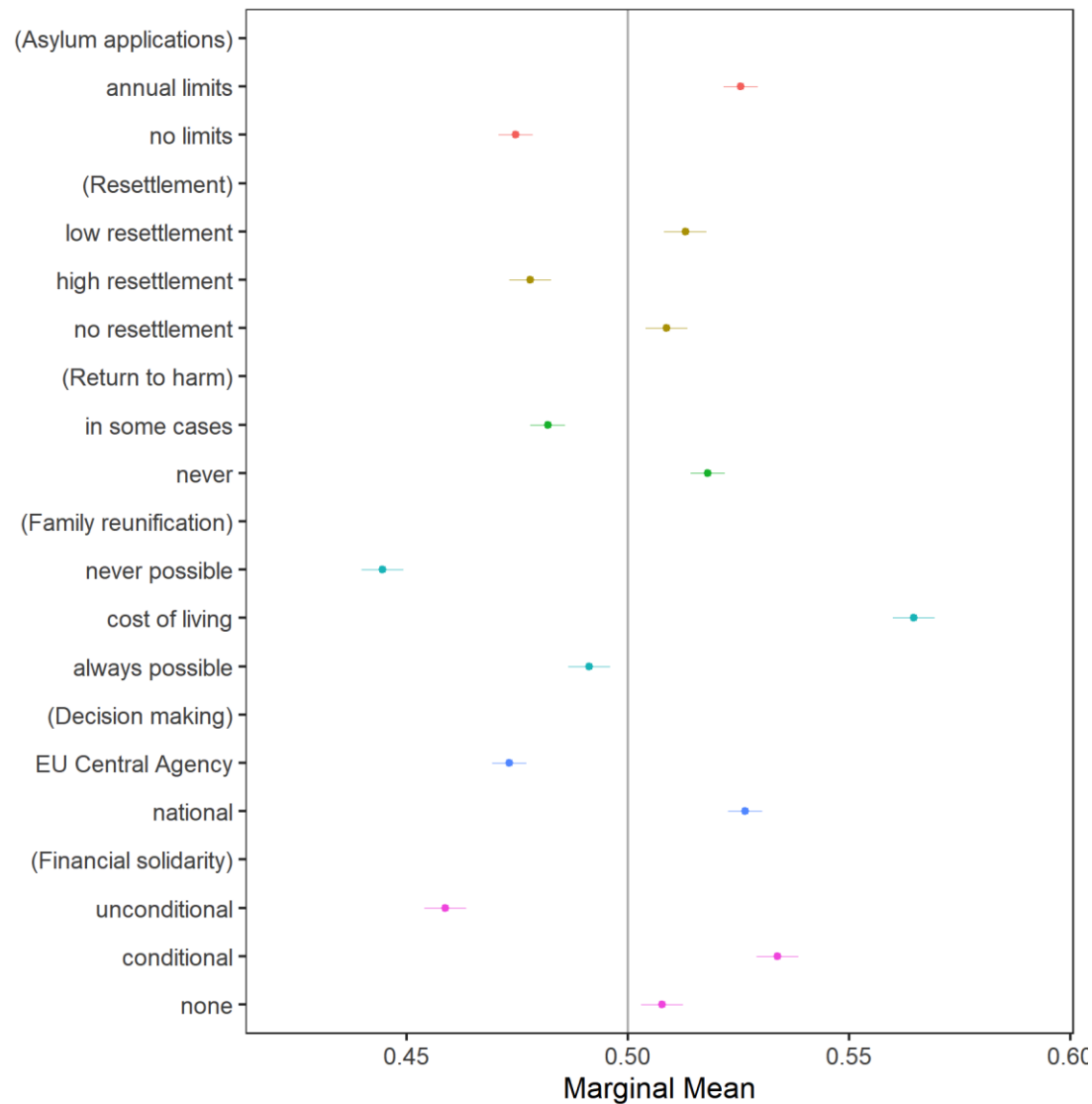


Results, Poland

Effects of policy features on the probability of accepting an asylum and refugee policy



Results, MM all



No survey fatigue

